

The Letters of
Sarah Elizabeth Jackson
(1910-1922)

with an introduction by Barbara Wall

Van Dyck
1925



BARR SMITH PRESS

An imprint of
The University of Adelaide Press

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'My sister was a wonderful woman'. So wrote George Canning Jackson on 7 February 1964. His sister, Sarah Elizabeth Jackson, had died of consumption on 14 January 1923, aged thirty-two. Canning Jackson was writing to Dr Helen Mayo, to whom he sent all the letters written by Elizabeth that he had been able to find. These letters were later deposited in the Rare Books and Special Collections section of the Barr Smith Library at the University of Adelaide, and are presented in this volume with an introduction by Barbara Wall.

Elizabeth had a remarkable influence on the young men and women of Adelaide, especially those connected with the University of Adelaide. Her exceptional personality, her extraordinary powers of thinking and communicating, her thoughtfulness, her devotion to the causes of women and children, her passion for redressing wrongs, her wit and delight in nonsense all shine through these letters, and help us to understand the outstanding impact and influence she had on her contemporaries.

ISBN 978-1-925261-55-4



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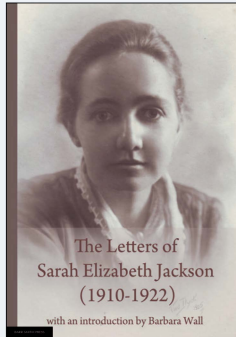


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(1911), Photographer Van Dyck.

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Suggested citation:

Wall, B (2018).

*The Letters of Sarah Elizabeth Jackson
(1910-1922).*

Adelaide: Barr Smith Press.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20851/elizabeth-jackson>

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An imprint of
The University of Adelaide Press

Published in Adelaide by
University of Adelaide Press
Barr Smith Library
The University of Adelaide
South Australia 5005
press@adelaide.edu.au
www.adelaide.edu.au/press

The Barr Smith Press is an imprint of the University of Adelaide Press, under which titles about the history of the University are published. The University of Adelaide Press publishes peer reviewed scholarly books. It aims to maximise access to the best research by publishing works through the internet as free downloads and for sale as high quality printed volumes.

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For the full Cataloguing-in-Publication data please contact the National Library of Australia:
cip@nla.gov.au

ISBN (paperback): 978-1-925261-55-4

ISBN (ebook: pdf): 978-1-925261-56-1

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20851/elizabeth-jackson>

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Book design: Zoë Stokes

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Cover image: Sarah Elizabeth Jackson in 1911 by Van Dyck, courtesy of the University of Adelaide Archives.

Dedicated to Douglas Muecke

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Introduction

'My sister was a wonderful woman'

So wrote George Canning Jackson on 7 February 1964. His sister, Sarah Elizabeth Jackson, had died of consumption on 14 January 1923, aged thirty-two. Canning Jackson was writing to Dr Helen Mayo¹, to whom he sent all the letters written by Elizabeth that he had been able to find. These letters were later deposited in the Rare Books and Special Collections section of the Barr Smith Library in the University of Adelaide, where I was able to read them, and get to know this 'wonderful woman'.²

It was 2015 when I came upon some letters from Elizabeth among Dr Mayo's papers in the State Library of South Australia. There were four long letters, one to her brother Canning, and three to Dr Mayo. When I first read them I was overcome by the thoughtfulness, the wit, the bubbling nonsense, the concern for young children, and the comments on different aspects of South Australian life. I had no idea that the writer was desperately ill, with only a few months to live. Investigation showed me that the main collection of her letters was in the Barr Smith Library and that they had never been published. I went to look at the collection and found it very sad that such fascinating letters, letters revealing an extraordinary personality, were not readily available to students and readers interested in the history of South Australia.

Thinking that perhaps I could publish the letters myself, I set out to discover more about Elizabeth Jackson. I looked first for an obituary for this thirty-two-year-old, hoping to find one in a local paper. I was absolutely amazed to discover long obituaries in all the local papers and also in local journals. It was the sort of response one might expect nowadays to be given after the unexpected death of a local football hero or singing star. Although I had never heard of her, she was obviously a person of great importance in her own day.

1 Dr Helen Mayo O.B.E. (1878-1967) was a medical practitioner who established the organisation which grew into the Mothers' and Babies' Health Association. She also supported the Kindergarten Movement and was the first woman on a university council in Australia. These were a few of her many achievements. She had been Elizabeth Jackson's physician and friend.

2 The letter from Canning can be found in Series 1 of the Sarah Elizabeth Jackson Papers, MSS 92-J142.

I learnt much about Elizabeth from reading these obituaries. Her impact on her contemporaries can be understood by reading what they had to say about her immediately after her death. No better introduction to this young woman who contributed so much to South Australia can be found than in this article in *The Woman's Record*³, 8 February 1923. The writer obviously knew her well and was greatly saddened by her death.

On Sunday, January 14, Elizabeth Jackson, the acting honorary editor of 'The Woman's Record,' died at Woodside. When readers know that all articles and letters signed S.E.J., 'Simple Simon,' and 'Dorothy Cleishbotham' were written by her⁴, they will realise more fully what a loss her death has been to this paper, and read with deeper interest the following more intimate description of her.

To those who knew Elizabeth Jackson personally, any account of her life and work must seem bald and meagre, so rich, so many-sided was her personality. But those who only knew her through her writings will be glad to learn more of her life and to realise a little better her courage, her humour, and her sympathy.

She was born at Ovingham on September 12th 1890, and was educated at various public schools, at the Methodist Ladies College, and the University of Adelaide, where she greatly distinguished herself, graduating B.A. in 1911, taking honours in Philosophy in 1913, and her M.A. degree in 1914. She won the Tinline Scholarship in English History in 1911, writing as a thesis the history of the State from 1850 to 1856, and cooperating with Miss Goyder (now Secretary of the Record Company) in correlating the letters of the State Government House up to 1856 with Despatches from England. She also won the David Murray Scholarship for a philosophical essay in 1914, and the John Lorenzo Young Scholarship for Economic Research in 1918. She was recognised as a leader by her fellow-students, and was a prominent worker and foundation member of the Women Graduates' Club and similar bodies. From 1914 to the time of her death (January 14, 1923), she was tutor in philosophy at the University, and her work was very highly thought of by those in authority, though with characteristic modesty she described herself as 'a mere splinter of the staff'

But a University is a little world in itself, and those who are successful there do not invariably make their mark in the larger world outside. This Elizabeth Jackson did, teaching at the Methodist Ladies' College, and then lecturing with great success for the Workers' Educational Association, both in Broken Hill and in Adelaide, where the psychology class begun by her was signally successful, and deeply interesting to its members.

She was chosen by the women's societies of Adelaide to go to Sydney as their representative in connection with a proposed Australian paper for women, and though this did not come into being, she was one of the chief helpers in the

3 This article, entitled 'In Memoriam' and signed E.M.F., appeared on page 15 of *The Woman's Record*, which was an Adelaide monthly journal which had formerly been known as *The Red Cross Record*. Elizabeth had been helping with it for a number of years.

4 Elizabeth also wrote many other pieces under her own full name.

transformation of the Red Cross Record of South Australia into our present Woman's Record. Her articles both serious and humorous were a delight to her readers, and during the last year of her life she gave her services as Acting Honorary Editor. She also published two booklets of sketches of country life ('At Petunia' and 'Petunia Again'), and numerous newspaper and magazine articles. Had she lived longer and had better health she would almost certainly have made a fine novelist, for the knowledge of human nature and the gift of writing were there, only needing a little more material on which to work.

All problems of citizenship interested her, for she had a spontaneous and real love for her fellow-men and women. As a trained psychologist she was specially interested in questions of mental efficiency and deficiency, and up-to-date methods of dealing with the latter. In this connection she visited 'Minda'⁵ and urged upon the Committee the necessity for fully-trained workers. She also, as a member of the Women's Non-Party Association, worked in connection with Professor Berry's lectures⁶, and later as a member of the Social Efficiency Committee. We can all see the pathos of a physically crippled child, but Elizabeth Jackson saw as plainly, and felt as deeply, the tragedy of mental abnormality; herself mentally gifted to a remarkable degree, she seemed to see a human spirit imprisoned in a mentality which denied it adequate expression, rather than the mere negation of mental weakness, in every deficient child.

Her letters were delightful — it brightened a dull day to see the familiar handwriting ('so characteristic as to be almost illegible') on an envelope — for one knew that inside was a feast of ideas and of nonsense, and that subtle communication of the writer's personality which so few achieve. Her mental vigour and range were so great, even in the greatest physical weakness, that there was never the least fear of a disappointing letter; and always the humour bubbled up, even through the most serious subjects. She loved to recount and to hear tales of the actual doings, and imagined sayings, of animals, both wild and domestic, and her imaginative sympathy seemed to enable her to place herself at will in the position of a bird, a child, or a philosopher with equal ease and enjoyment. For that she thoroughly enjoyed life, even in ill-health, no one who knew her can doubt. Her humour was no shallow thing, but rooted deep in her courage and her faith in others, was a spiritual quality. So that one cannot think of her now as divested of it.

One of her leading characteristics was her 'sweet reasonableness'. She loved an argument (and was a fine debater), and would stick to her point, and yet be ready to be convinced by cogent reasoning, in a way that made her a dangerous opponent — the temptation to give in to her was so great!

5 Minda Incorporated, established in 1898, provides support to children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Minda enables people with intellectual disabilities to enjoy the experiences of life, through special care, services and education.

6 In August and September 1921, Professor Richard Berry, from Melbourne University, gave a series of lectures on the care and treatment of the 'subnormal' child.

She hated self-seeking — the desire for the limelight. Not that she was devoid of natural and healthy ambition. ‘I would like to be useful — yes, and to be known to be useful!’ she wrote once. She had no morbid shrinking from publicity. Indeed so strong was her sense of community, her feeling of kinship with family, friends, neighbours, fellow citizens in an ever-widening circle, which merged imperceptibly into that real love of humanity which many talk of and few possess, that I doubt whether she ever thought of people as ‘the public’ in that rather chilly superior way which the word suggests. But the small personal desire for kudos, for full acknowledgement of rights, or of services rendered, this moved her to something as near bitterness as such a nature could go. For her keen enjoyment of the little weaknesses of human nature began always with her own, and never stepped over the edge of laughter into malice or cynicism.

Much she accomplished in her short life of thirty-two years; how much more might have been achieved none can say. But she had never been very strong — the eager wide-sweeping mind had never been adequately housed — and for the last ten years of her life she grew gradually weaker, and suffered greatly from ill-health, though her mind and courage seemed at times almost to conquer this by superbly ignoring it. But she was obliged to go for a time to Kalyra, and later to Nunyara⁷, and afterwards moved others to build a Women’s Room at Kalyra, where it was greatly needed.

During this last year, when her body failed more rapidly, there were, I think, three projects on which her heart was set. First, this room, which now stands, complete in every detail, an unnamed memorial to her.⁸ ‘So nice to think that the women weren’t in their bedrooms all that wet Christmas day,’ she wrote in one of her last letters. Then the Record, for which she had worked so hard, and endured so many difficulties and disappointments, which, though one of her lesser activities (looking at her whole life) was very near her heart. The future of that still rests in the hands of its subscribers and shareholders.⁹ Lastly (and of this she asked news only the day before her death), the Psychological Clinic which the Social Efficiency Committee hopes to establish at the University as a result of Professor Berry’s lectures. All her knowledge, all her sympathy, all her desire to help the children of South Australia, living and yet unborn, is summed up in that, and no fitter placed for a memorial of her could be found than the University which trained her and which she served. Her friends, realising this, are giving their donations towards the Clinic in a special Elizabeth Jackson contribution.¹⁰ None who knew her can doubt that this is the memorial she would desire. One can almost hear her saying, ‘Of course, we all prefer

7 At the time Kalyra and Nunyara, both at Belair, were nursing homes for people with tuberculosis.

8 After her death it became known as the Elizabeth Jackson Memorial Room. It still stands at Kalyra, where it is now used as a chapel. Recently, weddings have been celebrated there. It is now called the Elizabeth Jackson Room.

9 Unfortunately, *The Woman’s Record* lasted only one month after Elizabeth’s death. Her presence and effort were essential.

10 Although a considerable amount of money was raised it was not sufficient for a clinic. The money was donated to the University of Adelaide’s Barr Smith Library for purchases of books on psychology, which bear the Elizabeth Jackson Memorial Bookplate.

doing unnecessary things for the dead to necessary things for the living.’ But her humility, that scorned self-seeking, would accept our gifts for such an object.

One last gift such souls, passing, leave to those who have known them. They make the unseen world, whatever our faith or unfaith, more real and more familiar. For who could believe that the Power that could create so beautiful a personality would let it sink into nothingness? And who can fear to follow where such love and courage and laughter led the way.

This is only one of many accounts of her life. But this obituary, from someone who knew her really well, shows us the many qualities which are celebrated in all the obituaries. Another quotation, from *The S.A. Teachers’ Journal* of February 1923, shows how widely her influence had spread.

Although not a member of the teaching staff of the Education Department, Elizabeth Jackson belonged to the teachers of South Australia in the most possessive sense in which the word may be used, and her death has left a blank in the ranks of the leaders of the profession which it will take more than an ordinarily special person to fill.¹¹

Considering, as I later discovered, that Elizabeth had taught in a school for only two years — unwillingly in 1916 and 1917 at Methodist Ladies College, where she had been a student — this is praise indeed.

With her papers was the letter that Professor William Mitchell, later Sir William, who was at the time vice-chancellor of the University of Adelaide and was later to be chancellor, wrote to Elizabeth’s parents. This surely shows what an extraordinary woman she was.

P.O. Box 55 Narkunda
Fremantle
Feb 21 1923

Dear Mr Jackson

I have heard of my dear assistant’s death with great sorrow, though it was not quite unexpected. I am glad that she must have known how everyone at the University loved as well as admired her, but she could not know how those of us who look to the character of the students more than to their capacity saw in her the very standard of living that we should like them to attain. Her unselfish devotion to the best causes appeared so natural in her, but more than all she will live in the minds of her generation for the spirit she showed in suffering & the brave face she turned to the end. I am also thinking of the long agony that you and Mrs Jackson must have endured but I wd like you to realise that her memory will remain an inspiration to every one [*sic*] in the University who came in contact with her and found what a soldier she was and of the highest.

Yours sincerely W Mitchell¹²

11 This quotation appears in an unsigned article on page 402 of the *Journal*, entitled simply ‘Elizabeth Jackson’.

12 This letter can be found in Series 3 of the Sarah Elizabeth Jackson Papers, MSS 92-J142.

Reading these many obituaries convinced me that I must learn more about Elizabeth Jackson. I soon discovered that Alison Mackinnon had included a section on Elizabeth in her 1986 book, published by Wakefield Press, *The New Women*. This contained not only interesting information about Elizabeth's position and influence in South Australia but also a very lovely photograph. However, this account is more about Elizabeth's activities in Adelaide, and her position as a 'new woman', an educated woman, who, because of her sex, could not follow the university career which would have suited her intellectual abilities, than about her personality.

That she made such an impact in South Australia is quite astonishing. She was the daughter of a Methodist minister, Richard Jackson, and because he was posted to a new area about every three years, Elizabeth did not have a really settled life. In the years covered by the letters, she moved from McLaren Vale, to Brompton, to Two Wells and finally to Woodside. Three of these places were not close to Adelaide, and as her life depended on her university or Methodist Ladies College work, she was frequently forced to live in Adelaide, away from her family. This did not help her health. Already by 1915 she mentions illness in her letters, and by January 1917 she was in the Ru Rua hospital in North Adelaide.¹³ It was here that she met Dr Helen Mayo, who obviously took her illness seriously, in a way that had not happened before. Dr Mayo, later O.B.E., although she was renowned for interest in the management of medical problems of women and children, remained Elizabeth's physician and became a great friend, helping her through her worst times.

While in Ru Rua Elizabeth wrote to Canning with a characteristic mixture of honesty and humour:

Almost as long as I can remember there have been times when I have been thought to be "putting on" illness. Because I had no pain I often thought my feelings must be imagination myself. At school, before pleasure & ambition helped, I was egged on & told all that was needed was an effort. And now I am told that I have been doing things beyond my physical energy for at least 14 years, perhaps longer! I feel quite cheered; I have no pain, only feel as if my limbs were dropping off.

From this time on her ill health was continuous. In 1918 she was so ill she had to give up many of her interests. In 1918 for at least seventeen weeks she was forbidden to speak. At the end of the year she was sent first to Kalyra and later to Nunyara, both at the time nursing homes for people with tuberculosis. She reacted with humour to all these difficulties, but it was very difficult for her to work.

By 1919 she was well enough to do more writing. She wrote articles for *The Woman's Record* and for newspapers and periodicals. She wrote the two little books of short sketches about a country town, *At Petunia* and *Petunia Again*, published in 1920.

¹³ A syndicate of Adelaide medical practitioners established Ru Rua Hospital as a private hospital in 1909. It was on the corner of Pennington Terrace and Avenue Road in North Adelaide. In 1920 Ru Rua relocated to Barton Terrace, North Adelaide.

She managed to continue the psychology tutorials she gave at the University of Adelaide. She made a great impact on university life in spite of the little she could do. In the last year of her life, 1922, she was honorary editor of *The Woman's Record*, a role which she fulfilled with great efficiency. She was as busy as it was possible for her to be. Dr Mayo said after her death that she could well have had a longer life if she had taken things more easily. But as she had said herself in a letter to Dr Mayo at the end of April in 1922: 'A short life and a contentious one is better than a prolonged placidity'.

Dr Mayo, who had been both friend and physician to Elizabeth, had hoped to find someone to publish these letters when she first received them from Canning Jackson in 1964. She had indeed asked Mabel Hardy¹⁴, who had been born in the same year as Elizabeth and was at the University of Adelaide at the same time, and who had written a number of historical studies about South Australian organisations, to consider doing so. Miss Hardy, unfortunately, was leaving for overseas. No further attempt to publish the letters was successful.

This was a great sadness to me when I first realised what I was learning about Elizabeth from reading what she had written. It is my hope that the publication of her letters will enable many more people to discover the outstanding personality of this extraordinary woman.

14 Mabel Phyllis Hardy (1890-1977) was a South Australian teacher, founder with Patience Hawker of Stawell School for Girls on Mt Lofty, and writer of a number of substantial local histories.

1910

Letter 1

[This letter, beginning this long correspondence, although without date or place, clearly follows Canning's departure for Western Australia. Canning was registered on the electoral roll for Perth in 1910; he must have left Adelaide by early 1910, probably earlier.]

[McLaren Vale January 1910?]

Dear Canning.

We came home yesterday feeling very miserable. I never felt so sorry for Mother in my life.

When I was laying the tea, & your serviette had to be put in the box, & the ring laid by, that was when I realised that you weren't coming in any more.

But a sister's feelings are not to be compared with the suffering of a Father or a Mother.

But I needn't be making you homesick; you will feel lonely enough without that.

M^{rs} Shinkfield has just been in with a parcel for you & to say goodbye. She thought you weren't going till tomorrow. Oh if you weren't. We shall never cease to miss you — till you come home again, — & never cease to love you.

Dear boy. Dear Brother!

Your sister Lizzie

Mother's birthday is on the 22nd.¹ A P. C. won't come in time, but you might send one by return of Post. Sorry I didn't mention it before you went.

1 Sarah Ann Jackson née Canning was born on 22 January 1867.

Letter 2

[*early 1910*]

Dear Canning,

I have to dot my i's & cross my t's for you — mind my 'p's & 'q's, in short, haven't I? With this heavy joke off my chest, I proceed more freely.

I went into Wigg's² this morning. After a tiresome ten minutes with a distressingly brainless youth, M^r Chambers was at liberty & we got on swimmingly. "George' had told him about the books. There they were. 'George' would be in the West by now.³ Wonder how he stood the trip" — etc etc.

With 17/- worth of books (reduced rate) under my arm, I made a dash to get to the Victoria Rly. Station in 5 minutes — & didn't. We had a pleasant day at Glenelg — didn't see Minnie Angel, tho'. When we came home I told Pluto⁴ that I had walked twenty miles uphill in the blazing sun, & after looking at my face he said he believed the blazing sun part. Ruby Bettison came on Monday. She asked if I had a young man. Imagine! She also enquired if you 'walked out' with any young girl? When I said I thought not, she replied hopefully 'Oh! But then sisters don't always know!' Ruby herself is engaged. Florrie Daw & Det Wilson have also been 'keeping company' & are likely to be married soon.

Yesterday Mrs Stephens from Wallaroo came. She was househunting for Arthur who is going to Broken Hill for a bride — about Easter, I think. Arthur has lost his money thro' shares & the unscrupulousness of the broker.

Our Sunday School library is certainly looking up. The new books are a splendid addition. There is a life of Carlyle, which, tho' not a standard, I shall bag with all speed.

The ants haven't quite finished that egg, but the flies are subduing it to a nice dark brown — rather irregularly placed, tho' I have painted the chickens on canvas & on a

2 Edward Neale Wigg (1847-1927) was a prominent Australian businessman. He operated the bookshop E.S. Wigg & Son, started by his father in Adelaide. The firm had branches in Broken Hill, Perth, Fremantle and Kalgoorlie. In 1910 the business was sold to the Davidson family but the original name was retained.

3 Clearly Canning had not been in W.A. long.

4 Elizabeth's cat.

letter-wrack for Grandma, & shall copy them onto the egg when it is garnished without & within.

Miss Loveridge has been appointed to Renmark. She goes on Saturday, in a state of deep disgust. Messrs Painter, Rischbeith (?) & (Classics Honours boys) are also going in for State School work this year.

I am going to visit Winnie Potts tomorrow. Yesterday little Miss Rigby, (a Roman Catholic, she calls herself) came to tea: a queer, depressed, lonely little creature, not quite our sort. I lent her some books, & in return she offered me some of the interesting fiction of Miss Braddon (Ever heard of her?) For politeness' sake I accepted. Joy! She will let me have *Lady Aubrey's Secret*!⁵

When you write, don't forget that the position of the bed, dressing-table, window, etc, & the pattern of the carpet — or linoleum — are matters we like. Never forget that it is unlucky to sleep 13 in a bed, but don't set the sheets on fire while you eject the other inmates — You will find 'instickypain (vide M^{rs} Elliker) best for that.

Your very loving Sister

Lizzie

5 *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) was by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (1835-1915), an English popular novelist of the Victorian era.

Letter 3

Monday Oct. 5th [1910?]

My dear brother,

I have mislaid the letter I wrote you, but in any case it would appear rather tosh after your letter of today.

Dear old boy, mightn't a "gentleman at large" have found time to explain a little more? But of course you wouldn't be feeling in the mood for it. I don't know your home address, and I don't know how the shop will treat your letters. Consequently I don't know how much I can say. Of course you will easily get something else. From your letter I feel like Joe Vance, who couldn't tell whether his father had chucked the firm, or the firm had chucked his father; but he rather thought his Father chucked the firm.

If you hadn't left Wiggs, you would have been thinking all the time how much better you might have been doing at Carroll's. "Incompatibility of temper is used for legal separation between man & wife, though I think people of tact oughtn't to feel it. But you know the circumstances, and I don't. I suppose that the worst of the matter is that this sort of thing will militate against the next opening.

If you do travel, you will enjoy it.

Be a dear, and write soon and tell me that you are not being melodramatic in the extreme or melancholy or cockahoopness, and I won't worry a bit. I have perfect faith in your finding your feet. How about the agreement? It must be all very exciting, and you won't be doing nothing long enough to get bored. What about coming home for a few days, at least if you are going to travel? But I confess to hoping you get something definite. Random travel is rather relaxing.

You are very young, and there is a whole world to choose from, within the limits which alone make the game worth playing.

If I find the other letter, despite the small talk & general inappropriateness, I'll send it.

Your very loving Sister,
Elizabeth

Don't forget if you feel like getting something off your chest that you don't want to go further you can tell me — just as well to mention if private, tho'. I think you usually do, but I won't say anything about this letter to Mother unless she does to me.

S. E. J.

Letter 4

[*late 1910?*]

My dear brother,

If our letters weren't so dull I think you would envy our voluminous power. It must be an astonishment to you that you come of such an epistolary-minded family. This sounds like the "light fantastic toe" of an elephant. I am always sure of raising a satiric smile from you, however, if I can't afford a directer amusement.

I hope the Rigby letter doesn't complicate things, & that if you have decided to farm Grandma doesn't over-influence you. If you don't want to, of course it doesn't matter. Father is certain that farming is a good thing, & of course he wants his own son to be — prosperous. Hang on to the highest ideals you know — they give you something to work for. Do you know Epilogue to Asolando⁶ —

“No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time

Greet the unseen with a cheer!

Bid him forward, breast & back as either should be,

“Strive and thrive!” cry “Speed, fight on, fare ever

There as here!”

Your very loving sister

Elizabeth

6 ‘Epilogue to Alosando’ is the conclusion to a long series of poems by Robert Browning (1812-89).

Letter 5

[*Before Christmas 1910*]

Dear Canning

Father has been writing to you, & Grandpa⁷, & Mother is about to start, so you will have a real Christmas budget. I hope you won't be lonely, and I know you won't be dissipated. Underclothes seem a rather stodgy gift; I think I shall have to begin perpetrating some crewel work atrocities. Do you want a mantel-drape or a chair tidy? I could work it very chastely in Algebraic symbols. Mathematics are my bugbear just now. Doris Jones, the first woman in S.A. to gain Philosophy Honours, has just (temporarily) lost her degree on account of the creatures. Hope mine won't be permanent. Henry Bröse⁸ got his degree, I suppose you know, & Britton Angwin, (*ad eundem gradum*) & his two sons.

Well, this evidently isn't going to be a Christmas letter. You must just munch the raisins & the sweets and know that we sometimes think what we can't write.

I shall send you a letter or cards when on my holiday. The nearer the time comes the less I want to go; hope I'm not going to be a poor homesick sort of person like Aunt Alice. Father & Mother are very good, giving me so many good times. Have you read Gosse's 'Father & Son? I have only had half an hour at it, but I like it immensely.

I got *Past & Present* (Worlds Library)⁹

7 Grandpa, with whom Elizabeth often stayed at Whitley House, Beach Road, Grange, was Jesse Canning (1841-1932), her mother's father.

8 Henry Bröse gained his degree in 1910.

9 I have been unable to identify every book on the list in this letter. The others are listed here: *Past and Present*, 1843, by Thomas Carlyle (1785-1881), Scottish philosopher, satirical writer, historian, essayist and teacher.

Father and Son, 1907, by Edmund Gosse, English poet, author and critic.

Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), Anglo-Irish playwright.

Evelina, 1778, by Frances (Fanny) Burney (1752-1840), English novelist and diarist.

Critical Miscellanies, 1871, 1877 by John Morley, 1st Viscount Morley of Blackburn (1838-1923), who was a British Liberal statesman and writer.

The Life of the Bee, 1901, by Maurice Maeterlinck (1862-1949), Belgian poet and playwright, who wrote in French.

Jane Eyre, 1847, *Shirley*, 1849, by Charlotte Brontë (1816-55), English novelist.

The Path to Rome, 1902, by Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953), Anglo-French historian.

Father & Son	3/-
Sheridans Plays Worlds Classics	
Evelina(Everyman)	
Plato & Platon. & the Renaissance (Patr)	19/-
2 Morley Miscellanies (5/- ea)	10/-
Maeterlink's Bee	3/-
Shirley & Jane Eyre	2/6
Clan Miller [?] & Historical	2/-
Newbold & Golden Hours	1/-
Path to Rome (Beloc)	
Houllevigues Evolution of the Sciences	
Helen Keller's 'The world I live in	4/6
Advancement of Learning Worlds Cl (leather)	
Survival of Man(6/8 disc on £3.10.0)	9/-
Life of Robt. S.S.	

4 French books & an 8^d Sir Roger de P. And I paid 4/3 over-money.

I have got Lodge's new book 'Reason & Faith' for Father for Christmas. Never mind what I'm giving Mother. She might happen to read this, & then where would I be? —

The strike is very exciting. I do sympathise with better pay & less hours, but I think a man ought to be able to deliver goods with his own horse & his own cart. To him the concessions will make no difference, & while friendliness might make him forward the project, if it doesn't he shouldn't be forced. And when more men than are going to be benefited take part in the strike, it is an unnecessary aggravation of a necessary evil. But perfectly disinterested people have provided themselves with delicious excitement by pretending to smuggle off goods from a back door, & while the pickets are busy there driving off quite boldly from the front. But I think they are getting wary now. If the worst comes to the worst & we can't get bread I suppose we shall have to eat cake! (This is Father's joke. But I am popping it off at you)

Grandpa has been cutting the hedge. It is 18 inches higher than the fence below the little side gate, 3 inches above it. The front fence is to be up before winter

The Evolution of the Sciences, 1910, by Louis Houllevigue (1863-1944), popular French science writer and professor at the University of Marseilles.

The World I Live In, by Helen Adams Keller (1880-1968), deaf-blind American author.

The Advancement of Learning, 1605, by Francis Bacon (1561-1626), English statesman.

The Survival of Man, 1909, *Reason and Belief*, 1910, by Sir Oliver Lodge (1851-1940), world-renowned British physicist and writer.

Chrissie Johnson is leaving Minlaton for Tumby Bay. Mother & Father & Aunt Alice are gone to visit M^r Sissons. By the way, Miss Tanner at Wiggs told me to give you her Xmas greetings. M^r Chambers came rushing up to know if I really did want Ward's 'Rationalism & Agnosticism.'¹⁰ "Its 30/-" he added sternly. I hadn't seen him for a long time. M^r Gates (don't know his (proper name — N.Z. man) always takes me under his wing, & seems quite hurt if I suggest going downstairs myself. Did I tell you how shocked he was because I couldn't think of M^r Clarke's name, & for purposes of reference designated him (after you, & with an apology) "The Lancashire Lad". His hair positively went straight with horror, & ordinarily his grey-black locks are quite crisply curled.

M^r Maurice seemed to be having a worried morning on Wednesday. There were 3 men & Miss Tanner to attend to about 12 people, & not a boy within fire alarm to carry a parcel.

Goodbye, dear old boy. We shall all think of you at Christmas. I wonder if you will be with us a year hence? I think you were wise not to come just for the few days; we would all have felt it far more when you returned & the same money will give you longer when you feel you can be spared. But it isn't always easy to take this philosophically, as I suppose you know even better than I do. Dear Canning.

Your loving Sister Lizzie.

¹⁰ James Ward (1843-1925) British psychologist and philosopher. *Naturalism and Agnosticism* (the Gifford Lectures) was published in 1903.

1911

Letter 6

[July 1911]¹¹

[to Canning — pages 1 & 2 missing]

Prof. Mitchell is much amused at the item — boots 5/- — 20/-. He says there must have been brown people somewhere! I have just finished “De toute son Âme by René Bazin¹²; it seems to me a remarkable study of working class France. Antoine et l’oncle Madist sont bien décrits; Henriette est un peu trop bonne, mais aimable et vigoureuse; Etienne, l’amant rejeté, n’est pas ‘manly’ sur son rejet, mais assez natural.

On Friday we had a Discussion Evening in the Common Room — ought we to adopt Prof’s views in order to ‘get thro’ — Resolved that the Professors would not want it, but would prefer us to adopt their methods only, & think for ourselves.

We generally hear some good jokes at these reunions. A coloured gentleman, being too shy to propose vis-à-vis, rang up the lady. “Will you marry me?” “Yes. Who’s speaking?”

Mrs Jackson’s only consolation in all this trouble is that it triumphantly fulfils her prophecy.

Prof. Mitchell has been giving us splendid lectures on Kant — I look forward to doing honours — But wish I could see some way of getting a living out of them. I don’t think there is much scope for commonplace writers and their platitudes nowadays. Of course I can teach — but it is thinking that I like best. Did you see about “roasting” the boy at S^c Peters — but Mother would tell you.

Goodbye, dear, and very many happy returns. I am going to the Grange¹³ tomorrow afternoon — Monday the holiday, that is — so I can tell you about them next week.

Your very loving sister,
Elizabeth

11 1 July was Canning’s birthday. Elizabeth would finish her ordinary degree in 1911.

12 René François Nicolas Marie Bazin (1853-1932), French Novelist who wrote *De toute son âme* in 1897 (English translation, *Redemption*, published in 1908).

13 Mr and Mrs Canning, Elizabeth’s grandparents, lived at the Grange, a seaside suburb of Adelaide.

1912

Letter 7

Magill Rd. St Peters Sunday July 15, or thereabouts [1912¹⁴]

My dear brother,

I have been thinking of you all the morning — of you and of me. I wonder if you think I didn't say enough about your leaving Wigg's. Your last letter invites me to "sock it in". But I don't feel inclined to — about that; because it is done; and also because, although one's loyalty grows for what one works for, the chance of a partnership was a great thing. Of course it is better to be even a sub-manager in some firms than boss of another — from the point of view of being "in the thick of it"; and for the natural dignity and reflected self-respect of being in a big concern. But you will have thought of all that, and the consciousness that you have scope for your talent, that it is you who are going to make a big thing of the little thing, and that you work in part for yourself, very likely more than compensates. And you haven't given me any idea of the amount of business done by the new firm, nor of its status as a bookshop, nor of its position in Perth — all important matters, I think. It isn't easy to push a business in a poor locality.

I have been vigorously defending you from Grandma's suggestion that you might have come to Adelaide and set up for yourself "like Mr Hyde." The thought of you selling hundreds and hundreds of Sunday Companions and Pansy stories broke me up, and even Grandma sees the point now. I think that an intelligent bookseller has great possibilities before him as a cultural influence. To a great extent he must follow the public taste — but he can often lead. The books he advertises are the books people think about — and especially in Australia, where five sixths of the people read rubbish because they don't know there is anything better. My chief objection to them reading Deadwood Dick is that Robert Louis Stevenson, for instance, would interest them so much more; and although of course people untrained in literature wouldn't see the vast difference as we do, I think an implicit good taste would be acquired. And the higher your taste the more it interests you. The same applies to more expensive and probably worse novels. I suppose it is hopeless to try to create a taste for scientific literature — though you might make it extend to essays. "But this," as the Professor said the other day, after explaining his pet sociological theory for half an hour, "is not the point." The point is that you will

14 This letter appears to have been written in the first year of the Tinline Scholarship, for which Elizabeth received £30 in 1912 and £30 in 1913. See close of letter.

do, as you have done, your best for Wigg's while you're there — and the best for the other man when you've left. But I hope you will always have a kindly feeling for Wigg's. I hope you haven't annoyed them unnecessarily. And remember that animosity at your leaving is a tribute to you.

On the other question of "swelled head" — well, a splendid self-confidence is magnificent, but splendid complacence is apt to be only smug. So long as you're never satisfied, being always confident will keep you hopeful. But I think it will be well to bear in mind, as an *arriere-pensée*, that there are other booksellers. I know you are a good one, and that I don't know a better. But you and I are acquainted with but a very small corner of the earth. What you say about not marrying makes me wish — oh how I wish — that I were a different sort of sister. If only you could have thought of me — "What a jolly wife she would make;" if only I had been to you an instance of what a woman can be — I know that I am, and am a warning in that sense; but if I were to you a woman at her best, you would feel differently about marrying. I think I know women better than you do, and indeed very many of them are lovable and desirable. I think perhaps your shyness only lets you really know women who are not — mentally — your "class." And though many of them are fine, a man wants his wife to be a companion and when a woman is of the sort that has "tastes" you feel that you couldn't marry her unless you could afford to satisfy them. But don't you know that satisfaction kills pleasure, and that any real woman finds her unsatisfied tastes at any rate partially compensated for by a happy marriage, even if it is poor? That she would rather be poorly and happily married, than rich and — unless she did not love — single? And, even if you can't have the kitchen lavishly appointed, a woman of brains and heart won't allow it to be a "pig-stye." [Do you remember Grandma telling Emma that the drawing-room was a pig-stye? I was so struck, at the time.] I feel that I could be so happy in the tiniest home, if only I were a lovable enough woman for the sort of man I could worship, to marry. Unfortunately I have so many faults, and they all seem to come to the top. When I try to remonstrate, I scold; and often when I would be gentle, shyness makes me sarcastic; always the thing I think my words distort.

But never fear that a woman's tastes will make her discontented; she will be the happier in herself, and the more interesting to you, for having them. And if there be some sacrifice, why not? Honey at every meal nauseates, and so does the line of least pain.

Perhaps you think the celibate's life is more comfortable and less expensive? I think if discomforts come in family life, the new interests make up a hundred thousand times. Dave Williams was hearing his little son say his prayers the other night — "make mother a good girl, and for goodness' sake make Bunty well quick, Amen", and the warm little body rolled into bed and snuggled into the blankets. Don't you ache and shiver with longing to have a warm little body of your own?

And in marriage man must remember that the magnanimity isn't all on his side, despite what I said above. The woman [*does*] contribute. But I think men and women are incomplete physically and morally, unless they mate. Isn't there always a premature witheredness about bachelors and spinsters? And think of all the new characteristics developed by married life, and the wealth of new interests. You become not only a sojourner, but a dweller; you are anchored to your country by a home of your own; you are linked up with your race. In a way I think I am foolish to feel so keenly about this, because if you really fell in love I hope you wouldn't let prudence stand in your way — I don't think you are selfish enough for that. But you and I belong to the new hypercritical generation, apt to see first and most the superficially apparent, not to value the diamond because it hasn't been polished. And it is a way we young people have, to think that a young man married is a young man marred; we pity the cares of a fashion, so to speak. But it is really only that his heart has grown too big to wear on his sleeve — in fact he has only just begun to have one at all. His realisation of the meaning of life sobers him, but he hasn't less interests — only now he is interested in things that youth doesn't see because they don't glitter. And he finds a meaning in life, & has a meaning for life, that the unmarried never do.

Dear old boy, be very sure that no one sees this. Perhaps, from both our points of view, I shouldn't have written it. But we are only two children in the family, and we have only each other. For myself I have only just discovered that I have a soul — I don't mean of the immortal kind — in the last few days, and it hasn't been without stress.

And perhaps what I have said sounds priggish and theoretical, but that is only because my words won't say what I mean. But don't be hurt — it is myself I have put into it. With your busy active life, I wonder do you feel lonely? My student life leaves me nearly isolated. My aspirations would bore the people who laugh at my jokes — and I couldn't talk to you if we were face to face.

Mother writes with evident pleasure of a letter she has had from you & which I am to see at the Grange on Saturday. I would like to write to you about my thesis sometime, if you won't be bored. Wouldn't it be worth your while to do one on W. A. history? — a really careful & critical analysis?

Your loving Sister, Elizabeth XX (see back of Page 1)

I am getting Jethro Brown's "Underlying Principles of Modern Leg."¹⁵ For Father's Xmas box — getting it from Wiggs at once, if possible, for the sake of the discount? I don't think I'm really mercenary — but wait till you live on £30 (of course I don't have to but I don't feel justified in taking more from Father, if I can help it.) The scholarship

15 William Jethro Brown (1868-1930) was an Australian jurist and professor of law (at the University of Adelaide 1906-16). *The Underlying Principles of Modern Legislation* was first published in 1912.

is £30¹⁶ per yr. You ought to read Jethro's books if you haven't already. They really make you feel enthusiastic.

Grandma will be pleased that you mean ultimately to settle at the Grange. The assurance will do much to help her.

16 \$3489 in 2016 is the equivalent of £30 in 1912.

Letter 8

[*late July? 1912: in Adelaide*]

My dear People,

I'm very glad you liked the quilt. Grandma seemed to look forward to her day in town with great pleasure. I am sure it does her good. We don't all enjoy the same things. M^{rs} Jackson is always irritating her sons by assuring them she wouldn't cross the road to see a football match. And they can't understand her partiality for cemeteries. Anyway, a day in town — in prospect — seems to act like a tonic on Grandma, even if it tires her afterwards. It will probably be next Sunday before I go down. I like a quiet Sunday at home, but I don't feel I can spare the time to go there on Saturday. That is really my best working day.

I didn't go to the Professor's evening — only one Prof. turned up, but some graduates came to hear about the movement. On Thursday I went to "Pictures of S.A. 1836-1912." in a room over the circulating library. They took 2^{1/4} hours, with the lecture. A few of the pictures could have been omitted, and one or two others might have been shown, but on the whole it was good. The lecture didn't profess to be a critical history, and was rather inaccurate. But it was interesting, & the old Colonists applauded loudly.

Friday night I meant to go to the Classics Assoc. but M^{rs} Jackson wasn't very well — she had cleaned 4 rooms & walked to see M^{rs} Williams, so I stayed home. So I did last night, but next week Someone else had better take a turn.

It is 3 weeks to end of term. If I were coming back next term, I think I would come home Tuesday fortnight, & stay a little over three weeks. If the Exec. Council Minutes are to be accessible next term, — & if I knew it! — that is what I should do. But the Governor of Tasmania¹⁷ is coming, and we don't like to hurry the Governor, for fear in his aggravation he might say "No."

I think 4 weeks will about finish up the other note-taking. [one day this week I gave up the newspapers to a lawyer, who had to search on behalf of the S.A. Company. He had come in twice & found me at them, so I suppose he got desperate. Anyway he rang up the Librarian on Friday to see if I would be willing to give way. As I'm at them

17 The Governor of Tasmania spent the first two weeks of August 1912 in Adelaide.

pretty well from 10 a.m to 9.30 p.m. he wouldn't have had much chance otherwise — unless he had bagged them while I was at lunch.

Sir Samuel¹⁸ & Rev. Percy Watson haven't answered.]

I think I'm a very unhappy person to have my problems so evenly balanced! There are lots of things on the side of going home, lots for staying down. One thing, most functions are over in the middle term — no more extens^a lectures, Discussion Classes, etc. Classics Assoc. is only monthly, and Philosophy lectures weekly. Logic¹⁹ has two lectures a week, but it is such an easy subject: and the thought of home is inviting; and it would be nice and quiet for writing up my notes.

On the other hand there is Phil. & Logic, and the chance of the "minutes", & the references to the newspapers where my notes overlook things (tho' I could always keep memoranda & get them when in town.) And there is Miss Willsmore & her £3.10.0 — but that wouldn't pay for the board.

How very very tired you must be of all this! And I really don't worry about it. Sometimes I'm even too bored to think about it. But I am rather afraid of doing the wrong thing. Of my own decisions I remember more that were wrong than that were right. I know I shall be happy whichever I choose, but I don't want to feel afterwards that the other thing is the one I should have chosen. This year I have seen a sort of tendency of what I think I have to do in this world; but it takes training — all my past training and more — to fit me for it. And life is so short and the training so long. I can understand Robert Louis Stevenson's feeling when a boy that life is so short it isn't worthwhile starting anything. But it would be a poor economy to shorten training. And my goal seems a hazy sort of nucleus, sometimes, and I am not always sure of it. (Like the lady who meant to reform the world and found her own husband more than she could manage.) It is so easy to exaggerate one's importance and capacity. And it isn't easy to know whether one's ideals are selfish or not — merely formed because they appeal to the imagination, or are the inevitable outcome of being pushed towards one's real mission in life.

And in my own case I feel that I am essentially selfish; I can always justify my decisions by reason, but sometimes I can't by feeling. And yet several times when I have disregarded the reason & acted on what I felt, but couldn't argue to be right, I have been wrong!

But all this excess of subtlety isn't about the comparatively small decision on hand, but about the whole hard business of life — trying to pierce the veil — and perhaps finding there isn't one to pierce! But it is all part of the discipline — and interest — of

18 Sir Samuel James Way (1836-1916), English-Australian Jurist, chief justice of the Supreme Court of South Australia 1876-1916, chancellor of the University of Adelaide 1883-1916. Often referred to by Elizabeth as Sir Sammy.

19 Elizabeth passed Logic in December 1912.

life; and when you have a really hard nut to crack you feel you are really living — I suppose we get our taste for nut-cracking from our arboreal ancestors!

Well, to come down to hard jokes. M^r Silver aroused my argumentativeness about Sir Sammy by running him down. So I upheld him (Sir Sammy), I nearly burst with the joy of knowing that the main argument for the opposition was one that couldn't be mentioned to a lady. And he nearly burst with exasperation, because it was really the only argument he had left, after I had granted Sammy's vulgarity, pointing out that all Australians are a little vulgar — you see the sting in the tail of that! M^r Silver said "But he isn't consistent" & I hinted that "consistency is the hob-goblin of little minds." Finally, when M^r Silver would do nothing but reiterate "I don't care what you say; the man is a nuisance," M^s Jackson said "You know, Silver. Miss Jackson puts it very nicely; but she really means that you are a darned pig headed fool."

However M^r Silver got his own back, and more: for he said "Well, Miss Jackson; I wish I had such an ardent little champion." It was like being patted on the head.

I was afraid I had been perhaps a little rude, but M^r Silver appears to have been delighted, for he told someone that I knew how to keep my end up. I really felt it rather a degradation to argue with such a man, but as we were at supper I couldn't escape it — he would come back to the question despite every change of subject. So, he deserved all he got. And anyway, Sammy is our Chancellor.

I had letters from Canning right up to this week and I expect one tomorrow. He writes about two pages, as a rule, & invites criticism on his new step.

I took the bank book in, & got the interest added, address changed, & signature verified.

Did I tell you that Hazel Bart has a new nephew — the one and only? Also that Grace Byrne is engaged? Also Olive Williams.

This morning I slept till 9.40, had breakfast in my dressing gown — the others all in bed! — helped wash up, made my bed, and sailed off to Kent Town — didn't dare go to Syd. Rd. because they would all comment on my being late. The Rev. I.

Rooney²⁰ preached — The Talents.¹ Responsibility;² Atrophy by Disuse;³ Growth by Use, with copious illustrations.

M^{rs} John Williams sat next — wishes to be remembered to you both. M^r A Williams²¹ isn't at all well. Reeds have left — wherever they were — and are at Strath. waiting, I believe, like M^{rs} Micawber, for something to turn up.

M^{rs} Jackson & I discussed the birthday parties, & we think they should have brought in more. But the M^rL. Vale programme seems to have been a success. Thanks for the tickets.

