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[front line] 11 June

My dear Hazel,

I got a nice letter from you this morning, dated exactly two months ago. Really we have no cause for complaint here: the mail is behaving itself beautifully. You don't seem to receive my letters very regularly though. I send them singly at intervals and you receive them in batches. Perhaps you can give me some idea why that is so. Do those in green envelopes

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take longer to reach you? We have a suspicion that they are held back for a week or two, but no one knows for certain. If it is so, I will avoid using the green envelopes except for special occasions. But perhaps, by the time I get a reply from you, I will be on the way home - after the war.

We are in the trenches again, this time for a longer term, but it is a very easy life. In

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my present shelter there is actually a four-poster spring bed, and picture prints of distractingly pretty girls round the walls. What do you think of that, within two hundred yards of the Huns? There is seldom any strain or excitement - in spite of the casualty lists, which you must remember are very small in proportion to our numbers now. Of course we are only in the front line part of the time, but it is really the best place,

so we will have a good many fatigue parties when we move back, and I will not get another such bed in a hurry. Yesterday we had our first experience of the Minswerfer or German sausages: They are fired high in the air out of a trench mortar, and you can see them plainly, tumbling over and over and wavering a bit, so that you can't tell where they will land. They are certainly "some" bombs, but too hard to range accurately.

At any rate they generally land in a harmless spot. It is the same with the artillery. The other night the Germans must have put over several hundred shells, without getting a single man. The Australians have done some very successful raiding, but so far we have not been equally enterprising. Our men are very keen, though they are far from under-rating the enemy.

We get the English papers here - only a day late.

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The news has been very good lately - I think we shall have them well whipped before the end of the summer, and I hope they are not stupid enough to hold out after they are beaten.

I was surprised to hear that Mr Hutton had got his discharge, especially as Miss Livingstone told me a fortnight ago that he was only on a short furlough from Trentham. But perhaps you were misinformed. He was quite fit when he left Egypt. One of our company was sent home, discharged

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with a damaged hand, and the poor chap died of appendicitis on the trip. I would be horribly annoyed if that happened to me.

I have seen Ken Saxon several times lately - went to tea with him in town last Sunday. He certainly is "a very serious young man", but one of the best I know. His brother Jack's battery is somewhere on the outskirts of the town, but I have not seen him. I have also seen Harry Bell and the rest of his lot. They are all safe and well so far.

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It seems a terribly long time now since I said good-bye to you. Sometimes I almost seem to have half forgotten you, it is so long ago. I have to look at your photo before I can get a mental picture of you, and then I am not satisfied. Still my separation from you is such an inevitable fact that I seldom worry about it. Some day the time will come, and meanwhile I send you all the love that is in my heart. If you would only write and say you love me! Do you think you could do that? It

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is only a piece of selfishness
on my part to ask it, but
it would make me very happy,
dear, and then I could hope
to be sure of happiness when
I do get back. The certainty
would be worth waiting
years for, while the mere
possibility sometimes seems
so far away. I never meant
to say this when I started.
I have made a point of not
speaking of marriage since
the war began, but somehow
I see things differently today,
so I will just send this
and you can disregard it

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if you like.

I must close now and go
for a little sleep before tea.
With lots of love from
Cecil.