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My dear Mummy,

I have two letters to answer this time, which including the news of the world-shaking news of the grandmotherhood of Mrs D.G. Beaglehole, a fact which seems to have excited that lady to an unconscionable degree. I notice that Daddy maintains a complete silence on the subject, & personally I regard the attitude of studied neutrality myself as being by long odds the wisest & most rational. Do I feel any excitement at being an uncle? Not in the slightest. Did my pulse throb & the blood rush to my temples? Far from it. I merely took another bite out of a banana & remarked to Duncan Well the population of NZ has gone up one. Because you never know the way a kid will turn out. It may be a pattern of every possible virtue & accomplishment, like Auntie Win or me; or it may be a half-doped looking moron like Keithles or a regrettable streak of misery like Ern. Now if I was sure that this kid would grow up sweet & good-tempered & clever & respectful to her uncle I might feel inclined to risk a postcard to Geoffrey & [unclear: Theo] to appraise them that I was not displeased at the prospect; but it may yell blue murder for the first three years of its life like Keithles (it may be yelling at this identical moment for all I know) & then it may go to the kindergarten & poke out its tongue at the teacher & put ^{bent} pins under the other little boys & girls (& this reminds me of a priceless piece of ponderosity in this morning's Times. "The increasing custom of taking young persons in statu pupillari to see pictures as part of their education". Of course it would have broken the cove's heart to write "children"); & then I suppose it will go to the university & ~~won~~ fail in the English exam for not knowing who wrote Hamlet & go out for moonlit pillion-rides after Charlestoning till 2 am & fall in love with the wrong young man & smoke & swear & get drunk & get its name in the Freelance as one of the smartest of the leaders of Wanganui's younger set & generally bring its pore old dad's head in sorrow to the grave. In the meantime consuming an immense amount of money however it turns out & doing nothing for it bar perhaps drying up the dishes under compulsion & being rude to its mother. Besides getting all dirty & the whooping cough & making mud pies & fighting & falling into the river & out of the bath & drinking its bath water & eating coal & getting scratched by the cat & barking its knees & yelling & screaming at the wrong time & being sick & playing cricket on Sundays & refusing to stand up like a good girl and & recite Twinkle twinkle little star in company & refusing to practise the piano & biting the thermometer in two when the doctor comes to see her. And generally being a curse to the world. No, I don't see in the least why I should get excited at the advent of a fresh child in the world. [unclear: Cin bou]? I could here quote a most pessimistic poem by Hardy, but won't for fear of reducing Auntie to tears. How Auntie could bear to be [unclear: in] Wanganui at the wrong time & in Wellington when all the fun was going on, beats me to a frazzle. She might at least have been on the spot to pour holy water on its poll & show it what a bath was like for the first time; but I really suppose having had such a lot to do with my upbringing she thought it hardly worthy of her to descend to anything lower Well, I suppose I had better congratulate her on her great-auntship. Laws! she says, it makes her feel she must be getting old. Never you mind, Auntie, you're a nippy youngster in spirit, full of kick & go & verve & esprit de joie de vivre & no doubt in the years to come you will be hailing many another little nephew & niece, broods of them, clustering round your knees & demanding pennies & hokey- pokey & giving you cheek. I suppose I had better pat Grannie on the back too & tell her to bear up under the strain & not to drop the infant in her trembling decrepitude when she holds it; & urge Daddy to not sing too loudly when he walks up & down in an odour of peppermint helping to conquer the wind. I suppose that's Geoffrey's midnight job at present: well, he can have it on his own. I notice you are all getting worried about what to call it, & that Keithles submitted some peculiarly half-witted suggestion which you quite superfluously described as his ~~own~~ own; of course if you had applied to me I could have fixed you up in no time, but as you didn't I won't say anything except that I rather fancy Anne myself. Well, it doesn't matter to me much, though it would certainly have been very comforting to have been able to come back to NZ in my old age & say "Anne, my child, just run round the corner to the pub for your pore Old uncle's beer & be as quick as you can & don't drink it on the way back & here's a penny for you & mind you are a good girl." But I suppose such a pleasure will never be mine, I'll probably have perished in my second English winter.