20 Rev. Isaac Rooney.

21 Alfred Williams (1863-1913) was Director of Education in South Australia. He died on 18 February 1913.

I shall catch it — I've let the fire out. All this afternoon I lay in the sun & read, & talked to the tomcats & seagulls. Mrs Williams' children are still ill — one has dropsy.

Stan wished to be remembered to you. I think he and Hazel are very happy. Dora & Burt will go this week, I hope. They are too much for Mrs J. & rather inclined to make mischief. I forgot to tell you about the good time I had at Valesca's on Sunday.

Your very loving daughter Elizabeth

P.S. Don't forget to say how you are.

About a fortnight ago I met Miss Angel — Love, etc, to Mother. I forget her news!

Jim Larkin is married.

Letter 9

McLaren Vale August 5th 1912

Dear Canning,

I came home on Saturday for a rest, & stay till Thursday. I think I was getting into the mood of Matthew Arnold, when he wrote

“We see all sights from pole to pole,
And glance, and nod, and bustle by,
And never once possess our souls before we die.”

But I think after all one has to possess one's soul through one's work, or not at all. However, I am enjoying being lazy. Tonight I drove half way to Willunga with Father, & then walked back thro' the dark & wet & wind for sheer pleasure. The almond trees gleamed ghostly thro' the darkness, and the rifted clouds hinted at a moon above them. Once or twice a countryman loomed out of the wind, and the rain beat freshly down. Then the coach rumbled past, its red lamp blinking through my wet spectacles. The post office sent a cheerful glow across the foot of the tall church, & then I was in the darkness again. From a hedge a cat called to its mate — poetic notion, don'tchr know, but the noise — oh la! Adieu to romance and sentimentalism.

Well, I hope the business goes well. Keeping open Friday nights isn't chic, is it? I advise imparting an air of elegance to the establishment. Advertise in good paper, etc. However, I daresay you don't want hints.

Thursday.

I go back today. Perhaps I shall find a letter from you. I have been reading “Listeners Lure,”²² and like it very much indeed. I think it is better than “Mr Ingleside” or “Over Bemertons”, though there is the same air of admitting the reader into an inner circle of *recherché* people, which is particularly delightful to the plebeian. But I think these letters are wonderfully clever — and the humour of them! The moony, diffident, fastidious litterateur, retreating & philosophising — before the turkey was too good for anything. And those very funny telegrams “Don't be ass” etc. The kidnapping of Miss

22 *Listeners Lure: An Oblique Narration* (also known as *Listener's Lure: A Kensington Comedy*), 1906, by Edward Verrall Lucas (1868-1938), an English humorist, poet, novelist and biographer. Other novels by Lucas were *Mr Ingleside* (1910) and *Over Bemerton's* (1908).

Mitts was drawn almost to the verge of farce. But the intimacy with a delightful circle of cultivated people, and their reflections and whimsicalities and easy passing over of the ills & sordidness of life, is charming. Old Joh is quite complete & the Rev. Hercules, altho' you never really meet them.

“Adonais” — Shelley²³ — do you know it? I am sure you would enjoy it if you don't — reminds me very much of “Lycidas”²⁴ — even the metre & the phrasing & plan. Both begin by weeping and end up “weep not”; both apostrophise the “Melancholy Mother etc. What do you think of the line

“and cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay”?

“He is made one with Nature” is awfully like Wordsworth.

“Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,

Stains the white radiance of Eternity” though inaccurate philosophy, is a very poetic rendering of what was once a common phase of scientific thought. It is to be the text of tomorrow's philosophy lecture.

And “Sartor Resartus” has the same idea, I find, in suggesting that we are “light-sparkles in the aether of Eternity.” I didn't know Carlyle²⁵ had so much humour in him as I find in that book. Teufelsdröch's divesting — in imagination — all the grandees at the court function of their clothes is rather broad, but as funny as anything in Sterne²⁶ or Swift.²⁷

Well, I'll stop now. I'm quite sure you wouldn't read any more!

Your loving sister

Elizabeth

23 ‘Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats’, 1821, is a poem celebrating the death of John Keats and his poetry by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792-1822).

24 ‘Lycidas’, 1638, is a pastoral elegy dedicated to the memory of his friend Edward King by John Milton (1608-74).

25 Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus: The Life & Opinions of Herr Teufelsdröch: Heroes and Heroworship* was published in 1833-34.

26 Laurence Sterne (1713-68), Irish novelist and Anglican clergyman, author of *Tristram Shandy*.

27 Jonathon Swift (1667-1745), Anglo-Irish satirist and clergyman and author of *Gulliver's Travels* (1726).

Letter 10

[after 12 September 1912]

My dear Brother,

Your letter reached me on the 12th²⁸ exactly — good boy. The early editions sound interesting. Do you like Smollett?²⁹ I haven't read any, but don't feel called to somehow. And I gave up Fielding³⁰ — though perhaps I would like him better now. Laurence Sterne I know I would like, but my own tendency in jokes is to the coarse, so I reluctantly gave him up. In ten years I hope to be able to read him without any ill effects. My imagination isn't really gross — I only see the joke on the tip, without unpleasant details. That is why I can laugh at the man who stuck to the new enamelling of the bath, and had to be chipped out, while Hazel dithers. I have always kept clear of Swinburne³¹ myself — never came into contact with his work, rather; —and don't much want to.

I like your attitude to the “antique”. So many men, in laughing at women getting so, would forget that they do themselves. And the dignity & the venerableness does mean much if you have seen it grow so. Swinburne may, of course, have been an exceedingly pious young man, but I certainly don't think many of us need “redeeming from virtue” — not even in the sense he meant it. There is a good deal of talk nowadays about the blitheringness of respectability, and the necessity of doing as our Fathers didn't. But I like real — not commonplace — respectability; and if our Fathers' reasons for doing as they did were good, I don't see why we shouldn't follow. “Originality doesn't consist in thinking differently from other people, but in thinking (it) for yourself.” At the M.L.C.³² Old Scholars Service today we had a sermon against being mercenary or prosaic. Hurray! Themes which are not often dealt with (the latter at any rate) from the pulpit, & ones on which I wouldn't mind dilating myself.

Fancy you remembering my Strickland.

28 12 September was Elizabeth's twenty-first birthday.

29 Tobias George Smollett (1721-71), Scottish poet and author.

30 Henry Fielding (1707-54), English novelist and dramatist, author of *Tom Jones*.

31 Algernon Charles Swinburne, (1837-1909), English poet, playwright, novelist and critic.

32 Methodist Ladies College, where Elizabeth went to school. She later taught there.

I got two theological works from M^{rs} Jackson & Jack for my birthday — thought of changing one for Arnold's³³ poems, but won't for fear of hurting them, although they suggested a change if I didn't like those. "Protestant Thought Before Kant"³⁴ I am really glad to have. "Christianity and the Social Question"³⁵ looks interesting — but I want to study it apart from Christianity — for a Change. I argue this Social Question over and over with myself; sometimes I am all ardour, sometimes I wonder if it is worth attempting — if anything is anything. But,

"Tis only thinking
Lays lads underground."

Do you know A. E. Housman's³⁶ "A Shropshire Lad"? Valesca gave it to me for the 12th, & I like it though I often can't go along with the thought.

One Song (V) is really good; the lilt of it, and the sentiment, might be Bobby Burns? The man has power of expressing every mood; and he has humour.

"Oh, when I was in love with you,
Then I was clean and brave,
And miles around the wonder grew
How well I did behave,

And now the fancy passes by,
And nothing will remain,
And miles around they'll say that I
Am quite myself again.

The suicidal bits are good, although I think it an unhealthy thing to dwell upon them. This is better:

"Try I will; no harm in trying (I.E. to be glad)
Wonder 'tis how little mirth
Keeps the bones of man from lying
On the bed of earth.

Each poem in the booklet comes in a definite place, & you get a reflection of moods extending over months or years.

I was working in the Chief Justice's³⁷ office on Thursday afternoon, all alone. Everyone else in the building had a half holiday for the Show. Presently a tap on the door, & a uniformed looking woman stalked in, planted a parcel on the table, and asked me if I were Saved?

33 Matthew Arnold (1822-88), English poet, cultural critic and Inspector of Schools.

34 *Protestant Thought before Kant*, first published 1911, by Arthur Cushman McGiffert (1861-1933).

35 I have been unable to identify this book.

36 Alfred Edward Housman (1859-1936), English classical scholar and poet.

37 Sir Samuel James Way. Elizabeth may be working on her Tinline Scholarship essay.

She asked me if I didn't think I had a call to Christ? I said I was certain I hadn't. She said I must take care and be very sure. Finally I told her — nicely & smilingly — that I had given religious thought a holiday, but I knew a lovely joke. I told her — Laugh, and the world laughs with you

Snore, and you sleep alone: She had the grace to laugh.

One day when I was working in the Chief Secretary's office a man burst in "What the devkins do you mean?" I knew the exact minute at which he saw me, and I knew the fat Under-Sec. was shaking like a jelly, but I didn't dare look round.

You didn't tell me how the dance etc. went off (weeks ago now) Is the boss heard of yet?

If you come at Christmas, I hope it will be for more than a few days. Grandpa & ma are old, so I don't like to advise you. But I think a longer wait & a longer visit would be best. But you will know.

I'll look for the syringe on Saturday.

Love. yr Elizabeth

Letter 11

[*late September 1912*]

My dear Brother,

Yesterday I went to the Grange. G. pa & ma look better, although Grandma is very thin. I suppose you have written for Grandpa's birthday — Thursday 26th. If you knew how they live for your letters — especially Grandma — I think you would write oftener. I know you have a tiresome family. Two regular letters a week is a strain on any young man! If I weren't afraid you would take me at my word I would offer to forgo a letter occasionally so that you could write to them! But it wouldn't be a good plan. The gaps once made in the regularity might widen. I find that sort of thing happens with me. For instance I went to bed at 10 one night, and now I can't work later.

I found the syringe, and plenty of plaster, behind your books, but no poison. I put paper on top of the books.

This has been an interesting year for me. I never knew before that there are so many funny people in the world! Do you know M^r Reed, the old and dodderly librarian of the York Gate Library?³⁸ He is more like the keeper of the Old Curiosity Shop than anything I could have imagined. The poor old chap is quite pathetically pleased for anyone to use the books.

I have nearly finished at the Supreme Court. They are tickled to death at having anything in skirts down there. Do you know the C.J.'s Messenger? He says he was a bookseller in England till 8 years ago. He looks rather like M^r Chambers.

Sir Sammy told me with a bow that he was always pleased to help the students, but especially my father's daughter. When he orates — he can't talk — he is ridiculous. But when he just smiles he is nice enough to be a grandfather. He really beams with benevolence.

The first time I saw him he orated 10 minutes on end; and then the Messenger popped the wig on his head, slipped the robes over his shoulders, put the train-holder on

38 In 1905 the Royal Geographical Society of South Australia purchased the York Gate Library of S.W. Silver, a London shipping merchant. The collection is largely made up of explorers' accounts, colonial histories, handbooks and rare atlases. It had its own librarian in the early days. It is still with the State Library of South Australia.

his wrist, and away he sailed into the Supreme Court, like a debutante at a Buckingham Palace Drawing Room. And he said he was 10 minutes late.

His conversational plan is to assume that you know nothing, and that he knows everything. I see the book calls him “the charming and accomplished M^r Way”, and Marshall thinks he talks as though he had spent his life between the Athenaeum club and the court, with intervals of dining out with the best company in Europe. His pomposity is ridiculous, but his learning & his benevolence are very lovable —

The story of the grand joke of Friday morning is too long to tell. Suffice it to say that Prof. Henderson refrained from swearing, that I was impertinent and he didn't know it, and that afterwards the Private Secretary the Government typist & I laughed till we all but cried, and we got paid for the time, too.

Yesterday a Father & son who knew Uncle Tom in Faversham called on Grandma. He is a cooper, & a Methodist.

Your loving sister,
Elizabeth.

Letter 12

University Monday morning September 30 [1912]

Dear Canning

There doesn't seem much to answer in "Am O.K. — Letter to follow", satisfactory as it is, so I will proceed to news at once.

On Saturday night I went to Blackwood with the Prouds by the 11.10 train. Sunday morning we went for a walk in the scrub in a light rain. Along some of the valleys over the green gum bushes we caught glimpses of the sea, grey in the rain. Birds with clear voices, cheeped in the scrub, and yellow wildflowers and purple orchids flecked the grass.

In the afternoon we went for a walk, and along with 20 others took refuge from a downpour in a balcony. There an Irish terrier and another dog elected to settle their differences, and were with much difficulty separated — in a gory state. I am sure the men were sorry that the presence of women necessitated the interruption!

We had tea with Marjorie Walker, and went to the Quaker Meeting, where they argued on Baptism. I watched a sleepy bluebottle & speculated whether he or the argument would get out of sight first. The argument was lost in dust in no time, but otherwise the fly won the race by lengths — got clear of the course first as I went to sleep.

We had a wonderful walk home through the wet moonlit scrub, under a cloud-flecked sky. We didn't even talk.

This morning we caught the 8.17 train down.

I fancy Dorothea Proud hopes to get Girton next year³⁹ — she has the Catharine [*sic*] Helen Spence Scholarship. I think I shall try for it myself when it is vacant — in about 2 years. It gives one year study in Adelaide, 2 abroad.

I don't think I ever before spent 3 hours without hearing — and talking — small talk. This is a most stimulating family.

Evening

³⁹ Emily Dorothea Proud, later Pavy (1885-1967), did not go to work at Girton School in 1913. She took up the Catherine Helen Spence Scholarship, the first recipient, and went to England where she distinguished herself.

Your letter received. No, no-one is dead. I expect Mother's letter missed the post.

The Gods' laps seem pretty full of your business lately. I hope the news will be good, & that it will come next week. If it was bad, I hope you took it.

"Back and breast as either should be"⁴⁰—

The attitude of welcoming a reverse for the sake of further combat isn't an easy one. "I was ever a fighter, so one fight more"⁴¹ — I tried to quote this the other day, but what I said was "I was ever a talker, so one talk more" and it was so apt that I'm not likely to hear the last of it. I am a bit like the American raconteur, to whom Reuh:

"Say, sirree, you might get scarlatina, and you might get better, & you might get peneumy, and you might get better; but if you get lockjaw you'll burst."⁴²

But I must tell you about Friday night's Cathedral Choir practice; they were having a mixed practice, & Constance Davey was there. They were singing,

"As panteth the hart after the waterbrooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, Oh Lord" & Mr Dunn exclaimed "Gentlemen gentlemen, can't you hold onto your pants?"

This also really happened — show week. A farmer got knocked down by a motor car; he got up & walked dizzily backwards and got knocked down by a motor bike. "Why didn't you look out, old chap?" "Well, 'Ow was I to know it 'ad a blooming colt?"

I have been having inspirations of sorts this year, and writing them down on scraps of paper— my autobiography would be like Teufelsdröckh's ("Sartor Resartus")⁴³ — a bagful of scraps. Well, one inspiration was the title & the title-scene of a novel — the name is "Honeymoon Morning". Don't you think it sound rather popular? But I don't think I'll ever get any more than that one scene. I have dozens of odd scenes, no two of which would go into the same book.

Goodbye, dear old boy. Do hang onto your health. Don't get too busy for yachting and tennis. Its dreadful to get so that you can't enjoy anything but work — tho' only a few are affected that way, in Australia! Personally I always go out feeling that I shall be bored, but afraid of missing Something if I stay at home. — rather the way one hangs on to life, isn't it? — No, that is silly, & Comes of the cynicism that is born of sultry weather. The "ever a fighter" point of view is better.

Goodbye, dear old boy, and don't forget your loving sister.

Don't worry about my birthday present. I always enjoy what you send — & I haven't thought for a moment that you were forgetting, though it was nice of you to reassure me. If you haven't thought of something, you might send me a small and inexpensive copy of Matthew Arnold's poems — one that I can cart about and enjoy.

40 From a hymn.

41 From *Prospice*, by Robert Browning.

42 There are several versions of this saying.

43 Teufeldrockh is a character in Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, mentioned above.

Did I tell you I gave Grandpa “Joseph Vance”?⁴⁴ I think he would like the American Churchill’s⁴⁵ novels — *The Virginian* & *A Crisis*, anyway. I am not as poverty stricken as the envelope implies — merely had to borrow.

[no signature]

44 *Joseph Vance* was the first novel of English potter, tile designer and novelist William Fend de Morgan (1839-1917).

45 Winston Churchill (1871-1947) was an American novelist whose novel *The Crisis* (1901) was spectacularly successful. *The Virginians* was a novel by English author William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63), English satirical novelist.

Letter 13

The Grange Oct 5th [1912]

Dear Canning,

Did you ever stay at the Grange on a 3 service Anniv. and only go once? I have! Grandpa & ma seem very bright, tho' Grandma has rheumatism in one arm.

I think Mother told you of my brilliant inspiration — “The Life of Charles Sturt,” by M^{rs} George Napier Sturt; Price 16/-, published 1899 (I think) for Grandpa at Christmas — if you can get discount! The chapters on the Grange life are good. In fact the whole book is. M^{rs} Sturt was evidently a woman of culture, she writes well and the atmosphere is good. I fancy she is biased but a biographer has to be! — towards Gawler as against Grey. This I suppose was Sturt's own attitude.

Just now I am reading “The Hunchback of Notre Dame.”⁴⁶ The descriptions are good — though I can't be bothered reading them! Of course the translation creeks at the joints and one feels that some things that sound crude in English may be the best of jokes in French. That is always the way with translations — except the Bible & I suppose one would feel it there if one read Greek and Hebrew.

Logic exam is in four week; — if I have my research done — which despite all efforts, I fear I shall not — I shall go home then. If they will keep the despatch work open for me, I will take it up again next year. If not it can't be helped. 18/- isn't very much for 9 hours work, anyway. But I like feeling independent.

The Australasian Students' Christian Union is thinking about compiling a textbook on “Social Problems of Australia” or something like that. I have been asked to attend a Committee meeting of the Adelaide Section. I haven't much faith in the idea.

I hope to get a letter from you tomorrow, with the news you spoke of.

I think you would have enjoyed the chastened faces of the boys who took up the collection this morning. The expression reminded me of Edmund Gosse, in “Father & Son” Putting out his tongue at the other little boys who weren't allowed to take Sacrament!

46 A French Romantic Gothic novel by French novelist Victor Marie Hugo (1802-85), published 1831, translated into English 1833.

Do you know anyone who has Helen Spence's novel⁴⁷ "Clara Morison, a tale of the Adelaide Gold Fever" published 1854? The Chief Justice is going to lend me the second volume, the first seems to have disappeared. Did I tell you that I read those poems of Henry Newbold's⁴⁸ on your recommendation, and liked the lilt of them very much? especially "I'm damned if I see it he said."

Grandpa is reading both "Punch"⁴⁹ & "The Round Table"⁵⁰ with great appreciation. He is really a wonderful man. He says he wants a good complete account of the Boer war. He is also reading that Hawke's⁵¹ "British Empire" of yours — specimen copy

[*remainder of letter missing*]

47 *Clara Morison: A Tale of South Australia during the Gold Fever*, 1854, by Catherine Helen Spence (1825-1910).

48 Sir Henry Newbolt (1862-1938), English poet, novelist and historian.

49 *Punch or The London Charivari*: a British weekly magazine of humour and satire, established 1841.

50 *The Round Table: The Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs*: a policy matters journal relating to the Commonwealth of Nations, established in 1910 and still being published.

51 Edward George Hawke (1869-?), author of *The British Empire and its History*.

Letter 14

Dudley Rd. Marryatville. Sunday, Nov 17th 1912

Dear Canning,

Your Circular arrived during the week. You seem to be in a nice environment. You didn't acknowledge any of my letters — but — I suppose you had received mine — unless by your return to Perth you missed them. I suppose we shall hear again before you return to Geraldton. You don't say anything about Christmas. I would suggest that if you are not coming you break the news fairly soon, so that the disappointment may be got over before. I think you should be guided in the matter by your interests. I appear to be writing very woodenly — Sheer lack of sleep. The exam. didn't keep me awake but a Concert is! Two of us have been arranging a Women Student's Concert. I was to supply ideas, the other do the work. My colleague got ill & now I wish I hadn't had so many ideas! The thing will be a success, but there has been a lot of worry. I am to be the Mad Hatter. My "twinkle, twinkle" solo breaks people up — me included & I do it in my natural voice, so their laughter isn't very complimentary.

I hope to go home Wednesday week. Despatch work fills my days, at present.

Tuesday week I think I am going to the Dandis.⁵² "Will you all get out of the Park" is the song of the jedsons. — the Women Students Club Social takes the form of a Dandy Social this time.

Cp I am staying with Ella Stephens at Marryatville today. I have been too busy lately to have anything interesting to tell you about.

I sent your letter on to the Grange⁵³ — shall go there Saturday & translate the unintelligible parts.

Did you get my last letter to Mr Carroll's — commenting on your leaving? I wasn't anxious for it to fall into other hands at the time, I remember, tho' I think there was nothing particular in it.

Goodbye, dear old boy. I'm sorry this is such a stupid letter, but I must send it, or you may think I have forgotten you.

52 The Dandies were a theatre group at the time.

53 Canning lived with Elizabeth's grandparents at the Grange.

If it takes an hour & a half to chew a ham, how long will it take to chew a hammer? It depends on whether you are a professional or a hammerchewer. This is one of Willie Wibberley's. We had one afternoon of joint supervising, and amused ourselves by writing riddles & jokes to one another.

With much love Elizabeth Jackson

Letter 15

Methodist Manse, McLaren Vale Dec. 1, 1912

My dearest boy,

I think of stopping writing for a few weeks; you can take one of the White Peake accumulations periodically instead — you'll never read them all in a lump, & it seems a pity for any to be wasted.

So you have been enjoying Lady Blanche's ambition, and making witty answers in court. Well well, so long as you don't get the reputation of being "too clever by half" — But you deserve a little amusement for being humbugged so long. This letter will go to the Y.M., & be forwarded to Geraldton, I suppose.

On Tuesday night I went to the Dandies with a University party — not nearly so good as last year. The humour was alternately too thick and too thin; and 5 or 6 of the jokes were chestnuts — piano for sale by lady with mahogany legs, etc. And one or two were almost calculated to bring a blush to the cheek of a young person.

[conclusion missing]

Letter 16

[late 1912?]

My dear brother,

It was interesting getting that offer from Boan's.⁵⁴ Personally I shouldn't think a circulating library much, however good the offer; but I know little Sister's inexperienced advice isn't of much use. Father talks very rosily about farming prospects, if you take them up. It seems to me that in either line of life, books or farming, your trouble is that you haven't faith in the future — you trust your ability for the immediate months, but not for the years. But a competence, entailed or settled so that one's own art can't reach it, & the bank can't break, is about the only sure thing in these days; & inherited competences don't seem like blackberries for you and for me. Bless you, my dear, I fear the future as much as you can; but I do believe we are better without the competence; nothing like work for driving off boredom, and making you feel wholesome. I am not a wholesome person myself, but I'm trying to cultivate an independent spirit; so I suppose I shall spend a day and a half over those loathly despatches every week next year.⁵⁵ You can't think how hateful it is reading Copy, then Duplicate, & scheduling all the differences of "as" & "the's! [*sic*] — They make me feel like a boiled cabbage — now that I've got all the good out of them for my thesis — which is another bore. However you don't want to hear about my absurd troubles — & probably not to *revenir à nos moutons*. So I'll remark instead that I went to Bethany with Father this morning; the air and the land were wonderful. Father had only had half a day's notice that he would have 3 anniversary sermons to preach. He really is a wonderful man, doing his duty as he sees it, and with a depth of feeling that he rarely shows to you and me. He makes me feel small — his compliance is so often because the matter is beneath argument; and where he is sure of himself he is absolute rock. This morning's sermon was very stimulating & inspiring, altho' disconnected from the hasty preparation. Ideas and subjects skittled by; but every adult in the Church listened.

Of Mother, too, we only see the superficial side. Oh, I misdoubt we are of a degenerate generation — this particular part, at any rate. Bless you, my dear brother. Let

54 Henry Boan (1860-1941) was an Australian businessman and politician. In 1895 he established Boan's Department Store in Perth, which became very successful. There was also Boans Circulating Library.

55 It must be the end of 1912 if Elizabeth is considering 'despatches' for the following year.

us know when you get a position. And don't be impatient if you don't get one at once. Personally I've more faith in Labour Bureaux (?) than in advertisements.

"Punch" has come — late. I'll send it down by Grandma, if you'll save it for me. Doth her visit portend anything? If Lee's come I don't know where on earth we'll put everybody. I hope you won't think me officious if I say that I don't think Grandma's opinion ought to make you alter your way of life.⁵⁶ It is her individual pleasure, merely, of which she thinks, bless her for all that. And though I think that in all small matters we should do our best to please her, the broad outlines of life mustn't be altered for what is only an intensified whim. Father & Mother will be near her next year — & I, tho' she won't care about that. They have a small income — are not in want — and they have friends. And they can't expect you to give up the chance of real life, or a favoured line of life, for the sake of being near them.

Your clumsy sister

Elizabeth

Are the Economics books you have

Syke's "Banking & Currency"⁵⁷

Marshall's "Economics & Industry"⁵⁸
Capitalism?⁵⁹

Hobson's "Evol: of Modern

Don't forget to let me know. I think these are the ones you mentioned before but I want to be sure.

56 Elizabeth mentions in her diary that Canning unexpectedly came over to Adelaide for Christmas 1912.

57 *Banking and Currency*, 1905, by Ernest Sykes (1870-?).

58 *The Economics of Industry*, 1879, by Alfred Marshall (1842-1924), with his wife Mary Paley.

59 *Evolution of Modern Capitalism*, 1894, by John Atkinson Hobson (1858-1940).

1913

Letter 17

Brompton Burra. (Aberdeen) 27th May, 1913.

My dear brother,

Many thanks. Did you send me the postal notes, and someone else the letter? Or do you want me to get you 9/6 of Burra shares? I fancy you would get quite a lot for that now.

The ride north was very different from that South but I like the long bare, bleak sweeps of undulation. We are as high as Mount Lofty, and the air is keen like Mountain air. All the grass has perished from the drought; the gardens are frost-bitten, and the creeks are exist not — I went for a walk with Hazel yesterday over the long brown hills. This morning the houses opposite are almost hidden in mist, but we shall have a glorious day, and perhaps a long walk to “Sugarloaf” of which it is reported that ~~the~~ it affords a view of the smoke of steamers in the Gulf — which one will, of course, pronounce Charming. But there must be a long view of very Australian country.

I have read a very saleable novel “Jane Cable”⁶⁰, which was written with a devious theoretical knowledge of ~~the~~ construction, choice of name & character, but the bones stick out of the skin. I am now reading “Barchester Towers” by Anthony Trollope. It isn’t so good as a sequel or follower of Phineas Finn, a Parliamentary novel which I read at Jaunays, but the intrigues & scandals of the Cathedral Close are very funny. The moralisings are those of an independent-minded hen, though.

I have been thinking about the difference between the nature that is, and the nature that may be, & I can’t help thinking that each man has a conception of or ideal for his own character. Animals can only act according to the nature they have, but man can turn round and reflect upon his character, and approve or disapprove, continue or alter it. Animals are incapable of having ideals, but man has them, and the power of choosing, and not merely mechanically trying this ~~end~~-means or that to the end. And that each man has different ideals makes no difference \to the fact of morality/ for we all develop our characters in different ways. In adopting an ideal different from that of one’s fellows one has to remember that the experience of the race has taught something, and that the leaving of a well-trodden path requires consideration, and in deciding that such

60 *Jane Cable* was a 1906 novel, very popular in America, by George Barr McCutcheon.

a departure is necessary for self-realisation, one has to decide that the part of the self one has chosen to realise is the one that means most to the self-on-the whole, not only in the present, but for the enduring future years. It is easy to feel one's mental isolation and to take a pleasure in the indulgence of an original melancholy, and a Pride — in the Byronic and in the Wildean way — and to mistake this hobby for reality. On the other hand, it is easy to refuse to leave the path because of self-distrust or fear of undertaking the responsibility. I can't think that it is immoral to follow what appears a duty instead of what is a pleasure — it is un-animal. There is a very interesting passage somewhere in James' psychology⁶¹ in which he points out that man is not naturally selfish, that he might just as easily — as some people indeed do — find his objects of desire to be those directly benefiting others and even at the expense of himself, and that even some animals do this; but that only man does it deliberately. It is bad logic to argue from what animals do to what man should do — for it is a new principle in man that makes him able to even reflect on what animals do.

It seems to me that one needs to lose the habit of looking for the abnormalities or particular aspects. To study almost exclusively one phase of character, to look only for illustrations of that, is apt to lead to exaggeration of that, and to unconscious rejection of or ignoring of any evidence that goes against a theory one has formed, or, where one has no theory, to ignoring of characteristics which do not apparently affect the particular trait and which would yet have a modifying effect on the theory that must almost inevitably evolve from one's mass of statistics. I think that I was feeling all this dimly when I said that I would not read the *Psychology of Sex*⁶² yet. I want to get a broad & solid foundation of psychological knowledge and then study that as the erection of one of the wings of the building. It enters into, but isn't the whole scheme.

And I think that the modern hygieners, Saleeby⁶³ & Karl Pearson⁶⁴ forget this unconscious emphasis of the abnormalities (I don't mean that statistics of *Psych: of Sex* are abnormal but there is the same choosing of an aspect in each study) in their conclusions. They look only to the reproduction of the unfit, etc without thinking of the reproduction of the fit, and of the men of steadfast principle and intellect who will, before what they dread comes to pass, have evolved some way out of the difficulty, — and some way which will not be a direct break with the past — for it is the past which has made us what we are, and even if we react from it, we are feeling its influence — or we would not react.

Yours very lovingly Elizabeth

Again many thanks for the Postal notes. Did you think me short of funds?

61 William James (1842-1910) was a famous American physiologist and psychologist. He wrote many important books on physiology and psychology.

62 Havelock Ellis (1859-1939), an English physician, writer and social reformer, wrote *The Psychology of Sex* in six volumes published between 1897 and 1928.

63 Caleb Williams Saleeby (1878-1940) was an English physician and writer, known for his support for eugenics.

64 Karl Pearson (1857-1936) was an influential English mathematician and biostatistician.

Letter 18

Monday dinnertime [*June? 1913*]

My dear People,

I have become a person of importance, and I am so inflated with pride that I should burst if you pricked me with a pin. I have been offered remunerative occupation. & I would like Prof. Hendy to set up as a Labour agency. Having duly exasperated you, I will proceed — slowly.

Prof. Henderson told the Registrar to put a note in my box to go in and see him. So I went, & he turned out the typewriter and talked in solemn privacy. He said I was a trustworthy & patient person — & in short, would I correct the proofs of the despatches at Government House? The pay will be per hour — how much he isn't able to say, but he is fighting for the best possible. He thinks it would be worth while even if I came down every week.

I told him I couldn't say till I had written home. He said it would be for Fridays and Saturdays, & would take next term at any rate.

I really think the fates are against my peace of mind, because I had decided to come home, & Dora was going to take on Miss Willsmore if she didn't care to correspond.

I hope you will write and say what you think — not the sort of thing “you know best dear”. Dear doesn't. Moreover, she is exasperated because Mother reads Father's letters, and how can I find out from him how Mother feels about it?

I am more tickled about being asked, than anything. The chance to see the original comments is of course a good one; and even altho' I have to promise not to divulge them quâ [*sic*] comments, I can incorporate their spirit. And some generations hence, when Governors and officials are more enlightened, and no longer throw obstacles in the way of the righteous seeker for truth, some later historian will be amazed at the depth of my insight — “Couldn't have said more if she had seen the original despatches,” he would exclaim, eyes & hands held heavenward.

Prof said he would be sending for me again in a few days, so I would like you to write soon. And I hope you will be quite as frank as I was in yesterday's letter, and tell me all your minds — unless of course you have only one between you.

Anyway, they are evidently now in hot haste with the es, and they will be ready long before the 12 months that M^r Adams gave as a “conservative estimate.” Prof. gently prodded by me — seems to be able to move things. And he has written to the Chief Secretary about the Minutes, & hope that will be alright.

I forgot to tell you that last week I went to Prof. Hollidge’s Lantern Lectures on Greek & Rome — 2 in one day, followed at night by the S.A. ones, about wh. I told you. If I don’t spend another term in town, I have crowd’d a lot into this, & today I heard myself described as a “person”.

Stranger, to new library-official: — and what is that lady doing?

Official: “Oh, she’s a person working for the Arts degree”! The young ruffian!

I’ve been excited ever since last night, when I had an inspiration, but I think another 2 hours Parliamentary discussion will about settle me down.

Your loving daughter Elizabeth

I haven’t set out the case against, I find. Some of it you’ll see for yourselves; there is the boredom & the routine of it, & the shyness of a person like me with no aweinspiring a dignity as the private Sec. & gov^r typist — & these are the least of the “gainsts”.

I must dry the dishes & get back to the Pub.

Love, Elizabeth.

Letter 19

[McLaren Vale, mid-1913]

Dear Grandpa & Grandma,

The young man of whom Canning wrote did not come here; perhaps he went on to Yankalilla by the char-a-banc. We would have done our best for him, in the time, had he come. We have had lots of visitors lately. M^r Cann only went yesterday; Father is very proud of the circuit giving £170 to the Mission Hall.

Father had a letter and a photograph this week from one of his “boys” of earlier days in England; of course it pleased him very much, being remembered so kindly. Pluto had a great dislike for M^r Cann; he used to sit about like a haunted cat, with his ears cocked, and scoot when he heard the step. After M^r Cann had gone he was able to eat a nice juicy mouse in peace.

There was a vey good joke in “Punch” a while ago about two broom-sellers. One said “I don’t know how you can sell them at a penny; I steals the birch and steals the hafts, and then I has to charge [*word torn off*].” “Oh,” said the other, “I steals them ready made!”

The “Punch” Almanac is very good, and the Christmas supplement. We will bring them down with us.

I am starting chapter 9 of the thesis⁶⁵, so you see I am working fairly hard. I usually have a little walk in the evening, along a road where the maize leaves crackle and the crickets chirrup. Little groups of cattle stand about under the trees, or graze leisurely, while the evening haze settles on the hills enclosing the valley.

I forget whether or not Canning has been along this road. It bears the unromantic name of “the Flat.” Water stands in the deep ditches on either side, and tall reeds grow in it. Pink centaury and a lavender-flowered herb grow along the dry edges of the marsh; on little rises there are clumps of trees, or the wild dog rose.

But of course there are no fish.

Take Rover for a walk for me, and give him an extra bone with some meat on it. Tell Cockie and the kitten that Pluto [*word torn off*] them when we get to Bowden. I

65 It is 1913 because they are about to leave McLaren Vale for Bowden. Elizabeth’s Tinline thesis was submitted on 11 October 1913. It had thirteen chapters.

don't think the old cat cared for Pluto, so perhaps you should not say anything about him to her. By the way, how do you like the "Life of Sturt"?

Much love to both. Very affectionately

[signature missing]

Letter 20

[end of June 1913]

Received your letter this morning. Will call at Wiggs for the money & let mother know. The rain is pouring down. Was interested in 'Our Miss Gibbs.' It was here last year, I think⁶⁶ — I missed it in Sydney by one night. Nort agrees with your criticism exactly.

Dear Canning,

My weekly magnanimity really astonishes me. Don't roll in your chair and groan that sisters are so unreasonable! But write a nice letter and tell me something of what you are thinking of. I can't help teasing people today. Of course the object of this letter is to wish you many happy returns of July 1st Don't be pessimistic — I have an odd feeling that you will be. Life ought to get more interesting as we get older, and we have to find our interests in what we are doing, not in what we would like to be doing. But I suppose I needn't be a bore, if I am a sister. Mother is sending my present — photo etc — in her parcel. I would have framed the former, but was afraid of the glass breaking in the post. I detest the photo myself — as someone remarked, I'm not really as stolid as that!

Mrs Jackson has had a lot of trouble — niece & grandson dead, son & grandson ill, & an old friend ill, all in one week — & all sudden. But of course it isn't in the house so I don't realise it. So when Jack groans that funerals are more nuisance than weddings, and borrows my studs, & despatches me to Valfulls for 3 handkerchiefs, I smile. But when he goes down the cellar for his black hat, grumbling because he has to wear such a thing, and comes back nearly swearing because he can't find it to wear, I giggle. And when, after ransacking the house, including my room, & finding it in his own, he asks my advice as to at which angle it suits him best, I suffer great internal pain thro' keeping my face and voice serious.

Jack has a new "girl", and likes to be teased about her. He declares that all Norwood is agog because he wheeled her bicycle for her. "But it was alright," he says "I liked doing it." Jon Nicholls says if a little thing like that pleases him, he can wheel his. The lady of the bicycle is evidently literary; she is putting him thro' a course of Marcus Aurelius⁶⁷

66 *Our Miss Gibbs* was presented in Adelaide in May and June 1912.

67 Marcus Aurelius was Roman Emperor from AD 161 to 180.

& Longfellow⁶⁸ — “and by Jove, they make a fellow think”. By Jove they need to, for nothing else does!

My thesis still takes 5-8 hours per day; and I haven't yet done 5 years! My present topics are — uniform gauge scheme for Aus. Rlys — unfortunately not adopted; the Rise of free trade to a position in party politics in S.A., the early closing, 8 hr, & Sat holiday movement, & workmens associations; Government extravagance in public works & the Port, Burra, & Gawler Rlys, and the Immigration problem. Also majority rule & the Single Chamber question, for which I am reading MacGunn's “Ethics of Citizenship.”⁶⁹ Wiggs seem to do nothing but manufacture in these days. I am going to try to get a look at D & W. Murray's⁷⁰ early books, for price lists.

[remainder of letter missing]

68 Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-82) was an American poet, especially remembered for the epic poem ‘The Song of Hiawatha’.

69 John MacCunn (1846-1929), Scottish writer.

70 D & W Murray, softgoods warehousemen, merchants & manufacturers in Adelaide and Melbourne 1853-1971.

Letter 21

McLaren Vale Monday August 18 [1913]

Grandpa & Grandma are up & in the diningroom. But Grandpa must be careful about taking chills. Grandma's heart is so much better that the doctor is astonished — Aunty has just sent word of this.

Me dear bye,

Your letter came & as you sent it to the Varsity I got it about 9 hours earlier than usual. I wonder why you think I don't appreciate Kipling?⁷¹ I don't think all his rhyme is poetry, but some is, and the rest is very readable verse, and good rhythm — experiment. And the Jungle book & the Just So Stories — why I can repeat most of "The cat that walked" — I told it to Pluto — "How the elephant got his trunk." I can't remember in what way — if any, I thought his psychology wrong. It wouldn't be his character analysis however, but inaccurate reference to some theory, I think! By the way, Golightly is unknown to me. In what book does he appear? You used to recite the "Boffkins"⁷² verses? Well, I was telling Mrs Jackson the story, when I remembered who she was, and had to leave out the point — waiting for the Sleary baby to develop Sleary's fits. Wasn't it bad luck?

At the coach on Saturday afternoon I was stopped by a Salvation Lassie who said she was sure she ought to know me. I frankly admitted that I didn't know her; but — here was fame! She remembered discussing a book with me at McLaren Flat — an indecent book, she said; and I do not appear to have been on the side of respectability! However, I do not recall the circumstance or the book.

There was a delightful man on the coach. He had very much the appearance of Whisky Teddy, only not so dapper. His belltopper was of the ancient variety — [*small drawing of topper*] and very greasy, & his suit was tweed and his gamp was green & his boots elastic-sided. [*note in margin*] (He turned out to be M^r Mildred, an (ex?) lawyer.) He was fairly lively even at the start, talking about people not being in two places at once — unless they were twins, and so on. He got out at the first inn, and when he came

71 Joseph Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936) was an English journalist, short story writer, poet and novelist, famous for his stories for children.

72 From *Departmental Ditties & other Verses*, 1886, by Rudyard Kipling.

back explained to the coach that he detested the smell of spirits, but that the doctor had ordered him to take whisky when travelling to keep ulcers off his kidneys and — other organs which he didn't scruple to mention. Well, he was a most conscientious patient, and wrestled with the ulcers at every stop. I left him & Mr Branson telling ghost yarns against one another. Some of them were thrilling. I was chilled to the bone, but not to the marrow, and a nice tea soon warmed me through.

The Gov^t H. business is this: — permission has been sent for Government to give the Public Library duplicates of the despatches & enclosures from '36 - '55. A good many were duplicated in writing at the time, but those which were not have to be typed. I am there in the interest of the public library to see that the copies are correct and that we get all we want to have. I work 9 hours a week— 6 Friday & 3 Saturday — & get 18/-. It isn't good pay but it covers expenses. However, the work will probably go on all next year, and I shall give it up this November. Perhaps I may get it again in March. Of course part of the interest, to me, is in seeing the originals, & comments. Unfortunately those with comments haven't yet been begun. Miss Goyder, Sir Samuel Way's private sec & the Governor's Despatch typist, is very nice to work with. When we were working on the early mutilated documents, it was very funny to hear this grey haired, "tailor-made" lady reading "Your Lordship will perceive that this was a — blank — insult."

The part I like least is being introduced. Miss Goyder is overwhelmed by my degree & knowledge, & tells everyone.

The first day she introduced Capt. Walker — he is a poor little bit of a man with a lithp. Lady Bosanquet was very nice, but I'm a stiff backed person. Miss Bosanquet reminds me of Lossie in "Joseph Vance".⁷³ — just her voice fills the room with sunshine. But I haven't seen her yet, & unless the paper-photographs disparage her looks as much as they do her mother's — who is slim and comely and not fat & old — she will be a disappointment.

I am reading the "Dop Doctor".⁷⁴ Surely a woman wrote it? Some of the characters are superfluous, lots of the sentiment is commonplace, the jokes have been carefully collected, even the important personae are wooden, & the whole thing — like my tact! — creaks badly at the joints. But it is still readable.

There seem to be plenty of popular novelists about nowadays, but few lasting ones.

About my tact creaking at the joints — M^{rs} Jackson asks me "don't I think" something, I answer warily, Jack points out to her the diplomacy in the answer — & there I am!

Pluto would stop to send you his love, but he is having a most exciting chase after a flea! It has eluded him many times but this time he means to get it.

Goodbye

Your loving sister

Elizabeth

73 Lossie Thorpe, a character in William de Morgan's novel *Joseph Vance*.

74 A novel by Irish author Clothilde Augusta Inez Mary Graves (1863-1932), who wrote under the pseudonym, Richard Delan.

Letter 22

[*McLaren Vale, after August 1913*]

Grandpa is much better — better than he will allow. Grandma is better, tho' far from well. Don't forget to write to them.

My dear brother,

Two letters were waiting for me on my return; the 'Varsity had forgotten to forward.

Oh, I still go to Wiggs when necessary. M^r Clarke is always very nice. I haven't had occasion to go into the School Dept. yet — I ordered a year's "Punch" — for Father — on Friday. The shop here isn't improved by an extension of the stationery & fancy goods. I like a bookshop to be a bookshop. Preece's shop looks well, tho' I never go in. There was an "Age of Monarchy" in the window last week, and a "Carlyle"⁷⁵ — thinking about his stomach rather than the stars, to judge from his sad expression. But I like the picture! I should think M^r Maurice finds Australian Clubland rather dull. He looks interesting, but I wish he wouldn't go round looking injured. He should try a little Henley⁷⁶ — "Out of the cover of the night, black as the pit from pole to pole. (I know he would subscribe to that) I thank whatever gods there be For my unconquerable soul.Etc.

Whence this? — Oh, I learnt it last night — I have been taking liberties with your library you see, & brought the book here.

If a man isn't domestic, he isn't; but I should think the normal man would like a woman and children of his own, and a fastidious man to like the woman not to be anyone else's. Same with the woman in regard to the man. Domesticity needn't mean molly-coddle, but the dignity of pleasant surroundings and a gracious wife, among which life in one of its departments could be lived. But I am sure that some men like some women should never marry. And to choose a partner haphazard must be ruinous.

I am glad you enjoyed St. Brigid's. The decorum and sacrament of the service must appeal. And if that form of worship gives the best realization of your spiritual nature, then that is the all important thing. We-ell, I'm not quite sure about that; but if it gives the best realization of everyone's spiritual nature it is. And in any case it is for you — if it

75 Elizabeth is here referring again to Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881).

76 A quotation from 'Invictus', a short poem by English poet William Ernest Henley (1849-1903).

is! I was thinking of the next generation. Personally I know little about their beliefs. The actual body being eaten was a tenet at one time, in Mary's reign, I know; but the world has gone on since then. And I feel as if communion with saints as intermediaries to God must be less inspiring than direct contact with the All-Pervading — but then it can't regard God as the All-Pervading but as something after the fashion of a glorified Man, if it be thought that intermediaries are necessary. And then to the Perfect Light I shouldn't think the difference between bright candles and smoky ones would show much — I mean the gulf between Saints and Sinners can't be so wide as to make Saint's intercessⁿ necessary. And I don't like the confession idea, etc. But then there are lots of things about Protestantism that I don't like. About confession, I feel that having confessed one would feel that the responsibility was henceforth on the priest or God, and one wouldn't stand on one's own moral legs. And lack of initiative is one of the faults of commonplace people already — and it seems as if it is worse in Catholic countries; & that, added to the R. C. education system, which I had to study at the 'Varsity, is mostly why I dislike the notion of a recurrence to Catholicism.

I won't bore you with a similarly impartial criticism of Protestantism, which I am longing to make — tho' the remedies I would suggest are not taken from Catholicism. But I am convinced it is largely a matter of temperament, and the truth is the same no matter what form the interpretation takes.

I can't understand enlightened people believing half the things in the Protestant religion; but once you eliminate anthropomorphism, the thinking becomes too abstract for the untrained, I supposed. Personally, I have all my own ideas to put together yet.

