

Seven.

7. 12. 34.

I have heard from my
Mother, who said she'd
heard you'd an exciting
young son.

My dear Douglas -

I hesitated in my answer to your
letter. Because for a long time ^{was} no visitor during
the last 2 weeks of Hugh's return. You don't realize
how ill he was - how delicate he is. At last, within the
last 2 or 3 days, fresh air & good food & work - play &
the outdoor air ^{was} of home life are beginning to 'take'. The
dreadful grey look which so shocked everyone is turning
- not yet to roses - but to healthy pinks. Too handsome
for my liking, but very decidedly shaper. ^{well,}
I'll try ^{to answer you} as best I can, but it won't work.

because we start out from two different points of view; -
strangely enough, mine's was that of the ordinary parent.
Most people who had Hugh would say: 'What is the utmost
that can be done for him?' Then 'what does he want?' -
- the appalling difficulties of our life to-day attend - 'how are
we to get it for him?' Douglas, even Fayles - may, for
a time - be inevitable. It is our attitude to them that we

differ. Now, point by point - of course what little is needed

money - less than than ever - helps with Camilla. (Her Father² has never done anything at all. It's been wholly my job.)

Of course Hugh is ready to help himself. But, ~~plenty~~ his health, temperament & training apart, what child of 16 is wholly ready to meet the world? Very few; & very often the finer the child, the slower. He was dependant as long as he lived. I should think certainly in Hugh's case.

Your comparison of childhairs, Douglas, was a misnomer, proves nothing. Yours I know was hell, but this 'very special circumstances. No other, or whispers of ^{shameful} ~~hell~~ as, is no substitute for pity you read. In exchange of evils; & the boy & especially the that boy - in time. The orphan, as he is ^{most} ~~at~~ extent & purpose, is never an envied state.

(Don't think we talk of his affairs to him. Once or twice, chiefly when he was ill & it all came out; then closed down.) Now that he grieves. But the 'sense of grievance' you deplore - hang it all, Douglas! how can you expect such a hyper-sensitive, intelligent boy, after all that's happened to him to be learning with gratification?

While that your brother should have spoken against you is disgraceful, & he hates him for it. Described once a scene to me when he defended you. But that his Uncle said those things - obviously a man with a grievance - was not Hugh's fault.

As to the friends he made. I can't judge. To Hugh they were just people who were kind to him, & told him

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- a priceless thing to childhood - Interesting Things.

A pure boy, technically & actually, that we swear, never
breathed. But having no home want keep him out of bad
company. Now could he be a Bill Parot, its outside any sabbly
psychology. Neither to look, to vitality, or the insensibility. I
suppose what you really fear is his Dolbe's infamous
légèreté.

Yes, I know a good deal of the set that was, as said
it was, at Elia & Oxford. But I know just as many
decent boys grip up to the Universitäts as cheerfully & as
seriously as ever their fathers did. We are in a difficult, an
appalling period, but those places of education have weathered
as bad storms. Abuse of a place doesn't do away with its
virtue. It lately became the fashion to abuse venerable estates
& splendid things. Usually by people who know nothing whatever
about them, & have certainly nothing to put in their place.
You & I know better than to be carried away by such chatter.
(listen to me, posing at Platonic) - but here I come to
something bold with every ounce of experience I have in me: -
- when an intelligence is capable of the kind of training
Oxford & Cambridge give, it is fatal for that mind not to receive
it. That, after Elia, he was too long to go up, has been
Troy's loss. Left him in his 30s with his lively mind
in chaos. Blown about by any smart nonsense. And how
often have I seen it happen to others like him.
While its my main point that high is the type

to get the best out of ~~the~~ an elaborate, non-utilitarian training. 4.

The less our difference of view point comes in: you are presumably anxious about him as a head-winner. Oxford & Cambridge - (or we) - are less so. At their best they are to teach you how to learn & to think, so, finally, how to live. Hugh's needs all be that way. While, with his lively gifts in so many directions, ^{plus nice friends,} I don't think you need fear his starving. In deed you might reasonably hope for an exceedingly fine ~~career~~ career from him.

(Of course, if he is only going to be a painter, it's less serious. But we can't be sure yet. Meanwhile, to keep round Fogle's parcels won't do much to fill that budding mind.)

The boys there - yes, I've heard of young Porrys. But there are plenty of others. While the majority of them, I fancy, have homes to go to. And there get the essential small cases at very least. (Hugh has no vests or pants or proper over-coat. With his delicate chest.) And the Hosted boys, with it seems, one exception, are not boys of his kind. At a distance especially the company of men equals is a very important thing.

Still, Naples may have up something better. The paintings asked for are going in today, & I supervised the right set of letters.

You see, my dear, what use is it not to take

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high for what he is? Sensitive - too sensitive, desperately
affectionate & starved for it; the full-sized romantic misapprehension
delicate health, very undervalued at present. Under the
facade young for his age. When I compared what arrived
here, ~~with~~ ^{with} the boy of your letter last Summer, I'm left gasping
at the possibilities of human interpretation.

But one thing is clear - he's no steam fiddle, the
'office boy & President type.' But a bad life can wound
most hideously. Who needs love - (don't you think we
spoil him -) through discipline. Patience, loving criticism, &
infinite affection.

Yet, Douglas, your awful picture of what he might
become isn't as impossible as it sounds. He one of those 'begets
of carbene' my dear, we erect for our own ~~convenience~~ ^{use}.
He the wrong alternative. His failure would imply something
essentially different - Unless, unless, heaven pity us, if lonely,
badly-trained, not allowed to flower, his brilliant intelligence
mis-fed & mis-directed, he found later that his sex had
an exchange value for something approximate to the things he had
missed.

As to this 'bisexual-class' stuff, Douglas. It's not a
question of bisexuality in the sense of neither or both. How much do
we have? She wanted? It's a question of keeping ^{alive} under
whatever conditions, whatever modifications, certain standards

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which we believe are ^{essential} ~~essential~~, ultimately, ~~basic~~ ~~basic~~ conceived, to the life of man. Anything short of that is surrender to the Devil - & we haven't come to that yet. They can be adapted, shifted of amount - the demand will have been - ! - but they exist, & in them is an joy & contentment hidden. Not to do this means surrender to the hell you I loathe equally.

Wab. Of course Hugh will work. ("When I wasy to give my kids a good time" as he said one toast & supper for me in the kitchen.) All the fine, decent, honest writers are there. But he can't take a man's full burden yet.

Another thing he almost whispered to me when he was ill: "I think my Father sees me looking like my Mother, & of course he wouldn't like that." I was un-committal, but I remember that's true - a part of the thing that separates you. It's a most tragic pity. If we only could, how thankfully we'd ask you to let us adopt him.

Meanwhile let's do all we can. / If only you could, there is no expressing the joy you would have -

Always
Jay

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One other serious thing - we claim the dentist next week, but his eyes must be seen to. Perfectly inflamed, red & painful. There's no good oculist here.