

Esmailia

25 Feb. '15.

My dear Hazel,

I got a really joyful mail yesterday - three letters from you, and all those photos which you and Maurice sent me. The only thing was that you said you were not well, and I had counted on the holiday at Haritane to do you so much good. Not that I thought you looked very ill in the photos: they are the most characteristic ones I have seen of you. In one of them you look a regular imp of mischief, so I hope your health has not been seriously amiss.

Everybody has periods in which fits of the "blues" occur almost daily, but they should not have occurred in such happy surroundings as at Haritane. I should certainly have given you a "talking to" if I had been there, and therein I should have been most illogical and unfair, for such a state is purely physical, not moral, and can't be helped by any effort of the will. And you would have been hurt at my lack of consideration, and perhaps quarrelled with me, so, much as



I wished to be there at the time, perhaps it's as well I wasn't.

All the same, I am inclined to agree with your mother that you are not, in a sense, strong enough for university work. You have plenty of health and strength - that sounds like a contradiction - but it has always seemed to me that girl students fail through being too conscientious and worrying too much. You won't admit that you are inferior to man, but I really think that just in that one point you are inferior. A man does his "swot" just like any <sup>other</sup> day's work - as a matter of course. "Men must work" - though I don't pretend to believe that "women must weep". But women have not yet learnt to work without feeling that they are doing something for which they are not naturally fitted. That is the opinion of a "mere man", and is almost certainly wrong, but it may help you all the same. I love reading Bernard Shaw, with whom I seldom agree, just because he makes me clear my own ideas.



To return to the photos, for which I have not yet thanked you. They are just a lovely lot, especially the one in which you impiously describe the smile which God has given you, as a "grin from ear to ear". Not that I like it best - there is no "best" among them: they are all good and all characteristic of you. I know now what it was I missed in the big photo you gave me. It is very nice, and I am not going to banish it as you threatened to banish mine, but it is not you. You look very different in different moods, but that one doesn't represent any of your moods. What a pretty dress you are wearing in the Ashburton ones. I wonder if I will ever see it. Your Uncle Charlie looks awfully jolly, but I think you might have cheered your father up more. Altogether I was delighted with the photos, and thank you very, very much. I must write Maurice that long-promised letter and thank him too.

It didn't matter about missing the mail that week after the conference, because I



don't get your letters regularly anyhow. You must not think you are bound to write once a week, only I admit I would like you to keep up that average. I believe you were unwell when you wrote that last letter of the three, and you are not to make a duty of it to such an extent as that. It was very good of you to be so patient with me when you didn't get a letter for weeks, and only blame Lord Fitchener. If I had been in your position, I am so jealous and unreasonable that I would have thought you were not writing, but you never thought of doubting me.

I wish you had posted that letter which you destroyed. It is just when you pour out the first things that come to your pen - they may be little, trivial things - that your letters please me most. They are just you as you are at that moment.

Your impression of the Conference was just very like my own, except that I had a delightful holiday and it didn't "take it <sup>out</sup> of me" a bit. Perhaps I was too frivolous.



About my being a scout - you needn't worry about the danger. The way the war is going so far, there is no need for scouts, and we don't expect to be used as such, except perhaps towards the end, when the Germans are fairly on the ~~run~~ run. You see scouts are only used to reconnoitre a long stretch of new, unknown country, but in this war it is considered a good day's work if you advance a hundred yards. The training has been interesting, but we recognised all along that we were not likely to put it into practice.

I saw the University Schol. results, which Jack Mansell had, today, and was sorry to see that Maurice did no good. Better luck next time.

The Balaclava cap is behaving splendidly, thanks. I wear it every night, except when I sleep in the tent. The nights are extremely cold, so the cap is one of my best friends. I love to think, as I nestle my cheek against it, that your dear fingers have handled every stitch of it. You could not have given me a



more loving gift. I am afraid I was very thoughtless to mention a trifling sickness, which might make you worry about my health. I can hardly recall now what that "poisoning" was, and even my present complaint - with which I have been "resting" all the week, is just an epidemic, <sup>to</sup> which the strongest men are liable, and which has no ill effects.

It might be well to give you a general warning that anything which I tell you is going to happen, almost certainly does not happen. No preconceived scheme is ever carried out in this force: it is always the unexpected that happens. Thus for example there has been no scout exam. and I have not taught the officers French. Our sudden landing in Egypt put a stop to both schemes, but there is always some such upsetting of all arrangements, and whatever I tell you as to the future is only a possibility.

However, I think I can safely say that we are leaving this place (unwept) on Saturday, and returning to Zeitoun.



I met a number of men whom I liked - including Frank Adamson - but the trouble is I have not met any of them since. The B.U. men don't go to the Tournament. I remember nearly half the names you mention, but they are nothing but names to me now - except Rees-George, who is rather a figure at the Conference. He is one of those weak-willed people who are very susceptible to the "mission" feeling, and take a weird pleasure in it, but he's a real good sort. I quite agree about J. R. Young - as you know - and Bryan-Brown is another. I did not know about my eyes: I really think you must be prejudiced - but what a conceited thought that is! I'm sorry about the man you don't know a bit, but I really think it is partly your fault. You so seldom gave him the opportunity for real unrestrained conversation: he was all the time begging for another two minutes of your company. However, I hope his letters are helping to make amends, as much as your letters are helping him.



P.S. I forgot to say that I am quite convalescent and hope to be fully recovered tomorrow.

Of the future we know nothing, except the rumour that we are leaving for England within a few weeks.

Now I want to speak seriously. By the time you get this, or at least before I get your reply to it, you may hear that we have left England for the front. I think - it may be just cheek on my part - that the "dumps" and "nerves" you speak of were partly due to anxiety for me. The very idea that that is so has made me horribly home-sick, and I don't want any more of it, please. I don't want you to hide your feelings in your letters to me; that is the last thing I would wish and I hope you will never do it: but I do want you to promise not to be foolish and to hope always for the best, as I can honestly say I do myself - but then it is easy for me, in many ways.

Now I am rather weak and tired, so I must close - I think I have outlasted the censor. Good-bye, my own Hazel. With much love from Cecil.