The inessentials over which sects squabble are ludicrous — & heartbreaking. A man at McLaren Vale who is a Methodist, with leanings to Philadelphianism & Millennial Darwinism amazed me by this method of reasoning. I thought he was being sarcastic at first, & told him I didn't think things serious to other people should be ridiculed too unsympathisingly. And then he explained that it was his beliefs he was explaining! I can only hope he didn't feel all the ignorance that my remark implied I ascribed to the doctrines!

And the worst of it was when he supported an opinion with a text, I didn't know enough of the context to show its malapplication, and didn't dare to say that, in the last resource, the fact of its being a text didn't carry the slightest weight. Because I am the Minister's Daughter, and mustn't prejudice Father's position. It is hardly worth having the courage of my convictions with most people, either and I rarely meet the right sort. But I like discussing with them when I do — on this or any other matter. One — an Anglican clergyman & Chinese missionary to be, was most anxious to bring me into the right fold.

You are quite right. No one sect ever enquires into others, it just condemns them.

Do you know the Kitson's — S A. people? Mary, a pretty and intelligent & forceful girl is studying law at the 'Varsity. I like her immensely, tho' she is apt to take her

opinions from a “gentleman” (unknown) who talks with her a good deal, it seems. She is the second Catholic girl I have known at the ’Varsity (the other one was a blighter — no, only dirty & ignorant) but I think Mary will be one of the leading women by her third year. She was going to call on me at MacLaren Vale, but I came back too soon.

The “semi-communal” girls in the flat sound jolly; also the cat. Pluto is still “in the fat state” but his kittenish curves, alas have long been lost.

Hm the women would hate it if they knew you let them win. I don’t think chivalry means treating women as children. Of course, if they are mentally children — - — But it is Something if it is for chivalry you do it, good. Chivalry appears to have given up deference in such matters as offering a woman a seat, or picking out a clean path for her feet. I am thinking of last night in the car. The conductor put his gard in & said “Three ladies inside” (meaning a man outside had paid for them) & I nearly said “But no gentlemen” — for a whole row of women were standing. I know the old “woman in business” argument. Some men would appear to prefer her to go on the streets. North Terrace at 8’o’clock [*sic*] is becoming a difficult place for a lonely woman to go down & not be accosted.

On Friday we had the second Annual Tea-dinner of the De-Bating Club. I enclose a Menu & Programme. Skull & Crossbones & saucepan because we pirate & then cook our speeches. South Pole Fricassee — sausages. (M^r Dooley said what they discovered at the South Pole was that dog is good to eat — dog discovered that about Dooley long ago, but Dooley always thought he would get indigestion if he bit back. But now he is afraid to look when a man says “Down, Fido, down”) Vin aigre — Rasberry vinegar.

Ella Stephens replying for “The Gentlemen” was splendid. She twirled her moustache & thought “the fellers would be pleased, y’know.”

“Wilson” is the caretaker! I contrasted the residential University’s producing “bedmakers” — with spasms, vide Verdant Green, with our type, producing Wilson.

Gladys Ledger replied in Wilson’s voice & grammar, & we sang “Wilson” a song we made up, to the tune of “Harrigan”. It treated of buckets & dusters.

The design & programme & menu were maid [*sic*] out by me, and executed by Valesca Reumain. I have permission to go to Gov^t House as often as I like for Despatches. I must tell you the Gov^t office for the next week.

Yours lovingly Elizabeth.

Letter 23

[*October 1913*]

Dear Canning,

Grandpa &- ma were here today. Grandma was a little low-spirited over us going away, & Grandpa seemed to think he would feel it. They both sent love & remembrance to you, & I was to say that Grandpa's appetite is very fair.

Doll is very fat. She went down on her knees the other day, but only rubbed the hair off one, & grazed the skin of the other. Grandpa thinks her more suitable to him every day.

Did I tell you that last time I was at the Grange Grandpa read a scene from 'Macbeth' with great taste & appreciation? A really wonderful man.

Hazel Bartholomaeus & Gertie Stephens were here this afternoon. They met accidentally in town, & came out. Gert has gone on to Lady Holder's now, tho' she stayed here for tea. She & Linds are going to Sydney, & then Linds goes on to Brisbane, rifle-shooting.

I went into Wigg's yesterday, & got Ethics books for Stan & myself, but they didn't give me the Sidgwicks. Mr Chambers allowed a reduction on both Stan's & mine.

The University people wrote & asked if I still wanted a Scholarship, & I had to say no. I hope to want one next year, though. I am going to try to get a little coaching to do this year, & have a maid for Mother.

I turned out an old diary of mine this morning — a great advance on my first, tho' very funny. Of course there is no depth in it, but I really think the style is good, & some of the incidents are told with a good deal of spirit. The power of expression is far beyond anything I have now, & there is a curious quizzing of myself in it that strikes me as interesting. I wish I had written a little more that would show the development of my inner self — psychologically it would be of use to me.

As yet I have a sort of tenderness for my not yet cast-off self, & wouldn't like anyone to see it. but in a few years, when my self has more completely altered, some of it is funny enough to laugh over. For instance, after relating Miss Edeson's engagement, I mention on the same line that there has been an earthquake in Venezuela! And it was

delightful to be reminded of Carrie Lunn's 'mot' "I never waste; What I can't eat I just stuff down."

You will be tired of hearing of the essay, but take courage, c'est fini! 5191 words had to be reduced to 3000, & now the gaps are big enough to put your hand through, though I think the more condensed style is an improvement.

I have cut a great many pictures out of "The Literary World."⁷⁷ Aren't Mentschnipoff (any x, y, z's that are necessary please supply) & his bacteria theories interesting? Are you going to drink curdled milk & live to 160?

I hope M^r Petts is a nice young man. Do you like Miss Scrymgour? You have forgotten to tell us about her or her father. Do you see much of them?

All letters eagerly read! Dear old boy, you write very regularly. A word of advice — never tell us any of the interesting things that happen at business; we might get puffed up. Oh I wish we could see you, Yes. Work hard & keep straight — Like Mrs Gorgon Graham⁷⁸, I'm rather afraid of you working too hard than otherwise.

X X

77 A weekly American magazine that ran from 1847 to 1853 and again from 1870 to 1904.

78 George Horace Lorimer (1867-1937), an American journalist and author, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*, wrote a book of letters written by someone whose nickname was 'Old Gorgon Graham'.

1915

Letter 24

Aberdeen S.A. 9th Jan '15⁷⁹

My dear Brother,

A series of afternoon teas doesn't at first sight suggest much news for you. We gravely discuss babies, dressmakers, & the price of meat and, one mother, impressed by the shape of my nose, asked me if I thought little Gertrude's head betokened unusual brain power. But they are all capable housekeepers & gracious women, though countrified & unlearned, and know more than I do about all the matters. "Just living" as they do in the country would bore me intensely, but there ought to be a happy & soul satisfying medium between that and "just thinking." I hope I shall be able to discover some practical work for myself.

Burra country is what most people would call uninteresting, but I like the bare brown scarps, and the red rounded dunes, and the wind that sighs over many miles. And in the town there are white cedars & gumtrees & pepper trees, the unsymmetrical arrangement indicating, from the need for the hand of man, the un-richness of the \mineral/ soil, which has yet body enough for grass & wheat. But the season has been so bad that I had to walk for nearly a mile before I found some oats and thistles growing in a dry water way I was some miles out of the town & wanted the green stuff for a sheep which was dying. But I think it wanted water more. And, when I cooed to a shepherd he came up, leisurely cutting tobacco, & said "Ou ay. It would be one of Reids: he would give them a cry if he saw them knocking about". but tho' he agreed with me that what it wanted was water, he didn't get any \though his hut was near/ but observed that if Reid came too late, he would still be glad of the skin. There was neither kindness or neighbourliness in his bleared eyes, but only vacuity.

People here take the papers very seriously; they believe all they read, and afterwards repeat the platitudes in the leading article as if it were their own. Here we are Liberals — the atmosphere becomes perceptively cooler if perversity drives me to championing Labour & I have to eschew politics — and take the "Register". I laugh at the "Herald", taking an easy stride from democracy to the water supply but the more pompous "Register" is

[conclusion missing]

79 Canning was in Adelaide, where he had enlisted on 17 December 1914. He is apparently on leave.

Letter 25

[*Burra? Early 1915*]

My dear G.C,

I forgot to tell you in my last letter that there is a parcel for you at Wiggs, with 6/- to pay — but they don't know to whom. So as I was well loaded, I left it. I sent Maggie de Cont, a very nice one, with compliments from us both.

I wish the silly idiots would let you have from Saturday to Monday leave. There is a train about 2 from town — I'm not sure whether it is a few minutes to — & the Monday afternoon train would get you back to town about 7. But if they won't they won't. When you have your week's leave I am afraid Bowden will give you too little to do, & naturally you will go to the Grange.

I've been reading "The Day's Work".⁸⁰ Isn't it a great selection of short stories? "The Walking Delegate" is one to keep.

Kipling & George Elliot⁸¹ & Maurice Hewlett⁸² have been combining to ram the philosophy of work into me. Perhaps I oughtn't to funk law on that score.

Your loving Sister

Elizabeth

P.S. The affection of cooks for policemen is time-honoured, but I never heard of a cook being a policeman before. — As you know by this time, the capacity of the female mind for bad jokes is limitless.

There was a general exodus of visitors yesterday. "ie Cannings" lost 8 — their all. It is a blessed relief finding no-one on the rocks.

I would like to live here. I sternly refused to let myself bring any books, but I know I could work if I had them.

I've been working a nightgown for Mother. If I become much more industrious you will find me embroidering your pyjamas.

80 A short story collection (1898) by Rudyard Kipling.

81 George Eliot (1819-80) was the pen-name of Mary Ann Evans, a highly regarded English novelist, poet and journalist.

82 Maurice Hewlett (1861-1923) was an English historical novelist, poet and essayist.

Letter 26

Methodist Manse, Brompton 12th July [1915]

Dear old boy,

You really are a sport to write such long interesting letters. Much I hope the fortune teller's prediction came true, & that you got a letter "next week". We have sent so many. Mr Crispe told Grandma he had had a card from you, and enquired after you.

Pluto, the bad little cat, has several bald patches, which I bathe with Condy's Fluid & plaster with sulphur & oil. The first day he sulked & wouldn't wash himself, so that he went round looking as though he were turning into a canary. But he is very fat, & the rest of his coat is lovely

Week after next is the Primary⁸³ — only 300 children this year — what a falling off! The State schools have an exam. of their own at the end of the year, & don't bother about the Primary. Very sensible of them — except that it makes less supervising.

I am a particularly dull person today — the doctor says I haven't measles after all, & so I am not quarantined now; but I feel out of sorts. On Friday it is Theory of Legislation terminal, & I

[page missing]

While I was away I read "Dr Pascal"⁸⁴, some of the "Oxford Bk of French Verse", "Idealism as a Practical Creed" (Henry Jones)⁸⁵ & "The Regent"⁸⁶ again. Don't you want to be among the books again?

Father has written to M^r Kendrew to let you have money, as the Y.M. doesn't do that sort of thing. I expect poor M^r K. is rushed, too; but that seems the only way.

Grandpa has had his hedge clipped — largely by the District Council. Some fool was told to tidy up the roads, & parts of Grandpa's hedge seemed to come under that head. So he worked for several hours, Grandpa strolling along casually & encouraging him. Next day he brought another man with him, & they borrowed Grandpa's clips,

83 An examination for school children run by the University of Adelaide.

84 *Doctor Pascal*, 1893, a novel by the French novelist, journalist and playwright Émile Zola (1840-1902).

85 *Idealism as a Practical Creed*, 1909, lectures by Sir Henry Jones.

86 *The Regent*, 1913, a novel by the English novelist Arnold Bennett (1867-1931).

& both worked, but unfortunately before they had done the bad bit by the stable the overseer came along & put a stop to it.

Your very loving Sister

Elizabeth.

The Museum Catalogue is safely to hand. "S.S. Shoma" did it very well, I think. How mean of the authorities to make alterations while the book was in Press. It would be too much to look at in one day. E-J

[written diagonally across the top of the first page] G.ma was here on Sunday, very animated. Mother is better than she was — is about again. The flood is out again at the Grange — very big indeed. We hope to go down on Saturday — too late to see it I am afraid. Next week is vacation. I am going to see Bessie. Actually I don't know whether it is a son or a daughter!

Letter 27

[21 July 1915]

[*first page missing*]

both out of action it was impossible.

Grandpa is following “Punch” in “Jenny the dog Faithful” with great interest.

Young Artie was full of news on Saturday.

1. It was his grandmothers birthday — but he didn’t know how old she was (in fact he explained that he hadn’t asked)
2. “Auntie Lil” had a new daughter.
3. “Pupper Frank” had volunteered — & been rejected!

The little dog comes to visit us at intervals, & Mother covets him. Wanted him brought up to the bedroom, on Sunday!

Last night I went to the “League of Loyal Women” inauguration.⁸⁷ Sentimental business, but some of the speeches were excellent. Sir John Gordon made a fine recruiting speech, and I expect some of the women who have been exploiting their health in order to keep sons & husbands at home will become more reasonable.

Recruiting posters are being used — I am told that one outside Melbourne cemetery bears the inscription “Sleepers, awake! Your King & country need you.”

Well, dear son & brother, it is a week since your first letter came, and it seems a month. I hope it won’t be too long before we can hear again; but of course the mails are very disorganised. I wonder if you will get our letters. I heard of one poor man who got 32 in a bunch— & shared them with his letterless friends. Philosophy & art are the only comfortable things left in the world, I think; and they arn’t just suitable to the crisis. This “standing a spell on one foot first, & then a spell on t’other, tentatively uneasy and quite useless, [*sic*] is very trying.

Hope the Bulletin⁸⁸ & Chronicle reach you. The former has some rather good things. I’ve bought a couple of 6^d novels, will send one at a time, tho’ I don’t expect

87 This was held on 20 July 1915.

88 *The Bulletin* was an Australian magazine first published in Sydney in 1880. Its focus was on politics and business, with some literary content. Its final issue was published in 2008.

you will care for them. I can't think of anything that wd seem interesting where you are (unless you are still in Egypt, mighty hot & dirty & bored.) But you can hand it on to the others. So many of the letters say "Send us something to read." Your name is on the handkies etc, not for the benefit of the absentee laundry, but to prevent the P.O. people making anything out of them. There's femininity for you. If you get all the parcels we send, you will have too many socks etc & will be a boon unto your friends. We bombard you on the hit & miss principle.

If we get plenty of sun now we shall have a tremendous harvest. Grandpa & I shall have to help get it in! Grandpa seems grieved that he can't go to the war. It takes him nearly all day to read the papers now — but then he hasn't to waste time dodging the water inspector any longer. He told Ella all about his little shifts over that matter with unregenerate glee (continued for 3) & to Grandma's disgust. He vows that Grandma used to go inside so as not to see him, when he got water for the almond trees!

Mother is in bed again today, but really is much better in herself; so you don't need to worry for the safety of any of us. Gpa & ma are exceptionally well.

Yours lovingly Elizabeth

Letter 28

Brompton, South Australia. 25th July 1915

My dear brother,

Searching in your inexhaustible bookshelves I have come across such treasures as “Freemasons” & “The Southern” (Abe Lincoln you remember. [*sic*] Oh Lor! Can’t allow Mother ~~to~~ read either — one bad for her morals, too much blood in the other. One good thing I remember in the latter.

Colonel to officer hiding behind fence. “Come, that’s no place for you”. Officer. “Oh, do you really think the bullets will come through the palings?”

I can’t think of any Adelaide doings that you want to know about. I’ve paid the Grange tennis entrance fee & sub, but didn’t see anyone but M^r M^cLean to talk to, and he was very vacant indeed.

Mother was in bed yesterday, but she seems a little better today. Grandpa is very well. If he happened to be passing the Pavⁿ & someone was with him, he doesn’t know but what he might not have 6^d orth. (3^d each). I meant to ask him to take me this morning, as I know he would like to see the Dardenelles pictures; but of course with Mother & Alma I’ve only done a few hours work all the term. When a subject is only taken for fun one doesn’t do much at it, if other work is pressing, & then when the exam comes one remembers sadly that one is an M.A. with a reputation to lose. Ambition or self-assertiveness dies hard. This is not an age of chivalry, & the man student does not refrain from beating a woman student, even if she has been too heedless even to attempt retaliation. Neither has the average undergraduate due respect & deference for his academic superiors. He is quite willing to elbow ahead on the lists; here be dry old academic jokes for you!

Theory of law is interesting — if I only had to do what interests an arts student. Aesthetics I find fascinating, especially when it connects with metaphysics. There is a curious poignant delight in the theory of reality. The “history of aesthetics” of Bosanquet⁸⁹ I must buy — I have been annotating it at the library, & it is delightful. You have

89 Bernard Bosanquet (1848-1923) was an English philosopher and political theorist. His *A History of Aesthetics* was first published in 1892.

Lessings “Nathan the Wise”.⁹⁰ I wonder you never got “The Laocoon”, or “Miss Sarah Sampson”. Logic for the Friday class has also taken a good deal of time, as I have a slow mind & if I overlook anything, one or other of the 18 is sure to think of it. Of course it is only Formal Logic, & I have no opportunity to expound my favourite theory of logic as the clue to the universe — the inner significance of it. Stated like that it looks patently silly — but really it is very interesting. Of course it isn’t original. Kant⁹¹ paved the way, in & Bosanquet replaced it with wooden blocks — or gold bricks. Yesterday when I was smiling because Mary Kitson looked so bored at the lecture — which I hadn’t attended to either — Prof \Brown/ said “Now what do you think of that argument, Miss Jackson? You are a logician.” I replied profoundly “I would not like to pronounce.” & I don’t know whether it was awe or a polite refusal to laugh that restrained his features. I don’t know now what was the subject under discussion. \There are only five left in the class, 2 of them women & one, Mr Yardley. Of the others one has been refused & the other is in ill health./

Mary Kitson’s brother is convalescing & doing light Transport duty. He begs not to have any more flannel shirts sent to him. He is very comfortable & able to have a bath every day, which seems to count to him for glory.

Everyone eagerly asks everyone else what is the news from overseas; no one gets tired of hearing of the letters — & everyone considers that those she receives are far & away the best.

Yours lovingly

Elizabeth

90 Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81) was a German writer, philosopher, dramatist, publicist and art critic. He published *Miss Sarah Sampson* in 1755, *Laocoon* in 1766, and *Nathan der Weise* in 1779.

91 Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German philosopher; he is considered the central figure of modern philosophy.

Letter 29

B. Room, University²³rd August, 1915

My dear Brother

Shall I be [*text obliterated by large ink marking*] you of the big Russian naval victory at Riga? The Dreadnought sunk, & 3 cruisers, & 3 torpedo boats, & the Germans prevented from landing.

And the English have brought off a successful landing at Suvla.⁹² I suppose you are not in it, as you will be reinforcing Anzac. Oh, I envy you being in this. Whatever happens you have “faced death, where death is glorious”, and have been one in a mighty movement. Me, I knit socks.

And indulge in breakdowns. And go for holidays, all quite without obvious reason.

It was a wonderful week at Kangarilla, and I recovered sanity and poise — and avoided the newspapers. Walking 12 & 14 miles a day along pleasant country roads, over green hills and through shady valleys, pleasant with the murmur of the creeklet and the gentle cropping of cows, just now when the yellow buttercups and billy buttons, scarlet runner, purple orchids and wild lilac, maidenhair and bracken are at their best, would make anyone in love with life again. Clarendon was lovely at sunset with the bright green hill, dark trees, & blue sky, reflected in the smooth surface of the water. Here & there a silver fin glittered for an instant, sending a darkening circle on the water, & buxom kookaburra's laughed their satisfaction from the trees.

The greatest excitement I had was when pursued by a sportive pig, or keeping a strategic eye on the relative distances of me, the fence, and the ubiquitous bull. Once it was a case of going forward past a bull and his harem, or back past a couple of advancing dogs. I leant against the fence as nonchalantly as I could, waiting for the owners of the dogs, but I should think they saw my nervous flush.

The new recruits are put up in the Exhibition; some sleep on the foot-rest [*text obliterated by large ink marking*], some in the poultry reserve. The other night [*text obliterated*] was trying to sleep on the narrow ledge in the [*text obliterated*] suddenly he woke up with a jerk — “Somebody has left the b - window open”.

92 Suvla Bay on the Aegean coast of Gallipoli.

The poultry pen people were so amused with their quarters that they cock a doodled dood, and the cry was taken up all round the grounds. Unable to stop it, the officers paraded the men for 2 hours, that night.

Did I tell you about an inefficient young officer who had annoyed the men? They prepared this little ditty, & sang it as occasion arose.

“Halt! By the left! Form Platoons!”

If the officers operants cannot do it,

How the hell should the men form platoons. [*sic*]

This resulted in a month’s leave being stopped.

M^{rs} Hart at Kangarilla wished to be remembered to you. (She was very nice to me — for your sake, since she had never seen me before. Next time I go to K — it must be as her guest, not to a boardinghouse, etc.) Arthur is married — to Grace Tilbrook — & has a little son. He cannot go to the war, of course, & it frets him.

You will enjoy this week’s Bulletin — if you get it. We are told that there are 3 months parcels “held up” for want of time to deliver them, but that soon they will be released. You won’t know what to do with about 10 pairs of socks, some facewashers, various writing materials, lead pencils, biscuits, chocolate, etc. If you hang the pencils, pocket knife, toothbrush etc round your neck you will look like a stand in a curiosity shop. But really I can think of no other way of keeping them. Your letters & P. cards are most interesting. It has been lovely hearing so regularly. I suppose the spaces will be longer soon. 160 men have gone from th’ Varsity, not counting clerks & caretakers.]

[*conclusion missing*]

Letter 30

Methodist Manse Brompton 7th September 1915

My very dear brother,

Month today since you were wounded.⁹³ Perhaps next mail — or the next — we may hear from you. The news only came out in the paper today, and already there have been many enquiries.

Your authorisation of my receipt reached me alright. Mother would tell you how M^{rs} Shinkfield read extracts from Billy's letter with reference to meeting you — coming out of the Zoo, etc, "sharing a drink together". "Now! I wonder what that drink was," meditated Jim. It was so nice to hear of you indirectly in that way — sort of filled out your life — gave you another dimension! (such as sculpture has, against drawing.)

I looked into your Rabelais.⁹⁴ It is too gratuitously obscene for me. On Saturday I had tea at Eardley's (Assistant Registrar at the University) & Mr. lent me "When Ghost meets Ghost"⁹⁵ —nearly as good as Joseph Vance.⁹⁶ I like De Morgan, his books are a sort of human logic.

Eardley's are a very interesting family to me. They have a lovely house & garden, & 3 children, and everything seems so comfortable & well kept, with plenty of time for books & leisure; yet there is only one maid, & no gardener. Mr E. said Billy was the twin with red hair; really, I thought all 3 had that colour! Mr Eardley says Germans taken singly are delightful (his Mother in law is German) but as a nation, since 1820, they are unspeakable! Well, I think they can teach us method, & devotion — that the state doesn't only exist to confer rights, but that we have a duty to it — and they are going to right way [*sic*] to rub in the lesson. Our muddling is disgraceful; & then we smile smugly and say "We always muddle, you know." The National Service wd have been a lesson in devotion to Young Australians — and taxes! If we bear them cheerfully,

93 Canning had served at Gallipoli. He was wounded in the hand in 1915 and sent back to England to the Military Hospital at Hampstead in September that year. He returned to duty in Egypt in March 1916 but had a finger amputated in April 1916. He was discharged to return to duty on 3 May 1916.

94 Francois Rabelais (1494-1553), French Renaissance writer, physician, humanist, monk and Greek scholar.

95 A novel by William Trend de Morgan.

96 Louis Joseph Vance (1879-1933), a popular American novelist.

& make them willing sacrifices, instead of regarding them as extortions. We are going to have plenty of taxes, too, to pay up even the interest on the War Loan. (I suppose some hero will spring to fame & a place in the national heart by urging repudiation.) The great thing against that (viz repudiation) is, the influence of the large subscribers — banks & Insurance Societies & 2 the influence of the many & varied small subscribers. But I suppose nothing like a third of the voters will be subscribers.

Largely the selfishness of democratic people is due to ignorance — they are taught that they can settle the country's policy; and there seems no problem to them, just a clear cut issue, testable by the probable effect on their pocket. It isn't so much facts that they need to be taught, as grasp — in logical language, they want to deal in universals, but they never have been taught anything but particulars. O. W. Holmes⁹⁷ called it "an inability to think algebraically. [*sic*] And they need not only discipline in thinking, but in devotion — & this discipline they will have to impose on themselves. It seems hopeless but it dare not be. A democracy needs more intelligence and self-sacrifice on the part of each than any other government — and given that, it is the best form. But as we are now, in conflict with a thoroughly efficient bureaucracy — — ! of course we'll muddle thro', at the expense of wasted lives. & I jolly well hope we'll wake up to our responsibilities. Yours indignantly, Elizabeth. T.O.

[*written sideways along the left margin of the first page*] So sorry. I bought a Bulletin, & didn't know the mail for newspapers closed 20 hours before that for letters, so its too late. You'll get it next time, but it isn't like this time, is it? Yours lovingly, Elizabeth. You can't think how we want to know how you are going on. When I think of the name our men have made I want to fall on their necks. "If I die, it was worth it", some of the letters say. This eager generation!

97 Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-94), American physician, poet, professor, lecturer and author.

Letter 31

Methodist Manse Brompton S. Aus. November 4th 1915

Dear Canning,

We are all hoping that you will have a merry* English Christmas, snow & beef & pudding & mistletoe & Yule Log all complete — also that you will have got yourself the necessary underclothing to enjoy it.

The Advertiser kept it a dark & deadly secret until this morning that this is the Christmas mail — of course it is earlier than usual because of the War shortage of ships.

I wish I were a man. I wish I were 10 men. Even now Asquith talks of sending the unmarried first. Good Heaven! As if the comfort & convenience of individual families counted. Democracy hasn't failed, because it isn't completed. But this war came before we had learned how to run a crisis by Public Meeting. And I fear lest in learning the lesson we smash. I can't think we'll lose, ultimately — yet - - -. The times are too much for me. I haven't the soul for them. I wish Mr Asquith also realised his inadequacy — tho' perhaps no one could get enough woosh into the pre-occupied working man. I'm labour still — their cause is just, but their arguments & attitude & understanding of their own case are ignorant. Democracy is good in itself — but it has to contend with something more efficient for government tho' less ideal for life & in the long run.

Ye Gods! what a Christmas letter & for how many more Christmas . . .

Lovingly, Elizabeth Jackson

**[sideways along left margin]*

No, I don't. I hope those who haven't gone to the war feel the crisis too much to be merry. But it is better to be great than merry — it gives more real joy in their firmness of mind induced, & a virile humour better than inane mirth — After the war if warm-light hearted merriment may be for us again, tho' always with more of understanding in it & purpose & sincerity. T. over

[on verso of page]

My present is included in the money we sent. It would have been nice to send a parcel, for I suppose you haven't outgrown the pleasure of the unexpected, but the Advertiser took us on the hop. & I suppose it is as well, Dear old brother

Just got your letter dated Sept. 25th (at the Varsity) Part of the mail is still not delivered. Glad London “agrees with you.” There always were slackers in England, you know; only in the press gang days we didn’t notice them — no opportunity. We may thank God for so many as have fought. Wartime makes one envious of Germany’s system. One can force some sort of external heroism.

Much love. Look at the facts on both sides. Not all Englands past can be wasted. Wrote this with a borrowed 6^d engine.

Grandpa thought of going up to see “old Veale” on Monday — “Lots of worse chaps about than old Veale”. His house isn’t let.

Rover has been bitten again, twice; but nothing stops the hilarity of his greeting.

The “kitten” disappeared mysteriously (I think it was in the family way, too) and another — also in that interesting condition — has been got from “Simmons”. It oscillates between the two homes [?] “being young & silly-like”.

Katie isn’t a bit well, but keeps about — & doesn’t “holler” quite so much.

It was too wet for tennis on Saturday — at least before 3, when I had to come home. I saw old Percy MacLean laboriously sweeping up the Court. He takes himself so seriously!

Miss Muirhead & I get on extremely well; what I don’t understand she writes with her finger. She has a wonderful capacity for hitting on a single illuminating word. “Vera”, I think they call her; the fine-looking girl waved at me from the tip.

We are making face washers & handkerchiefs for the Red Cross; wonder if any of them will come your way.

Once more, goodbye. XX

Letter 32

Methodist Manse Brompton 17th November 1915

My very dear brother,

Reams of paper have I written to you; now I wonder how much you have received? We have had yours with wonderful regularity, until last week — 25 of Sept. is our last date. Next week there is sure to be something.

Saturday afternoon I went to Belair. Seasides were playing Clarendon there. We lost by 1 sett — of course our best weren't all there. Belle M^cEwen & Miss Martin played so you can guess. The Park is just turning yellow, and the sunset light was lovely. There were some young magpies quawking [*sic*]. Malcolm Mackie inquired after you in detail. He had written to you at the base in Egypt. I couldn't help talking of the need for more men — catty thing to do, but — think of him!

Miss Novice was at her most charming. She dresses becomingly. I have come to the conclusion that she plays with the unfashionable (& often really ill-bred) Seasides because she has in some way become declassée — or perhaps she likes to feel wellbred, & you only do that with inferiors. Of course lots of the Seasides are genuinely nice, but they are not fashionable, & several of them are ill-natured. Their satire is so unkindly, about the peculiarities of absent members. One feels one has one's turn! The satire of those who love you for your oddities is delightful — the other sort is catty.

Blackbrowed Vera interests me — a handsome girl, & she does know how to dress. She has temper & may be a difficult wife but there is character & possibility; she might almost be in a Meredith⁹⁸ book.

M^r Crisp is very proud of his sisters — told me how they make dresses & hats. I boil when I hear their disparaging of him. M^r Kidman has given him a pony which he had trained to come to him when he whistled. I can't decide which of two girls he means to marry — if either.

Percy M^cLean ought to go to the war — he must be pretty sound in wind to play as he does.

I hate matches, because I never get any decent play. But the exercise is developing real muscles! Women are always prodigal of exclamation marks, I notice.

98 George Meredith (1828-1909) was a well-known British poet and novelist.

I never remember having so few ideas in my head — & those few so dull. Letters to you seem such impersonal affairs.

[*conclusion missing*]

Letter 33

[mid-December 1915]

[to Canning— beginning four pages missing]

My nice little black cat my beloved Pluto, would send his respects, but he is, temporarily, so full of good beef that effort is beyond him. And we have had hot winds & dust — real examination weather. Of course noses bled & children were bilious or fainted. From which you will gather that filthy lucre has tempted me to supervise once more. It is believed that the University will recognise my claim to a pension, in the course of time.

When I am supervisor-in-chief the desire not to hurt the men's feelings makes me ask them to make the announcements. Funny how they like doing it! But they have very little sense, & often leave out the important parts. I nearly supervised a degree candidate with tuberculosis the other day, but D^r Stirling refused to allow a woman. And the men were afraid! I believe the examiner did it himself, in the end.

By the way, Keswick has promised to pay me 30/- of your back pay; they have recognised your "authority to receipt" after some bother. Their stamp on the document will make it more useful with the Lodge. I wonder if you got the form I sent you. The Lodge must owe you a lot of sick pay, but they require a certificate from the doctor giving dates of entry & exit. As if the military documents here are not enough.

"Silly thing! Silly thing"

as the Dandy comedian sang of the girl who asked what he would do if he could have all the beer he wished — "So much beer doesn't exist!"

You very loving sister

Elizabeth

Mother is sending you a letter — c/- High Comm^d — & I sent a Bulletin c/- Cousin Sam — he can keep it if you have left England!⁹⁹ Tho' I think only an Australian would appreciate it.

Vera Oswald is sending you some Sydney Mails.

99 Canning was to leave for Egypt after hospitalisation.

Letter 34

Methodist Manse Brompton 15th December 1915

Dear Canning,

This end of the year is being very busy — just the usual things — W.S.C. supper on Commemoratⁿ Day, M.L.C. Break up, St Peters Coll. Girls School Brk. Up, Old Folks Tea in the Town Hall at Hindmarsh, farewell to Valessa Reimann, dinner at D^r Mayo's & so on. It was Old Folks this afternoon. Some of them were extraordinarily dirty & obnoxious, but on the whole they were decent folk, & they were of all sorts, from the rusty to the good black satin. One old man came out in '52, & doesn't mind how he has tea, with or without sugar. It wd. have been apt, but unkind, to ask would he prefer beer. The programme was given by people who sang too shrilly or recited too fast. Father's heavy voice made his effort receive the only encore. He really was just right for the old people. The fruit & cake put out for them was very appetizing, but they ate less than I expected. But then they all had two cups of tea. The Irish ones called me My Darling & had bad breath.

Yesterday I helped spring clean the Common Room. We threw out (other people's) old shoes, tennis balls, condensed milk, mouldy jam, filthy knives, old lecture books — oh, it was the very essence of joy to spring clean like that, leaving behind one a triumphant trail of rubbish for the caretaker to burn. That old scoundrel hasn't dusted our shelves all the year. We gave him 10/6, & asked him to wash them. Of course he won't.

I have read "Bealby" by H. G. Wells.¹⁰⁰ Hope you saw it in England. It is more of an artistic whole than he generally attempts. It is like a poster in its strong colour and decided strokes. I think a little it is influenced by the moving pictures — lots of delightful chases, à la Mr Polly, of course. And the chapters are schemed so that each next has to go back to explain the end of the one before.

100 *Bealby*, a 1915 comic novel by Herbert George Wells (1866-1946), usually known as H.G. Wells, a prolific English novelist, historian and political writer. His *History of Mr Polly*, another comic novel, was published in 1910.

I am reading your “Modern Painters”.¹⁰¹ Before I have only had books of Ruskin’s on Ethics or Political Economy, & I considered him a dogmatic egotistic fool. But I really respect him now. He may be right or wrong, but he has knowledge and insight. But the impressionists must curse his memory! Did I tell you I’ve been reading modern French pseudo-aesthetics? (That is, Ruskin’s sort, of course. It isn’t philosophy of art.)

Well, after all this casual chatter you wouldn’t think there was a war on, or that we are rather anxious about it and you. The fact remains. But one has to fill up ones days & there’s little one can do save knit, which one does reading the while!

I am to have the same duties as assistant lecturer at the University again next year — my only certain job. This only occupies one term of the year, so perhaps I shall be home for the rest.

I told Grandpa that now you have been to England I want to go. He said he couldn’t think of letting me go alone, but he must get his back better first. I think your letter must have stirred old memories in him too. Mother has been much better lately, & Gpa & ma are fairly well. “Old Veale” is going to England soon. He has let his house for two months at £3.10.0 per wk. Last week from a glimpse I had of him in the train he was refurnishing it with what appeared to be a pail.

If you get all the letters the Grange Tennis Club sends you you must be deluged. They gave Les. Hodge a farewell belt last Saturday. He is off to the Front. M^r Crisp, I hear, has offered 7 times.

Your loving Sister Elizabeth

Don’t forget to tell us how your hand is.¹⁰²

[*added at top of first page*] Hope you get our parcel — lots of woollens & some eatables. Waterproof helmet next mail if possible. Wish you had these things earlier.

101 *Modern Painters* was by English writer John Ruskin (1819-1900), the leading art critic of the Victorian era, a draughtsman, water colourist and prominent social thinker.

102 Elizabeth is here referring again to Canning’s wounded hand.

1916

Letter 35

Home Address Methodist Manse, Brompton
Carnarvon House, Kingscote 24th January 1916

Dear Canning,

Hope they've given you a more exhausting job by this time. You were doing something with books for one hour per day when you wrote. Its very depressing to be underworked.

I'm going to have a third week here. Its cool, and I feel lots better; very anxious to be at work again. We had a letter from Miriam, very enthusiastic about you. It appears your eyes are very blue, & you are neither fat nor thin. I chuckled at having my own brother described to me, but liked Miriam for her letter. Hope you do get to see our step-aunt Margaret.

I'm having a good time here, but I misremember — or never knew — if you care to hear details. We have had every sort of weather, from driving rain, through sullen heat, to cool, calm moonlight. Last night we sat on the old jetty — parallel to and only a few feet from the new one where the “Karatta” was moored and watched the moonrise behind dense banks of clouds over a tranquil sea. By the time the sea was sparkling the clouds had gone, and we sat watching the moon's track on the water, & the zigzag of a light on a boat harpooning fish, and the darkened cliffs and their reflection in the water, and listening to the lap-lap of the water on the piles, and the jumping of the fish. About 11, after sitting in silence for an hour, just as we were watching the red glow of the lantern on the people in the returning boat, two unsteady seamen lurched slowly and precariously down the other jetty. One of them was explaining to his rather steadier friend that he can't go to the war while there are so many blooming Germans in Australia. & Why don't the Dagos go and fight for their country? Whater we want with Dagos anyway? For 'is part, 'e 'ad a 'art — all sailors got 'arts — only blokes wot 'as — and 'e 'ad to look arter 'is old mother. But even she ooks it, no more women for 'im. Orl they want of you is to take you down. Wots a Captin? Wots a Chief Engineer? Nothing. It's the Stoker does the work. The three worst positions in the world are pugman in a pug'ole, stoker in a ship, an' humpire at a bally football match.

Unfortunately his friend now got him aboard & we heard no more of him. The boat was in, and we went home to bed.

I haven't read as much as usual down here; we have walked & talked & read aloud, & eaten. Writing letters in such a crowded place is almost impossible. It is by no means a fashionable or a well-kept boarding house, but I notice since one of my little jokes a grievously affecting smell has disappeared. I asked our table in a carrying voice if the Harbour Master (who takes some of them out) had explained how to tell the difference between a shell with a fish in & one without. He hadn't, so I said you only had to leave them in the sun at the kitchen door. It wasn't a very delicate joke, but the landlady is ill, & the maids are careless, & it was necessary & effective. The maids are not well trained, they often laugh at our remarks when they are waiting. One of them giggles whenever one of us with a reputation for an appetite, asks for another helping, and she spluttered horribly when she set before us a covered dish containing a remarkably messy looking jelly fish & 2 bloodred starfish. The offering of the harbour master. But they help us with our silly little jokes, too. We got one to give the bank clerk a menu — Bread & milk, Mellens Food, Neaves Food, Fried Flapper, octopus pie, etc. Milk & water. The clerk was decent tho'. He asked in resonant tones for Neaves Food, Octopus Pie, & milk & water, not too strong.

I think this is enough to convince you that we are being very young & unacademic, but not very funny.

Your loving Sister

Elizabeth Jackson.

Letter 36

Methodist Manse, Brompton. 23rd February 1916.

Dear Canning,

Have you read “The Everlasting Mercy” by John Masefield?¹⁰³ Some of it isn’t exactly poetry, but it is very inspiring and informing realism. He has the artist’s eye that finds everything interesting — or finds much of interest everywhere and knows exactly which details to select for the interest of the reader, & for giving him the right impression.

I wish I had such a gift, if only in a form “suitable for use in schools”! True, a pupil did observe today that history is more interesting than last year but spoilt it by attributing the change to the textbook of Gardiner, as against that of the idiot Lout.

It is Ella Stephens who has introduced me to Masefield, & I am grateful. One of Noyes’¹⁰⁴ poems pleased me much, too, tho’ really I am not a good appreciator of poetry; analysis rather than synthesis. — dissection rather than appreciation — is my forte, so far as I have one.

I have been too busy to read, these 3 weeks, but last night I read a few pages more of “Le Sentiment Du Beau en Poésie” — French poetry, of course, and the connection between physiology, mathematics, & psychology, in the appreciation, is very interesting, though perhaps far fetched.

In May I am to give a little address to the Women’s Non-Party Political Association (“Oh Lord” — yes, I agree) on Taxes & Tariffs after the War. Me, I don’t see how we can penalise Germany without cutting off our own noses. The Non-Party, they disagree.

The tennis court under my window has been put to some sort of rights, & last night I heard the Secretary ask the Captain what was meant by “ex officio”. “Without the option” was the reply given. The Captain’s dash & savoir faire are much appreciated, and I gather that his reading extends even to Police news.

103 John Edward Masefield (1878-1967), English poet and writer. He was Poet Laureate from 1930 till his death.

104 Alfred Noyes (1880-1958), English poet, short story writer and playwright.

Have you read Thackeray's Essay "De Finitus"?¹⁰⁵ It is most delightful, & even the schoolgirls enjoy it.

I haven't been to the Grange for nearly a fortnight & if we go to Alberts wedding can't go next Saturday. But Father & Mother go fairly often, and report Grandma as being unusually gay. I think the excitement of being treated as an invalid to the extent of seeing the Doctor has brightened her up; so it is quite worth having him often. Of course she is far from being a sound woman, but she may live for years yet. I don't think you would find her much altered.

South Australia has been enjoying scares about German cruisers — which turn out to be a Chinese boat out of its course. And there are rumours — probably equally veracious — of a rising at Hahndorf. But no one is worried. The latter probably arose from 100 Mitcham soldiers marching from camp — to put out the Hills fire.

I can't write any more now (like Squeers with the broken leg) because I have a sore throat from teaching. Did I tell you I felt at first like a beetle twittering helpless legs? Well, I don't twitter now, but I'm not a good teacher.

Yours lovingly

Elizabeth

Mother is addressing to Weymouth camp. Mother also writes this mail

105 William Makepeace Thackeray (1811-63).

Letter 37

(On the Beach) Whitely House The Grange
South Australia 21st April [1916]

My dear brother,

Re-reading “Fraulein Schmidt & Mr Anstruther”¹⁰⁶ I noticed the very true remark that the letter you write is often not the one the receiver is in the mood for. I must have sent you a frightful lot of misfits. We have just had your letter about the move to Egypt. If the doctor is right, it is good that you will get the use of your hand again (you didn’t tell us you had lost it, my son.)

Mother had persuaded herself that you would soon be home, and she was very disappointed. Her first born has had his first serious accident, and she has not nursed him or seen him. My dear, it has not been easy for the mother who has held you spiritually and literally next her heart. But I know that all through you have felt for her as much as for yourself. She is feeling for your disappointment about Egypt.

I tell you all this because I don’t think she does herself. Of course I don’t know, but her letters to me are about you, & the daily happenings, so I suppose hers to you are about me. With every year I appreciate Mother more. Father could not have married more exactly the woman to suit him.

Grandpa says I am to tell you that he can’t

[remainder of letter missing]

106 *Fraulein Schmidt and Mr Anstruther*, 1911, an epistolary novel by Australian-born British novelist Elizabeth von Arnim (1866-1941).

Letter 38

[*The Grange 1916?*]

[*to Canning — beginning missing*]

I won't finish till tonight after I return from the Grange, but I hope they are going to be alright. Grandpa told me to tell the old boy that he is not going "to pag out" yet.

Do you remember Lynn Harberton on the gift of discrimination in "Listener's Lure"? I think that book interested me quite disproportionately. It is the very refinement of polished small talk, but it is the talk of people with nothing very important in hand. Now Harold Begbie¹⁰⁷ I hate. I am sure he was born out of a cultured circle, and that he is a big man with superficial brains, & wears checks; probably his hair is straight and oily. But he puts some reflections on this sort of person into the mouth of one or other of his drivelling characters — whom I really believe he thinks smack of the bracing open air of the Uplands of Fundamental Reality, Veracity, Honest Search, and other imposing Capital Letters! Spencerisms which in his hands become nothing but dreary featureless wastes, frosted into fictitious interest by a frock coated or silk gowned dummy here and there — which are almost a propos: something about the musical world seeing nothing in the world beyond music & emotion.

But Harberton's reflection on discrimination, & other things, are admirable as clever, fine-spun small talk, full of polished subtlety.

Monday

Grandpa & -ma both stayed in bed yesterday, but Mother's coming seemed to have done them a lot of good. I expect Grandma is up today. Grandpa thinks Grandma is very good looking in bed!

I fed the animals, & thought Rover seemed as if he could have disposed of more. However, there wasn't any.

Your loving Sister

Elizabeth.

107 Edward Harold Begbie (1871-1929), English author and journalist, who published nearly fifty books.

Letter 39

40, Davenport Terrace Wayville [*Anzac Day 1916*]

[*to Canning*]

In the “19th Century”¹⁰⁸ I see an article by Mais or Bais on the effect of the war on English Public Schools. (I daren’t even whisper to myself that I don’t know of which school he is master) He speaks of the boys’ increasing interest in poetry & beauty generally, partly because many of them are training for the front & in the expectation of losing life, are becoming aware of new aspects of it. I think his explanation must be right. Even a dull life is not one one wishes to renounce, and for the young, with so much of life not even opened up — shall we ever realise what you do sacrifice, actually or potentially? — I mean what you are willing to give up, whether or not it is really exacted.

This is the anniversary of the landing at Anzac. I walked into town by Draper Memorial the Market, & so on. It made me miserable to see the brutalised slobbering, mouthing degenerates, & the frowsty women & lame dogs. These men are more noticeable now that the others have gone to the war.

The fear of the future is on me. The soldier has a duty to do more than fight. He must keep himself clean — and safe so far as possible.

Certain forms of vice are either worse here now, or more noticeable. Surely it is only the ignorant or the undisciplined who are

[*conclusion missing*]

108 *The Nineteenth Century and After*, a British monthly literary magazine. The article appeared in January 1916.

Letter 40

40, Davenport Terrace Wayville 27th May 1916

Dear Canning,

This letter will reach you just about birthday time, I hope. I am giving you “The Sentimental Bloke”¹⁰⁹, but don’t like to trust it to the tender mercies of the P. O. yet. We think you will perhaps be on your way back. A really generous soul would cast it on the waters and trust to it being returned (by the P.O. people) after many days, if you had sailed. But as the economy campaign increases I get Scotcher and Scotcher.

