

P21/117/8-34

EXTRACTS FROM UNDERHILL LETTERS4.X.25 Mill Hill

If I recognise the Administrator correctly in the photograph his preparation for breakfast on the veld seems to me to consist of X looking on. Perhaps you were protecting the breakfast from the lions

21.3.25 Same

Knowing as I do that you have always been a stout upholder of your own race I can appreciate how painful it must have been for you in the present circumstances. (U. is referring to attacks by Tielman Roos.)

26.6.27 M.H.

(U. thanks H. for letter) Except at the bottom of the third page when your train apparently ran over a cow I read your letter quite easily. I was interested to hear of Merrill and should have been surprised if he had remained a bachelor, although I did not know it was a sin, I thought it was merely an imprudence to marry. (Hopes to see H. in 1929.)

12.2.27 M.H.

I do not think that four nights and three days in the train are too long a journey if the object is to escort a mother - having one of my own! (U. hopes one day to listen to H. on the wireless.)

12.2.22 M.H.

(U. talks of taking his final exam in June.)

12.8.28 M.H.

One of my S.A. cousins tells me you are the greatest orator in South Africa.....Amongst all the other jobs which I gather might be yours for the asking the one which I believe would please you best would be that of Leader, or one of the leaders, of a new Centre Party.....my cousin thinks it is a possibility.....he does not think that there is room in S.A. for Party Government.....If Mr. Tielman Roos should be prominent in the Centre Party with you this will not be quite like old times, will it?

8.1.28. MH

As a Protestant who is not a member of the Church of England I rejoiced secretly (at the defeat of the Prayer book proposal).

13.5.24 M.H.

(U. congratulates H. On Administratorship) You are adding distinction to the distinguished College where we got to know each other.

1.12.33 Newcombe Pk.

A week or two ago I went to two meetings of the Oxford Group Movement which were held in a City church, and I was considerably impressed. I mention them here merely because the presiding official, who appeared

to be an American, said that the Movement had produced, or at least had a great deal to do with a religious revival in S.A. and that this revival had been at least a contributory factor in the reconciliation of races which has resulted in the present coalition.

Underhill's letters are full of politics, India, Ireland, Europe, Labour, with typical restrained English references to reprobates and scoundrels, much dry but gentle wit, and a recurring interest in the weather and state of single blessedness.

7.4.34

Political parties tend to shift in the direction of their own extremists with a result that a coalition may develop a fissure in the middle.

6.6.34

Discusses status and transfer of Protectorates - says nation would resent it.

29.7.34

U. writes that his father died on 3.7.34 after a week's illness. "There can be few men who had so devoted a father as I had".

20.3.35

U. concludes:- You evidently read my letters, but I should be grateful if an occasional comment on my reasonings, and even of an occasional indiscretion in return for my indiscretions!

16.5.35

U. writes about Native Representation. An article in the "Spectator" said that neither Rhodes nor young Hofmeyr would have agreed to the suppression of the Cape vote. The "Times" said, that presumably you had come to the conclusion that no further progress is possible on the lines of the Cape vote and that the allocation of land to the natives is a great advance. "The New Statesman" described the Bill as "callous, repressive, reactionary, and likely to be calamitous". It refers to a sinister rumour that the land is to be allotted in the waterless wastes of Bechuanaland.... I have heard from other sources too that things out there (S.A.) are worse than we have any idea of. It is not at all pleasant to think of.

8.7.35

U. thanks H. for explanation that the Native Bills as recently published are not Government Bills at all. He concludes: P.S. I am getting tired of being called Underhill. Do you think you could call me Kenneth?

1.XI.28

I was interested to hear that you were at Criccieth. I was there when I was six and when Mr. Lloyd George was getting into trouble for being on your side in the South African War. It makes me shudder to think that if the youthful Hoffie had then met the youthful Underhill, there might have been bloodshed.....I had of course seen that you had definitely refused to accept the High Commissionership. It would have been very nice to have had you in London, but I think you have been wise. The listening multitudes were informed on the wireless that Mr. Smit had succeeded Mr. Hofmeyr at Pretoria. Before another twelve months are out perhaps they will know quite a lot about Mr. Hofmeyr!.....(U. hopes to see H. about April 10.)

3.8.29

The first essential to a proper treatment of the question (Black-White question) must, I am sure, be the full cooperation of the Dutch and English elements.....Rhodes didn't achieve it, and it doesn't look as if Smuts will achieve it. Hertzog is obviously not the man for it. It remains therefore for Hoffie to render this ~~xxx~~ great service. (NOTE that U. is writing only half seriously).....It was very very nice to see you over here and I hope it won't be long before you both come again.

15.XI.30

I bathed 13 times at Criccieth, mostly before breakfast.....there were few mermaidens at that hour.

28.3.31

(In writing of a lesser-known S.A. politician) But surely it will not hurt him if his intellectual weakness is exposed. In this country intellectual strength is the last quality required for a successful political campaign.

4.9.31

(Writing about H's book) I have found it very interesting especially the chapters ~~about~~ I have just been reading on S.A. economic and national future and her place in Africa and the British Empire. I do however wonder whether, if you get away from the racial divisions of parties and they become divided by economic questions, you won't find that you have got out of the frying pan into the fire. The economic struggle and the class war are such a terrible blight on European civilisation, and we never know where they are going to land us next.....(U. tells H. of a review in "PUNCH" which if he remembered rightly said:-"that you were very tactful in your history and they wondered what event you were going to leave out next, but then said that you wrote so well".)

31.X.31

(U. encloses review of H's book in "Sunday Times".)

12.3.32

I was very interested in reading about position on the Gold question, in which I think you are right, though, as I know almost nothing about the subject, my view is based mainly on the feeling that your party supported the Government in the more difficult policy at first and then changed round when the difficulties began to make themselves felt.