Let me say about the snap you sent that no doubt it is pretty good for Ern, but although Daddy comes out all right I never saw a worse travesty of you in my life, Mummy Your dress & your glasses come out alright, but I'm blest if I should have known who it was if I hadn't been told. I got a letter from Auntie which I think I

mentioned some time back, which was gratifying, & I may write to Auntie one of these days, though Lord knows when. Also two letters ^{for which due thanks} from Ern which rather surprised me, til I found that the second was just to cadge some information from me; & I might say that the right place for a young fellow going to write a thesis on psychology to get information from is from his prof. Gee! It was bad enough to have to run F.P.'s hon's classes for him; if I have to do Tommy Hunter's as well it will be a bit of a break-up for me. However I dare say that I may be able to squeeze a bit out of Laski & Burns, & so forth, so perhaps in due course something will eventuate. Ern will of course understand that if I send my books out to him it will be on the strict understanding that I get cash remittance by return of post plus 5% commission; or a better arrangement would be for him to send over the money first. & then I'll send out the books. This won't make any difference to him if as he says the Hunter's & Sutherland's right hand man; for what with the magnificent scale of pay the college council indulges in & the many tips he will get from gratified ^{& grateful} students, he'll have more money than he knows what to do with; while quite the reverse is the case with me. I occasionally feel called upon to give Win the Waitress a tip myself when she has been more than ordinarily brisk & obliging; & of course the expenses of a man of the world in a city that includes Piccadilly & Bond St are many. I might before abandoning this subject just give Ern a couple of tips, such as not to be sarcastic to people of less than his own size & when marking papers to mark them good & high. The family has a pretty good reputation so far in these lines, & it would be a pity to see it ruined by a young feller's at the outset of his career trying to eclipse his teacher & generally make a splash. Of course undue modesty is also a danger in the case, but I dare say Ern will escape that all right. The great things will be to keep his feet to himself when moving round among delicate scientific apparatus & not to blush when he doesn't know the answer to a question put forward by some fair & fluffy young thing.

I don't know that more comment is called for by your letters. I am glad you have had such a good holiday together; I dare say you could do very well with such a honeymoon periodically; it is certainly a bit stiff Daddy's having to go back to work at all, but if he ~~keeps~~ obeys the doctor & keeps off nightwork it ought to be a bit better than it has been in the past; while in a few years no doubt we'll all be earning such magnificent salaries that we'll be able to pension you off in a neat little cottage somewhere out at the Hutt with a garden seat & a kitten & a lawn to mow. Let's hope so anyhow. I hope Auntie Win is jakealoo by the time you get this; you might give her my kindest sympathy & hopes that she'll be well & strong ~~by~~ at least by 1929 when Johnny comes marching home again. McGrath was going to Oxford but after buzzing down there & to Cambridge & Paris & Lord knows how many places in London he thought he would settle down for a bit at the Brixton School of Building & do some practical plumbing & bricklaying for a while. When he isn't acting the British workman he goes to the Westminster School of Art (is that the place Alan was at?) & to a wood-engraving class & to the pictures & theatres & so forth & pays about 2 quid a week for bed & breakfast & blasts the cost of living. But then he has a grandmother who gave him £50 when he left home & sent him £25 at Christmas so he ought to have a certain margin to come & go on. However he swears he hasn't & is always on the rocks; so I suppose he is like ~~ah~~ ^{most} other artists & literary men; shiftless & improvident. Alan seems to be the only cove who can make a do of it; & no doubt just when he has saved up a nice little pile & completed his plans for coming over here again, some girl will hook him, & that will be the finish. thanks for the extracts from English Literature you have copied out for me, Mummy, the bit about London rain is accurate enough; I never see such rain. Although there was a bit of real rain today with blue sky visible over portion of Oxford Street & even the sun positively sun-like in a different direction. The say this is evidence of spring; & it may be so. That 10/- came quite o.k., was very welcome, and has now gone the way of all other ten bobs, good or bad. With regard to the deal in Davies & the remark of mine that Daddy quotes on same; I perceive that said remark was not altogether unambiguous. The book I referred to my A Poet's Alphabet; but as I have now given it away, the matter need no longer worry him. Blast the Times! I understand I was to get £ 3 for each of my articles, & here's the darn thing closed down & I haven't got a penny for anything, prose or verse, since last July. If you hear of [*unclear*: Morris] you might put in the book. If anybody cares to ring up C.Q.P. perhaps he will do the good work for me. I don't suppose the darn things were syndicated, or even all published, so I'll take 2 quid for the lot & think I'm lucky if I get that. I wrote to Parson Phillips about the lad Bottomley last week, but haven't had an answer yet. When I get one I shall probably send ^{the address} out to Miss Newton direct, & so gratify your wish for correspondence with her. Thanks for jokes in your last letter, which were duly appreciated. In re Paris; the day after we got to London I met Jack Yeates & Lorrie Richardson, Yeates said, how about all going to Paris at Christmas? to which we replied, Boy, you've spilled a bibfull. However that was only Oct 2; & Dec 2 we were all much lower in funds & Lorrie went to see an aunt in Wales, & Jack Yeates got a buckshee show out of T.P.'s friend at South Africa House, Lady Frances Ryder C.B.E. — they do a good bit for students at that joint — & I went to sponge on the Johnsons'. So we all got off pretty cheaply. Which is more than I am going to do this Easter, I am afraid. I think I mentioned our going down to Bristol for a N.U.S. conference for a week. We filled in our cheques for £3..10 & posted same in, then woke up to the fact that this Total Cost, as the prospectus said in large letters, did not include train-fare. That wouldn't be so bad in itself if I hadn't already