It has indeed “fallen to us to live in heroic times,” and I’m glad we do, and are young. For you actually to have taken part, and to have made some material sacrifice, is a very great thing. One can’t always live on the mountain tops, nor always feel the necessity of what one gave, nor the adequacy of the satisfaction of having done what one could, but you will never have permanent regret. Even if England as a present nation continues to disappoint you, you will still feel that you had and have to live up to what your ideal for her is. But I do dread the future for some of the very maimed, who went for faltering reasons and will not be sustained by an imaginative understanding of the value and necessity of what they did. And some will think that a definite reward is necessary. But still I know most went because just being them demanded that they should go; they went to fulfil their being, to take their place, and to pay the price for occupying that place, in their larger self which is the nation.

It is a real deprivation to women that there is no way in which they can explicitly take such a place themselves. It isn’t that I feel women want to fight, or do anything but shrink. But the men too have shrunk — & gone.

Of course every Mother faces what you face in a modified degree in childbirth. But she contributes no help and no special physical sacrifice that is a fulfilment of herself at this crisis. The mental sacrifice is made by all. But even I am glad I’m in it so far, and young. The real issues won’t begin to clear up for fifty years or so. But I might be alive to read, this past taking part in, posterity’s verdict. So I wish us both many strenuous returns of the day; the spirit to be happy though struggling, the courage to be patient and to readjust ourselves, if not blithely at least firmly and worthily, to the unexpected

109 *The Songs of a Sentimental Bloke*, 1916, by Clarence Michael James Stanislaus Dennis, known as C.J. Dennis, 1876-1938, an Australian poet known for his humour.

future. To win or honourably to lose the game, by keeping the rules, that is the thing, not by overriding them; not to lose sulkily because we can't override them. Forgive this. I've had to preach at myself a lot lately. I find it hard to remember that circumstances have made me what I am, that what I am is no claim on being something else.

At Wiggs the Monday a Miss Lyford (?) heard my name & asked if I were your sister — I think everyone knows me either as Rev. R's daughter or George's Sister! And asked where you are, & to be remembered to you. I think my account of her name is wrong. She seems to work in the downstairs room where the call-box is.

M^r Crisp has sent you 27 letters, & is writing again this mail. He had been getting anxious, from not having heard from you or seen me, and went to Grandpa to enquire. I have been to the Grange every Saturday for the term, except one of the holiday fortnight, but they — (G.G) - pa & ma — miss even that. Grandpa looked at the pictures of 3 Punches with great enjoyment. Poor Rover, he isn't recovered from the dousing yet. He can't jump up to greet me, only wag his tail. Grandpa is an interesting combination — quite explicable. But he wdn't light the fire last night — or tried to persuade Grandma not to. — to save Katie Sunday work, yet in describing Rover's pitiable plight — and in words that nearly broke me down — he added that the sight had made him laugh very much! And I suppose he wd have thought it very feminine and sentimental to do otherwise. He is not sympathetic to any pain that does not moan.

He and Grandma both looked very well indeed. James Odlum's death they talked of without much concern. I always dread such for Grandpa, because death seems a dreadful thing to him. So it is. Not to be feeling and thinking and appreciating any more — appreciating, tasting theories, that is what I like. But I think Grandpa's dread is partly of what comes next.

Their minister, young Humphrey — O, Grandpa would tell you he went into camp. The minister really means a lot to them, & they liked this young man. However, they like the Rev. William Jeffreys very much too — especially his sermons. I gather that he rather wallows in the sentimental.

Mother is getting more used to the car. It must be frightful to have nerves like hers. Father sprinted me from Salisbury to Gepp's Cross at 25 miles an hour — quite his quickest so far. But some days after I left he knocked a post down with it. I hope he went out in it next day — to leave it long would be fatal to his own nerve; he told me he always feels nervous when Mother is in.

Aunt Alice must have been stringing us on about the badness of her house. It is very comfortable indeed. Uncle Jack looked such a joke in gaiters & father's old shovel hat. A hundred pities they have no children. Alice is very clean. The kitchen was most artistic, with its spotless whitewash, big black fireplace, dark cupboards, red cloth, and small-pane windows.

Your very loving Sister

Elizabeth

Letter 41

40, Davenport Terrace, Wayville. 13th June, 1916.

My very dear brother,

The book of Cairo views came on Monday, and then Mother forwarded your 24 page diary. Next letter I suppose will be from hospital. Over a year since you went. Poor old boy, such a slice out of your life — but not a gap in it, more like cinematograph.

I wonder what you felt about Kitchener.¹¹⁰ But whether or nor he was the man we supposed, what a fearful death. I don't feel with the blitherers that he died as he would have liked best. There is too much suggestion of "a rat in a trap" about drowning. To go down in utter impotence, conscious of what your loss means to the nation, doubtful of the future of the Country in whose service you have spent your life— that is not, I think, the death a man would desire!

Grandpa felt it keenly. That and a bad cold sent him to bed for a day. Grandma told him he ought to be ashamed to feel it so much. "It isn't as if it were Canning." I think Grandma feels comfortably that the sins of the nation are being chastised suitably, and that when that is done suitably — and anyway, that it is out of our hands.

Grandma herself was very well, and in great spirits because young Sampson had seen you in Egypt. Somehow that seemed more to her even than letters.

Grandma will enjoy the Cairo book.

I have been reading Morley's life of Gladstone¹¹¹ — in 3 weeks I've only had time for 400 pages. It is interesting to see the growing liberalism of his mind. But think! He liked a dogmatic standard of truth! I have had to explain Calvinism, & Supralapsarianism¹¹², in connection with the Senior Literature, & I wonder if it isn't rather bad for the children. But the contrast of old time intensity of belief, and modern vagueness make me wonder whether religious toleration is an unmixed blessing. Freedom to think as you

110 Irish-born Field Marshal Horatio Herbert Kitchener, 1st Earl Kitchener (1850-1916), became Secretary of State for War in England at the start of World War I and became famous as a leader. He was drowned west of Scotland when his ship struck a German mine.

111 John Morley's biography of his hero Prime Minister William Gladstone was published in 1903.

112 Supralapsarianism is the view that God's decrees of election and reprobation logically preceded the decree of the fall, while infralapsarianism asserts that God's decrees of election and reprobation logically succeeded the decree of the fall.

like becomes forgetting to think at all. In the same way I think perhaps the Methodist simplicity of doctrine may be bad. It is so all-inclusive as to be indefinite — merely “a desire to flee from the wrath to come” is technically required, & even that we repudiate!

Later.

M^{rs} Croft (landlady) has gone to the Kitchener Memorial Service in St. Peters (her daughter bustled in & took her “knowing Mother would enjoy it”) & the other boarder & I washed up & collected the snails & slugs off the seedlings.

Word has just come that Eugene Alderman has died of meningitis.

M^{rs} Griffin (?) of Wiggs asked after you & particularly desired to be remembered to you.

Protection and Free Trade are being argued pretty hotly. I wonder are you a Protectionist? I'm a Free Trader by theory, but am beginning to realise there has been a war on. Told the Non-Party Political so the other night, and was nearly hewn in pieces. But of course they are all cranks there — Single taxers, lots of 'em.

On Sunday I went to Pipers (Rev-E-Js) to dinner. Flo is a pupil. It amused me to hear her laugh respectfully at my jokes, while she treated her Father's with silent scorn. I find that Non-Party, Women Students Club, Graduates Club, Debating Society, Red Cross Society, Philosophy Discussⁿ, Logic Tutorship, & teaching, dissipate my interests too much. But I certainly can't give up the last four — and I enjoy the company of the others, and the opportunity for making “speeches”, very much. I wish I could get mixed audiences. It's all very well for women to like me to speak, but I don't know how my performances would strike a male audience. There is a great pleasure in gripping an audience — especially a hostile one. I would like to be a tutor for the Workers' Education League — not too much work, yet the necessity for keeping up to date with modern thought, and to digest it and give a clear account of it, to be understood of the million. At school I have too much to do for my mind ever to be working at its best. I can only prepare 7 lessons a night badly. I doubt if I could do one excellently. I need very much time — to collect information, & then to sift & rearrange it. Sometimes I give a lesson really well — but generally I don't. However, all the children are interested, & that is something.

Goodnight, dear old boy. I suppose the problems of both of us will solve themselves if only we keep going.

Much love from Elizabeth Jackson

Letter 42

Monday 26th June 1916

My dear brother,

You are having a long time in hospital — at least I suppose we would have been told were you out. This mail brings news of Cyril's death. Poor things. Grandma cried. Of course she remembers him a little boy. Grandpa, up from bronchitis, wrapped in the red dressing-gown, buried the information in that vast silence of his, and talked of other things.

The flood was out. I surveyed it this morning, and reported the Club roller still a little visible. The water 6 feet through the fence of the little paddock. "Not much of a flood", said Grandpa. This afternoon the fence & the roller were covered & the water was to the top of the cricketer's table. "Fair to middling", said Grandpa.

Rover went with me this morning — his first real walk for a fortnight. He reassured himself of the safety of his favourite landmarks, and spent a good deal of time testing the relative easiness of hopping on 3 legs or limping on 4. Poor dear, but he is improving slowly.

We met several groups of children & dogs at the edge of the flood, and I remembered our little selves in those paddocks in the old days. We went right round, admiring those vague Corot-like trees on the sand hill near the golf links¹¹³, and enjoying the general green and grey with the hill veiled in distant rain. Overhead the sky was bright, with jagged black clouds over the sea. The red roofs stood out brightly — and those palms against the low wood over Reids way. The breeze rippled the muddy flood waters, and three blunt-faced calves, with no sign of the checking of their joyous youth on their necks, stood disconsolately on an island in the paddock where the fig tree is. The old Grange house looked very spruce inside its fresh green hedge; the park & Marryats signboards line, were of course under water.

Coming home tonight we splashed through water; as it is over the rails I suppose Grandpa will now call it a flood.

I was disappointed at not getting to Two Wells for the weekend, & I fear Mother was even more. I expect as it was too wet for the car, I ought to have put up with the

113 Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875) was a French landscape and portrait painter.

coach. But on a wet morning it is very dreary having breakfast at 6, & walking half a mile to the tram, & jolting along in a pill-box, with the manure dropping through off the boots of the passenger on top.

On Friday night M^r Isbister addressed the Varsity Red Cross. He has been in Egypt & what he had to say was interesting, but for an R.C. to be such a bad speaker! — a local preacher at his worst. & then so satisfied with himself!

I am still reading Morley's "Life of Gladstone". I am getting lots of insight into the affairs of the 19th century. Before I thought Gladstone stodgy; now I see he was great — as a statesman — tho' ponderous as a man. Perhaps at his worst he was a little like Cousin Sam as I imagine him.

I am also reading "Republic"¹¹⁴ for the 4th or 5th time. It takes some time for a mind like mine to realise how good it is. Now Pett Ridge's¹¹⁵ excellence I can see at once! Isn't "Name of Garland" good? I read some of it today. At school I have to read Emerson's "Representative Men"¹¹⁶ with the Higher Public. The hateful Bostonian. It is very mortifying to have to introduce my beloved philosophy through him as a text. He is so high-falutin' & idiotically "transcendental". Philosophy as expounded by him isn't respectable, its maundering.

I read the papers diligently (so does Grandpa) but I've come to the conclusion that the war is more than I can intelligently follow. Whether we retire or advance or stand still, someone is so impossibly plausible on the subject. All I know is that we must go on to the end, & that the next generation must be made as efficient as possible.

Your very loving sister

Elizabeth.

114 Plato's *Republic*.

115 William Pett Ridge (1859-1930) was a prolific English popular novelist. *Name of Garland* was one of his novels.

116 Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82) was an American essayist, lecturer and poet. *Representative Men*, 1850, was a collection of seven essays.

Letter 43

40, Davenport Terrace, Wayville, July 9th 1916.

Dear Canning,

Yesterday I was at the Grange, and they sent all sorts of messages to you. Grandpa is still in bed, so you won't have a direct letter from him by this mail. He was hoping to be up again today; the bronchitis is gone, but his heart is a little weak from coughing — nothing more than it has been before, you know. Grandma keeps astonishingly well.

Grandpa looked at the pictures in *Punch*, & especially liked one in which the Crown Prince said "Dam".

The Grange Methodist roll of Honour is being unveiled today, & Gpa. was very sorry to miss it.

The tennis cts were very wet, & the players rather quarrelsome. I never knew people quarrel in public before. But of course they are all good sorts, & even Mr McLean got over his little outburst.

Me, I've been in the (civilian) wars. The parent of one of my infants wrote to me complaining that he had warned yg. hopeful against "Don Juan", & that I had said it was much milder than its reputatn. I have replied that I cdn't tell that my remark wd. get an underlining from him having previously warned, that my remark embodied my experience of the poem, & that anyway one expected a sort of robust-mindedness from A.P. students. I didn't put it quite so baldly, but I wanted to add that if he would furnish me with a blank list, I wd avoid giving my opinion on the bks thereon. It is very difficult to know how far one shd eliminate one's personal equation, but really I tht. there was nothing much in Don Juan; I must have missed the points. He said it was "most defiling". I can't help thinking that my reply will reveal to him that I have a depraved mind. And you know you labelled me "respectable"! & I certainly thought my standard in literature was prim. So apparently I am one more of the "unsatisfactorious" on the M.L.C. staff. I never have felt competent or at ease, but it hadn't occurred to me that I wd. be bad for the morals of the youngsters. On the other hand it appears to be only my ability about which this parent has no doubts. So if I leave M.L.C. as an improper person, you are forewarned.

What I want is a billet where it is impossible to do any harm. I expect in a Jam factory I wd. spoil the brew. I never have felt competent in anything I've undertaken, except research work, & Prof H. is dissatisfied with that thesis, now. Even in Logic lectures, if it comes to practice (theory I can do) I sometimes get tied up.

Oh as an expert — feel the paper. I got 20 envelopes & sheets for 6d, & it wartime.

I'm being astonishingly economical, but I shan't have the £200 at the end of the year. I wish I could get a job with the workers education league — I'm not original, but I can take other people's ideas and make them interesting. And I couldn't hurt the morals of adults — I suppose?

By the way, I'm not worrying father with the affair. The parent is the President of the Confce — Rev. Frank Lade — and Father would be so hurt. Mother might even write to him to explain to him what a nice child I am really. M.L.C. staff is so shocking — one teacher a Fenian & pro-German (said to be); and — except for me apparently the others are respectable & dull. — Well, Ella isn't dull but she is only in the lower School.

Prof. Mitchell is a dear. I mentioned ordering a certain book. "But you shouldn't have done that. I've got it already! I'll bring it in". I wish I knew him & Prof. Brown on equal terms — socially, not only as a student. Being on a good social level is a great expander of the person. It isn't a question of moral worth, but of adaptability & adequacy to any situation; that gives power. Also, to feel easy, & to be assured that one's social standing gives one's opinions weight. This saves having to assert them. Still to get heard, having no position, requires more power — tho' social ease wd. make that exercise of power less arduous. I do so want to talk to interesting people on an equal level. Most of the students I know are dull, the vivacious are ignorant, & both sorts are rather afraid of either my age, or my (what they regard as) cleverness. And I know that I'm only half educated, and only spuriously intelligent, just enough to appreciate it in others, & feel impatient of fools. Yes, I know there's a war on; I'm knitting still! But I've got a grouch & a cold in the head. This morning in Church I stifled a sneeze with disastrous consequences. There was an explosion as of a Jack Johnson.

I have a copy of "The Anzac Book" lent me — shall buy one for Grandpa's birthday. Technically the drawing isn't good, I think, but the dash & cleverness, & savage humour — the Bulletin touch, but broader & richer.

Vera Oswald can't play tennis for 6 weeks — leg I think. She is such a delightful girl — & her colour! & the poise of her head! & a sort of sweet & eager seriousness. Miss Novise always enquires after "The Warrior". I wonder if she has forgiven you about that joke? My tennis is still in the stage where the other people feel it necessary to make compliments.

Very lovingly Elizabeth

Letter 44

40, Davenport Terrace, Wayville [16 August 1916]

Dear Grandpa & Grandma,

No, there is nothing wrong, only I feel so sorry for not seeing more of you yesterday. Tennis is a snare, but M^r Hughes, though an attraction, did not prove to be a delusion.!

When I got to the Exhibition, the Full Board was up, and the Gates locked. However, the crowd was good tempered, and I waited to see what would turn up. It rained, and I took a woman under my umbrella, in return for which she told me all about why her husband couldn't come. Several people loudly professed disbelief in the fulness of the Building, but a lot went off some through the rain, grumbling. Then someone opened one gate, the crowd at the back pushed, & women screamed. I managed to get inside undamaged, thanks to a man who shielded me, and found the Annexes of the Exhibition nearly empty, tho' not provided with chairs. On a box at one side was Miss McLean & a friend. We all shared the box standing on it during the speeches, and I saw and heard everything.

Of course no one really wanted to hear Crawford Vaughan¹¹⁷ or Sir Richard Butler¹¹⁸, "We want Billy Hughes". Still they listened fairly good temperedly. M^r Hughes speech you will see in the paper. For a man in his health to make so many people hear for nearly an hour was remarkable. I don't think he had much prepared his speech, but the points he developed most were that Australia has immense possibilities, and must develop them that we owe much to England for past and present defence,

that to England Empire means not aggression and aggrandisement, but the creating of free and self-governing peoples,

that all the freedom we have has had to be fought for by our ancestors, it is given to us by society, and that the man who will not fight for it, in order to pass on equal liberty to our posterity has no rights in the State. [He did not mention conscription, but this seemed to me to point to it.]

117 Crawford Vaughan (1874-1947), Australian politician and Labor Premier of South Australia 1915-17.

118 Sir Richard Butler (1850-1925), Liberal politician and parliamentarian, former Premier of South Australia.

That after the war we dare not relax our efforts; the gospel taught by this war is “Work, work, work”, and when it is over we must set to do the work of those who have died to keep our country for us. [This was as near as he got to any reference to the “Slowing down” policy, and the sentiment of continuous work was cheered to the echo by that great crowd.]

In referring to the Germans M^r Hughes said, if he lived in Germany for 60 years he would still be British, and he did not blame Germans for remaining Germans. It was natural and right. But he does blame Britishers who do not recognise and provide for the fact of our Germans feeling German.

No-one could call him, I think, a good orator in any ordinary sense of the word. He is not even really fluent, but slow, distinct and simple. The power of such a man, when a great crowd is disposed to hear him, is tremendous. He moulds their ways of thinking, making them agree to sentiments to which before they may have been indifferent or hostile. — For example, the notion that freedom does not always mean doing as you like but as your State/society likes, is not one which the average Australian in the street understands. But M^r Hughes put it so concisely and clearly and simply that I think even the larrikins understood why it must be so. Such meetings are a great educating power. I had never before seen a great crowd of people all thinking about —not themselves — but their duty to Australia and the Empire, and consciously debating opposing policies, and making up their minds about them. For the time even the debased and frivolous thought sternly, and were lifted out of their average everyday selves; they were no longer Tom and Dick, they were people who had to consider Empire problems, they were greater than their average selves.

M^r Hughes is not imposing, but he is able to say clearly what we are unconsciously striving after; and when the subject and the crisis are great, the effect is extraordinary.

It was interesting to hear the comments in the tram afterwards. One man remarked complacently “Well, he didn’t even mention conscription.” Another thought “We can expect conscription in a month or two, after that.”

I expect I shall be down on Saturday, but the effect of the speech will have worn off by then. This nice sunny day ought to be good for both of you. I am trying to cure my cold with more quinine. I’m tired of having to carry a handkerchief about all day.

I’m writing home, & to Canning, telling them such news as I know.

Miss McLean was very emphatic about being remembered to you both.

I remain

Your loving Granddaughter,

Elizabeth

Letter 45

Two Wells 29th August 1916

My dear brothers (plural due to Father talking, so doesn't that feel home-y?)

I've been laying the table for four lately; sheer reversion to old habit. You can't imagine how glad we were to get your letter (first from second time in England) after the 6 weeks wait. And the book on Malta was of course from you. That reached me first, and acted as proof that you were in England. From the evidence of your knowing our Two Wells address, we gather you have been getting our letters. You might occasionally say. Two Wells is all bucolics, cows, sloppy roads, and sunsets; not a particle of news is to be extracted from such a place. M'rover, the continual rain has made my brain mushy; it's weeks since I've done any real thinking. But I have read one great book, and one other good one.

Meredith's "Egoist"¹¹⁹ is beyond my description. It's like fan-painting. If you have read it you know what I mean. It is comedy, the characterisation is subtle the colours the same (as in fan-painting), and the ladies "float", and "swim" instead of walking. And the scenes are on terraces, lawns, or in woods, mostly.

The other book was "Traffics and Discoveries"¹²⁰ for the third time. It is delightfully if determinedly joyous. It reminds me a little of the recitations of their adventures by people who keep saying — "It was very funny. Of course it doesn't sound as funny as it was" — especially in the adventures with Pycroft in the destroyer in Blue Fleet and the motor episode with Pycroft & his friend "Hinch". But I do love it when an experienced motorist helps the novice out of a difficulty, and Pycroft says "Ought to a been in the Service. Probly is." And the general air of "O frabjous day, too loo, too lay" is refreshing.

Marjorie Walker has published a little booklet verse funds for Red Cross. She writes of Darlington Cemetery, that an old Maori chief rests there.

"Where, low the boobyallas keep
Their stunted watch & where the wild sea breaks.
Faint periwinkles mingling soft and dark
Twine their blue stars among the fallen stones.

119 Meredith's *The Egoist*, a tragicomical novel, was published in 1879.

120 *Traffics and Discoveries* was a collection of short stories published by Rudyard Kipling in 1904.

O ye, who woke unto an English lark,
For you, who sleep, an alien sea intones

A dirge, for ever. And, for ever, wild and free,
The salt wind sweeps the hillside. High and still,
Leading her track across the glimmering sea,
The dreaming moon looks down upon the hill.

Rest, little graveyard of forgotten lives,
Upon your rockgirt coast. The deep nights break
To dawning. High the sea bird wheels & dives,
And year by year the daffodils awake.

Despite the inaccurate scansion of one line, I like this.

Of Anzac she says: "When the bitter winds

Hurried the last dim transport from the shore,
And on the abandoned beach the smouldering fires
Flamed in the distance like a sacrifice
Twas left the world to judge Gallipoli."

Some other more Australian things I like too. She seems to me to catch the spirit of nature better than those poets who can only express it thro' the mouths of drovers talking bullocky. These people, however picturesque, are ephemeral: nature and her spirit are eternal. So I think Marjorie does well to see only nature and to ignore man — live man, anyway.

I am supposed to write an article for some Committee of publications (evidently unimportant; I don't know what!) on Individual Responsibility for Corporate Action. "Write a difficult article" said Iris Allen. But in 1500 words! It needs a whole Philosophy of the State to make it any more than mawkish.

I'm afraid my doings in Sydney won't make so interesting a chronicle as yours in England. We seem to be on the verge of conscription, though the Government has not definitely declared. I suppose Mr Hughes is right to try and take his party with him, but the long delay is losing him confidence. That is the worst of the democratic method; it is slow.

If our parcel ever reaches you, I hope the things will be of some use. But one feels so conscious that the irony of things sends the wrong things & at the wrong time to the wrong place. I expect you have piles of socks, and all the cheese you want — though Cliff Robinson said they had to blow the Last Post over theirs. And I expect you pine for ham, or some of the things we haven't sent.

Yours very lovingly

Elizabeth.

Letter 46

C/- Miss Sutherland
Ross St. Glebe Sydney. Monday, Sept. 4th, 1916.

Dear Grandpa and Grandma,

I am hoping that Father & Mother will be down when you get this, but I expect they will have gone up to Two Wells again. I wrote them a long letter yesterday expecting that they would get it on Tuesday but find that the letters posted on Sunday catch, not the Sunday but the Monday train.

My letter home described the journey, which was very interesting. I had a lot of sleep on the way to Melbourne, but not much after that. We were eight in the carriage — a Sydney lady and gentleman who had been seeing a son off to the front, a youth who was coming here to break bad news to his sister — his little brother had been electrocuted and 4 soldiers. One had been a bank clerk, one a pantomime actor, one was a socialist, and the other is an Australian Turk whose Father is fighting on the other side. All the soldiers were looking forward to two chops, and several poached eggs. At the beginning of the journey they also meant to go to the races, and then on to the theatre. By morning their desires had contracted to — dinner and bed!

But very likely, like me, they were equal to more after tea and a sleep. I was taken up the harbour on a ferry, and thoroughly enjoyed it.

Yesterday I went to Glebe Presbyterian Church in the morning, to Watson's Bay in the afternoon, and to St. Andrew's Cathedral at night. The Cathedral is long and tall and narrow with beautiful fluted pillars and Gothic windows; and the carved woodwork and the altar are lovely. But the preacher! — the brains of a kitten, and the antics of a mountebank.

Coming home afterwards I saw several street missions, one was by "The Israelites" who wear their hair long; their women have theirs down & wear white drawn silk bonnets; another was political.

And in the tram was a flabby looking young man smoking, who told another that — puff puff — he had been to church — puff. The other man said "Well, if you wasn't doing any good, you wasn't doing any 'arm." The young man went on "First time for years "puff. The organ was lovely; and the choir "Puff [*sic*]. "Makes you feel all different."

“Yes,” said the other man, “some people don’t ’old with churches, but I says it would be a funny world without ’em.” And then they talked billiards.

On the train there was a good deal of barracking for our respective cities. I found they hadn’t heard about our Torrens; if they had they could have scored off me.

I mentioned having lived at Norwood & one of the men asked eagerly if I knew Nelson? The pug at the Stadium? Had a brother a jockey? I replied regretfully that I couldn’t remember having met either of them.

My hostesses are the daughters of a Presbyterian minister. They have travelled over Tasmania, America, Canada, and England, and are full of information and fun. The youngest one calls everyone she dislikes “a murdering thief.” She is taking lessons in motor driving, and frequently imperils the lives of the rest of the class. She keeps a dog, a cat, pigeons, hens, and ducks and regrets the loss of a beautiful horse whose photograph she keeps.

The weather here is very warm. Thin clothing is a necessity, and everyone carries a sunshade! This house is quite near to the University, though not in a “good” part of the town — something like Hindley St. The house itself is old fashioned and big and comfortable. It was built in the days when the surroundings were paddocks; now shops and factories have gone up all round it.

I shall never get the hang of Sydney. Every time I go inside a building the city gets up and changes its position. This is very trying to a person who never was good at positions!

This afternoon I am going to a Women’s Club (of which I am to be honorary member for a week) and tonight to a Workers Educational class. Tomorrow I am to see Professor Meredith Atkinson¹²¹ at the University.

What my other engagements will be I don’t know, but I want to go to the Mitchell Library and to the Art Gallery.

I don’t expect I shall write again, as I’ll be back on Tuesday (tomorrow week.) I hope to be down on the Saturday, though don’t worry if I’m not —

I hope you are both well.

I remain

Yours lovingly

Elizabeth

121 Meredith Atkinson (1883-1929), a (male) educationalist and publicist, originally from England, was in 1916 the organiser of tutorial classes at the University of Sydney and lecturer in economic history.

1917

Letter 47

Ru Rua¹²² Pennington Terrace North Adelaide, South Aus.

3rd Jan. 1917

Dear Canning,

It is more than three weeks since I wrote to you, and in the meantime we have had a nice long diary from you — the length was nice, not what you have been through.

I am not supposed to write letters, and for the last few days I've been too tired to do them nicely even if I can potter. Before that I was very gay and full of ideas. If ever I do reach old age, I shall enjoy it, I find. Lying on my back & cooing at the ceiling I have also sorts of amusing memories, and a few inspirations. The D^r hopes to make me stronger than I've ever been, so I may be able to do my mouse's part in the little causes I have at heart. I wonder how the political talk goes in the trenches. Here I expect a Revolution & I'm not ready for it — too little. Though, to be sure, there are a good many conservatives at one end, a good many sheep at the other, and the agitators who see what's wrong, don't really see where the damage is, & hope to cure it as if human nature were perfect — & if it were, no cure wd. be necessary! So perhaps it will only smoulder thro' our time. But the No vote¹²³ makes continued smouldering doubtful.

Every yes voter in this hospital, except 2 undergoing operations — was sent to the polls, fortified by whisky & nurses. I only needed the Doctor.

D^r Mayo¹²⁴ is very good indeed. I and another of her patients are known as Mahomet and Uncle Ben Ezra respectively, & we write a very little paper — the Mayommedan — alternately. She is afraid of being beaten by an M.A., I shiver in my slippers for fear of being out done by one who isn't. Apart from this I do nothing, not even wash myself!

I[n] some ways I feel comforted. Almost as long as I can remember there have been times when I have been thought to be “putting on” illness. Because I had no pain I often

122 Ru Rua, on the corner of Pennington Terrace and Sir Edwin Smith Avenue, was a hospital established by a group of doctors in 1909. It moved to Barton Terrace in 1920.

123 There had been a conscription referendum in October 1916. The 'No' vote won (i.e. Australians voted against the introduction of conscription).

124 Dr Helen Mary Mayo OBE (1878-1967) was the most renowned of the early female doctors in Adelaide. She remained Elizabeth's doctor till the end of Elizabeth's life, witnessing her will and in 1964 giving her letters to the University Library.

thought my feelings must be imagination myself. At school, before pleasure & ambition helped, I was egged on & told all that was needed was an effort. And now I am told that I have been doing things beyond my physical energy for at least 14 years, perhaps longer! I feel quite cheered; I have no pain, only feel as if my limbs were dropping off.

What a disgraceful letter. I expect you wish you could lie in bed & do nothing.

Christmas day here we had 3^{ds} in the pudding (à la Grandma for we all got one) & bon-bons. Mine had a cap in it, & a staid Nurse put it on a chair with the remark "You won't want to wear that." I put it on for the Dr and paid out the staid nurse by putting my watch to her ear & urging her to hear wheels go around. She is now sometimes known to smile. Much love from Elizabeth.

[note on top left-hand side of page 1] My Senior passes were 21/25.

Letter 48

14, Davenport Terrace. Wayville. Sunday, 27th May, 1917

Dear Canning,

Yesterday I was at the Grange and saw the letter you wrote for Grandma's birthday. She would have been so glad that you remembered.¹²⁵ There was also a letter from Sam recalling Luckley memories that she would have enjoyed.

By now I suppose you have had our letters. I wonder whether hearing it among all those horrors will make the news seem blacker or lighter. Grandpa seems to fear death much less now than he did; I think it is because Grandma looked so happy.

Grandpa is unusually well, and we went to the bathing house and up the jetty. The sea was grey and cold and calm, and there were porpoises about. The sun came out for a little while, and we watched a big boat in the gulf that kept pottering about. Grandpa thought she might be a patrol. I stayed till after 8, and Grandpa talked a good deal, about the books he is reading — “Young Barbarians”, & “American Drollery” (Mark Twain¹²⁶, lent by M^r Sinclair) — and said he dreads writing letters. “But I like getting 'em. Now that's — that's — that's what the writer chaps call the essence of selfishness.” He was so pleased at knowing what the writer chaps would call it!

I told him about Ella's engagement — to a clergyman in Melbourne, Ashley Warren — and he said: “That's one of the things we'll never understand; how it is that the best looking girls don't marry first.” It turns out that he thinks Ella much below the average in looks, and thinks it is a marvel that she is to marry. He seems quite to judge of a woman's success in life by her marrying value.

On the whole, he is not sure that he wants another dog, they bark o' nights, and you have to get up and see what is the matter; and up the jetty they get fish-hooks in their mouths. On the other hand, there is a pleasure in seeing them go for the leg of the baker - - -

Somewhen or other he always tells me “I'll be glad when the war is over, and old Canning can come back”. The war news takes up so much of his time that he can't even

125 Elizabeth Canning — Grandma — died on 12 February 1917.

126 Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1836-1910), better known by his pen-name Mark Twain, was an American writer, publisher and lecturer.

read down the “deaths”. “I used to make time for that,” he says. Sometimes I tell him a little about my doings. Generally he listens in silence. I told him I am to lecture on “Mediaeval Gild Organisation” in the Prince of Wales Theatre on Tuesday night. He didn’t say anything, but he looked as if he thought they must be poor sort of fools to listen to me. (I think so too). He talked more about the “Anti-Shouting” Campaign about which I am seeing editors.¹²⁷ (So far the ‘Mail’ and the ‘Herald’ have promised us space.) Grandpa is much more certain than I am that it is bad for returned soldiers. “They drinks more than they means to”, he says. Somehow his approval quietened my worries. The Association decided to support Sydney in a petition to the Federal Government for a War Measure like England’s and although I had not been enthusiastic, at the meeting I did point out that some of them meant to vote “no” on bad grounds. So when the motion was carried, I could not say I would not play, and there was no one else who would visit the editors. But I am afraid the men will think we want to take away their little pleasures. Unfortunately drink has killed one convalescent and sent two others insane. Of course it only did that because they were already ill and nerve-shaken.

Grandpa has some little red breasts & blue breasts — tiny hoppitty birds — that interest him very much. Last year he used to watch their “nestes.” “Nestes”, that is what Chaucer writes!

Grandpa always seizes on ‘Punch’ as soon as I get down, and laughs or asks for explanations for the next hour. I am afraid that the change to small print will annoy him. He suggested having a draught-board, so I am asking Mother to bring ours down. He may not play after all, of course — but he used to!

Mother will have told you such news as there is. I only came back on Monday, but it seems years. Even school, thank Heaven, seems but a drop in the bucket when one is busy. But I haven’t had time for a single page of philosophy, though I did think through a problem one night.

How remote and peaceful all this must seem to you. I nearly cried when Sam wrote about the pork pie being extracted from your parcel. Cake is the only food we can send much — and I don’t think you have got any of ours. Lunch tablets & Bovril are so uninteresting — but pork pie!

I have another pair of socks ready.

Sam evidently thinks a lot of you; he was very pleased with a letter he had had. I suppose the impression isn’t reciprocal; but I expect he has his good points.

Tuesday

Goodbye dear old boy

Your loving sister

Lizzie Jackson

127 The Anti-Shouting Campaign was a campaign run by the Women’s National Movement for clubs and hotels to be closed when troop ships came in. There were many complaints about the abuse of alcohol.

Letter 49

14, Davenport Terrace, Wayville, South Australia
Sunday, 17 June, 1917

Dear Canning,

Your long diary about your 30 feet dugout and some of your daily life gave us all much pleasure. I read it through twice to Grandpa, and he is going to read it to "Old Newie." The story of Fritz's gun crew evacuating, "one man steadily increasing his lead" made him chuckle, and the chopping up of the ice for the kettle amused him. The 6000 yards range of the gun we had to stop & discover to be about 3 ½ miles.

After the letter was read he said I could "write and tell your brother I am as right as ninepence." He certainly is well, and if not quite so jolly, can still enjoy reading and fishing and yarning. He caught 7 small tommies, one large one, & a flat head, one day this week.

Before we went out to lunch Grandpa lit the fire. Between the courses he went in to see that all was well; but when we got back some wood and coke had fallen into the fender. Grasping the tongs he complained to it thus: "Now couldn't you just have waited till I eet my bit of pie." Then each piece was seized with the same precision and intentness with which you have seen him spear a pickled onion, and firmly put into its place. Then he pressed down the top log with his foot, and retired to his chair with a "There! Now you can read me Canning's letter again."

After dinner I darned socks and he looked at Punch, reading aloud the bits that pleased him, or observing that "this chap" (the writer of Charivari) makes you think before you see what he means." Seaman's verses in which Little Willie soliloquizes that "if kings are put down root

And branch, & Hohenzollern's do a scoot" he would be alright, because of his loot, amused him very much. He read it all aloud, chortling over the unexpected rhymes, and opining "as a fellow as knew what's what could make a recitation out of that."

I stayed till the 8.20 train; I would like to have stayed for the weekend but there is a psychology lecture to prepare every week now on a rather difficult subject (aesthetic appreciation) and on Wednesday week a history one on "Imperial Organization after the war." I am wondering what audience will be foolish enough to listen to me on such

a subject. But it is fun to see my name as giving a lecture in the same course as one by Prof. Naylor & M^r Angas Parsons, even if it is only to the Y.W.C.A.

On Tuesday night Lady Galway¹²⁸ lectured on “The Place of Modern Languages in a University”; and in the course of it she bade us beware of mediocrity. I felt conscience-stricken, but have come to the conclusion that it is for other people to refrain from asking me to do things, and to refuse my applications for position, not for me to make the withdrawal. That is the way of life, each to do his best and his most ambitious, and the world to do the judging & the squashing. A mediocre place that accepts a mediocre person — well, it wd. choose another if not me. I must simply do my best.

[remainder of letter missing]

128 Lady Galway was the wife of the Governor of South Australia.

Letter 50

Davenport Terrace, Wayville, South Australia
28th June, 1917

Dear Canning,

After such a break I think I had better start again. We have now received a letter of yours — or field card — of April 25th. Somehow it is a comfort to know that you know of Grandma's death. Before it somehow seemed that your letters came out of a former age; they do come out of another world.

I have sent Sam a Bulletin to be forwarded to you. The verses on "The Betrayers of Democracy", & the Daylight Saving Story, are the best things in it, I think.

Thoughts won't come! It is likely that I shall have to change my boarding-house, and any little thing unsettles my mind. The present place isn't very clean, but it is kind, & lately it's temper has been improving! I am irritable myself, except when public opinion makes it easy to be reposeful (isn't it queer how easy that sort of compulsion does make things?), but I am also very susceptible to irritability in others.

It is so catching. At school nothing disturbs me; being pleasant is no effort; and that must be because the children are not allowed to be irritable to me and because their opinion of me would change if I were so. Here I am deliberately and elaborately patient! Home I have to try even harder & do not always succeed. But of course asperity or obtuseness in a relation hurts me more. Not that that is any excuse for bad manners. I do like Maurice Hewlett's saying that "Manners are one's feelings clothes and ought to be a nice fit." In that case if one's feelings are all they should be, one's manners would be very fair — though in clothes it is necessary to look to cut as well as fit; and similarly polish of manner is pleasant.

And if your feelings are not nice? Well, try & make them conform to the manners, their clothing! As a fat woman puts on stays.

Fancy talking about manners to a man at the Front. But you know I don't mean the finicky sort, and anyway the same old problems go on here, and this particular young Methodist is not very satisfied either with her manners or her feelings.

Yesterday I lectured on "Imperial Reorganization after the War", by the request of the Y.W.C.A. I expected an adult audience, and found 50% schoolgirls, & 49%

graduates. The other 1% was a reporter. It was a good lecture but much too difficult for girls — too chunky. I am sure that to bore your fellow-beings, who have so little time to live in the sun, is the unpardonable sin, and that yesterday I committed it. The really enthusiastic person was the reporter, & he stayed afterwards to get me to repeat one of the jokes, and declared it to have been “a political education.” But I feel very repentant although I do not see that I could have altered the lecture so late as when actually viewing the audience — And of course everyone said it was etc etc

[two pages missing]

Kate Combs has been good enough to suggest sending you parcels on our behalf, as she knows you get hers, and food can be more easily sent the short distance. In some ways it would be better, though it seems easier to pack cheese & fish & fruit as one thinks of them, than to make out a list for someone else. And it is our parcel so much more when we have handled and sewn it. Of course we haven't the remotest notion whether what we send is any use. Don't refrain from criticising for fear of hurting our feelings, and if there are other things that you would like and we haven't sent, don't be afraid to mention them. Sometimes it seems absurd to send such tiny quantities — what is one tin among so many? Yet there are limitations on the amount of parcel. And the sameness must be monotonous — if you get them all.

Hassells are coming out in the publishing line. They have brought out 2 of Prof. Hendy's war books, and Leon Gellert's¹²⁹ “Songs of a Campaign”, and now a pamphlet called “Compulsory Marriage”. Nothing narrow about that firm! Perhaps they will begin to specialise as they get older. Did you know Leon? He was a teacher, and has been through a campaign, and is back for good, I think. The University awarded him the Bunday prize for verse — first time there has been occasion to give it. The best thing in it, I think, is of the man “who killed, and heeded not the making of men”, but whose grief now is “to have to touch her hair with bloody hands.” Leon's view, like that of all our people, is very fragmentary. The Bulletin complains that one of his sonnets ends on a rhymed couplet. So do some of Wordsworths.

I am doing almost no literary reading, though I have lately digested Jebb's “Britannic Question”¹³⁰ (1913) Berriedale Keith's “The Imperial Union & the Dominions”¹³¹ (1916) & Curtis's “Problems of the Commonwealth”¹³² (1916) The two latter, on opposite sides, are excellent. Curtis is for Imperial Federation, with an English Parl: analogous to

129 Leon Maxwell Gellert (1892-1977), schoolteacher, soldier, poet and journalist. Born in Adelaide, he later lived in Sydney, but returned to Adelaide at the end of his life. *Songs of a Campaign*, 1917, was his first published book of poetry.

130 *The Britannic Question: A Survey of Alternatives*, 1913, by Richard Jebb (1874-1953).

131 Arthur Berriedale Keith (1879-1944), Scottish constitutional lawyer, scholar of Sanskrit, and Indologist. *Imperial Unity and the Dominions* was published in 1916.

132 *The Problem of the Commonwealth*, 1916, by Lionel Curtis (1872-1955).

our Dominion ones, & a Parlt. of the whole Empire to deal with all external affairs. Keith (Prof. of Law in Edinburgh) thinks it would be enough if each Dominion sent a confidential minister home to live in contact & consultatⁿ with (the Foreign Offices) Cabinet. The latter dodges the real grievance — that war & peace are made for us by men responsible to the British Parl^r only; but it might lead to less friction. The Empire is so complex that it will take a triumph of mental ability to continue it. “The Crown of Empire is a Crown of Thorns,” as the Round Table people suggest. But I think if we went outside the Empire something worse would happen to us, even from the business point of view. And ideally it is worth very much to be a self-governing people in a world wide Empire. It helps to widen the vista, to take us out of our provinciality.

I am at the second volume of Rousseau’s “Confessions”¹³³, Still gathering understanding from his amazing frankness but much repelled by his sordidness & self-centredness. You would not guess that his mind could achieve greatness. Some of his moral gaps are probably usual with Frenchmen as he hardly seems to notice some of them himself, or he may have had a real moral vaccuum. I believe an article in the *Revue Philosophique* suggests the latter. Haven’t read it yet. Sending the children to the foundling Home was pretty calm! & being proud of marrying their mother 20 yrs later. Moreover this woman seems to have been — well, soft. How could he? I expect men have both more brains & more passion than we. Poor beggars.

Your very loving Sister, Elizabeth Jackson.

133 *The Confessions*, 1782, an autobiography by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-78).

Letter 51

Whitley House, Grange, South Australia
Sunday, 8th July, 1917

Dear Canning,

We are sitting in the dining room by a big coke fire which Grandpa is poking and keeping big and red. Outside a piercing North wind is bringing up the clouds. Grandpa says he is "still going strong."

Church was nearly full his morning, and the collection was over £1. The preacher talked mostly about Hell, but then, as Grandpa said, he could be heard. That has almost become the test by which for him a sermon gets placed.

Yesterday the Grange married men, in fancy dress, marched from the Hotel to meet the Henley Beach married men with whom they were to play football in aid of the Red Cross & Third Light Horse Trench Comforts. Of course the Grange band didn't turn up, but the procession looked well. We especially enjoyed a "tank", which fired at us.

After the march I went over to tennis — Percy, Mr Sanders, Miss Norice, Miss Martin & I; later, Miss McEwen. (Belle)

Last night was the annual meeting. Very peacable. Adey Crisp was there, & asked after you. M^r Sanderson was re-elected Captain, Miss Norice became vice-C. Miss Crisp, & Adey & I go on the Committee. Money in hand, £4. Courts & shed floors to be tarred. We went home at 9.15. Everybody applauded Percy, and flattered him, as is necessary. He is a thorough worker; his peculiarities are also known to you and forgiven of us all. So you see the "annual wrangle" was not held. War hath its victories.

Grandpa took your long letter down to M^r Newie. He stays in bed these days, just for warmth! Some fish were caught last Sunday, but as Grandpa justly remarks "When I got out there on Tuesday, I was too late."

I have been out a lot this week — lectured on psychology as usual on Wednesday (I always dread it, yet enjoy the hour when it comes) then went on to the Non-Party Political Association, where various people more or less incompetent reviewed recent books. My job was to explain the "Round Table" & the article on "The Spirit of Germany" — "in 5 minutes, & please make some jokes."

Thursday night there was a meeting of the Sociological Discussion people at the University to hear Miss Farr on "Women in Democracy." I had never heard her, and went prejudiced. However, she wasn't feministic, and was fairly impartial. Still, from her (very carefully charming) appearance I agree with the summary of her which runs: "She makes up her mind what she wants, & fascinates men till she gets it."

On Friday I went to the Classics Association. The lecture was on "Tennyson, Browning, & the Classic Spirit." The best things in it were the quotations, & a remark that "Tennyson wrote the "Idylls of the King" with one eye on the Arthurian legends and the other on Queen Victoria."

All this sounds very stodgy. I know going out puts me off proper study, and yet after dealing with small fry all day human intercourse with one's semblables at nights seems necessary. Yet lectures aren't quite the thing. One should join a good club, and drop in now and again. The Queen Adelaide Club wouldn't suit me, though, nor I it.

One of the girls lent me a letter from a damaged South African, which I brought down for Grandpa. Their Campaign ran into 2 wet seasons; it rained for 2 months on end, & they had nothing but their overcoats to sleep in. No tents; they just lay where they were. Their boots wore out, and their trousers, & their hats. Some of them wore bags with arm & neck-holes, & grass & a handkerchief on their heads. When the warm weather came there was no water. After camping on a river for 4 days rest they found that 200 dead niggers were in it a little higher up. Out of 1100 only 75 returned from the campaign above ground & out of hospital. Malaria & dysentery were worse than at Gallipoli (or dysentery was I suppose). Lions were about in hundreds, and as the sentry was only allowed to shoot if he could produce a body next day, he was often carried off after an ineffectual fight with a bayonet. The Germans forced them to entrench for 2 months, and aeroplanes had to be brought up, & bigger guns. Often the only food was flour & coffee — unless they could get an ostrich or a zebra.

