

No. 1 N. Z. G. St.

Brockenhurst

28 October

Dearest Hazel,

Yesterday I received your letter of Sept. 12th, the one in which you promised - not to let me be unhappy after the war. At present I can hardly realise my happiness: it seems too good to be true. I never deserved, and at times I hardly even hoped, that you would give me a favourable reply. In fact, I regretted writing that letter, because it seemed to be asking too much, and, in some way that I can hardly explain, it seemed to be taking unfair

advantage of your goodness and sympathy. But I confess I am not troubled by any such scruples at present. There is an element of selfishness in love, not generally a predominant element, but one that prevails over all others just at certain times, and at present I have no room in my mind for anything but pure rejoicing that I have gained your promise. As for your misgivings, they have no weight whatever with me. You admit yourself that they are very vague and probably foolish, so you can't expect me to be seriously worried about them. So away with your

cleverest, or even the most beautiful of women. I have no quarrel with the many millions of men who prefer some one else. I think the silliest thing the old knights of chivalry ever did was to maintain that their lady was the fairest of all. I only maintain that, to me, you are the dearest, sweetest, most lovable girl in the world. To me, that is the § truth; in the sight of others, I am quite mistaken, but what need that matter to either of us? That is a sadly unromantic view of the matter - ~~perhaps~~ I fear it is even a most ungallant statement - but it quite disposes

of your fear that I will ever be "disillusioned", so you can't complain. No, dearest, don't seek counsel of the sentimental novelists - they know nothing about you, and besides, it is hardly fair to me, who am no hero, and who certainly do not regard you as a silly conventional heroine.

I would prefer not to send you an engagement ring, because I don't want to forego the privilege of giving it to you when I come home. That is my point of view, but of course it shall be just as you wish, so please tell me which you would prefer. Now I want an entirely

new promise from you - you see I am insatiable. You have only promised to make me happy "after the war", which is French for "never", and which in any case is a very indefinite time. Now I want to be married as soon as ever I get back - at least I suppose a delay of a week or two will be inevitable, but I advise you to be all ready and to raise no objections, for you will get no peace whatever until you let me have my way. In fact I would be so restless and impatient at any delay that you would be sure to quarrel with me, and I don't want that ever to happen. So

please be kind and admit that that this is a very reasonable request and that you see no reason to refuse it. Of course I don't know yet when you I will be coming home, but I should be able to give you about three months "warning".

In the case of ordinary amputations the patient is kept in England to be fitted with an artificial limb, and he is lucky if it takes any less than six months, but I don't think I will need anything of that sort, so I may possibly get home about February.

31 Oct.

My aunts turned out to be very nice indeed. Aunt Lucy

is a wonderful, nimble, lively little lady of about eighty, with a large colony of grand and great-grand-children in Bristol. Aunt Etta, the ogress of my childhood, is unmarried, and must be ten years younger, but neither of them look very old.

She is tall and stately, certainly absent-minded, but I liked her straight away. They brought baskets of fruit and dainties which have lasted me and half the ward ever since.

I don't like the new ward very much. It is much quieter and is badly under-staffed, so that we get very little attention. Also it is right at the

far end of the furthest wing,
and very few visitors have found
their way round. However, I am
getting plenty of good reading,
so the time passes pleasantly
enough.

I think the mail closes this
evening, so I must close now.
Remember that you must be ready
to be married at once.

With lots of love, my dearest Lady
from
 Cecil.