fixed up the Lakes trip, which will cost me a few quid I suppose. And then I'd better trot down to see Auntie Jeanne, as she has asked me to twice or thrice, & I didn't at Christmas, & do my bit to keep the wheels of family affection oiled. Still I can make up the cost of railway fare in that instance in food, so there's hope for the hoops yet.

I have only been to three concerts this ^{last} week, but all first-raters. Lener on Tuesday; they finish their series tomorrow. I daresay after 50 or 60 more I'll know a bit about Beethoven's quartets. I will now include a diagram of myself after absorbing the later quartets. HIGH BROW also, as the space is handy, I include a diagram of me going up the Charing X Rd on a Saturday night Trafalgar Square, Nelson, Lions, Charing X Rd, dotted lines show course pursued angles indicate bookshops et seq Then there was a good Philharmonic orchestra concert on Monday; Bach & Beethoven & Brahms; conducted by a cove from the Fatherland, blond & lusty & with arms like a flail, who worked the orchestra up to mighty deeds & the audience including me to mighty enthusiasm; alas! the Times next morning said coldly "Thus & thus & thus; we fancy that several of our own conductors understand the great German better than some of his compatriots." So that was that. (Of the Brahms by the way more particularly) ~~so~~ & no doubt everybody felt duly crushed. But G.N. was a bit more comforting on Sunday. Thirdly on Saturday afternoon I went to the St. Matthew Passion, done by the Bach Choir, Vaughan Williams conducting. And a more curious conductor in some respects I never see; but he got results. It was the best choral singing on the whole I have heard here, pretty well perfectly done, & the chorales magnificent. I was shouted to tea afterwards & then taken home to supper & to play the piano & yap by the Ross family. I don't think I have mentioned them before. There is a young cove by the name of Ross at the I.H.R. one of the student assist librarians, & he asked me out to his joint one night to feed & play & give his good parents & himself the benefit of my views on life, which I did with my accustomed good will & benevolence. They are a decent crowd, very keen on music, though the piano is not of the best, & pretty rough in their domestic habits; Father Ross delighting to dispense with his slippers & Mother Ross calling attention to her own ~~with~~ superannuated specimens with breezy "unconventionality". They wanted me to stay the night on Saturday & Mrs R. inquired if Duncan wd be anxious if I didn't arrive back, but I reassured her that being a colonial he would not feel undue anxiety. However I didn't stay as I wanted to get hold of my mail, which was due & waiting for me. No doubt I shall be blowing out there again some time, as the food is good & plentiful & the family bright & intelligent & of the right hospitable open-hearted sort. Ross is one of Newton's students & keen on the same things as I am. The week before I got some good stuff too; the [*unclear*: linen], another Philharmonic show, the Dream of Gerontius conducted by Elgar & pretty well as good as the Passion for singing; & aha! Man & Superman. I went to this on Wednesday with McGrath & saw the usual shortened version, the finest thing all around for play & acting combined I've seen in my life. Then seeing that they were doing the whole thing the Friday after, starting at 5pm Duncan & de Kievriell & I went to that. We got to the queue at 4, too late to get a seat, got inside about 4.30 & stood till 11.15. All for 1/6 & by cripes! it was worth it! The had an interval of ½ hr from 7 to 7.30 when we strolled around Kingsway & Lincoln Inn Fields eating bananas & buns & apples, a kind old lady having guaranteed to hang on to our stands for us; by jingo! we were worn out by the time we staggered up our three flights of stairs & fell on our beds; but I wouldn't have missed it for £25. It's a rank shame a good company doesn't take some Shaw to NZ; it's a very paying proposition here apparently Gwen Frangçon Davies did Anne, a wonderful performance, & a cove called S. Esmé Percy Tanner; I believe he has played it since the play was first done. Well, by gum, if you could see a few things like this it would add 20 years to your life, The goods, the goods, & no mistake. And yet there's not a nit of acting in the Hell scene — just 2 ½ hrs straight talk. I must say I give old G.&S. the palm. I enclose the Times report of the first night — a great & glorious performance. Unfortunately from one point of view Man & Superman which was only billed for a ~~week~~ fortnight, to be followed by other Shaw, was so great a success that they are playing it till the end of the season, & so doing us out of the others for the time being. But the opera is back this week, so there is quite enough to go to.