I shall be posting a Bulletin in a few days. It is bought! We get papers & letters very irregularly now, & often are not told about an outgoing mail. But home grown papers are always procurable. We are already providing this years Xmas books, in the hope that they will reach the front in time! Last years were packed in September. & some didn't arrive till March. Letters of thanks for them are just to hand.

With much love, I remain,

Your affectionate sister, Elizabeth Jackson.

Letter 52

14, Davenport Terrace. Wayville. 12th July, 1917

Dear Canning,

There are rumours that the Australians are having a rest; we hope you are one of them And yet I wish their sweethearts were there to look after them. Do you remember Xavier de Maistre's "Voyage autour de ma Chambre"¹³⁴, and his comments on la bête? The flesh and the devil take a little struggling with, but I will not believe that our men cannot overcome both, even though they (the flesh etc) are as bad as the Germans.

To turn to an everyday [*sic*] subject: this afternoon Miss George, once head of Advanced School for Girls, gave a tea-party to the teachers of M.L.C.¹³⁵, her last school, on her retirement. Miss George looked like Betsy Trotwood¹³⁶, and the rest looked like — teachers.

The party was at Moore's, the big drapery place which has become an Emporium. Ella and I looked at the furniture department afterwards. I would like to furnish a house, and live as a man might, but Mother doesn't much encourage the idea. Of course if I had a cottage and a maid there would be no saving done, but why should I "pig it" in uncomfortable lodgings all my youth? True, at present I put everything into the War Loan, and I suppose that course must be continued at present. The modern Pepys writes in his diary "One man may not give another to drink. This do bring the war home to one"! If saying goodbye to our men did not do that for women, the thwarted desire to shop would. Before the war I hadn't the money, now I have (some) money, & the desire, but not the conscience.

I have been made Tutor in Psychology and Philosophy to the Workers Educational Association — the appointment is from the University — and small as the pay is, it is

134 Xavier de Maistre (1763-1852) was a French military man who became known as a writer when he wrote *Voyage Autour de ma Chambre* ('Journey Around my Prison Room') in 1792 when he was under arrest in Turin as a consequence of a duel.

135 Madeline Rees George (1851-1931) was headmistress of the Advanced School for Girls from 1886 to 1908, and of Adelaide High School from 1909 to 1913. She had a sister, Marian Rees George, also a teacher.

136 Betsy Trotwood, whom Elizabeth compares Miss George to in both this letter and a later one, was a character in Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*, 1850. Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812-70) was an English novelist and social critic.

an addition to teacher's salary, and I hope it will lead to enough advanced work to make school unnecessary in a year or two.

It seems unfair to dwell on a feminine career in these days when men find theirs scattered to the winds, but mine is a very insignificant one, and it is at the expense of no man, at any rate of no South Australian, for I have done more in these subjects than any other S.A. student.

Of course I was at the Grange on Saturday, & stayed till 5.54 Sunday. Grandpa was purring with satisfaction — health, and having Mother there. M^{rs} Lewis, the housekeeper, is a very nice woman, but quite brainless. She is helpless; doesn't know how to make jam, boil corned beef, & so on. But that sort of thing appeals to men, I believe. They like having their advice asked on the most un-accustomed things. We all do. And her muddling results in something or other to eat. Anyway, Grandpa doesn't want to change, and that is all that matters. He makes the fire, & boils the kettle, & sees that there is washing-up water, with simple pride; & even sneaks away to sweep the verandah! It isn't so easy to give orders to a housekeeper as to a maid, and I really think he likes doing these little jobs. He feeds the fowls and looks after the cats, and inspects his little estate. We go solemnly over the vines & the almond trees every Saturday, & agree that they need pruning. And we admire the geraniums, and perhaps sit on the verandah seat in the sun and observe that the blinds need mending. And then I get the string-tin and (well under observation and orders the while) mend them.

We have had lots of rain — indeed, my new umbrella is wearing through already. Heaven send we may yet learn to make things as well as the Germans! Also I yearn for some English made boots. The Bulletin may say what it pleases, Australian made Protected shoes are dear & nasty & let in the wet. I think it would be much better to let each part of the Empire devote itself to developing what it is characteristically best fitted for, and our job at present is production rather than manufacture.

But I do hope we shall learn to make most things somewhere within the Empire as good as anywhere out, only I'm not sure that I like the idea of trying to be self-sufficient to the point of exclusiveness.

I wonder if political ideas change much at the Front? Some of the letters published in the papers as coming from there strike one as being written by exactly the same Pro Bono Publico and Pater Familias we knew of yore.

Not much war (or other) new literature comes my way, but "The Confessions of a Soldier", if as honest and complete as Rousseau's, ought to be enlightening, if someone would write it. Pot boundness is the trouble with most of us, and anything that cracks our old pot, and forces us to get another, or, better, anything that stretches our present hide, is good.

Goodnight, dear old boy. Love from Elizabeth.

Letter 53

14, Davenport Terrace, Wayville, South Australia
31st July, 1917.

Dear Canning,

This mail has been and gone and sprung itself on me in the most unexpected way. I even have a Bulletin for Sam, to be forwarded to you, which looks as if it can't get packed in time. You would enjoy this beautiful blue day, the almond blossom is out, and that parrots chatter.

It is too bad to talk to you about my uninteresting bustle, but in the time I can think of nothing else! 4 lectures and several meetings, to say nothing of 60 lessons, in a fortnight, leaves one rather breathless, especially as 2 afternoons & evenings go to Grandpa even if the sky falls and he doesn't seem appreciative! But of course one goes to him for one's own sake, and not for his. He talks of playing draughts and dominoes with Little Lydia Lewis (aged 16) so that will help his evenings.

Last night I gave the public lecture on "What is Psychology?" They expected a small meeting, & we overflowed and had to go into the Prince of Wales Theatre. I got the point very clear about Psychology being not the knowledge of objects, but the systematic observation and explanation of the way of knowing, & how Philosophy discusses the difference made to our idea of reality, by this consideration of the way it is known. Set out step by step, with explanations from baby & ordinary life, it was a pleasure to my inexperience to see the intentness with which the men followed. It is so difficult, and I made it so clear, that I don't think anyone there knew what a feat it was; because I really gave them many aperçus into the value of such a subject, and into philosophy. Of course when it came to Applied Psych. I window-dressed for all I was worth. That was easy & interesting & less exhausting for them & for me.

Next week — Fellow Feeling — will I am afraid be an anti-climax. It can't be made so spectacular.

To be clear & interesting is all I can ever hope. The good Lord didn't make me original.

At the Women Student's Club we are busy getting into rooms — part of the old police barracks, ungraciously kicked our way by a sulky government. We are doing our

best to make them habitable. The doors & skirtings were cedar, & the pigs painted them. The 'Varsity red Cross has also been asked to switch off pyjamas and send money; so we have a concert on hand there. I haven't much sense about furnishing, but then I know it; so I acquiesce in the suggestions of the tasteful (absorbing information) and just look after the club & undergraduate money interests, & umpire their rows. This is more fun than it sounds, & is about as incapably done as a frank brother will imagine for himself. In fact I am hurt & amazed at the mediocrity with which Australia puts up. Why, if I hadn't pointed out my social unfitness, they would have given me an official position from the Council of the Varsity over the women students! The woman member remarked, when I had explained "You are a wise little thing." The fruits of wisdom are another year at M.L.C.

Don't be cynical, & say "Ye gods! and a war on!" Our ant-like movements have to continue. We can't stop and imagine the horrors. It does no good, and we do it in our dreams.

But perhaps men at the front are too near to naked reality to be cynical. You must see the best & the worst there and learn to stress the best most, for that shows to what we have grown, and away from what.

Write when you feel like it, & bust the censor. He doesn't really take it in, unless its war news. Oh! I went to McEwen to see him hypnotise people! It was great fun. The thought reading was a fake which even I could see through. The other was right enough. While they thought they were watching a cock-fight, & some were making bets, one man said it was a disgusting exhibition, & tried to fetch the police!

Much love from Elizabeth Jackson.

Letter 54

Whitley House, Grange. Sunday, 12th Aug. 1917

Dear Canning,

Yesterday I enquired about Forster's editⁿ of Walter Savage Landor¹³⁷, which you asked me to get for Father. It came out in 1872, 8 vols. at 14/- each. Only second hand copies are now available. M^r Maurice is enquiring about them. I wonder if Landor wrote 8 vols. all worth that to such un-falutin' readers as we. I always think there's a lot in all "collections" that has run to seed. I hate selections & I hate collections. The book here & the book there that you like & want — But that's only me.

I am sending to Paris for Duhamet's¹³⁸ "Vie des Martyrs" just out. (Mercure de Paris, 3f. 50.c.) The review in the "Times", & the extracts, read as though it is a really remarkable book. The "martyrs" are the tortured in this war. Duhamet was a pull before the war; he is a doctor now.

I have one of those colds that make your chest gurgle, your throat tickle, & yr. eyes water. It was rash of me to spend the week end here in the circumstances (but I so seldom can spare the Sunday) because Grandpa's dealings with his porridge worry me so much more. You know how trying my "manners" always were! And I dislike to see him get onto a chair & take the curtain and kill a fly on the window-pane with it! Or even to see him crack a silverfish on the diningroom tablecloth. You probably won't believe me when I say that my feeling has only manifested itself in explosive giggles. Love isn't blind, but it sometimes sees things in their right proportion, thank Heaven. My feeling for Grandpa isn't a bit affected adversely by his "accidental" qualities, nor is it because of anything he has done on me (& indeed I would not call him an unselfish man) it is for the man that results from moral sturdiness, shrewdness, humour, and a sort of self-sufficiency. You really are about the only person necessary to his happiness. I no longer count for him now that the interest of my youth (he likes young girls) is not able to give way to seeing me with a family. I'm simply not normal, in his eyes, or else

137 Walter Savage Landor (1775-1864) was a prolific English writer and poet. His collected works fill sixteen volumes.

138 Georges Duhamel (not Duhamet) (1884-1966) was a French author. He was a doctor who served with the French army in World War 1.

am “undesired”; and there is little community of interest. And though I do care, I would like to be necessary to his happiness, yet I never feel that I can stay away. I go to see him for my pleasure, not for his.

But you need not fear to find him much changed. A little of his charm was only evoked by Grandma (tho’ I had never realised that before) and some other things in him her refinement repressed, but he is essentially the same.

Unluckily with Grandma my heart never would feel things in their right proportions. My head knew what was to be said for her. I am so glad that from you she got all the affection that her very loving nature craved. Had she been placed socially beyond the reach of certain stimuli to unfortunate characteristics, she would have been adored as she deserved.

Father & Mother were down this week. I think I do give them satisfaction, and noone can know how necessary their love is to my happiness. This doesn’t make it less true that they and I are better for one another by letter and for holidays rather than the tedium of commonplace days, and I think they know that as well as I. People who live in such little houses as we do, and in such isolated places, really see far too much of one another, and get too little intercourse with others, to keep really healthy tempered. In-living is as bad mentally as in-breeding is physically, I am sure that even husbands & wives ought to have occasional spells from one another.

What a sententious letter! But people with colds do take themselves seriously & of course I am a very communicative person, & expression is necessary to my mental well-being! It is different with you, I think — unless you are one of those unhappy people who do want to, but can’t get the cork out.

It has been so nice to have letters from you by the last 3 mails. Imagination reels before the attempt to think what your circumstances are, but we are grateful for any word. Matter personal to you interests us more than the military situation (well, you know what I mean) so that the censorship does not affect us here only as it makes you dislike saying anything that a third eye is to see.

Grandpa is reading “Captain Bluit¹³⁹,” & predicting that the Judge’s motn [*sic*] will never come to anything. I have been re-reading “The Lost Tribes” of George Bermingham¹⁴⁰, and laughing over the collapse of Father Roche under the firm eye of the bishop, & of the fraternising of M^{rs} Dann with that austere gentleman, genially called “bish” by her. It is a good book. You keep saying “ — wish the story wd move, but I daren’t skip!” Its all so funny. I have now taken down again “The Parsons Pleasaunce,” sent out by you last year. I do enjoy this & take it to heart —

139 A novel by American author and humorist Max Adler, pseudonym of Charles Heber Clark (1841-1915).

140 George A Bermingham, pseudonym of James Owen Hannay (1865-1950), was an Irish clergyman and a prolific popular novelist.

“From robber bands in stranger lands,
And perils of the sea,
From women’s tongues, & all loud guns,
Good Lord, deliver me.”

But I think Ditchfield¹⁴¹ is a bounder, out for money —

& very like Sir Oliver Lodge in science. But very readable, for all that.

[There is no conclusion, but this letter was enclosed with the following letter.]

141 Rev. Peter Hempson Ditchfield (1854-1930), author of *The Parson’s Pleasaunce*, published by Mills & Boon in 1910, was an Anglican clergyman, historian and prolific author.

Letter 55

[*typed letter*]

14, Davenport Terrace Wayville, South Australia
Sunday, 16/8/17 [*actually 19 August*]

Dear Canning,

Whoever said that I was a bad writer? This is as neat as anything, and only the third sheet of paper that I have tried to type on. But I expect you learned long ago. Some things I dont understand yet, but I havent had a lesson yet. The machine is a Corona, and I expect I am a reckless idiot to treat myself to it, especially in war time. But every time I have to write anything important and neat, my temper goes to smithereens. All the same I cant say that I altogether like the look of type. It is so callous and calculating, and impersonal. This doesn't look the least like the hurly burly of my thinking, does it? But my very personality annoys people, and I ought to be glad that one thing that comes between me and them is gone.

Nothing less than the sky falling was ever to keep me from Grandpa on a Saturday, but this time my chest has risen, and there is nothing for it but bed. Several weeks ago Grandpa told me that he had written "the old boy" "another nice letter." so I hope you got it.

This has been an annoying week at school. Exams and colds and devilment generally. Thank heaven there is a probability of six months more seeing the last of M.L.C. for me. The w.e.a. people think they may want me on a fixed salary then, instead of on piece-work, as now. You would never think I would have the courage to discourse to elderly people on psychology and philosophy, still less that they would listen. Of course it remains to be seen how long they do. I think I do know a good deal, but in S.A one gets no background and little experience.

Unfortunately the class has so lately begun that we are not to take a holiday this term, though M.L.C. gives a fortnight next week, and it is the Varsity vacation.

I am enclosing the letter I wrote last week. The speed of this has become that of a line a minute! (Exclamation marks are inventions of my own.) [*handwritten exclamation mark*]

With very much love,

I remain,

Your loving sister,

Elizabeth Jackson. [*handwritten signature*]

Letter 56

[*typed letter*]

C/- M^r Pentelow¹⁴², Public Library, South Australia.
19/9/17.

Dear Canning,

Mother is quite sure to tell you all the news about how she got me here in two twos. The house is just behind the Public Reading Room, a red brick one which you may remember. My room is upstairs, overlooking Govt. House. Hope Lady Galway wont think it necessary to call. I have my meals brought up, and the cooking is good. Boarding life suits me excellently, as long as it is clean. The daughter of the house is to be married to a returned soldier, and the money from me goes to it. I am Milly's cow, so to speak, and am a tie mornings and nights. I had to get Mrs. Pentelow to take down her pictures. It was too embarrassing to bath before a text which warned: "your Father knows".

I think I told you that I have to give up school at the end of this year. I am supposed to go out to grass, but I shall keep the W.E.A. work; it is too congenial to give to someone else. I have tried to persuade Dr. Mayo that if one is going to read it may as well be philosophy as novels. She disagrees. It is very pleasant to idle with a clear conscience. You and I were brought up to work for the night is coming.

Last night I went to the Repertory acting of "The Dolls House".¹⁴³ The presence of the Governor's Wife made up for the amateurishness! Dr Mayo sent me the ticket, so I suppose that is part of the cure. The hero merely recited, but the others were amazingly good. Nearly everyone "dressed", but the collection of pre-war garments must have been unique. A woman near me in a sort of bathgown kept saying "oh, thats naughty." A thing queer to me is that all the papers praise the hero, and rather snub the good players. James Anderson is the man's name. Ethelwynn Robin was Mrs. Linde, and the Register dismisses her with a phrase. She was really less sticky than anyone. Hear the words of an expert.

142 Samuel Job Pentelow was the caretaker of the South Australian Public Library. The Pentelows lived in a house very close to the Library building.

143 *A Doll's House* is a three-act play by Norwegian poet and playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), first performed in 1879.

Do you know Francis Thompson's¹⁴⁴ poetry much?

“In the rash lustihood of my young powers,
I shook the pillaring hours
And pulled my life upon me; grimed with smears,
I stand amid the dust o' the mounded years —
My mangled youth lied dead beneath the heap.
My days have crackled and gone up in smoke.
Have puffed and burst as sun-starts on a stream.

Ah! Is Thy love indeed
A weed, albeit an amaranthine weed,
Suffering no flowers except its own to mount?
Ah! must -
Designer infinite!
Ah! must Thou char the wood ere Thou canst limn with it?

“Ah, fondest, blindest, weakest,
“I am He Whom thou seekest!
Thou dravest love from thee, who dravest Me.”

But I am not sure that I like the “Hound”¹⁴⁵ best. “Ex ore infantum”¹⁴⁶ is exquisite, and “The Foretelling of the child's Husband” and “The Child-woman”.

I have been too tired lately to read much — really I sound like an invalid. A casual eye could see nothing. wrong, e.g. Mrs. Pentelow.

All through “The Doll' House” I was knitting the leg of a sock, but there seems a doubt as to whether we shall be able to send more parcels. I have heard that those waterproof Burberries with the detachable lining are very good for warmth, and you can sleep in the lining. If you would like one, get it from me. £8 is the cost, I think. I would get Kate to send one, but you may have already got one. If not, you could wire to her to send. I cant bear to think of you being cold.

I have just discovered another text which shows what a sense of fitness my landlady has. She never lights the gas on the stairs but then she hangs a motto there which explains “Thou are art A light unto my path.” She really is a good woman though, - but I almost wish she were not a Methodist. She will be shocked the days I do not go to church. Still, she will soon be used to it.

144 Francis Thompson (1859-1907), an English poet, writer and ascetic, who became addicted to opium. He died of tuberculosis.

145 ‘The Hound of Heaven’, Thompson’s most famous poem.

146 The poem was actually called ‘Ex Ore Infantium’.

Mumps are very bad. I passed onto a class before recess advice on how not to catch them. After the interval I gave what I thought was the full advice to another class, but one of them prompted me, "Yes, Miss Jackson, and what about washing the mouth?" The young scamps had talked my words all over the school. Later on one was discovered doing strange things with her mouth and a wash-bowl, and explained that she was "busy not catching mumps." I like to see people taking the Higher Public able to be frolicsome.

Dear old chap, I hope you will be able to be frolicsome again some day. Goodbye now, with much love from

Elizabeth Jackson. [*handwritten signature*]

Letter 57

[typed letter]

C/- M^{rs} Pentelow, Public Library, Adelaide
South Australia.7/10/17. (Sunday)

Dear Canning,

I have been wondering whether you have had your teeth done. Poor old boy, that is the worst sort of operation for you, as bad as amputation, so far as pain goes, I suppose. If they don't give you a decent set we must get a better dentist when you come back. I know it isn't as good as the right ones straight off. Grandpa hopes they wont be big ones. "All them people you sees on post-cards shewing their big teeth must have cheap sets." Poor Marie! Or was it Nellie Stewart? Grandpa is as dear as ever. When he heard that the coal strike meant only three mails a week for Father, "O, bagger it," says he, "only three newspapers."

He looks for me to take him reading matter every week. I wish I knew as well as you what his tastes are. I'm afraid to take him much more George Bermingham. He will be so frank about it when he gets tired. Said he of one book, "I daresay some people might find something in it." The tone implied that they were jolly fools if they did. Capt Bean¹⁴⁷ on the war I got for his birthday, and he was delighted. Has lent it to old Newie, and promised it to "Ellis". A chaplain on one of the Dardenelles war-boats has written something well spoken of by Punch, and although my old faith in the infallibility of that reviewer is gone, I think I'll get it for him. And perhaps some of Clarence Whatshisname's cowboy yarns. I am awaiting the verdict on Leacocks¹⁴⁸ "Sunshine Sketches from a little town" in fear. Personally I don't think him more than semi-humorous, but it was all I had. I don't believe the authors await the first press notices with the nervousness I do G.'s appreciation or deprecation of what I take down. There isn't time for me to read much.

Mrs. Gifford wishes to be remembered to you. There was great excitement at Wigg's one day when I went in. Why hadn't my brother been in? Sergeant Jackson, late of Wiggs, had returned. It turned out to be someone who was at Wiggs before you.

147 Charles Edwin Woodrow Bean (1879-1968), Australian World War I war correspondent and historian.

148 Stephen Leacock (1869-1944) was a widely read Canadian teacher, writer and humorist.

Before I had a machine I used to think I would never send anyone my prentice efforts. Now I know one is an apprentice for a long time.

Do you know any of Rupert Brookes' poetry? I have a volume of those written before the war -aetat 18-24.¹⁴⁹ Good enough to show promise, but not to keep if he had lived. They are the adolescent thought of a poetic boy. But I hope all the cultured English youths do not reach that age regarding women as merely instruments for gratification. He can worship them — while they are young. Indeed his attitude to age is not one I like.

“Day after day you'll sit with him and note the [*sic*]
The greasier tie, the dingy wrinkling coat;
As prettiness turns to pomp, and strength to fat, and love,
And love, love, love to habit.

.....

O lithe and free
And lightfoot, that the poor heart cries to see,
That's how I'll see your man and you! —

But you

- Oh, when that time comes, you'll be dirty too!

Of course I can understand it, but that attitude is very young.

Another tells of his delight at being with the holy three he loves, “Night and the woods and you.”

“Silver and blue and green were showing.
And the dark woods grew darker still;
And the birds were hushed; and peace was growing;
And quietness crept up the hill’

And no wind was blowing . . .

.....

And suddenly there was an uproar in my woods

.....

And a Voice profaning the solitudes.
And at length your flat clear voice beside me
Mouthed cheerful clear flat platitudes.

You came and quacked beside me in the wood.
You said, “The view from here is very good,”
And how the days are drawing out, you said,
By God! I wish — I wish that you were dead!

149 Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was an English poet. His first volume of poems was published in 1912. Aetat 18-24 refers to his age at the time of writing.

But it is too bad to quote these, when some are so good.

Oh, love, they said is king of kings,
And triumph is his crown.
Earth fades in flame before his wings,
And sun and moon bow down
But that, I knew, would never do;
And Heaven is all too high.
So whenever I meet a Queen, I said,
I will not catch her eye.
And so I never feared to see
You wander down the street,
Or come across the fields to me
On ordinary feet.
For what they never told me of,
And what I never knew;
It was that all the time, my love,
Love would be merely you.

This is delightful (and my phrase “quacking.”) How upset the early Victorians would be at our poetry. Little of it fit for use in schools! It set in with Swinburne, I think. Anyway, at its best, it suits this generation.

I’ve worked for nearly 13 hours today, so it is time I stopped. But I don’t think I told you I went to “A Pair of Silk Stockings.” Professor Osborn thinks it wobbled on the top of being over the fence. Somehow I wasn’t shocked. Either I am childlike, or so wise a bird as to be confident they will not undress too far. Of course I don’t prefer a bedroom scene. On the contrary. I liked the remark that [*the remainder of the letter, from this point, is handwritten*] a husband is “on your hands, on your nerves, and on your pillow.” I’m glad I saw Marie Tempest.¹⁵⁰ Hers is the only adequate acting I’ve seen.

Father was down for a few minutes on Tuesday and we walked along the Torrens. It is good to have that walk so near at hand.

Next year, if the war isn’t over, you shall have some nice letters. I shan’t be overworking. 8 hours day on Wednesday. I never see any of ’em, though of course I could — if I gave up some work. But “work for the night is coming” is what we were brought up on. Hope you get the P.C. in this. I bought it — & some others which I’ll send later — from Vera Oswald.

I’ve finished another pair of socks (I do ’em at meetings mostly)

Your very loving sister
Elizabeth Jackson.

150 Dame Marie Tempest (1864-1942) was an English singer and actress known as ‘the Queen of her profession’.

Letter 58

[*typed letter*]

[*handwritten along left-hand margin of the first page*] N.B. I don't think I would vote for Prohibition myself tho' it would not be out of consideration for "the trade."

C/- M^{rs} Pentelow, Public Library, Adelaide. 21/10/17

Dear Canning,

I have had 3 field cards from you since I wrote, one dated 22/8/17, and of course all welcome.

Last week Mother was down, and I went to the Grange after school on the Friday, and came up and saw Mother into her train in the morning. Grandpa was very glad to see Mother, and more than usually demonstrative to me. Then I went out to Dr. Mayo for the week-end. After lunch we went on the "round", to a queer mixture of places — poverty stricken back lanes and N. Adelaide houses, and to a dear old garden not far from St Peter's, to an old Miss Barnard, who has lived there ever since old Mr. Mayo was at school 51 years ago, when another Saint was in love with this poor old lady. We went home through a storm of forked lightening which lasted all night. Next day Mr. and Mrs. Mayo and Penelope¹⁵¹ came to dinner, as their maid has left, and the coal strike makes cooking very hard. Penelope spends two days a week doing V.A.D. work, as well as running the house. Whatever English graduates are like, Australians are pretty capable. In the afternoon we motored up to Stirling's¹⁵² at Mt. Lofty. The garden is lovely, especially with the Japanese cherry coming out, and the slender trees of all shapes and greens climbing the hill. The house also was a pleasure to me; . . . I like to think that S.A. has such houses, even if I cant be in them. Our country is so raw. The hall has aborigine trophies in it, and the drawing room some Japanese banners. The people themselves live in too different a world for me to appreciate. Miss Stirling is Dr. M's

151 Dr Helen Mayo's parents and younger sister.

152 Sir Edward Charles Stirling (1848-1919), surgeon, scientist, politician and anthropologist, was very active in South Australian affairs. He lived at St Vigeans, a great house at Stirling in the Adelaide Hills. Harriet Adelaide Stirling (1878-1943), child welfare reformer, was his daughter. She established the School for Mothers with Helen Mayo in 1909 and in 1913 an independent hospital to address the special needs of infant patients.

special friend, but has little sense of humour. She is a born mother, and is wrapped up in her Babies Hospital, and in getting suitable homes for State children. At dinner the Dr. unluckily remarked that I was going to speak for Prohibition at a meeting, and Sir Edward was very huffy about it. His wife said "Never mind, dear, you have your whisky tonight." We came down in the starlight, and the lights of the city spread out like a lake. On the Devil's elbow there was a blow-out. A soldier who had his best girl in a trap insisted on helping put on the new wheel, but I suspect he knew more about horses. His strength was very useful, but once he undid all that the Dr. had done. He told us his name was Corrrporral O'Learrry, and that he was glad to make our acquaintance. I felt ashamed of enjoying the adventure. You see I had not to lie down on my — front. Some one from a distance called out "Is anything wrong?" "Yes", bellowed the Corporal. And we heard no more of the enquirer.

[The following paragraph has been bracketed in ink and a note appended: 'Noticed 7/2/64 GCJ'. The initials belong to George Canning Jackson and the date refers to the year that the letters were given to Dr Helen Mayo to be placed in the Barr Smith Library.]

I shall be very sorry when Dr. Mayo's interest in me evaporates, as it must.¹⁵³ She is the only person whom I meet on equal terms who is at once my superior in knowledge and ability and estimation. To argue with her is not to meet a man of straw, nor someone who can say little from knowing little. And then she sees a joke so quickly.

I have been so unwell that Miss Patchell¹⁵⁴ has relieved me of 6 lessons as an alternative to my leaving at once. Sometimes I feel so well that it seems absurd to say anything, and I think Mother thinks I could get on if I pulled myself together. At anyrate, she seems to dislike the idea of me going to bed for 4 weeks under doctor's orders instead of under her experiments. The dear woman. I know she could pull me up to previous standards of health, but I am set on becoming really strong, so that I can be as ambitious as I like. And that takes time, and not continual stimulus. We have both got so used to me existing on the minimum of health that it has come to seem sufficient to her, or at anyrate inevitable. I fancy Father is not very well, though of course one gets nothing out of him.

Your new socks ought to be gramophonic. They would tell you about a motor ride on a hot Saturday afternoon, about Stirling's drawing room, about the Womens parliament, where I made a shocking speech as premier, and about Mary Kitson¹⁵⁵ getting admitted to the bar in the stuffy Civil Court, and the Council's visit to the Women's new rooms. The Chief Justice told Mary that to be successful she needs friends,

153 Elizabeth was very wrong about this. Dr Mayo remained a close friend.

154 Headmistress of Methodist Ladies College.

155 Mary Cecil Kitson, later Tenison Woods (1893-1971), was the first woman to graduate in law in South Australia.

(apparently to have divorces,) knowledge, hard work, a knowledge of men, (this she has been collecting all her 'Varsity life') of affairs, and good manners.

As we were having Sports Day at M.L.C. I couldnt go to the Grange, so I wrote to Grandpa. To my surprise he replied in a very nice post-card. I think I told you how worried I was lest he would not like "Dr Whitty". On the contrary he wants to know what it would cost to keep. I must find him something else for this Saturday. I did not stay at the Sports very long. I can't stand much. But Hazel's brother, Charlie Bartholomaeus, was there — the only one of her family not known to me. He has been ill for about 18 months, but is now fit, and leaves for the war this week, along with a lot of others — about 800.

The only thing I have read lately that you would like is Coventry Patmore's essays.¹⁵⁶ He quotes Alice Meynell¹⁵⁷: "Colonialism is only provincialism very articulate . . . The decivilised . . . were born into some tendency to derogation, into an inclination for things mentally inexpensive." She goes on to say that when you accuse an American of vulgarity, he always replies as if you had said barbarism; But her complaint is not that he wears feathers and paint, but a second-hand dress suit. I shall get her essays. Meredith's "One of our Conquerors"¹⁵⁸ is not his best. The cleverness is not sufficiently worth while.

Tennis is about to begin at the Grange again after the floods. I shall enclose another card. Mrs. Gifford at Wiggs is very anxious to be remembered to you.

We are allowed to know so little about the war that there is positively not enough to feed our thoughts. Whenever we see that the Australians have been especially in it we have qualms.

Your very loving sister,

Elizabeth. [*handwritten*]

156 Coventry Kersey Dighton Patmore (1823-96) was an English poet and critic.

157 Alice Christiana Gertrude Meynell (1847-1922) was an English writer, editor, critic, suffragist and poet.

158 Meredith's *One of our Conquerors* was published in 1891.

Letter 59

[*typed letter*]

c/- M^{rs} Pentelow, Public Library, Adelaide,
South Australia, 26/10/17.

Dear old Chap,

I think my last letter goes by this mail. but this will be fresher. Moreover, I rather think I was feeling ill when I wrote it. and now I am much better, and feel a fraud to let other teachers do my work. No less than 7 Punches came yesterday, so I had an orgy. I'll take them to Grandpa a few at a time. I have a book that I know he will like. Mrs. Pentelow's daughter's young man came back yesterday, so there is rejoicing, especially as he is not too injured for marriage . . . nothing transmissible.

I am too much out of things to know how opinion is going about the war and conscription. The W.E.A. class would tell me, but it is in psychology which does not lead to discussion of politics. The Odd Book-shop takes too much energy to travel to. The newspapers of course are no guide at all. Even the Herald dares not say anything but what is loyal, though I know that there is a large party which thinks this is a capitalists' war. Broken Hill 'Truth' used to voice that opinion, and get into trouble for spoiling recruiting, but that has gone insolvent through so many fines. It is very hard not to sympathise with the suspicions of the thoughtful workers, even if they are, some of them, agitators. They have grievances, though they often do not state the right ones, and the arguments which they use are often illogical. Since the recent strike there is more talk about the miners taking over the mines. At first I am sure there would be loss and disappointment, but if we could have disciplined minds in our workers, that, i.e. ownership, might solve the problems. But success for that is 100 years off. Ours is a changing age. If we could only be hear [*sic*] in a couple of centuries. But then they would be in the middle of another development.

The absurd etiquette of the army annoys me. Probably Grandpa is right, and the men do not care, but to a feminine mind the rigid distinction that keeps a private from dining with an officer, if they are congenial, serves no useful purpose. The forms may make it easier for an inefficient officer to control his men, but there should be no such officers. Even in Aus. the advancement seems to come by influence. Of course it

is impossible to make minds absolutely impartial. I expect that what I am gerding at is human nature, after all, and that the thing to do is to get our children nicely brought up, and a fair chance of intellectual growth for all, and money for individual tastes and enjoyments. Life cant be all striving. In schools one does get depressed by the low level of intelligence, and I am reckoned one who can make ideas plain, so that this is not the judgment of one whose own bad teaching makes her hold the children stupid. But in schools it is possible to get respect and attention without the dragooning methods of the army.

It is not at all a propos but isn't this nice? "To be clever and sensitive and to hurt the foolish and the stolid — "wouldst thou do such a deed for all the world."? [*sic*]

[*added in handwriting along left-hand margin*] This is an inconsecutive letter, but I've no time to begin again. After hot winds we are having rain. Perhaps that accounts for the turbulence of thought. Most people are convinced that Germany must be beaten first, & then that we must have good spring clean at home. But of course Britains only flick dusters, really! Elizabeth Jackson.

Letter 60

c/- M^{rs} Pentelow, Public Library, Adelaide,
South Australia, 6th Nov. 1917.

Dear Canning,

Your field card of 4/9/17 to hand. I hope to find something else at the University tomorrow. We quite understand the difficulty of writing, mental as well as physical.

Mother will have told you about Grandpa's indisposition. The Doctor thinks inflammation of the liver painful but not dangerous. The poor old darling is naturally very sorry for himself, and is a trying patient. He was pathetically pleased when Mother came down.

I have just finished Logic and Psychology lectures. Last night there were votes of thanks and a bouquet and the mover remarked incidentally that the class always had an inkling of Miss Jackson's meaning.

Tonight the Workers Educational Assoc. had its first annual meeting. The speakers were Profs Mitchell and Naylor & M^r Heaton, the Director of Tutorial Classes, and I — a sort of minnow among Tritons. The speeches were all pretty good — mine very jejune by comparison, of course; and difficult to re-arrange, though it had to be done because Prof Mitchell's remarks ran along the same lines as those I had prepared. His was magnificent. The Trades Hall was nearly full, and the audience alert. There is a good deal of opposition to the W.E.A. from people who regard it as a capitalist concern, but that aspect is largely confined to the newspaper letters, I suppose. One objection is to the tutors having degrees — but I didn't see the letter & don't know the reason.

Now I shall do very little work — 3 to 5 lessons a day only. It is really easier to keep full steam ahead, — but my mind is afflicted with a sort of paralysis, and I feel it very hard to think. I stare into vacancy for hours.

We are in all the depression of the Italian defeats. When you get this perhaps matters will be better — if not . . . Father came in for a few minutes this afternoon. He feels the war news deeply. Forgive this stupid letter. The mail closes in the morning. I turned the heel of a nice thick sock in the meeting tonight.

Yours lovingly,
Elizabeth.

Letter 61

[*typed letter*]

c/- M^{rs} Pentelow, Public Library, Adelaide,
South Australia, 14/11/17.

Dear Canning,

I expect you would like to live the quiet life that I am having. I come home from school early in the afternoon and read a novel right through, lying on the bed. Then I read the letters of Chesterfield¹⁵⁹ or Lamb¹⁶⁰ till it is time to go to bed. The novels have included "Sharrow", which I expect you know (Baroness Von Hutten)¹⁶¹, "The Majors Niece" (Bermingham) "Under the Greenwood Tree" (Hardy)¹⁶² *Aylwin*¹⁶³, etc. No wonder young Stanhope went wrong. A father who harped on manners in letters almost daily, yet left the boy to travel on the Continent for years with noone but servants and a clergyman, was wanting in sense. But the precise old nobleman says lots of interesting things, and refrained from shocking me as much as I understand I should be. That is probably my fault rather than Chesterfields. But things read are so less impressive than things said. It is like the difference between art and reality. "Is not life one thing and is not art another? Is it not the privilege of literature to treat things . . . without the troublous completeness of the many-sided world?" The cow-boy deaths in the Bar 19 books would turn one's brain in life. In a book they give us nearly all the fun and excitement of murder without the nauseating reality. Poor boy, you have found the difference between war in art and in life. Lamb is delightful, makes one laugh aloud. "My motto is, contented with little, yet wishing for more", says he. And he tells of the glories of his new lodgings, which overlook three trees "and a pump, the water of which is excellent, cold with brandy, and not very insipid without." "Oh, how I wish I were a rich man, even though I were squeezed camel-fashion at getting through that needles eye

159 Philip Dormer Stanhope, fourth Earl of Chesterfield (1694-1773), statesman and diplomatist, wrote many letters to his illegitimate son, designed for his education.

160 Charles Lamb (1775-1834), English writer, poet and essayist.

161 Bettina Riddle, later Baroness von Hutten Zum Stolzenberg (1874-1957), Irish-American novelist.

162 Thomas Hardy (1840-1928), English poet and novelist.

163 *Aylwin*, 1898, was a novel by English critic, novelist and poet Walter Theodore Watts-Dunton (1932-1914).

that is spoken of in the Written Word.” He doubts not that he could squeeze through! His filial love for parents and sister are charming, and make one see that differences in education and genius need make little real breach. When he is giving up his love for the sake of the family, he says “Love, the feverish and romantic passion, hath too long domineered over all the charities of home, the dear domestic ties of father, brother.”

And again, “I think sometimes, could I recall the days that are past, which among them would I choose? Not those merrier days, not those “pleasant days of hope”, not those “wanderings with a fair haired maid”, but the days of a MOTHER’S fondness for her BOY.”

I have no anecdotes of Grandpa for you, as he is still in bed, and at that stage of convalescence when Grandma used to tell us she was “obliged to laugh” at his contrariness. Mother is not having a very easy time, but seems to stand it without irritability. Grandpa was pathetically glad to see her. When he is better I expect I shall go home and stay in bed till my tissues get regrown. I am not ill in the sense of diseased, only worn out and prepared to be a docile patient. When I think how worn out some other [*letter handwritten from here on*] people are, without my chance of rest, I feel ashamed. But when I can’t give my rest to them it would be absurd to keep on till the arrival of the thorough breakdown predicted. I haven’t broken the news to Miss Patchell yet.

Resting like this gives no doings & few thinkings to record — except morbid ones, staved off mostly, thank heaven, by a resolute grasping at the skirts of happy jokes.

I enclose you a paper & envelope in case you get time to write — and thoughts which will not rasp you to pen. It is lucky I haven’t a vivid imagination, like Mother. I would go mad. Goodnight, dear old boy. Adey Crisp had a letter card from you, I was glad to hear, & a pretty girl called “Aileen” asked for your address. They all seem a nice family, though I forget the name — at the Grange.

Much love.

Elizabeth Jackson.

Letter 62

c/- M^{rs}. Pentelow, Public Library, Adelaide,
10th Dec, 1917

Dear Canning,

It isn't often this talkative person can't summon up energy to write, but though I've lots of ideas to communicate (perhaps you are glad to be spared) I can't do it. It seems absurd to say this to people who are exerting all the endurance you are.

Someone lent me "Private Spud Tamson"¹⁶⁴, and it made me very angry. I suppose Sandhurst is responsible for the grammar as well as the sentiments. Of course slum people can make good soldiers; but why pretend that all officers are competent and that the army organisation is perfect? & another VR — naval occasions — talks of women as angels of whom men are not worthy but doesn't suggest that men ought to improve! Women are not angels, & men needn't stay where they are. But Neil Lyons'¹⁶⁵ "Simple Simon" is delightful — like Chesterfield, only not so champayn-ey — more body to it.

M.L.C. children brought me Rackham's illustrated "Ingoldsby Legends"¹⁶⁶, and Essays of Elia¹⁶⁷ & 2 vols of Famous Paintings — the Corot is one I think I'll frame. I had thought of asking if I cd. have it out of a book of yours.

I don't know yet what I'm going to do for Christmas. Mother must go to the Grange & the D^r says I mustn't. So perhaps I'll go into hospital for a bit. It will save Mother some of the fatigue of nursing — No I only need leaving alone.

I have a new dinner-dress, you will hear with cynicism. It must be dowdy, for the dressmaker says it looks just like me. The Women Students are having a dinner (no, its not extravagance. 3/6. Himmel, what cooking it will be) & I'm President, no less. The D^r is saving me up very carefully for this event.

164 A light war novel by Captain R.W. Campbell in 1915.

165 By Albert Michael Neil Lyons (1880-1940). Born in South Africa, he worked in England as a writer and journalist.

166 This edition of *The Ingoldsby Legends* by Thomas Ingoldsby, illustrated by famous English book illustrator Arthur Rackham (1867-1939), was published in 1907. Ingoldsby was the pen-name of Richard Harris Barham (1788-1845), an English cleric, novelist and poet.

167 By Charles Lamb (1775-1834).

This all sounds very frivolous, so I'd better save a reputation for philosophy | saying that while I've been cooing at the ceiling I've thought about the world & its relation to Eternity. I've also made a Conscription speech for women, which the W.E.A. & the doctor won't let me deliver. The W.E.A. doesn't want to annoy its anti Consc. members.

Yours lovingly Elizabeth.

I'm in dread of hearing you are a prisoner. We hear that many guns & gunners have been captured. E—

1918

Letter 63

Two Wells South Australia 13th June, 1918

Dear Canning,

You won't get this till long after your birthday, but I hope one or other of the parcels will turn up about the 1st. Have you ever received a Bulletin? We've sent so many. The last (about June 6th) was very good — in the Bulletin way. The prescription for writing to that paper is "I am It, and the other fellow is a darned fool" Convey this as insultingly and as unexpectedly as you can. When there is no argument, call names; call names, anyway, they establish your superiority.

The Red Page was very funny on the teaching of spelling & history; some [] some — arguable, I don't want to be dogmatic myself! I heard Father pointing out a paragraph to Mother: "Read that, Annie, of course it's a lie, but it's a bonny one". I've been reading "Paradise Lost" Have you ever read it through? The Heavenly Muse raised by Milton¹⁶⁸, as he desired

[*page missing*]

Satan chafed. It was a little monotonous. The poem isn't flawless (I'm not sure whether it is held so or not.) It seems to me that Milton's lack of humour is several times very evident. He interrupts the angel's chorus to observe that their harps never needed tuning; & when Raphael visits Adam

" A while discourse they hold,

(In fear lest dinner cool.") — — !Can't you hear the third M^{rs} Milton scolding the poet for keeping dinner waiting? And he has a whack at another wife when he describes the duties Eve cheerful performed for Adam. He also makes them utter 50 lines each to say "Night night." And he hits at R.C's bishops, & people who won't recognise their superiors. And one gets a little tired of the reiteration of the crudeness of Eve's charms. I'm afraid the old Puritan had a carnal eye — and was perhaps a gourmet. Eve "turns, on hospitable thoughts intent,

What choice to choose for delicacy the best

What order, so contrived as not to mix

168 John Milton (1608-74), a famous English poet and the author of *Paradise Lost*, had three wives; the last, Elizabeth Mynshull, whom he married in 1662, outlived him.

Taste not well joined, inelegant, but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindest charge, . . . [sic]

Really, I think the charge against the Puritans of undue ascetism is hardly borne out by their great example.

After such magnificent reading, it seems awful to admit that I've been reading "Breezy Stories" "The Detective Magazine"¹⁶⁹ all day.

[*conclusion missing*]

[*added along left-hand margin of page 1*] You may be sure that Mother will be thinking of you on July 1. She has you always in her mind, I think. Wish she had a healthy crop of young grandchildren coming on! Not that she would think any less about you, even then.

169 *Breezy Stories* and *Detective Story Magazine* were American pulp magazines established in 1915. Both had short stories and serials and ran for many years.

Letter 64

Two Wells. 10th July, 1918

Dear Canning,

You know of course that we all thought about you on the first — a day of more consequence to us than the 4th, until we heard of the Australian exploits.

I have been amusing myself by reading old letters. I saved them for my old age! One or two were by you from the West. Do you remember carving some meat that turned out to be flyblown? And [*therefore*] “turning vegetarian”? And you retail a strictly vulgar joke about the difference between a snake and a flea — the former only crawls on his own stomach. And then there was the gorgeous account of the W.Aus. M.P.’s place, where you killed a sheep, & were offered first a hut to sleep in, & then the lubra’s bunk. And the M. P. remarked on the obvious — his weekly bath. And you humped all your things 16 miles to the Rly Station. ’Member? I think the Bulletin wd. print that letter.

Having become “avid” as every American magazine says, for new books, I’ve written to Wiggs & Coles & Tyrrell’s for certain books, & for lists of letters & biography. Tyrrell’s offer “a fine copy of Lady M. Wortley-Montagu¹⁷⁰, bound in red & green, for 8/-. I don’t think I can stand red & green — gilt on top. “Well Spent Lives” sounds fetching, doesn’t it? It reminds me of a time at M^{rs} Pentelow’s when I felt bored, & asked for the loan of a novel. She offered Smiles’ “Self Help”.¹⁷¹

Amongst Prof’s books was Borrow’s “Letters to the British Bible Society.”¹⁷² Contrary to expectation (I don’t share your love for Lawyers & the rest) I enjoyed it immensely. The troubles in Russia were most entertaining, & when he propounds a plan & observes “It would be no use suggesting an alternative scheme, as I feel that if this were rejected I would lose all zest & be unable to force myself to act” he really is delightful. And when he has persuaded anyone else to agree with him he always attributes it to the working of the Holy Spirit. But I feel as though I have told you this before.

170 Lady Mary Wortley-Montagu (1689-1762), English aristocrat, letter-writer and poet. She wrote many volumes of letters which were published after her death.

171 Samuel Smiles (1812-1904), Scottish author and government reformer. *Self Help* was published in 1859.

172 George Henry Borrow (1803-81), English novelist and writer of travelogues. *Letters of George Borrow to the British and Foreign Bible Society* was published in 1911.

