

# TO KILL REFUSING

## BRISTOL'S WORLD WAR 1 CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS

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**Title:** Prison letter from Frank Merrick to his first wife Hope Squire 3/3

**Description:** Hand written letter

**Details:** Prison Letter from Frank to Hope Squire (his first wife) 9  
October 1917.

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Merrick and Paul Merrick

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WJ

spel to wife

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In replying to this letter, please write on the envelope:—

NUMBER 4214 NAME J Merrick

WORMWOOD SCRUBS. PRISON. W12

*The following regulations as to communications, by Visit or Letter, between prisoners and their friends are notified for information of their correspondents.*

*The permission to write and receive Letters, is given to prisoners for the purpose of enabling them to keep up a connection with their respectable friends and not that they may be kept informed of public events.*

*All Letters are read by the Prison Authorities. They must be legibly written and not crossed. Any which are of an objectionable tendency, either to or from prisoners, or containing slang, or improper expressions, will be suppressed.*

*Prisoners are permitted to receive and to write a letter at intervals, which depend on the rules of the stage they attain by industry and good conduct; but matters of special importance to a prisoner may be communicated at any time by Letter (prepaid) to the Governor who will inform the prisoner thereof, if expedient.*

*In case of misconduct, the privilege of receiving and writing a Letter may be forfeited for a time.*

*Money, Books, Postage Stamps, Food, Tobacco, Clothes, &c., should not be sent to Prisoners, for their use in prison, as nothing is allowed to be received at the Prison for that purpose.*

(1)

*Persons attempting to clandestinely communicate with, or to introduce any article to or for prisoners, are liable to fine and imprisonment, and any prisoner concerned in such practices is liable to be severely punished.*

*Prisoners' friends are sometimes applied to by unauthorised persons, to send Money, &c., to them privately, under pretence that they can apply it for the benefit of the prisoners, and under such fraudulent pretence, such persons endeavour to obtain money for themselves. Any Letter containing such application, received by the friends of a prisoner should be, at once, forwarded by them to the Governor.*

*Prisoners are allowed to receive Visits from their friends, according to rules, at intervals which depend on their stage.*

*When Visits are due to prisoners notification will be sent to the friends whom they desire to visit them.*

No. 243

(8254 — 20-4-00)



to the above.

October 9, 1917.

My own Hope, I supposed until yesterday that when I had worked for 8 weeks I should be entitled to write to you in the ordinary course. I learn, however, that marks forfeited during "Chapter I" of my stay here will prevent me writing till Jan. 28, 1918, and this <sup>fact</sup> is a special concession (together with your reply) on account of the special circumstances and fact of my submission (which dates from the day after your message was delivered by the Governor). The fact that Anne wrote for you made me specially anxious concerning your neuralgia, please give me an unvarnished account of how you have been for the most part you know what I want to hear about, but I mention specially Lindsey, Horace, Morse Ogden and all the boys <sup>and girls</sup> <sup>and people</sup> whose welfare seems most uncertain - <sup>musical</sup> feminist, and pacifist doings of our friends, and pupils' progress (and fate at exams.) are also ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> continual sources of speculation. I must tell you that the risk of captivity dwindles into insignificance compared with the longing for your continual presence; this is due to such fundamentally mutual feeling that you know it before I write it, but it is a joy to express great truths. As regards all other longings, including a fear that occasionally attacks me that self-centredness tends to make too much head-way, I will know that the great cause of Internationalism and ~~the~~ belief in the great potency of Love (if people only dared to adopt that belief) will gain more by every week I stay here, than I could contribute by coming out on any terms, but those of unconditional release. Regarding this, I rejected Home Office Scheme on August 6th. The chairman of the Tribunal admitted he had my G.L.C. defence when I said it contained a very brief explanation of my reasons for refusing scheme, but added that if I rejected scheme my reasons need not be entered into. This letter will be a ramble, which fact you must excuse. I've read the following books: - Bible (up to end of Psalms), "Pleasant days in pleasant places" by Walton (?) (excursions to old churches, etc.), "Memoirs of Daniel Wheeler" (1770-1840, Labour agriculturist and missionary who mentions "dear Mary Hargreaves" of Balby Meeting, Sheffield - 1820, same relation? in spite of spelling), short "Life of Carlyle" by Hylie, some of the longer poems of Wordsworth ("The Prelude" included), "Chronicles of the Pilgrim Fathers" by Nathaniel Eaton, Governor Winslow, etc., and two and a half (roughly speaking) Esperanto grammars. I wished to learn Latin, but there was a mishap in that language. How wonderfully useful Esperanto will be to the International movement! The W.L.L. manifesto and M.P.L. "Women and War" should be translated into it and at some suitable moment posted to every Esp. group or centre in the world - perhaps immediately the war ceases. Will your branch (I wanted to say our!) of W.L.L. push Esperanto, do you think? Apart from printing news-sheets in that language, the study of it might be exhorted for those who do it as a door or other back work. (!!!) I think Dr. Zamenhof's heroic life-work bears a marked resemblance to that of the man who taught "Kluger Hans" and the woman who taught the blind deaf-mute, Dorette Keller (if that was her name), all three individuals opening up new roads of communication; when one thinks of it is not that what Beethoven and the rest have done? I have done lots of musical work, and I believe my technique has improved, mainly in two respects, i.e. wrist-work and motion of the arms from side to side while the ~~body~~ <sup>body</sup> remains still. The latter improvement has been partly helped by much conducting, which has also helped to unstiffen some pieces from a rhythmical point of view (Chopin's Ballade in F, Chopin's in F sharp, and some of the short Brahms pieces, etc.); it is also a better way of warming oneself <sup>than</sup> "tiger-facing" because less tiring, more lasting in effect and noiseless. Composition has been very fitful, although I have done some little bits and fragments; the musical nature of many of the echoes here is rather an obstacle to such work; that is, there is generally a very low pedal-note faintly audible (either as a continuous hum, or marked by the rhythm of footstep, etc.) which makes modulations difficult to accomplish mentally unless ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup> knows them beforehand, so to speak. Baudelaire and Debussy treat of "Les sons et les parfums", well, as to the latter, there are some jolly ones, especially the new canvas (made of hemp), the beeswax (for thread) and the bonfires. Do send the paper on which you reply, it will make extra variety!! I celebrated August 19, September 2 and October 8 by fasts, simple to accomplish by holding over something from one meal or postponing it from the next. Tell Margery in wishing her many happy returns of the day that I manufactured some chocolate cake in honour of it. I shall observe Dec. 21, 23 and 25 by some good shuffle or other of this kind. Write Harold a birthday P.C. on Nov. 11. For three other dates I have made special provision. ~~If~~ <sup>if</sup> it is true that some women have now got the parliamentary vote while the general franchise question is held up, what am I wished for situation as regards advantage to all adult suffrage bodies. I expect some of these bodies will take all the advantage that can be got from it in spite of the manifold difficulties of these times. Give my love to all our "bank" societies, my enthusiasm for the ~~idea~~ <sup>ideals</sup> which each has set before it increases; and tell the W.L.L. "not to refine" because of the



