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West Down Neck  
Salisbury Plain

T.S.S. "MONTEZUMA."

6 Nov. 1914.

Dear Elaine

Your letter of October thirteenth was very welcome and I hope you will write whenever the spirit moves you. The badge sent is the one issued to the men but as the officers have no distinctive emblem a great many of them are wearing it.

Am sorry that you and Aubrey could not manage getting down to Valcartier but under the circumstances do not see how you could have made it. Schop must have developed quite a taste for soldiering all of a sudden. I see that they are holding special classes for officers and presume he is attending one of these.

I was indeed surprised to hear of May Labatt's engagement as I had no idea that he was paying her any special attention. I know him slightly and thought he was quite nice, no, the Labatt girls have none of them made





very brilliant captures but both Lena and Babs seem very happy as a result of theirs which is the main thing after all. I always had a bit of a weakness for Mary myself but latterly have seen little or nothing of her largely because she was always going about with the particular admirer of the moment.

I suppose Hughes will eventually be side tracked as minister of militia. He has been made a Major General and can probably afford to retire with this distinction. The Valcartier camp was an absolute waste of money and no one can have a very good idea of the vast sums squandered unless they had an opportunity of looking at things somewhat from the inside. Jack Carneck certainly gave my side of the Peterwawa incident but it is a paper that carries no weight though very amusing and quite clever in spots. I had no idea that Hazel and her 'finance' were not getting on and if they





were mutually not suited it is much better of course to break things off. She would be a hard girl to handle and your description of him did not disclose any outstanding features of great brilliance.

We have now been here for three weeks and expecting for a couple of days we have had nothing but rain. The camps are fields of mud and the roads are inches deep in a soupy sticky mud most disagreeable to walk in and almost impossible to remove from one's boots. All ranks are wet almost continually but an officer usually has enough changes to keep his body dry (but not his feet - despite rubber boots) whereas the men have not.

We were inspected on Wednesday by three Majestics, Pritchener, Roberts and others. For a wonder it did not actually rain that morning. They professed themselves (I believe) as very pleased and you never heard such cheering as was given when they motored





down the road between the two lines. Kitchener looks, if anything, a little more sour and grim than his pictures look but little Roberts trotted gaily along, reaching only to Kitchener's waist, and seemed to think nothing of his eighty odd years.

We are of course not told anything definite about the plans for the future. We are however to go into huts in a few weeks and it will likely be well on in the winter before the Canadians are sent abroad. There are a good many thousand Indian troops on another part of Salisbury Plain and it is likely that another quarter of a million men or more will be sent across when the proper time comes, possibly when the Germans begin to get worn out. The war is only well started and from present indications it will last a long time unless something unexpected happens.

I had a letter from Wyle the other day. He has joined a territorial corps as





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a luck private and is using pull etc to get a commission. I will try and arrange to get a day with him in London in the near future. I also had a letter from Bertie Biggar and may see him too when opportunity arises.

Tell Aubrey that his cigarettes never came to hand though I am grateful just the same for the thought that prompted his sending them. Like everything else at Valcartier the post office and express departments were hopelessly mismanaged and I may yet get them or perhaps some one else has had the pleasure of smoking them. The putties and under linen duly came to hand and have been most helpful. I have asked Bob to remit you for them. If you will therefore let him know what they cost he will doubtless do so at once.

The Canadians are divided among three separate camps here, about ten thousand in each. The Newfoundland troops are also



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on the plain as are the contingents from the Antipodes but I have not seen any of them. We are not far from a flying school and often see as many as half a dozen planes in the air at once. Yesterday an airman was killed not far from here, having miscalculated his distance from the ground due to the thick mist and rain.

Will draw to a close now as really nothing more to add. Best love to you both

your affectionate brother  
Ward.