Sydney Low's "Egypt in Transition"¹⁷³ is entertaining, & is not like "the Smart set" Magazine, advertised as "written to amuse & not to instruct." That magazine surprised me. The publisher, & editor & advertisements are English, & cover & advertisements on good paper & of good class. The contents (also the paper & stories) are vulgar & American. The whole tone is cynical and — dirty. The heroines display luxurious charms by means of short skirts, thin stockings, & so on, & the hero's desire is merely for a temporary union — naturally. Only why not have a decent heroine who wd. wear? Just sometimes

[*conclusion missing*]

173 *Egypt in Transition*, 1914, by Sir Sidney James Mark Low (1857-1932), British journalist, historian and essayist.

Letter 65

[*This letter is in the Helen Mayo papers in the State Library of South Australia*]

c/- Miss Allen, Winchester St. Malvern, South Australia.
25th July, 1918

Dear Canning,

Last mail I had 4 postcards from you. The Censor had cut off the printed titles, but left the photographer's name & address — Reims. Also, even the uneducated Australian knows the R Cathedral — and I fancy the enemy does too. The Censor is like the Law, and Mr Bumble says "The law is a ass" (not "hass" as generally misquoted. It does sound better that way somehow.) The p.c.'s are very good. There were 2 dear dogs too. Wish I owned them in the flesh.

I enjoyed the journey down very much. The car was a good one, & Adelaide Plains are at their best. Where the wild fowl rose over the marshy land it was peaceful and romantic, and the Abattoir Cattle stood about red and serene. As an invalid should, I remark on the effect of the journey — none.

The Allens are exceedingly good to me, though I know them so little intimately.

30th July

I think I enjoy biography & letters more than any other reading during the last 8 months. There is some of the movement and variety of a story, and yet there is more discussion and stimulation, so that one escapes the enervation produced by too many novels. Of course Meredith & Thackeray & Dickens are not too relaxing, but much modern stuff is. I like Eden Philpotts¹⁷⁴, & rather wonder that you have none of his. Also Neil Lyons of the pre-war period.

E.V. Lucas¹⁷⁵ life of Chas. Lamb was very good; Lamb's letters I read in November. I have John Addington Symonds¹⁷⁶ Life now. It is interesting to see the quicker growth of mind under stimulating influences of the company of the great and of those born to culture; but the over-complexity of the stimulus is not good, and living with the great,

174 Eden Philpotts (1862-1960), English author, poet and dramatist.

175 Edward Verrall Lucas's *The Life of Charles Lamb* was published in 1905.

176 John Addington Symonds (1840-1893), English poet, literary critic and biographer.

at a great University, while it makes for early maturity, seems also to make a man take himself very seriously, earnestly watching for sprouts of genius in himself, lamenting their absence, tormenting himself with traditional problems, old before his time. The typical Oxford man can never regard himself as a joke; he is always portentous, always goes about big with himself. Indeed, the notion of “being in labour” very well describes Symonds’ miseries up to his 28th year. And yet he has the cheek to tell his sister that he doubts whether women will ever appreciate the “mocking spirit” of Ariosto! Perhaps the women of 1860 could not. It isn’t nearly so much a matter of sex as of temperament, sex affects temperament, of course, but the divisions are not arbitrary.

S’s depths of misery show he had greater depths of nature; but I do feel superior to him in the point of being a good invalid! Some of our phases are the same, & my illness has begun at the same age as his; but he will take it seriously, and he will be miserable, although he has all the alleviations of travel & congenial society & unlimited literature. I’m cut off from all these. But of course, he was a sort of God wrestling with Jupiter, & I am an imp with finger to nose. It sounds conceited even to compare, but the value of biography is that it gives us interesting, even if false, comparisons and contrasts; & with Lamb & Symonds in mind, I feel much less ashamed of my enjoyment of letter-writing, & longing for (congenial) company. Some how the Puritan view is that man should be self-sufficient except for God; but contact with other minds is as necessary as contact of lung-air with the outer air. I thought that country quiet would drive me to writing, but except to letter writing it has done little, has been prolonged stagnation. Last year, under pressure all the time, there was a good deal I wanted to say — things that were quite old, but unknown in clear and interesting terms to most working class Australians. This year there is nothing to remind me of what these things are, and no one to talk over ideas with, & winnow. And yet I like the solitude, when it is tranquil and unfussed.

You will be amused to hear that some time ago I started a story with the idea of tracing the influences on the development of Australian youth, but after the outline was draughted & some of the incidents suggested, the rough draft is tedious. And yet it must be done before composition proper can be tackled — the hard and interesting part. So I stick at Page 160. By the way, no one knows anything of this except Marjorie Walker and D^r Mayo. The D^r has been urging me to write, and even offered to save my letters as a basis for publication! She is not a literary critic, I fear. But she does stimulate me to a sort of prolific vivacity & sts, from the problems she suggests, to an insight more showy than real. My letters differ enormously according to recipient, and that of course if the trouble; in writing for the public there is no such stimulus of the reader’s tastes and understandings. I really think my story wd. go on like a house afire if I could talk it over. A conversation carried on by the pen is very funny, but not exhaustive. A half-written sentence is not understood as a half-spoken one is, & conversatⁿ either stops, or over-runs the point, while one is writing one’s own remarks in a legible hand. Now in 7 weeks I may be speaking again. In that case I think you had better come home &

discuss things. Besides, there are things in “George’s” progress that are less clear to me than “Martha’s”. Martha is an intellectual prig & intell: climber, assimilating all the moral tags, hymns, & Self-Help homilies. George starts a law course, but spends his whole time in the literature Section; gives up law for station life. (Obviously I want to use some of your father here, if I may. Uncle Willie had a narrow escape from being George’s father. Tom & Polly Sexton are Grandpa and Grandma, I ruefully admit, as far as character is concerned. How far this is justified, & the personal incidents used in George & Martha, is hard to say. I’ve got so fond of Ernst my German that I’m afraid I’ll never do justice to his struggle when the war breaks out; I want to use him as the foil which suggests the crudeness of the English Australian, too; but as he has to have a commercial career perhaps I must invent a young Englishman. I shan’t send it to a publisher till someone acquainted with us has read it. “Melksham” is the Grange, the scene of the first part, Petunia is any small northern railway wheat town. Adelaide is itself, & presents difficulties. To get a Professor in I shall have to mannerise in such a way that no-one can think it a skit on an actual Professor & those we have are such good material that I long to describe them as they are. There is a Labour man, Mickey Coglan, whom I like; his son is going to be called up for Service from Broken Hill before the Referendum, & be an I.W.W., undereducated but passionate & sincere. The politics can only be suggested. But I think the idea, of epitomizing S.A. today, is not bad. The execution is a different matter. Schiller¹⁷⁷ talks of the free play of the imagination round a subject. My imagination gives me scenes too crude, and conversation too much in the manner of serials in “The New Idea”. I seem ripe for writing a Penny Horner. Having got the conception, & realised the pitch at which it ought to be worked out, it is very hard to strike or sustain that pitch. However, if it only tides me over some dull months, it will have taught me a great deal in the way of appreciating novels. Technique doesn’t come by instinct merely. I’ve just been thinking of all the nice people I know. Everyone (nearly) improves with knowing. When I reach the gates St. Peter will say “Well, what have you done?” I shall answer, “Oh, Peter, I haven’t done anything; but I’ve known some very nice people.” And then perhaps he’ll let me in for their sakes.

D^r Mayo is so free from the humbug of some medical quacks, & so willing to give reasons for her opinions. She says all I need is plenty of food, & rest & a contented mind. She is giving me some special treatment, just to hurry things on, but I enjoy her mental injections more. She is very suggestive, because, although she does not often begin a topic, she contributes to one that comes up, neither accepting nor contradicting, but thinking, and then giving some answer of her own which is never a mere parrot-repetition. (& think of her patience in deciphering my scribbled remarks!)

I am only just realising what a parrot one can be. It is so easy to give some superficial meaning to current phrases, and so accept them. It wd. be worth while never to use a

177 Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller (1759-1805), German poet, philosopher, physician, historian and playwright.

stock phrase, in order to make sure that the idea was one's own, even though it had been some one else's before.

Poor old Symonds, it wasn't his fault that he was mentally miserable any more than its my credit that I'm on the whole cheerful. He started out with such very bad nerves. He must have been a trial to his wife, though wives seem like mothers, to prefer the trouble to the loss.

Your very loving sister, Elizabeth.

[postscript in pencil]

August 1st No fresh news from here, tho' we are all very cheered at the continued Counter-attack & Check to the Germans.

I go home on Sunday. The almost blossom is just coming out. Imagine it, against our blue sky

Letter 66

82, Winchester St. Malvern.

Saturday, 3rd Aug. 1918

Dear Canning,

Whether it is by another or the same mail as last letter that this will go, I can't say, but I feel like writing again, & a mail closes on Monday.

We have had three weeks of wonderful weather. You know the clear days that succeed a frosty night when the hills are clear and rounded, the spires and roofs stand out in obvious perspective, and the spikes of blossom on the almond trees are defined and delightful — in fact, when all the world looks as if it is seen in all the polish of a looking glass. I am lucky indeed to ride home in all this tomorrow.

Everyone has made my visit pleasant. Miss Allen's hospitality is of the sort that takes you and the trouble you give quite for granted — all in the day's work. (Luckily I've been unusually well, & haven't needed nursing, apart from having meals brought to bed. The days I spent in bed under a sheltered verandah.) The doctor has been pretty often, and I've had 5 visitors — quite an orgy! And yesterday Professor Mitchell came and weighed straight in on Social Psychology, and Oxford & [] & Mrs Humphrey Ward's "Reminiscences" & French verse. I hadn't had anything so stimulating since I saw him last year! He is one of the world-men, he throws shafts of light along dark topics; he knows who all the great writers are, and can estimate their ability. He corresponds with many, and has the tone of one still living in the great world; you could not imagine that he is in this little backwater of S.A.

Lord, what we miss! At Oxford the students would be in daily contact with such a man, and grow in grace and stature.

I don't know how I've had the luck to have his interest for so many years — mental injections administered at intervals as short as I liked to make them. And each time I feel more conscious that I'm not of that calibre; not a scholar or a thinker or even ordinarily well educated; only moderately intelligent and zealous. Enthusiasm is my only gift. But because I can understand him — I think that is why he talks; I follow, but cannot contribute. And of course he is a born monologuer.

It is this personal side of University life that I am sorry you missed. You are quick, with a mind capable of a broader grasp than mine so you have by nature what I had laboriously to acquire; and naturally you tend to despise mere plodding & the accumulation of facts. I think that with me this did result in a certain degree of comprehension along certain lines; that is the excuse for facts; and I think the discipline necessary even for a good mind. The University would have given that, and you would have enjoyed the personal side. You would probably have taken to Law or Journalism. Still, the war would have taken you just the same, my dear, and you would have missed much that you have enjoyed. There is no doubt that you are a good business man, though your enterprise needs tempering with patience, and I believe I'd rather be a bookseller than a lawyer. Hateful preliminary clerking! And taste is a great factor in enjoying life, & books allow its exercise. And then when taste becomes a business asset as well - - - .

I very much wonder how I shall get my living. Of course my throat may allow of lecturing again, but the D^r is quite sure teaching will be impossible. I'm rather old (& poor) to learn a new profession, & not strong enough to stand in a shop, or to do housework. It is physical more than mental rest they say I need. But don't feel depressed on my account. I've enjoyed 8 years of my life, anyway, & haven't lost, but acquired, capacity for enjoyment. I feel ashamed sometimes of missing the people I like, & the free run of the libraries, (Since they had let me take books home I had regular orgies) but after reading the lives of Lamb, & Symonds, I find myself not alone in that.

Besides, the world is so much more elastic than it looks. Think long enough & search diligently, and there is always a place ready or to be made. We live in a society, and our real value is to it & in it; (we have none alone.) Being discontented is unpleasant, but salutary. It pokes us on to harder work.

Rotten letter, after all.

Love from Elizabeth.

I find that down here people have a worse impression of my health than is right, & it must be gathered from my letters — so don't believe any such impression you get. Grumbles are all due to inactivity & a natural uncertainty about the future when plans have been scattered. I'm really 5 lbs heavier than last winter, & have a notable complexion.

The following "pome" is per Marjory Walker. It is about

"A young lady of Siam
Who said to her fond lover Kiam
"I refuse to be kissed; but if you insist,
Heaven knows you are stronger than I am."

I have been lending some of the novels lent to me to Grandpa, but they are not all in his line.

Letter 67

[*typed letter*]

Two Wells Thursday, 8/8/18

Dear Canning

Chance delayed 2 of your letters till we thought this mail had nothing for us, so the surprise was pleasant, though I expect Mother would rather the post had made no mistake. I am glad you get the Times and supplement. So do I. The paper makes me as mad as a hatter because of its complacence and ignorance of the other side of questions, especially its intolerance of the idea of ignorant but sincere working people who see a problem that the Times is blind to, even although they offer silly solutions. But such people are naturally alienated when they see the papers which represent the established order so incapable of understanding the sincerity of those for whom the present system as worked is not successful. We cannot expect tolerance from the undisciplined and inexperienced thinkers, whose position in life, and inculcated prejudices lead them to believe that noone is disinterested, but culture ought to mean insight and sympathy.

And yet, suppressing irritation with the attitude, one learns to understand the Conservative mind, as well as more about events than Colonial papers give. And the Supplement is invaluable. Some criticisms even convey some of the intellectual glow that one might expect to get from the book itself. Of course some others are piffle.

It is a grievance of mine that all the books I want to buy are anything from 12/6 to £10.10. Not that author and publisher are getting too much, but that as a book is often not worth reading more than once, (if that, and one cannot tell till one has it in ones hands) and I get through an easy book in a day, a stiff one at the rate of 80 pages, I really dare not embark, I have about a dozen books on order now, but they do not come to hand. If so much money were not spent in worthless rubbish that will illustrate well, or look profound and read easily by a public that likes to think it is au current des savants, there would be more to put into permanently valuable works. My ill-temper is due to some rotten stuff by G. Le Bon¹⁷⁸ which Prof. Mitchell has given me. All that is worth while in it would go into 10 pages. I'm reading social psychology now, in case I do get back to the W.E.A., which is interested in such things, but very little of worth is to be

178 Gustave Le Bon (1841-1931), French social psychologist, sociologist and inventor.

found, and I doubt whether — oh, it obviously can never be so definite and accurate and valuable as the psychology of the individual. One may just get a decent lecture or two out of it.

I feel disappointed about my own writing. I cannot handle my conceptions in the matter of fiction (and serious writing is of course quite out of my reach. Teaching is the only value of my study as far as other people are concerned.) and every time I read a decent novel, or a review of one, I feel the absurdity of trying to compete with them; and no one wants to write mush. I cannot even force myself to go on with the attempt, composition is so slow and painful and unsatisfactory. And yet it is the only form of expression left to me, and one ought not to do nothing just because one cannot do excellently, or because one cannot do as one chooses. And I feel, probably foolishly, that if I do not in some way justify my existence, I shall lose the affection of my friends. It is only people like Charles Lamb who are loved (outside the family circle) for what they are, quite apart from any distinction they achieve for themselves. Just to be Charles Lamb. [] and friend-loving and genial and companionable, with a solid core of principle and selflessness, was to be a genius, the world's man, without the Essays. And yet Lamb was ambitious of the cachet of having done as well as been; and I suppose we all desire a distinction proportioned to our circle.

I happened into a good deal of the letters of the late 19th century while I was with Miss Allen. T. E. Brown¹⁷⁹ seems to have aroused the enthusiasm of his friends, but I cannot see that there is enough substance in his letters to justify two volumes of them. They show a charming man, full of humour and of an affection which he is not ashamed to express to his friends, but those qualities are not enough to compensate for the unimportance of the friends, and of his and their little publications, and of his remoteness from affairs. The beer is always small, and too often it is flat as well. But I felt a little comforted to find that he and Lamb and Symonds miss their friends and books and libraries, and don't mind saying so. Somehow one gets the feeling that only weak souls need companionship and stimulation, that one should be sufficient, for oneself. Now during that fortnight in town I had more ideas and more impulses to work and write, and much more freshness of outlook, than for several months. It was not that I was not left alone often, for much solitude is necessary to my peace of mind as well as to my health, but still I did have six congenial visitors. And it was nice to find these men regarding letter-writing as a solace. I am always so ashamed of the long letters I write, and of my eagerness to hear from friends. I am so afraid that they will think "Oh, it is all very well for her. She has plenty of time." It is true, but I also was a worker, and even then wrote many letters. And after being busy one is sensitive about idleness!

One of your letters told about pleasant days in an orchard in the summertime, with the moisture dripping off the trees, and how it made you forget for the time that

179 Thomas Edward Brown (1830-97), scholar, teacher, poet and theologian from the Isle of Man. His *Letters* were published in 1900.

the world owes you these four years. And then the Literary Supplement comes and you remember again. I wonder if on consideration you would hold that the world does owe you anything. This would sound ungracious and callous if you did not know how my imagination has wept before the tragedy of what human bodies have been called upon to bear — not forced to bear by physical superiority, but what their own souls have called them to, however unsentimentally they may have put the matter to themselves. But that very fact seems to me to be the triumph. All that we are and all that we think and all our capacity for enjoyment come to us through our dead and gone race, and our contemporaries. You are paying to posterity the debt you owe to your ancestors, and though the debt is collected from few generations so violently and completely, it is much to be assured of your own honesty. That is something which no woman can put to the test. She may feel as though she would pay if she could, but she can never prove it by doing it. I said something like this to General Forsyth, and he was almost indignant, saying that woman suffer more than the men. But to me at any rate it seems as though physical suffering is more of a test than mental. Once having decided her sacrifice, there is no turning back for the woman, and the pain is very much the same in kind. She knows what to expect. The man has to string himself up again and again to meet many sorts of crisis, in discomfort and bodily danger that is so sapping to moral and physical courage. He has all his animal instincts to combat; he must want to hide and to run away. You are proving the empire of your manhood over the beast from which man springs. Before the war I was often tortured by the idea that civilisation had sapped endurance, that man was less man than in the days of Drake and Cromwell. But now I know that it is not so. It is no use to tell me that this man deserted or that a regiment behaved badly. Of course, and they always have. The point is that so many millions do not. And I do not mind that conscription was necessary in England. If some individuals shirked, the soul of the nation did not; it had the courage to send men into danger against their will, and in this highly-strung and sensitive age, that is a difficult thing to make up ones mind to do. It was largely the reason for the failure of our first Referendum. Even that repeated failure does not shake my conviction of the substantial fineness of this generation. A nation must be judged by the number of its strong souls, and I doubt if any previous age would have found so large a proportion of people voting “Yes” with so full a knowledge of what was involved. It was not mere blind sentiment. It does catch democracy at its weakest, which is a point which matters little in ordinary matters. But where so high issues are concerned one should no more give equal weight to the worst elements in the nations soul than we do in our individual souls. Our own most clamorous sensation is often hunger or fear or fatigue, but we neither give in to it nor judge ourselves by it. And so I am sorry we had the Referendum, and I protest against Australia being judged by the fact of the way the majority went. (And one cannot allow that all the people who voted No were the worst elements in our national soul.) Would England have done better? Would any other age have done as well?

And so you see I think that the world is giving you something in the opportunity to establish your manhood. The war having come, you could not do other than you did, you would not even have agreed to refrain from even the horrors involved, I think, the point of principle apart. You are living your life, not perhaps in the sort of world you would prefer, but you are doing your choice, the one you would support on consideration, in the actual world.

And Life is pain, as well as intellectual and aesthetic enjoyment.

I think all this is the conviction of most of the men on both sides, whether some of them could make it explicit or not. Some of them would put it much better, with more of force and less of what looks like sentimentality, but that it is true is proved by the fact that the war goes on, carried on by men who are not slaves or ignorant, but capable of coming to stop the fight if they had as strong reason to do so as others have to continue.

Poor old boy, always I either preach or describe. Next time I will tell you about the journey up.

Much love.

[no signature]

Letter 68

[*This typed letter was probably addressed to Dr Mayo.*]

The Countess Two Wells presents her compliments to the Umpire, and begs to submit for his consideration the following highly satisfactory score:

Saltdamp
8/8/18.

Back to home and Kepler¹⁸⁰ — Gracious! I didn't unbosom to my Father Confessor that I took the fortnight off Kepler! I just left him behind with my other troubles, and have the reward of no longer shuddering at him. Still, I would have asked about it if it had not gone right out of my head. Don't make the penance: "Wear two waistcoats." Already I dread having to reply to "And what did you do in the Great War?" "I sent my brother to the front and wore out his Jaegers."

Really retribution has overtaken me already. I have laughed immoderately over the following joke. A straight-waist-coat may yet be necessary (over the gamgee¹⁸¹, of course.). Naturally I was specially anxious for my weight to show up well, and felt sure it would. But hearing a hint that my chest was a little thinner, I thought I would take no chances. Stifling that passion for impartiality which is the crown of University education, and wilfully misapplying all that Bowley's "Statistics"¹⁸² can teach of precautions for securing accuracy, I put on a petticoat whose amplitude and weight had hitherto been its salvation. Staggering under the combined burden of this and my guilt I essayed the weighing machine. TWO POUNDS LIGHTER THAN LAST TIME. 1/4LB. LESS THAN ANYWHEN SINCE HOSPITAL. A member of your material and ignoble profession can put what emphasis it likes on the physical, for idealist feelings and states of mind are the only criteria. For me, I feel as if a fresh wind had blown through my mind. MAYOS MENTAL INJECTIONS, probably. I fell out with the gods at school

180 Johannes Kepler (1571-1630) was a German mathematician, astronomer and astrologer.

181 Gamgee tissue is a surgical dressing invented by Dr Joseph Sampson Gamgee in Birmingham, England, in 1880.

182 Sir Arthur Lyon Bowley (1869-1957) was an English statistician and economist. *Elements of Statistics* was published in 1901.

for not rewarding my industry better than other people's brains, but you would think conscientious eating would have softened them.

The journey up was great, and followed up again by that curiously low temperature. But then in the night I perspired enough to cool a dragon. My delight in the streets was such that a soldier mistook the Smile Universal for the Glad Eye. Down from the blue-grey sky slanted black curtains of fringed storm, and soft silvered cloud-banks. The Port smoked on the horizon, and white sandhills gleamed. A stiff breeze blew over the insolent green fields. A flock of sparrows swarmed up from a haystack, settling darkly again as we passed. Slim lambs unnuzzled again from their ewes and stared with their big wide ears. It really was a lovely ride, but you take rides yourself, I understand, so you shall be spared the rest. You can't think how nice it was of you to come to say goodbye. I'm sorry I shook my paleolithic fist at you. The sign means "You are entirely wrong". Peace be with you, and with your Pathology class.

Letter 69

[*typed letter*]

Two Wells South Aus. Friday, 9/8/18

Dear Canning,

In one of your letters you were so thoughtful as to speak of money. I am glad to say that financially I am able to be independent, even for another year, if that should be necessary. Old age was such a bugbear that I saved very carefully, luckily. Sometimes one is apt to think that, what with the risks and worries and pains of life, it isn't worth the trouble. But really these things are only the rules which help to make the game. I admit to an occasional desire, in the right feminine way, to get over the rules, but I know better in my heart. This may not be the best of all possible worlds, but it is the one we are in, and we ought to be grateful that it gives us so much scope for our activities!

The drive up from Malvern only took an hour and a half. I loved seeing the streets again, and beamed from side to side as the country does when it comes to town. A soldier waived [*sic*], apparently not being sufficiently observant to discriminate between the Smile Universal and the Glad Eye. All the people were paying their Sunday visits to the Art Gallery and Gardens, and a dismal little group was waiting at the Hospital gates. Prospect was clouded with dust, but once beyond the houses all was clear. The Port smoked on the Horizon and sandhills gleamed. The sky was blue-grey, with black curtains slanting down, and masses of soft cloud silvered in the light. A stiff breeze blew from the hills over the insolently green crops, and swayed the clumps of trees till they looked like a Corot picture. A country girl leaned over a cottage wall, basking in admiration of her pink dress. From a haystack rose a flock of sparrows, their underwings fluttering light, then settled darkly again as we passed. Slim lambs unnuzzled from their woolly ewes and stared with all their big wide ears. We neared the line of wood along the river till we reached the gnarled old gumtrees brooding over the sluggish water, and sheltering the artichokes whose withered heads rose gaunt out of this years green leaves. Then we slid over the bridge onto the uneventful Two Wells plains, and met the Sunday lovers sauntering home to milk the waiting cows. The storm broke about an hour after we got in, and next day the country was soaked and cheerful. My prescribed walk left me in a quandary. One road had become a canal, a busy highway for ducks,

one was impassible for mud, and the only clean strip on the third was blocked by a bony cow weeping for her calf. What to do? Why, fling out ones chest (suitably padded with gamgee waistcoat), fix ones umbrella at the "ready", and advance. Even private life admits of some heroism.

I hope you wont forget to tell us more about the Widow Twanky. (Was it a grave error of the Censor's to leave the name? He seems to have a set against proper nouns.) I have never been to a pantomime, by the way, expect I am too old now to enjoy it.

Down the railway line there are some trap-door spiders. I enquired at dozens, but found noone in. I hope the rain has not drowned them all. They are the first I have ever found for myself.

Goodby, and much love, and thanks for your thought for my comfort.

Your loving sister

Letter 70

[*typed letter*]

[*There are two identical copies of this letter. The second has a few handwritten corrections. Only the second is reproduced here. The letter is probably intended for Dr. Mayo.*]

17/8/18

Dear Woman,

If fiction has a muse, I think no one should call her a fickle jade. She is quite consistent where I am concerned, and stays away all the time. This morning I thought I would call upon her, but of course she was not at home, so I went on for my usual walk, to an old stump. There I rested, and there I had this day-dream. I took my novel to you, and watched you turn a few pages. Then you stifled a yawn, and said politely that you felt very sleepy this evening. With your hand hovering over an American Medical Journal, you remarked that what you needed was relaxation. So I left you, and went to see Rica. She sighed, and put down a treatise on heart-diseases, and said she hoped it was better than Peter Piper. This gave me an idea, so I got Doris Jones's address and motored over to see her. (The sales must have been brisk.) Doris asked what the name of the book was, and I said "George and Martha".

"Not snappy enough", she observed. "Let me see. . ." "What colour are Martha's eyes? "Really, I hadn't thought about them. . . Not green", I added hastily.

"People like the heroine described," said Doris sagely, "How does she dress?"

I hadn't thought about that either, but felt sure that Martha's clothes would be dowdy and badly cut from what I knew of her.

"What picnics does she go to?", Doris enquired. "She doesn't go to any," I said. But her mind is coming on very nicely, though.

Doris only sniffed. "Well, she must do something. On what page does the love begin?"

"There isn't any love," I said coldly, "Martha isn't that sort."

"Oh, if you are going to take it like that. . . Well, at least you've got a lily-pond?"

"No, I haven't got a lily-pond. The only one I know is in the Botanic Gardens. It never looks very nice when I am there. Besides George and Martha are too busy up

at the University to go mooning round lily-ponds. It wouldn't be reasonable. And it wouldn't do any good."

Doris looked down at her hands. "I got married," she said, and faded away to Japan or wherever the honeymoon was spent. It was a good sort of argument, you know, and I felt a little impressed. Still I really had begged Martha to fall in love, and she had been quite definite and a little contemptuous about it, so I do not feel that I can blame myself. You quite see that it is the fault of the Muse, don't you? If she WON'T be at home, what can I do?

Letter 71

[*typed letter*]

“Two Wells” 23/9/18

Dear Dr. Mayo,

You would think me seriously ill if I neglected to offer an unsolicited opinion on the proposed alterations to the U4 Constitution.

The method of rejecting or expelling members is what we wanted before, though the Club would not have allowed us to do it. It will seem a matter of course now.

The Hon. Member clause was put in originally to please people who thought such as Miss George, though without formal qualification, would be useful members. It has never been used, and though it would be a nuisance to have to give the month's notice and so on if we did wish to honour some one, it is quite easy to tell folks that our Club admits of no exceptions. Oh, yes, we did use it for Mrs. Darnley Naylor.¹⁸³

I suppose you all sighed with relief at being able to say there was a mandate to define the Red Cross, though it took remarkable insight to see anything wrong with it by merely looking at the Constitution, which makes no reference to delegated committees or to individual sub-societies.

About “omitting rules of Sub-societies from the Constitution”, I don't understand as they are not there now. We can hardly omit a clause sanctioning their formation under certain circumstances, and arranging for some formal connection and control. That is all we have.

I hope the other matter is a suggestion, not a mandate. At any rate I am sure that if there is anything in what I have to say the Vice-Chancellor would listen, as the fewer changes brought about at the request of the Council, especially in matters already well understood and working excellently, the better. Sub-societies meet so often and so intimately that they have a much more coherent opinion than the larger body, and that opinion has value in working the Union; one can even imagine a case where it could be vital to harmony. The delegate from the Executive could not represent the point of view

183 Ethel Richman Darnley Naylor, a nurse and leading member of several women's organisations, was the second wife of Henry Darnley Naylor (1872-1945), who was Professor of Classics at the University of Adelaide from 1906. They married in 1916.

of the Society if she disagreed with it, or if she were not in close touch with the Sub. meetings as well as the Sub-Committee. (I consider myself a fair-minded person, yet I remember being very much in this position once for the grads, and being utterly unable to put their case, though I understood and had prepared it. In the meeting the rush of my own conviction simply wiped their view out. I could not see it.)

This also suggests the difficulty of the choice of the delegate. She must be someone with the dignity fit to represent the august body, and with the time to attend many committee meetings. If she relies on only going when difficulties arise, that of itself will give her an hostile air, and will find her unprepared to act with a proper understanding of what the Sub. is after. There will be "bothers".

I also think that last year we reduced the no. of representatives as far as we can with safety. It is essential that the Executive should be understood, and that it should really give the students scope to act; it is bad economy to have too few representatives.

From the point of view of the Sub-societies, I cannot see that there would be much inducement, apart from the possibility of being refused the use of the rooms, to join the Union, if connection with it were to mean giving the U4 a delegate to their Committee (usually of 4 members only) without themselves having any guarantee that their corporate opinion would be represented on the Executive. (We know from the past that clubs have had a corporate opinion, and that it was not without weight and value, and that a fair number of the questions with which the Executive has had to deal have been connected with the Sub-societies.

I really feel that were I to be starting a Uni. Society under the proposed new rules, I would do my best to establish it on an independent basis, and you know that I was a founder of both present societies, and also that I am anxious for the U4 to be the nucleus of the Women's societies — but only so long as there is mutual use. The Sec. of a Sub. is usually more valuable than the rep. of the much less united undergrads, who is also much less versed in business, and the Sec. forms a valuable link between the two bodies, ensuring sympathy for both. Really, it is more essential to give the Club representation than it is the unorganized grads. and undergrads.

I cannot help thinking that if the Vice-Chancellor understood how well the present plan works, and how popular it is, that he would consider our point of view. I know that you personally think that the individual matters more than the society, but it is from the Sub-Soc. that we get our keenest individuals. Moreover, our theory when we planned the connection of the Subs. was something on the lines of the projected Imperial Parliament, in which each nation is represented. This was leavened, of course, but it was in our minds (Miss Blair and I were taking Constit. Theory, you see!) and it is a good principle. I cannot think that, after working successfully so long, the Council would wish to alter our whole theory of the Union. I can see some logical anomalies of present classification, but I insist on being a pragmatist.

There is nothing like a Constitution for rousing the feelings of your South Australian student, is there? I wish I could talk it over with you. I shan't be down till October. It wont be too late to argue, but one hates to go against the Committee resolution that will probably be on the board by then.

But I ought to trust to the commonsense of the Committee, I know. It is only those who understand the inside workings who can see exactly the place of this clause, though, and some of them are not acute thinkers or experienced speakers, and some of the younger ones, like the Debating rep., will think that the clause must be accepted, whereas I feel confident that we should have the courage of our Constitution and experience. The change would give less real power to the Exec., and would stir up strife now and cause it later, and it is the Union, not the Council, that will have the bother.

Letter 72

[*typed letter*]

Two Wells South Australia 25/9/18

Dear Canning, tomorrow is Grandpa's birthday, but already the papers warn us that this is the Xmas mail! We find our happiness in strange places and despite much, so perhaps one can wish you a Happy Christmas without irony. Merriness is easier, of course, you can have that with a fowl and a sausage and a song. Real happiness is an artist, it can do without accessories, is entirely creative. Dear, dear, you can see how far I am from the Xmas spirit when I set out to analyse! Yet we are already having "seasonable weather." I am just up from a fortnight in bed. It is astonishing what changes can take place in that time, even in this little place. Spirals of dust are blowing over the yellowing crops, grass-seeds threaten, the poppies which were not out, are already overblown. A foolish man has cut down some more of the trees whose shade he and his cows will want in a week or two, and has finished putting up a stable. The corporation has put a fence round the piece of land that I regarded as sacred to my walks, and there are signs that wire-netting is to complete the barricade. Ah, well, Father has a pair of pincers. The mare that used to roam the roads with me has a foal, and I am as surprised as little Allen Johnson. There are two fresh cows, and the little pony has forgotten me, so that I shall have to make friends all over again. And the horsehair that tied the wagtails nest onto the bough has been broken, and the nest is deserted. I did want to see the young wagtails. But I think saddest of all is the rustling of the wheat stalks, though the crop is not a foot high. The farmers are beginning to talk about their need for a living wage. We shall have them socialists yet. And the sky is brazen.

People in bed do not collect much news, though behind my curtains I hear more than you would think. For instance, on the afternoon of the tea-meeting: "Are you going in in those clothes?" "No." "Where are the others?" "Laura's got 'em." "Where are you going to put them on?" "Mind your own business." "I know. In the ..[.] " "Shut up. I'm not." Laura arrives and conveys her brother to the stable for grooming.

In the country the church would be worth while if it were only for the social side. To the children Anniversary is THE interest. I wonder why the pleasures of children, and the fragility of flowers, are so touching. A little girl asked Father last week: "Is it Nuts and May today, Mr Jackson?" No, said Father with perfect promptitude and gravity,

“Nuts and May is next week.” I think Father is much quicker to grasp the meaning of children than he is of older folk, and because he takes them as seriously as they take themselves, they are not self-conscious with him. Father both hears and sees very slowly. From the point of view of psychology, his reaction times would be interesting. The slowness accounts for his insensitiveness to how he is affecting other people. He does know that he irritates them, but not till it has been done. It is also the reason why his sympathy is slow. It is deep but it does not recognise signs of trouble quickly. Partly, too, he does not pity people for all the things for which they pity themselves, because he has a sane view of things. Have you read “*Emilia in England*”? Meredith called it “*Sandra Belloni*”¹⁸⁴ afterwards. It is a study in sentiment and sentimentality. There are the 3 ladies of *Fine Shades* and *Nice Feelings*, and their brother, a youth who cannot love unless all the world applauds his choice. A breath of ridicule on the beloved, any feeling that he must stoop socially, and, hey presto, his feelings give him torture. Emilia, whom he comes to love, is a naïve girl with natural passion and a genius for singing. She is *Unspoiled* and *Unsophisticated Nature*. Then there is Mrs. Chump, low-class Irish, *Nature Simple but Vulgar*. She is delightful as a contrast to all the others. Cornelia, one of the *Sentimental Three*, elegant, *Polar*,... of her says Mrs. Chump: “And there was Cornelia starin at me like a codfish risin’ on it’s tail, so she was.” Then there are some slighter *Sentimentalists*, as foils to the *Three*, and a poet and a woman who can never control her laughter. These act as pointers, so that the reader does not miss the point. Meredith keeps one’s mind darting. He is not so good when he comes to men whom he admires. He invariably draws them without a sense of humour. His own is so strong, and his fun so bracing (he makes you laugh at yourself, instead of pitying) that I think he must do it from some idea that the really forceful people have little humour. I think it is partly true. To be keenly humorous is to have a strong sense of proportion, and to see the ridiculous easily. That prevents a man forging ahead. He becomes sensitive to ridicule. As someone says in *Sonia*: “It took years of painful disillusionment to discover how much fanaticism is required to shake the resolution of others; and years more to find how completely I was lacking in it.”¹⁸⁵

Anyway, Emilia is good reading. Some of the situations are gorgeous, and there is one of those aristocrats whom he draws so well. I think he loved the type — as who would not? I am sorry to think that I have read all of M. except his short stories and poetry, neither of which attract me much. Of course one reads the novels again and again, but I wish there were more to come. The quality was too good for a large output.

I have been writing a speech for the Sausage Tea, the annual end of the Debating Society at the Uni. Mine is a reply to “The old familiar Faces”. This is the first tea I have missed, and though it was very ingenious of them to get me into it like this, I would rather be there in the flesh than as a ghost.

184 *Sandra Belloni*, formerly published as *Emilia in England* in 1864, was a novel by George Meredith.

185 *Sonia: Between Two Worlds*, 1917, a novel by prolific English novelist Stephen McKenna (1888-1967).

Ella sends me this joke: M.O. “Now, honestly, in private life would you come to me with a thing like that?” “No, Sir. I’d send.”

I am reading “The Holy Roman Empire”.¹⁸⁶ You know Voltaire’s *mot* — “neither holy, nor Roman, nor an Empire; otherwise a good description.” But Bryce makes the sort of book I like; he gives the theory of the facts, and links all in that way. I prefer the juice of the grape to the grape, in history. Now I want books on Charlemagne, Otto, Frederick Barbarossa, etc. Prof. Henderson told me my “Culture was not complete till I studied Modern European History.” As I knew it would not be even then, I was not much impressed. But I do wish I had really studied it. This is mere reading, and Libraries are not at hand, so it is not even systematic reading. I am enclosing a joke! though I fear that [*conclusion handwritten along left-hand margin*] it reads but drily when you don’t know the circumstances. D^r Phoebe Chapple¹⁸⁷ has the M.C. for distinguished work under fire. I have always had a poor opinion of her professionally, as D^r Mayo teases me for having “let out”. D^r Mayo is unable to go to the front because of the remains of an illness she got in India. Cathell¹⁸⁸ is the writer of a “Manners for Physicians”, a book whose blatancy makes D^rM. ashamed of her profession. Much love from Elizabeth

186 *The Holy Roman Empire*, 1864, by James Viscount Bryce (1838-1922), British academic, jurist, historian and Liberal politician.

187 Dr (Major) Phoebe Chapple (1879-1967) became the first Australian woman and the only female doctor to be awarded a Military Medal for gallantry.

188 Dr Daniel Webster Cathell (1839-1925) published *The Physician Himself* in 1882 to help young physicians. It was in its tenth edition by 1892.

Letter 73

[*mid-September 1918*]

[*to Canning — beginning missing*]

— me not 'aving a young man, and having to paddle my own mental & moral canoe in circumstances of some difficulty. Sometimes I can't believe it is I here, reading trash, and doing nothing. I feel alarmed lest my performances in the silence line shd get known — 12 weeks today; I wdn't be able to cope with the matrimonial offers.

Dear old boy, if anything does happen to you I will see that P.A.C. gets the Kipling Set. And if when you come back, if anything happens to me, & I've any money to leave, I'll try to see that they get it, even then. You'll need all your money after the war. Fortunately for Australia England is buying our wool until one year after the war.

The extreme Labour Party advocates repudiatⁿ of War Loan, but invested, of course. Repudiatⁿ won't come for some years, but if it does, it will hit small people like me pretty hard. Sh'dn't complain, though; though someone ought to give the extremists senses about capital. The Bulletin tries — but the Bulletin is against Imperial Federation.

Well, there's inconsequence for you! I must be getting sleepy.

XX Elizabeth

Letter 74

Two Wells South Australia 16th Oct. 1918

Dear Canning,

Indle Leroux has written again, & sent a snapshot of herself. Her sentiments are in the elevated French style, and she looks frank, but not typically French. It is interesting to notice the sort of mistake that an uneducated French girl makes in her writing. They are not the sort that I would have expected — *arrivie* for *arriver*, etc. I am very glad that she got my letter

The mails are very far between now — about 4 weeks this time, so I expect you will be quite glad to hear again. I have been reading some of your letters from the West. You used to look out for the mail in those days too, *et tu aies écrivé français quand tu aies eu le temps et la patience. Moi, je le lis couramment, mais l'idiome me vient très lentement en écrivant, et le grammaire j'oublie presque entièrement, bien qu'il n'ya que six mois que je n'y examine! Mais le français est si scientifique que l'on se sert d'un livre des regles très de bon aise.*

What is worse than to have a bee in one's bonnet? Why, to have it in one's bed! I am lying behind a wind screen of *dolicos* in full bloom, and bees, and beelets (silver lets) & other insects buzz about in the most distracting way. Oh, I am calm though! They sit on me, & I take no notice. If this year has reconciled me to bees & cows, I daresay next will find me good friends with mosquitos & snakes.

Someone sent me a "Daily Herald", & I read 3 pages with growing bewilderment. Surely, thought I to myself, I read about that inquest some time ago? But it is Tuesday's paper, & Tuesday was yesterday. The War news upset me completely, till I saw the date — paper 3 weeks old yesterday. A joke on me in another way, as I had written to the editor, enclosing articles, & asking for one back, that I now found had come out all that time ago! He is going to print the other 2, if I don't mind waiting. I'm not equal to M.S. peregrination, so shall let him keep them. I didn't try the Register or Advertiser. They are better news & advertising papers, but not nearly so open to general articles.

Prof. Mitchell was very good about "The Psychology of Patriotism," & "of Recruiting;" said the angle of vision was right, as well as the Psychology, but he feared the public liked more acid. I know — when it drops it on the other fellow; I was trying to get it on the public.

I've only a little more to write of the first draught of "Children's Children", but, though it is interesting and acute in its way, I haven't been able to plan it or handle it, it has run along by itself; & so its crises are not strongly marked, & the incidental is dwelt on too long, just because it was easy. The second draught could remedy this, if the fault were not in my weakness which is of course always worse in summer. I can work in patches, but not in a sustained way. The article on "Living Wage" shows the weakness. It is just as jerky as I am.

Was I reading "The Holy Roman Empire" when I wrote before? I think I must have been. I've only read novels since — *Fortunes of Nigel*¹⁸⁹, *Wickhamses*¹⁹⁰, *Villette*, *Shirley*.¹⁹¹ I can read these again and again. The Times [sic] takes a nice long time to read, too. I give it flattering attention — if my attention could be a source of flattery. The essay-writer for the Supplement seems to be a philosopher of a perturbed and tender, even bruised, Spirit. I like what he writes, too — but what a contrast to Ramsay Smith¹⁹², that pachydermatous philanthropist! Ramsay is the sort of man who is always nosing out some irregularity, & either to minister to his self-importance, or else from a real desire for equitable administration, making a shindy till it is righted. He makes himself very objectionable from his manner of doing it, and yet he is right. Only a pachydermatous man, probably, could bear to expose his colleagues, but the same thick skin makes him unduly impervious to their wincing under unnecessary roughness. He wouldn't do a bit in private practice! A doctor who isn't sensitive isn't "in touch" with his patients; & a doctor to whom the patient can't talk only hears ½ the symptoms. Besides, often the doctor is the patients only protection against the well- or ill-meaning attendants. All this is à propos of Ramsey's insistence on inquests on 6 consecutive mental hospital deaths. All have been properly attended to, yet he has elicited that, tho' eligible for the asylum, their certificates of admission were irregular, & that, tho' doing their duty, the Official Visiting Doctors did not know that the Act required certain things. He has managed to rap their knuckles at the inquests over matters irrelevant to the issue of cause of death, & yet they are things that needed to be definitely known. It took Ramsay's genius to do it, from the Coroner's Office! Work done for the impersonal state often becomes perfunctory, even gets taken over without the duties being explicitly understood, if there is no adequate supervision, & it is right that someone should see that regulations are kept, & that regulations are adequate to ensuring that all the insane are examined frequently enough not to be detained after recovery. Oh, he was right to enquire, but so hideously and unnecessarily rude, & implying to the unintelligent that

189 *The Fortunes of Nigel* was an 1822 novel by Scottish historical novelist and poet Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832).

190 *The Wickhamses*, 1906, was a novel by William Pett Ridge.

191 *Villette*, 1853, and *Shirley*, 1849, were novels by Charlotte Brontë.

192 William Ramsay Smith (1859-1937) was a Scottish physician, naturalist and anthropologist civil servant, active in Australia later in his career. He was frequently challenging authority.

the people illegally detained were unwarrantably detained; whereas he really meant and now admits that the flaw in the detention was technical. Of course the public are now alarmed, & the asylum staff furious; for their kindness and efficiency appear reflected on, through the very fact of the inquests, & yet the jury found that the proper measures had been taken. You like R. Smith, I know, & I think he's useful — & unpleasant! He acts as though he feels safe in assuming people to be rogues, & as though slapping them in public were the best cure. Even reproof can be courteous.

It's a fault all through Australian public life, this roughness of touch. Of course it is plainest in politics, where the more names you call your opponent the better. We speak pretty well of the dead, though — except in the Bulletin, where the obituary notice is the sign for writing every scandal you are lucky enough to know.

Reading in the Times a list of Red Cross subscribers, from Chile, Shanghai, Bolivia, etc. I felt such a thrill, to think of the people the British are — with the courage and imagination to follow a foreign career, & yet the love of country that keeps them in close touch with Home affairs. And then looking back through the past — what a history! Stirrings of a whole people against injustice, leadership at the crises fixing, or so far fixing, the natural progress of ideas. And in time of need always enough and great enough men to do what is necessary; and today millions of them; the biggest crisis she has ever seen has evoked the most defenders. Lots of duffers, lots of blunderers. many commonplace men, & some cowards; yet a nation must be measured by her successes, & by her great men; & I don't think any nation can show more of either.

Another striking thing in the Times was the account of a Requiem mass for French soldiers on July 14. I would like to have seen the flash of the guards at the Elevation, & have heard the blair [*sic*] of the trumpets. Ceremonial seems fitting at a time like this.