We went down to Laski's yesterday afternoon for the first time & then cursed ourselves for putting it off so long. God! The man's a marvel! I never heard such conversation before. Apparently he knows everybody & everything. He started off by discussing the question of papal supremacy in the first century & finished up by giving books away to one of his cobbers (not me) after discussing about 50 people & giving his own reminiscences of them & of his Oxford days. "Ever know T.H. Bradley" says one cove "He knocked me down on a bike" says Laski & goes off into an extended account of his little ways, which I will tell you when I get home. He is a book collector, mainly of stuff bearing on his own subject, but pretty shrewd on other things. He once bought a book outside Heffer's in Cambridge for 1/6 & then went upstairs & sold it back to them for some enormous sum. But that I gather is a habit of his, anyhow according to his wife. She seems a decent sort. But he reckoned the prize yarn of that sort was about Birrell, who bought a 1st ed of the Pilgrim's Progress from an old lady in a country market place for 1/6. It was marked 1/-, but wanting to be generous he offered her 2/-, which she steadfastly refused to take, compromising on 1/6. He then sold it by auction for £300. And then Birrell

wanted to get rid of a huge edition in 6 large vols, of some early 19th century authors, Hannah More, I fancy; & he couldn't get anybody to buy it from him. So he took it out into the garden & buried it. Then he^L got on to the Beatty-Jellicoe controversy. Apparently most of the navy is pro-Jellicoe. He told a yarn about Beatty which is pretty illuminating. Haldane wanted to get an up to date naval staff organised or something & he got hold of some bright lads in the service & got all the information he could from them & chewed things over & thought a lot & worked out a scheme; & then he got Beatty along to dinner to get his ideas on the plan. He talked brilliantly but Beatty didn't say a word. Laski was there too, being a particular protégé of Haldane's, & walking home ~~over~~ through Hyde Park with Beatty he said "well, Lord Beatty, the old man talked better than I've ever heard him to-night. What did you think of him?" Beatty grunted & said "H'm! I was trying to think who'd told him all that so that I could sack him" So much for naval reform.

Well, goodnight & God bless you all, Granmer & gaffers
& the rest of you

Jack.