

My dearest this has been Oh! such a splendid morning. First  
your letter came. I read it in bed. My mind had still the  
pale hue of desamland, and it became all cosy at once.  
The country sounds lovely. If only I could walk those hills  
with you! But as you say we shall, we shall before  
so very long. It is good that you love the hills, and I'm  
glad you're interested by Whympers's Sonnet. The more  
I think of it the more convinced I become that we ought  
to have a proper climbing season this year in the Alps.

I've spent much of the morning altering the  
2<sup>nd</sup> four lines of the Sonnet; they were rather  
feeble before, and express better now what I thought  
at that moment. The last two lines were written  
first. Please notice that the metre makes a natural  
pause before the words 'in you'; nearly every line of  
five beats has a break like this, though not usually  
so near the end. The last six lines ought to be read  
quite slowly - <sup>rather</sup> slower than the 1<sup>st</sup> eight. My darling  
Ruth, I do hope you'll like it - it costs so much! I am  
well satisfied now with the mystic idea of the 2<sup>nd</sup> four  
lines, because the spirit of the last six is, I think,  
somewhat mystical and is thus rightly prepared. I  
needn't tell you what was the 'one true vision' for me

at that moment - a row too dear Ruth. pp1am/311191415

I feel that I want to go on telling you many many things, but I really must do some jobs. I've corrected a good lump of Shakespeare papers, but there's still a long half of them before me. I shall league myself with the Wild One next time & get him to clog their pens! And I'm terribly behindhand with my new-born correspondence.

One remark in your letter made me think very hard as to why I have such an aversion to the military way of things altogether. I came to the conclusion that it is chiefly because it makes people self satisfied & gives them a sort of <sup>heart</sup> animal contempt of superficial strength for the signs of weakness - but there's more than that & I must discuss it properly with you sometime. Of course the effects that you observed are admirable, but I should like them produced by other means than military & I can't help suspecting that I should find the Master Volunteers much more pleased with himself than I should like. You see I'm a doubter in life; I have enough fixed for the foundation, enough firm land to build on, so I think - but the rest for ever changing & uncertain; - and consequently I demand of the jolly certain people a very full recognition of the philosophic fact that they may be all wrong, and I find that the great mass of them deny this fact.

- My sister Mary comes on Tuesday and her man too. He is an instructor at Woolwich and therefore both a schoolmaster and a soldier; for which shall I dislike him most? Well, anyway he used to be very nice - it wd. be a sad thing if everyone got better as he got older, because then the old folk would be right - as well as righteous & that would be quite intolerable. I hope you've got a letter from me by this. It was posted before yours.

Now my darling I must tear myself away. You really won't be able to feel lonely now that you have the sonnet! And for me - Oh! how ruthless life is - & yet not so.

Ever your loving  
George.

Sunday May 17

Please date your letters - it's only decent that all immortal documents should be treated this way.