Next week I expect to go down to see the Throat Specialist; perhaps I shall be able to speak again — not that I mind much, though I fancy “the Silence of Dean Maitland”¹⁹³ whatever it was, was nothing to mine. I shall always contend after this that children should be taught to write — in case they lose their voices you know! — Like the people who want them taught to write left handed, in case they lose the right! Father and mother have been exceedingly patient; of course it has been worse for them than for me. I know what I mean, they don't! Yesterday I washed my hair — oh, quite an event. (I did it for myself, until this year & doctors orders against.) It feels so nice; I keep patting it to feel the softness. That is a pleasure a man doesn't get with his close crop.

I would like to have been in Town on Sunday, when everyone seems to have thought that the war was over, as Germany had agreed to Wilson's 14 pts. At such a time one wants to be out with the herd — gregariousness is a nearly universal instinct. I was gloomy, though; not that I don't want peace, but I do think Germany

193 *The Silence of Dean Maitland* was an 1886 novel by Maxwell Gray, the pseudonym of Mary Glead Tuttiett.

ought to feel war at home. She has so often carried it into France. That isn't the weightiest reason, though; if she surrendered like Bulgaria I wd be satisfied. It is not to be borne that our men's sacrifices should be in vain. The Anzacs are coming home via Italy. I wonder if you will see something of Italy before you come back? Or you saw duty in Germany? Elizabeth Jackson.

Letter 75

[*mid-October 1918*]

[*to Canning — beginning missing*]

teacher, & the cramped time at her disposal.

Mother is an exceedingly attentive & efficient nurse, but I amuse myself as overleaf — not being an exceedingly patient patient.

Sometimes I amuse myself by copying Punch drawings; but I can achieve nothing funny enough to send. It is a pity I wasn't taught some principles of painting. As it was, we just dabbled, & the teacher improved.

I have had a couple of days amusement out of the big Red Cross Xmas card Sample book you gave me. With snapshots & publishers Illustrations & newspaper cuttings it is quite interesting besides making me feel about 10. I am having a belated childhood. This day begins my 17th week of silence. When the Doctor was up she asked to hear 5 or 6 words, & I had nothing to say, & said so with positive difficulty; but my voice was clear, & she was pleased about it.

I've just had 5 letters & 2 parcels by the mail. I loathe days when there are no letters. Marion Rees George (late Headmistress of the Advanced School) has sent me another police yarn. Of course I read them, but fancy her — she looks like Aunt Betsy Trotwood in David Copperfield. She only knew me for a few months at M.L.C., and she has been so very good. Your very loving Sister

Elizabeth

Letter 76

C/- J. Canning Grange South Australia 31st Oct. 1918

Dear Canning,

We have been at the Grange for 8 days. Grandpa was a little out of sorts at first, but seems himself again. He still visits Neure & Jowett, but scorns the few small fish that alone are available. He bought me some in town at 1/10 a lb; And considers that someone makes scandalous profit — “altogether beyond all reason,” says the dear old thing, shaking his head, shocked and perturbed.

I am speaking again, and he can hear me if I am close to his ear.

In a kind of desperation of boredom I typed out various sketches of Pluto, Two Wells, Willunga, etc, & sent them to Hassell's. On Saturday afternoon the Junior Hassell (father of one of my old pupils) came down. He said that I remind them of George Elliot but they won't take any risk!!!! With this joke curdling inside me, I agreed to publish at my own. I'd give anything to print the joke as well, only that it might lose them their reputation for literary judgment. As a matter of fact, I shan't lose. I am enough known for a fair number of people to buy out of curiosity in addition to the people who want a handy Xmas present & who pick up anything easy looking. I shall lose not money, but reputation. At present a good many people think I could do good work if I put my mind to it. They will probably think I did “put my mind” to this.

I am perfectly aware that hack-work is my forte, but out here there is no-one to hack for.

D^r Shorney is not definite that I shall not be able to work next year. Of course I could live on my savings, but you can't begin to imagine the dreariness of having no duties, & insufficient energy to set one's own tasks. I have done spasmodic work, but I know I could do more & better if I had to.

It has been nice to see a few people, tho' they send my temperature up rather. If we have a cool summer I shall finish “Children's Children”. I hope to spend 3 or 4 months in the hills.

I am reading "The Antiquary."¹⁹⁴ You have not done so yet, unless in another copy, so it is something for you to look forward to. You will find having the pages cut a great convenience.

I haven't been hearing any jokes lately. Miss Norice spoke to me over the fence. She was nicely dressed, as usual. She has a good deal of natural elegance & much intelligence. I wish she had cultivated it more. She looked like a nice comfortable pussy, in her furs. Thomas the Cat here is not sociable. His mother is, but she appears always on the verge of a family. It must be very distressing to be a cat. I don't comment on the war. It is not for a head like mine to grapple with such a problem, thank God. I'm afraid America will be regarded as leader of the world now.

Your loving sister, Elizabeth

194 *The Antiquary* (1816) is a novel by Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832).

Letter 77

[*probably to Dr Mayo*]

The Ritz [*Kalyra*]
alias, the Work'us. Nov. 6. 1918

Dear Thing,

If you don't laugh over this letter, I'll never love you again. I've been in a state of incipient hysteria ever since we arrived. We got a nurse [*'probationer' added in brackets*] with some difficulty, and I understand they keep a matron in bottle — certainly not on tap. They whizzed me into a bedroom, whirled me to a storeroom (10x5, for the whole lot of us) with an engaging vista of lavatory, w.c, & night utensils (no need to point these out; they were obvious) & I was then left, spinning like a teetotum, with instructions to proceed to the dining room when the bell went. The dining room was not obvious. As an afterthought, came a glass of milk. I followed the stampede a few minutes later, . . . women on one side of the room, men on the other. No intercourse, alas. To lead the conversation away from temperatures, I murmured that it would add to the gaiety of nations if the sexes dined together. The woman with the thin nose immediately dropped my acquaintance; & the girl with the eyebrows and nice colour spurted into laughter, & then looked ashamed of herself. They then addressed themselves to spring onions & mutton, & I devoted my ingenuity (fruitlessly) to finding a spot on the milk-cup where there was no chip. Genius solved the difficulty by sipping from a spoon (battered, but not actually dangerous.)

After tea I went to fish out notepaper, & asked a patient if there were wardrobes. No, but a ¼ hr. sprint down the corridor (opposite end from store-room) there are some pegs. Audited & found correct, but decided the dresses should remain packed. (Must get some bleached calico covers made, I think.) Was offered a wash (3 basins for 10 of us, no elbow space) & having washed the basin, had one. (Daresay the basin was quite alright, you know.) Found trunk was in bedroom. More exercise, but found it at last. Back to storeroom for nightgown & slippers & dressing gown, & to bedroom to put them on. Astonished to find dressing-gown had not to be restored to luggage room for night, & that a chair (4 inches by 4) might receive my clothes. All this information dug out of patients, who took it all seriously. A girl with most engaging grammar showed me where

to 'ide my slippers under the bedhead, to save hunting amongst the jumble (ugh!) in the storeroom. Putting them in the hidey-hole, I discovered that I must ask D^r Browne to purchase me a duster in town.

By this time I felt that I quite understood how the management induces its patients to take exercise — the principle is the same as hanging a cabbage rather high in the hen-run to keep the birds jumping. I think now that it is not I who do not know what a thorough rest is, but D^r Browne. What he calls a rest, I call “making an Effort”. But then I'm sure I need to do that. I see “light occupation about the building” is part of the programme. Hope they don't put me onto the boots. Anyway, you can't think me unfit to face a boarding-house after this. NEXT DAY [*added in pencil*] H. G. Wells would much approve of some of the things the patient do for themselves, and they all seem worse than I am.

Well, about 7 p.m. a nurse flung the remark at me that I could go to bed if I liked. This was when I am usually “toxic” (note my refinement — entirely due to reaction) but there were no facilities, so of course I couldn't be.

(Steward in Smoking Room. “Ere, Sir, you can't be sick here.”)

Passenger: “Oh, can't I”? (Is.)

A few minutes later I was reproved for not undressing in full view of the road on one side and the gardener & other patients on the other. However, I can be firm myself, & if you say nothing there can be no discussion. A room that can't have the doors partially closed for 5 minutes must be very insanitary. About this time I gathered, from the evolution & remarks of people outside, that teeth get cleaned into the basins we wash from. I can't reproach the patients by asking definitely, and the nurses seem to think “Answer no questions and you'll tell no lies.” However, a string across the doorway rather low down will probably detain one of them long enough to get information to absolutely necessary questions.

The Sister in charge whizzed in with 2 sorts of medicine in Sacrament glasses on a tray, & asked if my cough were dry or loose. Taking a dislike to the appearance of both yellow & white mixtures, I said firmly that I did not cough, but would like some blankets. She was perfectly nice, & brought 2. At 12, wrapped in the gamgee waistcoat & very thankful for it, I caught a night nurse & got another.

Someone had haemorrhage [*sic*] in the night, & before that the little girl next door sang a sentimental song & her prayers in quick succession. ~~I find that it is necessary to remember not to cough when other people do. I haven't been so active in that way for months, but of course it will wear off.~~

I feel an awful snob for being so amused to find myself dans cette galère. I wanted impersonal nursing, & I guess I've got it. Of course I expected nursing. Patients here won't get sentimentalized, but should develop a wholesome self-reliance. They can't cry, because there isn't anywhere to do it. Besides, why should they? [*added in pencil*: And you can't dry your eyes on paper.]

I'm quite at rest about the sufficiency of £2-2-0. With the economy there is, it ought just about to cover expenses. The nurses are few, & work at top speed — the speed that always makes Father remark of a horse "It can't keep that up long."

We get up soon, & I'm wondering how we can all bath, as there is only one. I expect we go in 3 at a time, or else have one on Saturday nights.

It is too bad of me to tell you this side, because of course there is lots that is good (for instance, the gardiner [*sic*]; not a shy man & Irish, & when the friction gets less by use, I shall appreciate the change — though I don't know what value I shall put on it. I know I would not have missed it for anything. No; "the girls" don't bath in the morning. (& last night "the girls don't bath at night." There must be some witching hour between.) This one did, but if you've ever tried to get a complete sponge, even, in a "fixture" with the door precariously "kept to" by a chair

Teeth, it appears are cleaned outside, near the road, in a drain. Patients clean their own bedsteads with turps. The last one must have omitted this rite for weeks & weeks & weeks. I wonder if we take turns at getting the spider webs out of the bathroom. Everything is rough clean & nothing completely so — perhaps it is only superficially dirty.

It is very diverting to be "one of the girls" — quite like "one of the boys" in Clubland. (my predecessor evidently very careless) Went in to breakfast. Soiled table cloth, no napkins, porridge, chops, eggs. By looking out of the window it is possible not to see how some of them handle their implements, but a closer view of a "girl" chopping an egg drove me from the room. As soon as I get really hungry none of this will matter.

[*remainder of letter missing*]

[*Elizabeth reacted with great humour to what must have been a horrifying experience. She was not at Kalyra for long — her next letter was from another nursing home, Nunyara, where the conditions were ideal. She had left Kalyra on 31 December 1918. However, her Kalyra experience stayed with her and in May 1920 when, in better health, she was writing for The Woman's Record, she wrote an article with the title 'What Our Hands Find To Do — Practical Help'. She spoke of Kalyra, explaining that it was a temporary residence 'designed for the relief of any tuberculosis subject for whom cure or improvement may be expected'. She explained how and why it lacked funds and pointed out that though the men had a billiard room to which they could go for recreation the women had nothing. She explained that a well-supplied recreation room could be constructed and appointed for about £200 and 'we cordially invite the Red Cross Circles and "Record" readers to co-operate in providing this gift'. Money donated was acknowledged monthly in The Record and by September 1922 sufficient money had been collected, and the recreation room was built and appropriately fitted out. Elizabeth lived only a few months after this success. After her death it became the Elizabeth Jackson Memorial Room. It has had many different uses over the years, but it is still there, and still named after Elizabeth. It is now used as a chapel. Weddings are celebrated in the Elizabeth Jackson Memorial Room.*]

1919

Letter 78

Nunyara 9th Jan. 1919.

Dear Canning,

I am lying on a rock of a jutting hill whence I can look from Belair round the wooded hill tops to Mt Lofty & round the horizon till I see Glenelg sparkling on the sea shore. Just at my feet is a basin in the hills, and the rounded, cleared hills fold into it. Outside the basin the garden suburbs sweep from the slopes of the range onto the plain to the crowded houses of the city — & yet not very crowded; for rows of green show between them. Sea & sky are cerulean, smoke rises like dusky pearls, roofs are jewels in the setting of the distant trees. Close at hand the gum tops shine in the swaying breeze, the shadows lie cool and long on the bright yellow grass, hens cackle; it is 10 o'clock on a summer morning in Australia. I wonder if your lines are cast in as pleasant a place.

I have been at Nunyara 10 days, & I don't ever want to leave! It is cold cream to my Kalyra-chafed soul. From my lounge I can see Adelaide & Glenelg & the broad blue sea. And I have a pretty room, and a bathroom, and am not allowed to carry lounges or cushions, much less expected to. D^r Rennie & the Matron really care about the patients. D^r Rennie has T.B. himself, & takes the treatment. He got it at the war, & was handled by practitioners who did not know very much about it. Naturally he has got into touch with all the modern authorities, & oozes information. The exaggerated views about its dangerousness annoy him very much. Careful patients are no danger at all to adults; & with care patients should be able to return to their work. Between 70 & 90% of people have the infection before they are 12, but it only develops into activity if they overwork or underfeed, or so on — or don't keep warm.

I have put on 2 lbs this week; and as I lost at Kalyra, I am naturally pleased.

There are 9 patients here; only 2 of us are up every day, & I shall be in bed 2 days
Early lunch

Scheduled: 23 Apr 1918, 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

a week when injections start. But we are all well, so far as feeling goes, & joky. Yesterday I edited the "Kalyra Times"; it was illustrated very cleverly by Miss Eglinton, & threw off impartially at Staff & Patients. It had a great success. Father MacEvoy, who is in bed, & whom we don't really know, was tickled at the things we found to say

about him. Very small beer all of it; but, like good children, we have learned to play with inexpensive toys. None of us is clever, or beautiful, or polished, but we are all good tempered.

I had had 4 excellent Punches; the German retreat had put the writers at their most hilarious. It is easy to throw off at Conservative Punch, standing for conventional polish in manners & culture and art, but I think it is a good ideal. I enjoy the rugged & conscientiously savage Bulletin, but despite, not because of, its mannerisms. If you find a diamond polished, why chip it about? That is what the B. does.

Lady Galway leaves in a few weeks. It is literally true that she will be missed even by those (like me) who have never met her. She was gracious & kindly to look at and to hear, elegant in dress and bearing, penetrating in thought. Her speeches used to stir me even when I read them at Two Wells.

Of new books I see very few, but I don't read as voraciously as I used — one lies & coos at the ceiling, & finds it not unprofitable even mentally. I meant to have learned chess before you came back, but much I doubt it now. I am so dull at it. I think I must be dull at everything! Generally I like writing letters, but this afternoon I feel sleepy.

Later.

I've been thinking what a happy 10 years I've had. Even this last I enjoyed. It wd. have been more hilarious out in the hurly burly, of course, but there were hours of tranquil pleasure. And though such a life might pall in the long run, every joy one has had is so much gained from life. People who always put the value of life in the future make a big mistake. A woman here asks why they prolong her life just for a year or two. Every use, if only she could enjoy the hours as they come.

One must take life as a game, to which the hardest rules add Zest — T.B. among them. Getting one's living despite it is just a useful occupation — So long as the game does not become a fight. It is as with children who like to walk alone as long as they know there is a hand stretched out in readiness. As long as life can be flooded with work & friendship and ideals it is worth while; where we lose grip is in loneliness & disappointment.

Goodbye, dear old boy. The war has made your rules harder, but perhaps it has consolidated the essential you. And for you there is always love, if you can accept it. I know family love is not exciting, nor for ever enough, but such as it is, you have it.

from Elizabeth.

Letter 79

[the 'Woman' addressed was almost certainly Dr Helen Mayo]

Nunyarra, Belair 9/2/19

Dear Woman,

You know I thought “thank you” for your letter, didn’t you? Funny you got the information from Rica. She didn’t answer when I asked her. (Forgot, of course.) I hear she is quarantined in Melbourne. How enraged she will be — No, I didn’t doubt your ability to translate that bit of French, so don’t feel insulted. Crossed out because of the doubtful gender, & non-necessity.

Supposing someone had rung up on my behalf to enquire after Bluebell, and if you failed to understand that had substituted Penelope’s sister, would you have grasped the idea? Ah well, you were saved by the “Mail” (which showed you well enough to lunch with Lady Galway) by Miss Goyder, and by Dr Rennie. I daresay they were as enlightening as you would have been.

Thanks for re-assuring me about mother. She looks to me very frail. She says you told her to rest. If she doesn’t set apart definite hours for it she will never do it. Dear me, amongst the other things for which I am eminently fitted by nature, one is nurse, or, preferably matron. I know so well how to get instructions carried out. Given a little brief authority, I could manage Mother admirably. The authority’s the thing. We only listen to the certificated I know. I do myself; it is so hard to pick out the wheat from the fads of the inexpert. But one respects even the prejudices of the elect. Hence the necessity of being one of them. The funny thing is that so few of them know their power. I sometimes feel inclined to pray for Dr Rennie — “Have courage, my boy, to say no.” And then again sometimes I feel sorry I’ve prayed so hard, when he says it. He is an entertaining mixture of maturity and youth. As always I wish psychology (especially novelist’s psychology) were part of the medical course. You’ve got it, by instinct or experience, though I’ve known you to give in within a minute of victory.

[Later. I hear his going must have been different. He broke the jug.]

I have actually read 3 chapters of a popular work of philosophy. I feel quite a student again. I’ve read a queer mixture of late. I think I told you of the Henry

Bordeaux¹⁹⁵, & Zola & Balzac¹⁹⁶; & then Cassell's mags (with a story whose hero was variously called "Capt", "Lord", "Lord Robert", & some titles that I've forgotten,) & an illustrated book about Josef Israëls¹⁹⁷ the Dutch Jew painter, & Kandinski's¹⁹⁸ account of Neo Impressionism, or post Cubism — Symphonism, anyway! And Mary Antin¹⁹⁹, the Russian Jewess' account of her 12 yrs life in the Mediaeval surroundings of Polotsk in Russia, & her re-birth in nth cent. America. And some letters from Mazzini²⁰⁰ to Mrs Harriet King²⁰¹ & the Rd Table & some Chaucer.²⁰²

I gave Father Pepy's [*sic*]²⁰³ diary of the Warre (Vol 1) for his birthday, but have not read it yet. I've heard that it is — was, 18 mths ago — very witty, & Father needs to see the funny side a little. Noone wd. take him for 62, except when he is worried or sad. He is one of those who wd. find it very much easier to go to the war than to worry over it from this side. Impotence is a miserable feeling.

Tuesday

We have been living in an East wind for more than a week. I used to think I like wind, but now I agree with Kipling "East is East." And when the sound of the wind in the trees — often very Romantic & all that is complicated with the flapping of canvas, & the patient is fixed in bed — well, it seems to me that if I were to be allowed a vocabulary of one word only, that word wd be "damn" — a nice ladylike ejaculation by comparison with some, I daresay; and certainly a very tolerable situation by comparison with life in France. Only I never could see much comfort in that sort of argument!

I remain,

Quite in a good temper for all that,

Elizabeth Jackson.

195 Henry Bordeaux (1870-1963), French writer and lawyer.

196 Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850), French novelist and playwright.

197 Jozef Israëls (1824-1911), Dutch landscape painter.

198 Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), Russian painter and art theorist.

199 Mary Antin (1881-1949) was an American author and immigration rights activist. She came from a Jewish family living in Polotsk, Belarus, then part of Russia.

200 Guiseppe Mazzini (1806-72), Italian politician and journalist, activist for the unification of Italy.

201 Harriet Eleanor Hamilton King (1840-1920) was an English poet and writer. Her strong sympathy for Mazzini informed a number of her works.

202 Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1403) is considered the greatest English poet of the Middle Ages.

203 Samuel Pepys (1633-1703), English naval administrator and Member of Parliament, most famous for the diary he kept as a young man.

Letter 80

[*typed letter*]

17/2/19. Nunyara, Belair, South Australia

Dear Canning,

Doesn't the drawing [*there is a pencil drawing of a man on the bottom left-hand corner of the page*] brighten up the page? The artist did one too many for the Nunyara Times, so I bagged it. Since she left I have had to do some of the drawings myself, as the new artist isn't very good, even at tracing, which is all we are clever enough for. We are lucky to have a book full of funny pictures that are fairly simple, and we fit jokes to them out of the happenings, or put part of one with part of another. It is amazing how many of them suit.

The war — or peace — situation has me worried, but as it will have entirely changed by the time you get this, it is no good discussing it. The books and p.c.'s you sent arrived, and the letters will be taken to the Grange next week when father is here. I enjoyed reading the remarks on them. The French aren't shy about wearing their hearts on postcards, are they? The books I haven't read yet. Heavy lit. I am forbidden, and the social contract seems that at present. *Vie des Martyrs* I ordered from Paris, and it comes this week, along with one on the *Drame, ancien et moderne*, and another which I only ordered three months ago. Really, shipping is nearly normal, by comparison. Even *Punch* is not more than 10 weeks old. I have the calendar!

I believe I am to be asked to take Prof. Mitchell's Logic lectures while he is in England. Anyway, he wrote to ask the Dr. if I were fit, and I told him to say yes. Can't say what answer he gave. On the cool days I am very well, and of course hot days never were very cheerful for me, but I think I have felt them less than usual. I am so happy here, and would like to stay for the winter, but there would be no real advantage in it, and the expense would be unjustifiable. I must try to earn this year. I have too expensive tastes, and too much dislike of anyone having the right to criticise me, ever to be dependent, even on my own people. I don't mind them criticising when I pay for myself, and know that what I do is my own funeral. They are glad I am here, so that is good. I have put on a stone.²⁰⁴

204 One stone = 6 kilograms.

This picture [*drawing on left-hand of page*] represents the M.O. saying Where, oh where, is my little dog gone? But Kiwi came home again on Sunday, to everyone's delight. I have been writing my Red Cross page, about the W.E.A. Just thinking of that work makes me very eager. I must find some substitute for a voice. That sort of teaching is the only thing I am good at. It is rather fun having the world such a very closed oyster. I do wonder what you are going to do, and whether you can get into an English publishing house. I have only typed 23 pages of my novel. You see, one is always being interrupted for walks or for rest. I can't send it out to be typed, because I make alterations as I go on. Besides, I haven't written the last chapters yet. The hero has to die, and life get reorganised for the rest. But I shall have got into the mood for it by the time I'm ready for that part.

I haven't written to Nellie for a long time, but Mother does, and I find it hard to write to anyone at all. I suppose my intellect gets exhausted! O wonder if you will come home married or engaged or really single. There are some things I would like to be sure about. I am very anxious for you to marry, only it must be the right girl. It is the worst thing possible, of course, to stick to an engagement just because it has been made. Not even a saint could make a success of it, or make it anything but a tragedy for wife and children as well. On the other hand it is quite impossible to judge from a distance, and never possible to tell for other people. Where there is a difference in education and interests, and perhaps in *savoir faire*, you have to be sure that you can really get and keep above the superficial things, and that any difference it will make to the sort of friends you will be able to have — with whom your wife will feel at home — will be compensated, so that you will never let her feel that you have made a mistake. I might be on the staff of the Sunday Companion, mightn't I? But one does look with a little anxiety at one's brother's life, and the difference of upbringing between people of the same class in two different countries might be as serious as a difference of actual class, when one is transplanted into the environment of the other. But if you come out with a wife, she will find a very hearty welcome from me, and I know from mother and father.

Of course I am an idiot. This is not a matter on which one wants or can take advice. Read the above as mere natural in the circumstances speculation. I've never been in love. I do think that only married people, who love and plan and sacrifice and enjoy for and with one another and their children live a complete life. "Parental love and the tender passion" to be pedantic, are instincts and mere casual connections cannot satisfy them. Ultimately, that is why they are immoral, I suppose. It is rather fortunate that I do not wish to marry any particular person, though the doctor says that, when one's disease has been arrested for a couple of years, it is safe. The disease is not hereditary, the child can only catch it from a parent whose illness is in the active state.

A married patient who is doing very well since he left here has come up to see us.

Goodbye. Test hour. Much love.

Letter 81

Nunyarra Belair South Australia 8th March, 1919.

Dear Canning,

Have you read Everard Meynell's Life of Francis Thompson?²⁰⁵ The style is that of an average man brought up in the excellent Meynell-Patmore coterie, using their phrases & turns in an uninspired way, with occasional blots of pure journalese, but even "seconds" of the Meynell make is good enough, & if the froth didn't rather fizz up over the subject, it wd. be really entertaining. As it is one blows it aside & gets some idea of what life Thompson lead & of his moods & genius. Thomson's letters are delightful.

But reading of the great is very discouraging to the small. It seems worthless to write merely the ephemeral — or wd be if one took one's self so seriously as to think that what one does must be judged as art, & not just as amusing to us as writers & perhaps also productive! Prof. Mitchell offers to see an agent in England for me over my manuscript — when ready! — and I accepted. Now I see the awkwardness of him associating himself in any way of work of this quality. He has not read it, of course. The style is not only undistinguished, it is colloquial; and there is little structure. I was meant for a pedagogue, not for a novelist.

[Along the left-hand side of the page is an effective drawing of a man in a dressing gown, sadly holding out a bowl with a spoon in it.]

This picture "represents" one of the patients asking for more soup. The housemaid has taken on the cooking with great success so this week's "Nunyarra Times" alternately praises & teases her. We trace all our pictures, & the extraordinary thing is that by looking at illustrations one sees how to turn them over to our own ends. This week I fd. a picture of a youth sitting by the fire doing fancy work, with a black cat. Obviously "D^r Rennie dreaming that the trials of Staff are o'er." He has a black cat. (Cook, laundrymaid, & one nurse left this week, & the Matron (the party at fault) stayed in her room & sulked! The doctor answered bells, sat up all night with a serious case, went to registry offices, & generally rose to the occasion. I organised washing-up parties, those able made our own beds. The housemaid & the remaining nurse worked like three. It was a great lark, and we all enjoyed it. The Matron is to go, of course; meanwhile we have 3 new nurses, one

205 Everard Meynell's biography of Francis Thompson (1859-1907) was published in 1913.

of whom is apparently mental. It is impossible to get decent ones; the War has made us so short at home, & the Military are not discharging those who return, because of the wounded they expect to receive.)

When the men get re-absorbed in civil life, more women will be thrown out, & maids & probationers will be more plentiful.

I thoroughly enjoy life here. The view is changing & enchanting, from Marryatville to the Glenelg, broken only by a line of gumtrees on the spur of the hill. The company is not stimulating, but is gay & friendly, & one can have as little of it as one likes. And there are cows & cats & dogs and birds. I expect to go home at the end of this month, when the course of injections will finish. In June I am to come to town & start the Scholarship research. I am being very good & see practically no visitors. This saves my throat, of course. I also hose it with menthol & oil to prevent the infection reaching it.

Such a lark! Some yellow journalist who had heard of me & the Times thro' a patient here wrote an article (with the high lights all in the wrong place) about us. I squirmed a good deal, because it was obvious to University people who was meant. I had a letter "Did not know you were in a Sanatorium till I saw the Register article."

But this outcome makes me laugh. A woman went to the Register office to get the address of the "Young lady referred to, as she can cure her"! So they've sent up to see if I'll see her. I long to say "yes", but it is unkind to do it for the fun, just to add her to my collection of curiosities. The publisher of the Evening Journal has just been in to see me about it. His wife lives in the room next to mine. As it is Sunday, there are lots of visitors about. The doctor has just bought 3 more cows & one man is off duty. So he has gone to help milk. Now the friends of a patient are pursuing him to the cow-shed. Up he comes. The whole pantomime is opposite one end of my door. (I am in bed with an injection.)

A propos des injections, Doctor wd. not put the needle in straight, but at an angle; then he complained that the skin was tough, & the needle used to bend. I proved geometrically a vertical injectⁿ should hurt less, but he said "so little as to be not worth trying". So last night I talked about carving legs of mutton, & he admitted that the vertical cut was tenderer. So I persuaded him to give me the vertical jab with the needle, & he did & admitted it was easier! Of course it was; that way the needle only has to penetrate one set of vessels, as they are arranged parallel to the skin; the diagonal injection cuts through many. I was generous, though, & said the ease might be due to the needle, but he admitted it was the same instrument. Oh, he gives in very nicely.

Erica Prince has been in the Quarantine Camp at the Exhibition, where 600 people from Influenza in Melbourne have had to spend a week.²⁰⁶ She says they have had a delightful time, everyone acting as though it were a picnic. They had concerts at night at which they sang original songs & parodies. One began

206 The great influenza pandemic of 1918, often called the Spanish Flu, caused about 50 million deaths worldwide, more than the casualties caused by the War.

“If flu were the only germ in the world
& Ramsay the only boy. . . [*sic*] {Ramsay Smith, of course)

I fancy I saw in the paper that Capt. F. Laycock has returned from Africa.

In the absence of any ideas on anything whatever I think of closing down. I’ve been all the afternoon writing this bit of rubbish.

Hoping you are well and happy-ish,

I remain

Your loving Sister

Elizabeth.

Letter 82

Nunyara Belair 28/3/19

Dear Canning,

Somehow having some of our letters to you returned makes it hard to write — like talking through a telephone when you think no-one else is at the end of the wire.

The London “Times” has interesting articles in about the taking possession of French towns from Germany, return of prisoners, & arrival of Pres. Wilson. Of course, the “Times” sees everything through a bevelled mirror, but it makes good reading. I send some of them on to Grandpa.

Me, I get very little time for reading, because of rests, & walks, & the “Nunyara Times”, & the book. MacMillan’s Melbourne agent has sent “Petunia [*sic*] to the London firm, tho’ he thinks it too short. He politely asks for the “first refusal” of the novel & will arrange to see me when in Adelaide “to discuss it.” All very cheerful, but it will be different when he sees it. It is a poor ill developed crétin, with occasional dimples.²⁰⁷

It is still delightful here, with the air and the view. I go home in 11 days, when the course of injections will be over. They have lowered my temperature a little, tho’ not so much as one man’s. He has only had 2, & is now normal nearly all day long, tho’ a few weeks ago he was always 100. He is a returned soldier, a very nice fellow. Too quiet to tell us much, but adds little dry remarks to the conversation. Everyone here is glad to see him up. He had to stay in bed for so very long. He is engaged to a girl at M^t Barker who seems very nice.

There have been great ructions on the staff here, & I think a harried young doctor (“I hate rows, and won’t be mixed up in them”) almost thought of giving up the Sanatorium. After vigorous work he has got a pretty good staff again now. He is a great encouragement to me, for tho’ he must be younger & also has T.B., he has had the enterprise to start, against the advice of everyone, this Sanatorium, & already the opening seems justified. If he can knock out a career, perhaps I can. Anyway I’m heavier than ever in my life before, & uninfective.

207 Elizabeth published two booklets of sketches of country life — *At Petunia* and *Petunia Again*.

The Tennis Tournament is just over. I see P. McLean did a great deal of “necessary preliminary arranging”. Neither he nor Miss Norice got into the finals. Taylor is champion, I think.

It is hard to say how economic things will go here. Soldiers & Bolsheviks are scrapping in Queensland, & everywhere there is mental ferment that I hope won't become physical. For those of us who are young and strong (of head or of health) it's a great time to be alive in. Influenza is not very bad in S.A. I fancy, despite the croakers, the measures were effective. Our list isn't 1/100 of Melbourne's or Sydneys. 3 deaths, I think.

[added on left-hand margin of page 1] There are many things I wd. like to say about your future. You & I are always restless & impatient before indefiniteness. But it is our qualities that provide for us, & while you are energetic & businesslike & pushing & patient you will make a place, if you can't see one.

Goodbye, dear old brother.

Your loving Sister Elizabeth.

Letter 83

Two Wells, South Australia. 28th May, 1919

Dear Canning, 34 days to your birthday — I hope you've a firm grip of life, and a joy even in its anguish. Birthdays make one ask if life is worth living, & so on. A year ago I would have said no, as far as I was concerned, but now, with better health but no better prospects, I know it is. And I know that one finds a greater fulness in it every year.

If we are not glad to live it is because we are somehow dealing wrongly or inadequately with life. Fortunately, if we are sufficiently dissatisfied with our character, which of course is our implement for handling the world, we can always change it. Beloved Professor Mitchell preached that most heartily.

I've been reading the Round Table résumé of "Australia in the war". We did emerge from all that muddle of the Morphettville [...] to an army known among armies, great in assault, & defence, not only gallant but achieving. And if you who were of that army still curl a cynical lip, I quote the article which says the Digger was always a pessimist & a critic, but determined, & pt. out that however the hubbub & change & distraction of war prevented clockwork precision, & however odd men may have sunk before the test, the result against the enemy proves the instrument of war our men became. They must in the mass have had great qualities of manhood, such as training could turn to the highest account for the purpose given.

In my last letter I think I did not mention your idea about my going to England to see "Children's Children" through the press. But you would see that travel & looking after myself, & irregular hours, & so on, are impossible just yet. I would much like to see Uncle Jim, but I could not (or shd. not) make my own bed or lift my own boxes, & I fancy an invalid more — especially one whose blooming appearance invited no compassion — would not be too welcome.

I am often very doubtful whether any publisher will take the book. Parts of it are beneath contempt, yet I've nothing better to substitute. George falls at Gallipoli; so he never knows what the army becomes, though he has learnt its gallantry. And he never sees England, though he says in the first chapter "I'm going to England some day." I'm a kind of realist, though almost any written character must be idealised too. The very omission of the long dull tracts of life has a heightening effect on characters as presented.

Have you read Philpott's "The Virgin in Judgment"?²⁰⁸ That man's art annoys me. It's so perfect as to seem done with scornful ease. I think there is a little too much scenery, though. At least I can't read it all! "Cripps the Carrier" (author of "Lorna Doone"²⁰⁹) is amazingly good — & the same man's "Cradick Nowell", disappointing. It is the rustics who "make" Cripps. They & the dogs are the best part of "Nowell."

Norton Jackson's daughter, aged 2 yrs 8 mths died last week. I am so sorry for him. He is the most affectionate of men. At the same time, the years of loving must more than make up for the loss. I mean, baldly, bereavement is better than barrenness. — & I don't mean barrenness of the loins, but of the mind never centred round the love & play & future of some offspring.

In about a month I want to find a landlady & spend a couple of months doing research at the Library, if the influenza epidemic is abated. A landlady won't be easy to find, of course, but I've put off the scholarship work rather long already. I expect it to be very interesting. Logic exercises will be coming in in about a fortnight. I don't look forward to them, bother them. But they are remunerative!

I see there is an Industrial Hist. of Aust. Out — 73/6 — not in the least likely to be worth the money. The number of books of all kinds that come out frightens me. Can we afford so much on the financially unproductive, while we have so much waste to make up? Of course one gets very tired of economy, & to make a whole nation economise seems impossible. One needs to take some people by the scruff of the neck in order to get their attention while elementary principles are expounded — and even then they will pursue their old course, unless they are well-disposed despite their ignorance & flightiness. People are not sufficiently trained to earnest purpose in childhood. Each is inclined to think himself of no importance to the world, & of great importance to himself. The reverse attitude might result in ridiculous pomposity, but in great advantage all the same. We are not sufficiently conscious of our social function, & of our social place. We are not like pebbles imbedded in a matrix, but more like the partial crystals of some solution. We are made of the nation & neighbourhood & family, simply vital principles which have attracted & arranged certain of their elements of tht. & feeling & so on. There is mental continuity despite physical disjunction, and we have no right to act as tho' we were self-sufficing & disconnected. Ay mi! A philosopher goes a long way round to say "we are all members one of another" & "no man liveth unto himself", doesn't she? But that is because the fulness of those ideas is only realised after the meditation. The summaries of other people's wisdom only becomes striking to us after we have gone through the same process of rational^m ourselves. That is what the teacher must remember — to take the pupil right through the process, not just impose the rule of thumb.

208 Eden Philpott's *The Virgin in Judgment* was published in 1908.

209 The author of *Lorna Doone: A Romance of Exmoor*, 1869, and *Cradick Nowell*, 1866, was English novelist Richard Doddridge Blackmore (1825-1900).

But we come so to look at ease & leisure as the desirable things of life that we dread teaching people to feel fully their responsibility, that it is important that each man, however humble or unintelligent, should with whatever difficulty acquire as much knowledge, and practise it, as is possible to him. We all think, “Oh, just my stupidity won’t matter, or my ignorance! I can have an easy time — or at any rate, my child shan’t be allowed to feel the burden of responsibility.” And yet the normal man likes responsibility (whether passive or active — of suffering or of initiative) despite the strain — just as caviar is a taste more difficult but more delightful than chocolate, & “Diana of the Crossways”²¹⁰ than “Pollyanna, or the Glad Girl.”²¹¹ That’s the proof of the strength of human nature, that it likes to be tried.” And it is usually the fault of not having been exercised in small self-reliances & responsibilities to others when we shirk the duty & cannot believe that duty-doing brings its joy.

All this because the people want to go on being butterflies — extravagant ones. But petty economies often make me exclaim myself “Oh, it’s cheaper to be dead, if that’s all.” But of course one doesn’t produce, when one is dead.

Much love

From your moralising sister

Elizabeth.

210 A novel by George Meredith, published in 1885.

211 A best-selling 1913 novel, now regarded as a children’s classic, by Eleanor H. Porter. Pollyanna’s name has become a popular term for someone with a very optimistic outlook.

Letter 84

Two Wells, South Aus. 4th July [1919]

Dear Canning,

Tuesday was your birthday and of course we thought of you. I hope you weren't melancholy, nor yet boisterous.

Many thanks for "The Brook Kerith." Marvellous imagination Moore²¹² has, warm and lovable. Joseph of Arimathea was a dear little boy, and Dan so human! and what is used & what rejected of the Testament most skilful. And the story of the saving, & the building up of the Resurrection — & then Caesar — & the cunning drama of Paul! It's an astonishing genius, too good to call tour de force. I suppose the daring to do it will be thought blasphemous by some. Being Moore, one noticed the pointing of the finger at sex — in the cockfight & at the brook with the Essenes. The curiosity of the celibates was most engaging, though. Still, I wish Moore could forget the nasty. It makes him seem smeared himself.

We have had the Rev — — Clarke staying here. He is keen on the Bible in State Schools, & I'm not. He got so cross I was ashamed of myself for provoking him — especially in our house — but I had no idea that he was feeling the argument so deeply. When a thing is very near one's heart the detachment of a diletante is exasperating.

I've fallen in love with 2 cats & a kitten today. The nicest cat was very like M^cClusky — pink nose, soft thick fur, but greyer & darker & bigger. It lay down and snuggled at me in the middle of the main Street! I could have tucked it under my arm with pleasure.

The kitten is black, but not at all like Pluto, and very wild. The other cat lives in the woodheap. But of course I mustn't be having cats; I'll be in lodgings again soon. I've applied for extension of thesis time, but if influenza keeps away may not need it.

Sometimes I feel as if my old interest had gone, & I wonder whether I have the power to write the thesis. You speak of altered mentality, but I hope that is righting itself. A little regular study — half an hours reading, & then jotting down a précis of it — would soon bring back your grasp. And vivacity & spontaneity such as I gather

212 *The Brook Kerith*, 1916, by George Moore (1852-1933), prolific Irish writer, novelist, poet and art critic.

you lack (You say you can't compose an advertisement) will return as turmoil of senses & feelings subsides.

I wish you weren't at Faversham. Judging from the letters you sent when you first saw them our relations there are not of fine grain. I don't like us to go against our moral disapprovals. Some fastidiousness is good. At the same time you have your own life to live, & may have revised your judgment. But don't lower your standard; keep raising it. The restrained pleasures have the best savour, not the rowdiest ones.

We have Thanksgiving for Peace on Sunday. Aye, we're thankful!

"Children's Children" is finished, except for making fair copies of some pages. I wish you could see it before it goes to a publisher. Father has read it, & advises that it be given its chance. My bother is how far certain perfectly innocent parallels will make people think that purely imaginary things are parallels too. Probably incidents of Martha at the Uni. will be put down to me — but I don't think I mind. I shall probably sign it Elizabeth Jay, or Essie Jay. (S.E.J.) It ought to show the growth of provincial children; what it does show is a provincial writer! My next story will have fewer threads in it. It will be about M^cLaren Vale, I think. I have the knot, & some of the characters, but not the resolution, the untying. I think I am better at characters than at story

Time for me to go to sleep, so goodnighty.

Love from Elizabeth.

Just had a letter from you — Kent in cherry time. Evidently you are happy with the girls, so that's all right. My friend Rica Hübbe²¹³ is very ill, & D^r Mayo is going to England next year, so I feel a little melancholy! I have many acquaintances of whom I am fond, but these two people I love.

213 Edith Ulrica Hübbe (1885-1967) completed a B.A. at the University of Adelaide in 1908 and a medical degree in 1922. She suffered from many illnesses.

Letter 85

Two Wells South Aus 2nd Aug 1919

Dear Canning,

So you don't like "In the Scrub"?²¹⁴ Well I admit that it is like a gutter-snipe spreading his fingers before his nose in the well-known way; but I thought the real bush touch was done with some deftness & grace, myself.

"En voyage with Pluto" is cheap, I suppose is your objection. But so are lots of the others. No, it was not Bowden — Norwood to Grange, really, turned with additions, into Norwood to Two Wells. There was the same mixture of fact & fiction in that as in all the rest — derelict included.

Your taste is better than mine, as I believe I've mentioned before, and I certainly wish you had been at hand to discuss my work. But I don't think I should have omitted that pirouette in the scrub! — I think you only object to it because a woman wrote it. & perhaps your imagination "lives in" what I only dotted. But you may be write right.

Macmillans haven't written whether or not they mean to publish *Petunia* in England. I do not think they will — at any rate, Prof Mitchell thought they would not, & he has been a reviewer!

By the way don't stop criticising. No one else is willing to.

I had decided to used a nom-de-plume for "Childrens Children", but found when Father was packing it, that he was disappointed. I therefore put my own. I suppose a man does like to feel that the name he gave his daughter is good enough. I found with *Petunia* that using my own name was like being in King William St without gloves, & it will be worse with the novel. My next will be "The Happy Grocer", I think, although it gets harder instead of easier. There isn't enough in me for complete books; "*Petunia*" is more my level. You should write; you have far more depth than I. I am just an irritable prig with gusts of warmth and streaks of priggishness and meanness, of vagueness of vision & no experience of life.

You have strength & depth & insight, but a sort of blight of melancholy. Have sunshine instead — easy to prescribe. Might as well tell myself to have strength & depth & insight!

214 Both 'In the Scrub' and 'En voyage with Pluto' were published in *At Petunia*, a copy of which is held in the State Library.

You will be tired of hearing that I expect soon to go to town for research. I dread it a little because of the preliminary awkwardness of getting a landlady who won't be nervous, & also because my health lets me run like a mouse on a string, & then pulls me up again. I must not have a cough when I research, for the sake of the documents.

I meditate some more "Petunia" sketches, but the papers probably won't accept them. The Queensland "Daily Mail" has taken my "Commonsense about Consumption", but it has not appeared yet. I am reading my first Rhoda Broughton²¹⁵ novel — strongly under the influence of James²¹⁶ at the time, I think, but one remark is à propos of this letter! "Her affection for him was tried — by years of letters all about himself."

Have you read Coghlan's "Land & Industry in Australia"?²¹⁷ 4 vols — 2000 pages! I've read 200. I think of advertising for the loan of letters & diaries of S.A. old colonists — am waiting to hear from the Pub. Lib. what they have.

I don't think that your 6 months will be long enough to prove your "only the best books" experiment. It takes time to reach the people of taste, and still longer to form the taste of the others. But it is conducting one's business or profession or trade along lines of ideals that gives it its grip on our interest — hence my "happy grocer", who is offered a chance to take Law, but is too conscious of the value of his function in feeding people. I'm bound to be priggish & pedantic. It seems a pity but as soon as a man in a book becomes conscious of himself, has a theory, he seems sentimental.

Millicent Proud has just sailed for England. She wants to live there for some months & then move on. She is like Keeling, also Daly the theatre manager, she "holds tradition guilty till it is proved innocent", but despite that bias she is a very fine woman — sincere & deep feeling & energetic, tho' "intellectually sprawling."

We are looking forward to having you home again, and I think you do right to explain your feeling against settling down, and so on. I have found myself that it is a mistake to try & spare people's feelings by withholding confidence; one's parents are not children, & our confidence means more to them than our contact. I know mother's heart leaps up as every fresh soldier comes home. The Two Wells young men are such dears. They let us poor homestayors express our thanks, & smile at our flags & go to our welcomes — tho' I do think they must sometimes think it was easier to go to war than to come back! But then the welcomes are so sincere, and as warm for the gravedigger's son as for the well-to-do young farmer.

Well, goodbye, young chap, & be good, now do'ee. And don't be too stiff with the world. It has a warmer heart than you'd think & often likes us when we in our humility

215 Rhoda Broughton (1840-1920) was a Welsh novelist and short story writer.

216 Henry James (1843-1916) was a very influential American-born British writer.

217 *Labour and Industry in Australia*, 1918, by Sir Timothy Augustine Coghlan (1855-1926).

think it is merely being polite. I agree with Mrs Menzies-Legh²¹⁸ that it is ungenerous to be afraid to show our liking for people for fear they like us less than we do them. Have you read “The Caravaners”?

Elizabeth Jackson.

218 A character in *The Caravaners*, 1909, by Elizabeth von Arnim.

Letter 86

Two Wells, South Aus. 15/8/19.

Dear Canning,

Some of the prints in the Buddha book are delightful. So far I've only dipped into the text. From the size of the Library Catalogues I gather that Faversham doesn't read much — unless there is a free circulating Library. The classificatⁿ by authors seems better than by book title. Wonder why they don't date the catalogues? Lots of the authors I don't know & some I miss — Wells, Hewlett, de Morgan.²¹⁹ I see that the Classif. by title is the latest as Hergesheimer's *Three Black Pennys*²²⁰ is in it. Also that it is only a short list of some. They are the newer, I suppose — Susan [] & Sylvia & Michael²²¹, neither of which I've read. I like the waistcoat pocketness of the new ones.

Isn't this ink shocking? It's Onoto.²²²

Can you read Paul Trent?²²³ I'm amazed at his vogue — struggled thro' "Bentley's Conscience." Never again! Does no one read *Belles Lettres*? We've just got our Punch with the review of "The Love Spinner"²²⁴ Jove! What an interesting thing a catalogue is. But my comments are not, so I'll desist.

This morning I wrote an article (to the Signor Simple Simon, D. Litt) emending "Pussy cat p-c, what did you there . . . [*sic*] So I caught (for frightener) a little mouse under her chair, just frightening it, is the solemn argument, was to make a vulgar scene. — It tickled me very much at the time; when it's typed out I daresay it will be less funny, even to me.

Monday night.

219 Augustus de Morgan (1806-1871) was a British mathematician and logician.

220 Joseph Hergesheimer (1880-1954) was a prominent American novelist. *Three Black Pennys* was published in 1917.

221 *Sylvia and Michael*, 1919, a novel by Scottish writer and biographer Sir Compton Mackenzie (1883-1972). This novel was a sequel to his earlier novel, *The Early Life and Adventures of Sylvia Scarlett*, published in 1918.

222 Onoto was a brand of fountain pen first manufactured by Thomas de la Rue & Company in 1905.

223 Paul Trent (pseudonym of Edward Platt) was a prolific English novelist.

224 *The Love Spinner*, 1919, by Clara Turnbull.

I've just written a letter to some M.L.C. children who still write. Such a good letter — if I weren't labelled school marm to them! You see I told them all about our efforts to adopt Emily, or, in the alternative, Scipio. (2 cats) They are not related and while Emily is like a Duchess, Scipio is an indisputable guttersnipe. Emily is too polite to take a bone in her fingers, and Scipio bolts his food & swipes over it. This morning he tried to bolt a piece of me too, & I can't say what I felt because there was Emily in the offing — such a thorough lady, if shocked she is apt to disappear for a day or two. We have to exert our powers over both cats (at least Scipio is a kitten) because at present neither seems inclined to be adopted. Eat our tucker, yes; be cuddled, no, not even patted. Well, we can't say they flirt; they give us no encouragement. I daresay, though, you would prefer to hear of something else than cats.

Have sent word to you about *Galahad Jones*, written by Adams²²⁵, illustrated by Norman Lindsay, published by John Lane. It is a little Chestertonean, but not at all chaotic. All the whimsicality is organised round an idea. I think really it is the splashes of colour in it that remind me of Chesterton.²²⁶

Ella Stephens writes of her experiences in Papua. Owing to the shipping strikes they are out of flour & butter & kerosene (though she does not class the latter as a food so much as a flavouring.) Ida Brummitt has written from the borders of Afghanistan, where she is “nursing in the next war.”

The Public Library is being awfully good — even giving me page references, to save time. But nothing can shorten the newspapers!

I am reading a very good set of essays (some from the *Rd. Table*) by Alfred E. Zimmer.²²⁷ Know him? And we have 3 new *Punches*. You can't think how welcome they are. This isolated life is very unstimulating, though certainly writing helps. But that is a much more ambitious form of expression than I am fitted for.

Sts: I think of taking a course of Pelmanism, for the psychological interest. It seems to be a practical applicatⁿ of that science and might be enormously useful for practical advising if I ever lecture on the subject again.

There is just a chance that I shall be asked to edit the *Varsity Mag.* \(\text{free})/ It isn't easy to get a living in a few hours a day, but the editing would give me an interest, and some prestige. Believe me, having something to be interested in matters, & if I degenerate into a “coach by correspondence” or something, I shall need such artificial cocktails.

225 Arthur Henry Adams (1872-1936), journalist, literary critic and creative writer, was born in New Zealand but spent most of his working life in Australia.

226 George Keith Chesterton (1874-1936), English writer, poet, philosopher, dramatist, journalist, biographer, literary and art critic.

227 Alfred Eckhard Zimmerman (1879-1957) was a British classical scholar, historian and political scientist.

Letters will arrive in a few minutes. One gets greedy for them — but you know more about that than I. Wish I could talk over “The Happy Grocer” with you — perhaps I shall! It can only simmer in me for a few months, with all I have on hand.

I meant to have learned chess before you came home & \did/ work through the first few chapters of your book. But it takes a different sort of brain from mine.

The Gen. Sec. of the Pub. Lib. has died. That of course is a position that you have not had the previous training for. Sec. of Adelaide Circulating Lib. you might get, if it were open. A course in a Library where Seth's (?) Cataloguing is used would have been valuable. I shan't think there is much doubt of you getting something where you can find a full life. Wiggs are fools if they don't know that your range and eager interest and ability aren't 6 times those of their appalling people. Only its site and Capital keeps that placed going. A good manager who could inspire the assistants to interest & courtesy wd. work wonders. For years they have acted as tho' it were a privilege to be allowed to shop in Wiggs. And yet I like the place. I'm like the cats, like what I know.

To convince the powers that be of one's being the very thing they want takes self confidence but not aggressiveness. “The place would suit me, & I feel sure I wd. be good for the place.” Even if Wyards is small, you can pt out the personal contact with publishers, & the opportunity it gave you to catch up with things. Dear me, I would like to be composing some letters of application! Only I haven't the ghost of a chance of going into business. (By the way, don't fear that I contemplate interfering in any way, even in order to have sthg. ready for you. I would, like a shot, if I thought you would like it, but I know you wouldn't.)

So goodbye, & much love. And don't waste your amazing mental vitality through impatience. One has to give people a chance to find out that one is as valuable as one is; & one has to remember that one's value must not be flung away. It is less wasteful to use brains at pay inadequate to them, rather than to ignore them & take on a mere physical job at wages adequate to the physical.

Oh dear, you don't want to be told that.

Dear old boy, we both find life pretty difficult but that is the interest of it.

XX E. Jackson.

Letter 87

Two Wells. South Aus. 7/9//19

Dear Canning

Writing to you, when you will probably be on the water when the letter gets to England, is like talking on the telephone to someone who isn't there. And isn't this insulting paper to do it on, too? A Peace economy, of course; & we must be economical. Captain Butler is flying about the Country in an aeroplane to remind people of this. I fancy the Federal Govt pays him for boosting their loan.

Mother went down to see Grandpa this week. I think the old chap is fairly happy. He was fixing up the stable as a tool shed.

I corrected the Logic exam. this week. Not such bad papers as I had expected. Bro. Purton²²⁸ came up to discuss the term's work. Being confronted with him for 5 hrs. depressed me at first, but he turned out to be almost as entertaining as a woman would have been, & knowing so many of the same books & people made talking easy. He gives me the impression of a man who prefers easy Amercanised thought, & I wish he would wear fresher linen & take more exercise, but his enthusiasm for education & interest in his profession are I think real, & he enjoyed it as much as I did when a Methodist local preacher approached us on the Station & "hoped he wd. have a good time on Sunday." He is very willing to explain the Christian Bro. order, and altogether made a pleasant break in a rather solitary life.

The old lady who didn't want to go to the Incurables²²⁹ because "M^{rs} S. has promised to strake me for £1" is dead. Poor old Soul. Too many years are not a gift to pray for, are they? 80 nice healthy ones or, better, die before decay sets in. Grandpa still enjoys life, & eventide is pleasant to such as he, as well as for those who love him.

My interests at the present time are mainly

1. Influenza epidemic, when over so that I can do my research?
2. Writing for the Red Cross Record & Varsity mag.
3. Trying to get the "Record" made a woman's mag.

228 David Gabriel Purton (1883-1948), Christian brother, teacher, lecturer in psychology and logic, and headmaster of a number of Catholic schools.

229 The Home for Incurables, now the Julia Farr Centre.

I find it much harder to be keen on public questions here in the country than in town where there are meetings, & lectures, & currents of opinion, but the Round Table is always stimulating.

No, I can't feel you on the other end of the wire, & I'm going to stop.

Your loving Sister,

Elizabeth.

1920

Letter 88

Woodside 16/5/20

Dear Canning,

What Giddens' Almanac calls "some showers" have penetrated the study & dining & Miss Lamberts rooms; & taken some iron off the tank & the stable. The latter items suggest that there has been some wind too, though Giddens says nothing about it. Father managed to keep the — the arbour at the end of the Rose Walk — intact; & the shade house stands where it was.

You didn't ever see Peter, so you don't know what an engaging little fellow he was. In the middle of his play yesterday he had a convulsion, and died. I didn't know a little dog could be so dear. He used to wag his anomalous tail (we shall never know now whether it was undeveloped Pom, or decadent terrier) and, paws on lounge, hopefully suggest a walk, with his pricked black ears & sharp black eyes. And if he could just get his tongue to yr. chin - - - & he was so zealous when he had a bone to bury! & so funny if he wanted to bring it inside. He would prance in, innocently and proudly, tail up, head up, bone a-one side — & in hearing the reprimand, turn sharp round, you would swear he was silently laughing. And to see him tugging at a coat-tail, legs set, eyes bulging.

You see the little dog I didn't want became very dear. They say it happens to unwilling mothers too. And, in most cases, what is or promises to be a trouble brings pleasure more than Commensurate, One stands shivering on the brink of responsibility, or bother — & afterwards wonder why we couldn't foresee all the additional strands of interest that wd make life more live. It's the full life, not the placid or the empty or the carefully smothered one, that feels worth while, however one may doubt it on depression or vexation.

Peter loved best 1, the dog opposite; 2, bones; three, me. In another day I would have been a bad fourth to Mother, who was fast engaging his affections by her supreme powers of understanding the ways & comforts of puppies. He was the only dog she ever had inside, so you can gauge what she feels, & how quickly he won on her.

I wouldn't not have had him, though. I like to remember his little ways.

We are all a little anxious about Grandpa's cold. He is so dreadfully sorry for himself when he is ill! And before he has got used to the new housekeeper! But very likely it

got better. Mother has been struggling with hers. Poor dear, yesterday Peter upset her in the morning, & in the afternoon she was very depressed about the muddle of getting straight. But now the paper hangers have gone we can get on with the study, tho' there aren't enough bookshelves & that means cases lying about till more are made. And she is so tired of having unsuitable & makeshift furniture. But of course we have allowed ourselves to accumulate far too many things. Only one man's lumber is the apple of another man's eye — especially mine & father's!

We could do — & do better — with much less, if we had a clean bill to begin with.

If you build, arrange to have the water laid on to the bedrooms, if you can. Saves work.

Grandpa will miss you when you are in a home of your own, but I am sure it would be a bad hindrance to your & Edie's happiness to stay with him.²³⁰ It doesn't matter who the third party is, nor how matter-of-fact the conversation, people never can be just as free or get quite such a pleasant intimacy when a third person is in the house. Apart from common sense, M^{rs} Birrell told me all about it. And in her case the third party was her own mother, & M^r Birrell was fond of her too.

Woodside library is the most atrocious muddle. Even the authors aren't kept together, let alone in alphabetical order. But there is the fun of lighting on something unexpectedly good or bad. Unpacking our own books reminds one of things one hasn't read for some time, too. I have 2 or 3 Henry Bordeaux's French novels, in both languages, that you probably haven't seen.

I get rather hungry for other books — the books I put on the "Record" list.

By the way, have you returned "The Psychopathology of Everyday life"²³¹ to the Varsity? We have Lawrence's "Julius Caesar", I see. Do you subscribe to Preece's?²³²

(Wonderful weather, this; reminds me of Flanders.)

I have finished 2 chapters of thesis — the typing. They are the nice scandalous ones, all about people's grandparents. Old Kyffin Thomas (splenetic merely) George Milner Stephen (perjury) John Baker (sharp practice) & so on. But a few old colonists come out well — Hanson²³³, Morphett²³⁴, John Brown.²³⁵ I liked the dear old things, even when they are horsewhipping one another, or solemnly holding Courts of honour! Sometimes they are so very very old, sometimes so modern. But Heaven knows whether

230 Edie was apparently a close friend, but she did not marry Canning.

231 *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, 1901, by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Freud was an Austrian scholar, neurologist and founder of psychoanalysis.

232 An Adelaide bookshop.

233 Sir Richard Davies Hanson (1805-76) was Chief Judge of the Supreme court of South Australia and the fourth premier of South Australia.

234 Sir John Morphett (1809-92), South Australian pioneer, landowner and politician.

235 John Brown (c.1801-79), pioneering emigration agent and company manager.

those responsible will be convinced that all this has any bearing on the economics of S—A—, & the relation of capital & labour. I can only hope that they will be too entertained to enquire.

I wish Vardon's were more entertaining for you — & that they would grant 10 minutes late in the morning.

I take some 14 h^s to correct the Logic exercises. If only those zealous souls who do more than they are asked wd. realize what it means for me when they put 16 sentences through 8 evolutions each - - - when there are 30 people in the class. Some of the papers have to be almost entirely re-written. Still, it isn't really dull, because I am reaching out after minds all the time.

Your very loving Sister, Elizabeth.

Letter 89

[*typed letter*]

[*December 1920?*]

[*after the Commemoration in 1920, the year of the publication of 'Petunia Again'*]

Dear Canning,

Having just declared that it is “misery” to have my fountain nib broken, I feel much better. Violence, like swearing, lets off steam. I got the nib right again last time, too, and may this.

I'm sending a fairly recent London Observer, and keeping the Record for the Grange. The Observer has less in than the Times, I think, and the journalism is worse. The writers put on airs.

I shall be putting on airs soon! The editor of the Mail wrote and asked me for a weekly letter, length and subjects (non-social) to be left to me. So gratifying to know that I am up to Mail standard! The editor said he had just been reading “Pet. Again.” I pointed out that some of those sketches (in the earlier book) he had rejected, but he said at that time the Mail had no money. The man puzzles me. He seems to have ideas and ideals — and yet look at the rag he produces. I did hope that the reviews in the booklet might inspire some editor to offer me reviews — but the Mail ed. seems to do those himself.

I had a good time in town, really enjoyed it, and was going hard all the time. Prof. Mitchell told me that the Uni. had raised my salary, and he gave me more work to do during the vacation, while the typist is comparatively unengaged. So I'm busy in venting Logic Exercises. There are also some psychology lectures to prepare for Jan., before I come to the Grange. Mother can't get down till the washerwoman has been, that individual being unable to alter the day. But I think I shall come on the Wed. or Thursday. Of course you will have town and tennis and the jetty, besides Grandpa. Dear old thing. Yes, I didn't mind him sending the copy to Miss Lewis. It had gone straight from the printer, so wasn't written in. He shows much more interest in this book than in the former one — has bought 6 copies! I helped him (yes, I did, I brought bolts and hammers, and did some hammering) prop up the vine trellis during the two hours I was there last week. He was too hot and tired to be glad to see me when I went in

at first, but I'm pretty used to him, and after I had talked to Miss Wade he gradually awoke to interest. Miss Wade keeps the house clean, and looks after garden and food. I suppose she can hardly be expected to keep Grandpa himself looking fresh! (Of course he looks well.) I think he gives our affection less to excuse than most men of his age. I am afraid the cottage seems to him an attractive occupation. It will deter him more than the expectation of work and worry. Of course three rooms of the present house are idle capital except for odd days in the year though I don't think Miss Wade dislikes us going there as Mrs. Lewis did, though Grandpa gives the impression of being afraid to have us — not at Christmas, of course, but ordinary times. He still seems to hanker after Mrs. L. — though it may be only his interest in people he knows; and of course she and he had many common acquaintances. Commem. was dull — 65 minutes oration, after 85 had graduated. Student concert pretty fair. Grads dinner the best I ever ate — I mean talked through. Great fun.

[on right-hand margin, in pencil] Love, Elizabeth

1922

Letter 90

[*This letter is in the Helen Mayo papers in the State Library of South Australia*]

Woodside 19th Feb 1922

Dear Helen,

Are you just off to C. H. as you get this — full of what are variously known as beans & the joy of life? Or did you extend your holiday after the custom of medicals? So festive as you must have looked! You need a chaperone if you can't refrain from des oeillades! "I don't know you & I don't want etc" — so definite and comprehensive. But you have doubtless forgotten by now the earlier adventures. I was relieved to hear of the arrival of "Annie"; because somehow your sister-in-law doesn't sound likely to have a strong desire to do your packing.

Penelope came last Saturday. If I were a praying person I shd put a clause in my prayers that you might have grace to stand firm etc: "God keep the Light papers²³⁶ for S.A." Penelope's work will provide authenticated copies sufficient for the research student's needs in the Mitchell; & Adelaide \ordinary/ students will also use the similar copies; but Adelaide ought to have the sentimental interest of the originals. Whatever comes of the rest of Penelope's work, the provision of accurate copies of the papers will be of enormous value. And I incline to think she can do the rest well. Her nervistic state is like a film over some of her ability, but her executive capacity — knowledge of how to set about things, & how to utilise every hint are good. She will elucidate allusions as well as anyone, & she really has the initiative to go to England for the final threads. She shows to much better advantage on her own basis. I think it is only by comparison with her own family that she feels inefficient. She suspects herself, and longs for reassurance, but suspects also that, coming from such a family, she cannot really be dull. And of course she isn't! It's the miserable conflict that prevents her interestingness from having scope.

236 Helen and Penelope Mayo were the granddaughters of Dr George Mayo, who had married Maria Gandy after Colonel William Light, whose mistress she had been, died. The Light papers, obviously of enormous historical importance to South Australia, were in the possession of the Mayo family. They were eventually given to the State Library of South Australia.

I can analyse like an impartial wretch now; but when she was here I wasn't tactful. I was just me, terribly interested in the work she thinks of doing; & like a fool my questions and suggestions showed my knowledge of the period, problems & so on. And that is so frightening to a woman who has only reached the edge of the subject. And when she said that you & Elton²³⁷ were the only ones really capable of doing the papers, & that if they were left to Elton It would be "this year, next year, sometime, never," so to speak, & that you are too busy, I allowed the most idiotic sort of politeness & loyalty to prevent me from saying — the truth — that P. is more competent than you! (!). I shall write to her, though, & if only she believes me it will buck her, for she can't help feeling that in general she suffers by being contrasted with you. But the thought of you, with however much time on yr. hands, chasing up 16 sources to discover where a man went to school, or whether his alleged birthdate can be verified, & authenticating the dull business of the copies, & churning over the whole matter for months to get the right perspective makes me giggle — though to be sure, you would probably see that at a glance; you have a swiftness of judgment that I have no personal experience of in myself — but anyway the patience of a bookworm is not yours. If you did all these things, then I'm afraid your judgment would be better than P's. A rude little Democrat, sniffy about the medical profession's knowledge of history, has often been startled to hear you touch off a point. Your mind has rather the sweep of Green's than the niggling of Gardiner's, though; & it is Gardiner's detail that is wanted here first — tho' if Green cd. then come in & fuse the detail into theory — — — Anyway, Penelope is marked out for this work, things being as they are; & as the authenticated copies ought to be given to the world, & as Penelope ought to have a career, (tho' this work postpones the final choice of lifework in a difficult way.) the best thing to do is to build up her confidence by deferring to her [] on this & that pt. to the importance of the work, & to the privacy of such hours as she fixes.

She is such a darling, under that film — it's more like a drug. Get it out of her system, & we could watch her expand.

In one of your letters you said, a propos of Prof. Mitchell, that men never think of women as they do of themselves. I've been chewing this over. They must learn! No wonder the Shrieking Sisterhood shrieked.

I am very proud of myself. I waited 19 days before answering M^{rs} F['] [*sic*]; I firmly intended to say nothing at all about the remarks which had hurt. My pen insisted, but I tore up the page. It isn't for me to teach her manners if she meant to hurt, nor to hurt her if she didn't. And she is far too old to learn nice feelings anyway. As you quoted about M^{rs} Simpson, "How hardly shall they not have riches. . ."

Did I tell you about 2 local preachers who preached at me? They must have divined my unspiritual attitude; they have sent me a book "Fosdick on Prayer." Probably the

237 Elton Mayo was Penelope's and Helen's brother.

Spirit told them to. I told Father he wd have to read it. Was much shocked that he took up Punch instead, but he explained that he liked a change.

I'm afraid of developing a bust — & stays. I'm honestly fat — round; tho' just this week I feel very languid & yesterday there were streaks of blood once. But the languor was almost certainly due 1 to getting off the Record Stuff 2 to taking to novels afterwards. 19 items of Feb. Record were due to me. I got in 2 references to Health Week (date omitted); but couldn't think of anything to say for March on the subject. So get Miss Hornabrook to send up some more B. M. J's! The chaste editor cut out of "Games for Girls" all the discussion about their effect on menstruation, so that one poor doctor is represented as deprecating the motorbike in toto, whereas she really said "for those subject to dysmenorrhoea!²³⁸" I thought it an inoffensive & useful way of giving the women technical terms for the subject; of course some wd have to go to the dic. to understand them. But apparently instructⁿ on specifically female health is objectionable even in a woman's paper. It may be so, too. My judgment isn't sound on all points; tho' had I been editor I wd have published that.

The Register has just accepted 2 articles — one on "The New Psych" written to show what can be done for the brilliant, & the use of the probably-to-be proposed clinic.* The Sec. also sent up the stock lengths for various types of article, which seemed to show a pleasing willingness for more. So I shall write on "Personnel V. Equipment." "Education for Social Reformers" (I mean that Committee members shd know the literature & ideas about the type of institution they are administering) "De-institutionalisation," "Prison Reform", at judicious intervals. Repetition is the secret of good journalism, I'm told.

The Brisbane Mail has also used my article making fun of Festing Jones, Butler's biographer²³⁹, 7 weeks ago, but it hasn't sent a cheque, & I only heard by accident. So I s'pose I'll have to write to the editor. He may have used the Short Story too without my knowing. And someone has pinched my "Simple Simon" nom-de-plume. What hurts is that the Bulletin snubs him. I hope no one who knows me as S-S- reads the Bulletin! The only Comment the Bulletin makes to me is "Try elsewhere." I lack gall, I suppose? I don't, but I always try to keep it out of what I write. Vituperation repels, it doesn't reform. I've been trying to persuade the Editor of the Methodist paper that this is so. The poor man takes it so nicely, too. (Beer & the R.C's & sex are his cock-shys;. He is the man who once talked Teetotalism so long that Mother had to restore me with wine.) And asks my opinion on a further point, should one allow one's knowledge of a man's secret vice to tincture one's castigation of some other dereliction? I should think not! Like punishing a child & not telling it what for, or telling the wrong thing. Besides, the public not being in the secret wd lose faith in the apparently overdone remarks. I hope

238 Painful menstruation, typically involving abdominal cramps.

239 Henry Festing Jones (1851-1928) was the friend and biographer of the novelist Samuel Butler (1835-1902).

our editor isn't developing mania; but it looks like it. He was so nice, too, before he got these things "on the brain."

Penelope brought me "The Life of Cobden"²⁴⁰ — very bad reading for an independent, ambitious, democrat. If fires all these qualities. But no wonder you grew up public spirited, with a father who read bought Cobden & Mill!²⁴¹ (The correctⁿ of "read" to "bought" is only because the book was in the house for all to read.)

I wd tell you the story of the 4 kittens & the cat who lived a double life; But I don't believe you are interested in kittens.

Were you cynical or abstracted when you thought "the discipline of Marriage" would be good for Mary? Like John Ridd (in Lorna Doone) threatening his sister "Oh! May you have a husband!" Of course it is a discipline & in the best sense, the one you meant, but it is more than that, it's a completed life.

Don't forget to tell me whether D^r Scantlebury scratched D^r Kemp. & why don't they like her? But Ph.D America is rather a quack degree, isn't it? Of course some of them must be really educated, but the Pub. Lib. lent me a bk by Trabue Ph.D. which is a most impudent compilation of Link, Lerman & Goddard; she says the Ph. D's may be ranked with the best intellects of the day. I rank them with the best moneymakers & puffers of their own reputation. You will see that the Record reports one of D^r Kemp's lectures.

XXX. E. D & S

erwent age

*The Advertiser is keeping psychology well to the fore — tho' their writer does call; M^cDougall a "psychoanalyst." Probably a slip of the pen. Anyway, its jolly decent of them, because it prepares the public to want a clinic.

240 Richard Cobden (1801-65) was an English manufacturer and radical liberal statesman. *The Life of Cobden*, 1881, was written by John Morley.

241 John Stuart Mill (1806-73), English philosopher, political economist and an early thinker and writer on the subject of feminism.

Letter 91

[*This letter is in the Helen Mayo papers in the State Library of South Australia*]

[*written sideways along left margin*] ‘We live by admiratⁿ, love & pride.’

Thursday, 9th March [1922] Woodside

Dear Helen

The soothing syrup personally administered by my physician is simply wonderful. Ought I to advertise it in the papers? Monday morning I was rather toxic, but except for that I'm almost incredibly better. Life is hardly a horrid bore at all, and this morning I was so buoyant that I simply had to take a short walk. And that inertness I'd had was so very shattering, or desolating, or something. The ointment - ? As soon as the microbes smelled it the weaker brethren got out their trunks, tho' they are rather hampered in their packing by having to hold handkerchiefs to their poor little noses. The scientific ones are devising gas masks. After the first minutes the smell becomes imperceptible to me.

Many thanks for the tabloids — they look very pretty I'm sure; and I even went so far as to guess their object. So your apologies, tho' welcome as bringing a letter weren't really necessary.

The B.M.A. meets on Friday (tomorrow) — at least the Council does; now I'm far from sure how far you might think it wise to mention Minda²⁴² to them. So I just remind you of the two [?] I wrote to the Council of Women & the Teachers Progressive League; we do want a few men now, & I hope Bentley will spend quite a lot of his Minda's substance in acknowledging letters. I ought to have given him the tip to have replies stereotyped.

Sposing you were to stick a Methodist Class ticket on your various writing tables, headed Elizabeth? I can't bear to think I'm missing anything. Jot topics down.

McDougall found Freud's Totem & Taboos²⁴³ more ingenious than convincing, tho' he evidently delighted in it.

242 Minda Incorporated, established in 1898, provides support to children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

243 *Totem and Taboos*, 1913, by Sigmund Freud.

The Canadian Mother's Book sends me into fits of laughter. "Won't you do it for him, Daddy?" All the same it is sensible, & some of it I shall send down to the Record — suitably expurgated for our chaste editor.

I'm returning the letters. There isn't much difference in the reaction of a professor who has proposed, from when he has been to the dentist. The man's in love. Professor Abel does keep her dignity, tho' even there there's a skittishness. . . But it expresses something beautiful in them, if it impresses the onlookers as amusing. Being in love must be very tremulous. Don't forget that when Hendy gets back he will want someone to talk to about his professorism. You are indicated I fear. Ask him to dinner [Sublimate with your Senior Lit. Exam. System! On second thoughts, don't!]

Molly and Kathleen you really will enjoy — & they can be funny as well as engaging, when they get at ease.

Lady Galway is like "Diana of the Crossways" — Diana grown older & so more responsible with Diana's capacity & Diana's fun & Diana's tenderness. But I believe the medical profession ignores Meredith, - probably because Earl Romfrey warns his pregnant wife, who is nearly raving over the imminent death of her beloved Beauchamp, "My dear, take care. Your pulse is ninety."

Your patient aet. 60 is delicious — but oh, my hat (no reference to the hats you showed her) so is D' Fry! One doesn't begin to sublimate till one knows what is to be sublimated. The shrewd old thing was right about character too. But if she wasn't willing to talk, she gave him no chance. Only thing to do then is to refuse to go on with the case. Pretty hopeless at 60 anyway, isn't it. Suggestion & persuasion the best chance then — tried hypnoid? Depends upon what wrong, I know. I wd. like to try hypnoid²⁴⁴ on the plan of asking the patient to "add up these figures for me", & "Don't let me interrupt you," I may have to speak to my assistant." [*sic*] Then when she is absorbed, make suggestions. Piano playing wd. also be good cover & diversion of the conscious.

Dear me, I really do know how funny my ideas about patients unknown to me are! Wd. like to try my prentice hand, tho' but wd never look pontifical enough! Can you look pontifical? You know, there always is a way to tackle nearly everything, if one can find it, even Unsuitable matrons in Government employ. Of course if one can point to dirt, indubitable neglect, scars, starvation, flagrant mismanagement, it is easier; but a carefully presented case, showing the obstruction, & sheerly superficial care, contrasted with the need for individual mothering, the truth that State children don't live by bread alone . . . how dare they not have a driving & enthusiastic ideal of giving these charges of the State the maximum? Well, with such ideas first carefully pumped into the faithful few, with the case carefully worked up & presented to the Council as a whole, on an occasion when some dereliction or extra mismanagement prepared the mind for it, would not some effect be made? If an hysterical woman weeping into a vice-

244 A state that resembles mild hypnosis but that is usually induced by other than hypnotic means.

regal ear can give an improved home for T.B's. surely a sane woman supported by other sane men & women can get attention? I do see that it might be necessary for the leader to risk damaging Committee etiquette & making herself regarded as a nuisance, to risk this even, & fail; but wouldn't it be worth while, considering what is a stake? Those who know are the only protection those State Children have. I believe press support could also be got from the "Tiser & Herald & Mail (only the Mail is so sensational) if damned etiquette could be ignored & the respective editors have their sympathies personally enlisted. Knavery is strong but think of the sentiment in "the great heart of the public." When the public outcry began on behalf of the indignant matron, organised "interviews" with those ejecting her cd. be published, & forcible, tho' discreet & non-libellous, explanations could be made. The public cares more for 90 children than for one matron, when the right points are put to it. What generally happens — as in the Red Ruth²⁴⁵ affair — is that the Council is too dignified to speak; it leaves all the enthusiasm & defence to people who don't know, & so can't say very much — besides having no personal interest in doing it. "Reformers & Statesmen need tenderness and pugnacity" says Lloyd Morgan.²⁴⁶ I believe there are members of the Children's Council who have both; & that they have performed miracles; but isn't it possible that in the disheartening fight over details for years, they have lost the buoyancy of inexperience, which is a very valuable quality? To attempt the impossible, in a carefully planned pitched battle (prepared for so far as possible during months of waiting for the crucial point), might be to achieve the impossible. Florence Nightingale²⁴⁷ reformed the Army Medical Service, much entrenched behind the Seats of the Mighty than the little S.A. State Ch. Dept.

I know that I don't know what I'm talking about — that's the value of me. I'm not hampered by disappointments & precedents, & by knowing my men. Not knowing them leaves

[remainder of letter missing]

245 Redruth was a town and gaol near Burra. The gaol was used as a girls' reformatory from 1891 to 1922.

246 Conwy Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936) was a British ethologist and psychologist.

247 Florence Nightingale (1820-1910), English social reformer and statistician, the founder of modern nursing.

Letter 92

[This letter, obviously meant for Dr Mayo, is in the Helen Mayo papers in the State Library of South Australia]

Sunday 23rd April '22 Woodside

M-ph-m. This is my opinion of your betterness, even if you did get “Annie” to support you. However, the Lord Loveth a Cheerful Liar, & I'd like to be popular in celestial circles myself,

Now, will you tell me if you went to the Garden Party — & were you one who left for the cheerful hospitality of the Club? And have you finished your Monday lunch lectures. Also what did the Social Inefficiency Mtg do? I've been home nearly a month & apparently there have been no developments.

The Chosen Race has a fundamental sense of justice. I dare say the Wittles feels it quite right to wrest from the ~~idle~~ rich S.A's some of the adequate salary the State hasn't paid them. I suppose they are going to become farmers in England? And she will set up a hair-ornament shop? Or return to the ancestral furniture. Evidently she has leanings that way. I'm a spiteful pig — only is there really any need to make amiable allowances for a woman so sure she is beloved? Sir Josiah Symon²⁴⁸ — my, what a liar! I read his speech at the farewell luncheon.

Darling, what beastly weather! Are you asleep? Or only very depressed? Still, you aren't alone until tomorrow. But then even our dearest can't always lighten depression. Tennis & horse-riding can dispel it if its physical — & temporarily, even if its mental. Turning a somersault in the passage is also excellent, tho' I can never persuade anyone to do it — not even myself. Depression ought not to be, as Miss Patchett wd, say. Fear of pain, or of empty years, depresses us. But when the trouble comes we tackle it, almost with a rise in vitality; & the years arn't so empty, when you are actually in them. Companionship that you can't have, and lost ambition, causes that must be fought but can't be won, and the sorrows of ourselves & others . . . but these are not mere depression, there's a tenderness, & stirring, in all of them; there is beauty & comfort in

248 Sir Josiah Henry Symon (1846-1934), South Australian lawyer and politician, was regarded as one of the finest orators of his day. He bequeathed his legal books to the University of Adelaide, and the remainder to the State Library of South Australia, where they form part of the special Symon Library collection.

the tears of things, after all, & they take us nearer to the truth of life than the happier state of being flippant at a tea party.

All the same, I wouldn't mind being flippant at a tea party, if one could be come by. I ought to have gone to the Anzac service this afternoon. There will be just a few there, & the soldiers will shrug their dead shoulders, & say "So this is all they cared." I can hear a man mending a tank, & another going gaily off on a motorbike to see his girl.

I have been thinking over the baby problem. Institutions are bad for them, foster mouths are rare — the girls must just stop having babies. I suppose it is the illegitimate babies that cause the surplus? Suppose there were 2 or 3 motherly ones among them who would like the career of looking after babies — including their own — then couldn't they be engaged, under the care of the matron? But if the Government will let enough be said¹. Of the dangers of institutions & 2of the actual cases hurt through them a press appeal wd. almost certainly persuade a few childless women who have probably half thought of taking them into doing it. Keeping up the supply of foster mothers is the trouble. Being allowed to tell (impersonally & without clues) bits about each baby might help. The particular is more appealing than the general. I very much doubt being able to help, — except in the Record — but even for the Record it wd be a great help to see Miss Stirling, & ideas for a campaign — I mean new & original ones! — might evolve between us. Of course M^{rs} Fisher is formally the person to consult, — & she is more accessible than I am. Her sympathies are very stirrable, & she has good imaginative constructive ideas — in flashes. But I expect she wd want the article written (and of course she takes what I send) by me. Spose the Govt. wdn't let us have a précis of the children awaiting adoption every month — Florence B, green eyes & no chin, inherited syphilis; Remember it is the ugly babies for whom the world is hardest. Won't you help? Susan J. — blue eyes & golden hair (curly); 9 months. Perfectly healthy, very engaging. Come early. This child will be rushed.

If only spinsters knew it, an adopted baby, however much of a nuisance, would be worth the interference with their freedom. (But when the baby hasn't grown up within you, the centre of hopes & fears for months, it is hard to believe this.)

Oh ho! I may know of a mother! My father's half brother, a "Pommy", a milkman, married & they are childless. I think I told you how she saw in the "Record" about the bronchitis baby at Mareeba whose father had looked after it? She had had it for month after the mother's death, & they had decided to adopt it, when she got ill, & when she was better the child's aunt interfered. Of course she mightn't take to just any child, but she is the sort of woman the appeal wd reach. Clean & sensible, too, nice, tho' not educated.

If we knew of a few such, & took them over Seaforth & Mareeba . . . Lady W. isn't the only one to 'thrill' at the Babies' Hospital.

Astonishing how ideas loosen up when one begins to talk over things. Chuckle away. I know I've only intoxicated myself with my own verbosity; but I feel much better for it. I needed the stimulus. Spent 30 hrs over the Record last week. Then this week I'll recuperate; do Thesis next. And then it will be time to think about the next Record! (A photo or two of babies needing mothers . . . ? If they only were all Mary Perrys! But motherly hearts will mother the poorest weed.

A mean minded Elizabeth can't keep chortling at the execrations of the Ed. that reach her by post & telephone. Their maledictions quite exceed mine, tho' I fancy there have been those who thought my groanings exaggerated in the past. I rejoice to see such suffer in turn. It is only that the lady has left the printer to do the editing, & has left some with & some without (including me) instructions as to what to do with M.S.S. Apparently the idea is for the printer to print everything sent in, & then for her (returning when the proofs are done) to reject what is unsuitable. She always does leave the grammar & erasing of what is injudicious to the proofreader. It must madden the printer (as well as the proofreaders). My M.S. is about half the Record this time — & some one who heard that I was editing this month sent hers here too. I rang up & ascertained that I wasn't supposed to be editing unbeknownst, and sent everything to the usual address. Why maze you with the details?

But other people's maledictions have been so soul-satisfying that I haven't even felt agitated. Mary Kitson holds the fort nobly as Chairman. The hates of Mrs F. & me would overwhelm anyone else, but Mary pretends to find us both perfect.

It is nice of Miss Hornabrook to call me Elizabeth. The only person I want to call me Miss J is Mrs F & she doesn't. Miss H. remarks on how she used to be afraid of me. Of course I feel a chuckling pride in having appeared terrifying, tho' the surprise is (or was at first) akin to the feeling I had at the University in my 3rd or 4th ye when someone had heard of a practical joke of mine & "had always thought you were so sober." Really, I feel quite Prussian.

Are you any thinner? I tht I wd try the Coué plan of auto-suggestion, but my proposed murmur of "I get better & better" turned into ["]Hel-en gets thin-ner & thinner." Now that you know this hetero-suggestion ought to make you lose 4 oz. a day. When you reach the weight you prefer let me know & I'll stop.

No, pessimist, I think I gave a pretty accurate account of myself. I'm not exactly flourishing, because I'm not buoyant, & my (infrequent) coughing makes me conscious of my chest & sometimes there's pain under the left shoulder blade. But, apart from chest frailty, temp. is ordinary, not much sputum or cough — pulse 90-100 in afternoon. Rather heavy night sweats. I walk once a day. There! Dash me! No, I didn't expect you at Easter. You said "If you need me", & I knew you weren't just in a way to come tootling up from mere joie de vivre. And I have learned in whatsoever state I am that rest & food

therewith are the main p'int, I've a dim idea sometimes that it wd be wise to give up the Record. But a short life & a contentious one is better than prolonged placidity.²⁴⁹

I think of buying a roll top desk. Doing Record, Thesis, & general correspondence with the aid of two table tops (2'x1^{1/2}') & a kerosene bot,l is a nuisance; & father will find it useful later on. Moving these heavy pieces of furniture is the trouble — and we may move next year.

Did I tell you about Easter Monday? I came out to say goodbye to a farmer, in a dressing gown. "Ain't you got nothing on" said he. "Certainly," said I, much shocked. "Which 'orse?" said he. Miss Whitlam thinks I invented the story; she does me too much credit. So I shall tell her the story of my remarking on the wish that "we could retire to Nathill & live there always", & of a lady (herself) assuming that it was a cemetery to which I thus referred. She so often says "I don't believe you" to my stories; it is only that I see the point, & isolate it from irrelevant detail. But praps I mustn't tease her. She must have felt unhappy when she realised she had been assuming an early death; as she said, she wouldn't have thought I meant that if it weren't for my "ghastly jokes."

Last night I read a most joyous Moving Picture story about a man who jumped into the river & dragged a girl ashore, only to discover she was in bathing suit, & diving, not in distress at all. The Americanese — "fall for it," "cinch", "gun" "Get me," etc was delightful. You just had to take it as farce.

S'pose you can't have Trevor for the B.M.A.? & he may not be the type of case they call interesting. 40 patients must have satisfied even insatiable you. Elizabeth xx

249 Dr Mayo thought Elizabeth would have lived longer if she had taken life more easily.

Letter 93

[The first page of this letter is missing. It appears to have been written to Elizabeth's parents.]

[mid-1922?]

Miss Allen is expecting Jack & his family home in Feb. on furlough. Miss Whitham is to stay here till Xmas. She may take a room at M^{rs} Walker's after that, as most of her work next year will be at N.A. Marjorie has sent me 2 scraps of notes. Her mother is back from Tasmania. Her sister died. M^{rs} Proud has sent me a copy of Millicent's letter from Holland. Funny old Millicent.

By the way, when I am ill isn't a suitable time to mention it, so I must do this when well — I have made enquiries, & cremation is only a few pounds additional expense to a funeral. It is necessary to leave written expression of the desire, I understand, so I'll probably incorporate it in a will soon.²⁵⁰ I made a will some years ago, but I think Mother said she hadn't it — & I know I haven't it. The coffin must have no decorations at all. I'm glad. I hated those sham lilly things on Grandma's. I know they were to hide the screws, but they were ugly. The friends of the corpse follow the coffin to the chapel in West Terrace, & after the ceremony the coffin is withdrawn thro' (like the communication-hole between the diningroom & kitchen!) to be incinerated. The ashes can be scattered, or gathered & buried in the family grave. The latter I think would be best for our particular case. A private funeral is less harrowing — & less trouble to the outside world that wd. come out of respect & yet be loath to do it. No-one likes funerals.

These details, please understand, are for future use. Don't you go putting them into operation next week because I'm not ready — not for some time yet. My will will leave all my worldly wealth to one of you (but don't hope to set up a yacht on the strength of it) except £30 to the Uni. Women's Club to provide the sub. to London Punch every year, & perhaps a small sum to Canning as remembrance. I wd. like my friends to have a book each — can't specify now, because I don't know what wonderful ones I may own by that time. If I were wealthy I'd endow a Manse Bathroom Fund.

I've had a long letter from M^{rs} Birrell. They think of leaving Blackwood. Change is good for T.B. patients, of course. We get reckless; & M^{rs} Birrell hasn't been able, like me,

250 Elizabeth signed her will on 12 November 1922. She left instructions about cremation. The witnesses were Dr Helen Mayo and her sister Penelope Mayo.

to have changes. She has been too weak to go to town & so on. By the way, she wishes to be remembered to Mother.

The cat here has gone to Tweedvale, I think. She might have done so 6 weeks ago, so that I could enjoy the kittens.

Hope Quarterly Meeting is amicable.

I got £1.1.0 altogether out of the shareholders on Wed. night. Mary Kitson gave ½, rest in small sums. Mary's cousin is in so don't expect to hear till Monday.

Your loving Elizabeth

Letter 94

Woodside, 13th Sept, 1922.

Parcel has been sent today — 14th XX.

Dear Canning,

I hope you think of me very respectfully now I am 32. Of course having been that age yourself may give you a certain contempt for it. I like the thirties & the forties — one is grown up but not grown old. The 50's are nice, but make you thoughtful.

Many thanks for your letter — letters. I haven't decided what to buy with your present yet. I hope it won't take all that, though. I like presents to be reminders, not expenses.

I am getting back onto the lines now the light has come. I like the long days — hope you get an intermediate season between cold and heat. Being me I'm a little sorry that you didn't have at least 2 rooms — so as to get privacy if you want it. That's like women; they want to make men (& men's arrangements) over on their lines. Low windows, that you can see through when lying down on rain-bound days, are a Comfort — & of course big ones, opening in at least 2 aspects, are best for ventilation. That big window in the Grange house — in the kitchen where the almost unused stove was — was a beauty for size. I dreamt of the old summerhouse one night, with us on the roof.

The local doctor came again yesterday. Poor man, he feels he does no good, but that we may think him neglectful if he stayed away. He has been about a good deal — through the war, of course, so he is amusing, and ready for give & take. He isn't a snob, so his wife must be! For tho' Methodists, they didn't call when we came here.

Do you know anything about grape-fruit? They look like citrus & taste, Mother says, like poor man's oranges — you have to prepare them for eating by slashing the pulp [*little drawing of half a grapefruit with the pulp slashed*] & dropping in sugar. In America they are almost universally eaten for breakfast, even the picture show breakfasts show them, each half of fruit held in something like a wine glass. There are said to be a few trees in Payneham.

The sharpness one tastes through the sugar is very appetising. If they have a future for S.A. it wouldn't be a bad idea to have a few trees in ahead of the rest. Very likely you

know more about them than I do. The picking & packing would be as with oranges. Dr Mayo sent me some, & I had some with her last year, too.

I hope you liked the joke about the man who was “a whale on fits.” But of course it was a chestnut to you, who have a good memory. I found it in Lohy’s diary in an 1907 Punch — told as coming from Australia, too. I pinch a lot from Punch; so few S.A’s send in humorous stuff, especially funny verse. And there is so much rather hard stuffy, and lots of stodgy reports, that we must print; so I want all the jam I can get for these pills.

M^{rs} Fisher sent me a pile of “Queens” — a fool of a paper, all about High Ups, Beauty, & How to live expensively. Now & again there is something usable. M^{rs} Pat Campbell’s²⁵¹ autobiography is running through it. M^{rs} Pat had 2 children to keep, & a salary of £2 a week, & provide your own dresses. She went to a doctor, who told her she had T.B. throat. She rose to her feet. “You must be a fool” she thundered. She & the doctor became great friends, & she was soon back on the stage.

I think of trying the remark on Helen. Perhaps I cd. then go back to lecturing — & before that take a trip up the Murray. ’Fraid I shan’t take any trips up the Murray. Father looks forward to being with you a good deal when he retires. He seems to think there are a lot of little things he could do.

I had a very nice birthday, with letters & presents & a Surprise Party from town. Mrs Jackson sent me a hand worked silk handkerchief. Her fashionable granddaughters in Perth must be corrupting her! Sorry I can’t offer you any chocolates. & I’m not even writing on birthday notepaper.

The field glasses have been a great solace. I have watched the parrots pecking off the plum blossom, & a little boy chivying hens, & other things diverting to the bed-bound.

My love to Bill & Henry & Fanny — you’ll be hard put to it for names for the chicks. Hope Bill doesn’t step on them.

Goo’bye.

Elizabeth.

Marjorie Walker expects to lose her Uni. Job next year — a whole time lecturer is being appointed. But except for the money, her neuritis is so bad that it is almost a good thing. Prof. Henderson is very ill — his brother had to come for him & take him home.

251 Mrs Patrick Campbell (1865-1940) was an English stage actress.

This book is available as a free fully searchable ebook from
www.adelaide.edu.au/press