considerable differences that exist in policy, &c. &c. between its members. To each living thing its own special qualities, and the N.C.F. derives much of its strength and still more what I trust is its durability ~~from the fact that~~ <sup>from the fact that</sup> each member does choose his own course for himself, guided partly by the light and partly by the strength of his conscience. By the way, if we have more than one copy of any suitable books, one of each could be sent (unconditionally) to W. Scrabble Library, and I learn that there are always educated prisoners here, so they would not be wasted if C.B.s ceased to be sent here. I thought of "Flemish Tales" and "Women in the Ministry" (what a pair!!), perhaps other friends could clear out a few books likewise? If cheap, would you give James-hof's "Kronomatia Fundamenta"? We had so many schemes and ideas of what we can do when I get home again (however far off), however adverse the circumstances may be from all sorts of causes; perhaps these schemes will seem as paltry as "inspired music" dreamed in sleep sometimes does when remembered afterwards, but if they do, it will be because being home again will be such a blaze of day-light that it puts minor lights to shame, like Juliet the moon! One idea might be proceeded with now if time and head-aches and all your schemes don't interfere too much—I wondered if you could get on with your pianoforte book. What do you think? Perhaps one of the more interested pupils would take it down at your dictation. I thought the fact of your being occupied with it might in itself help to drive the wedge of your <sup>last</sup> 9 months' activities still further, and if the Chapters could be adaptable as successive articles for a periodical we might try and float it that way afterwards. Doubtless I shall spend the next fortnight thinking of all the things I wish I'd put into this letter, Symphonies and Oceans and what-not besides, all full of feelings and thoughts. Forgive my long silences, before and after this, they are due in part to a testimony borne to our union and to the single moral standard which we one day hope will animate the life of the <sup>nation</sup> ~~people~~. Both families and all friends will forgive a list of names and messages, tell Horace I often think of our childish games and Daddy that his talent for guessing would have great scope in the study of Esperanto (in which, by the way I've read two or three of Schekereyade's tales). Mazzini's "Duties of Man" (in English) was given me to read yesterday, I've not yet had time to look at it. Well, I fancy my time is just on the point of being "up", and certainly my space is, so with <sup>much</sup> ordinary love to everyone, and more love to you than I have the talent to express if a whole life-time were allotted to me, Your own husband

⊠ Forget to say "am, and have been, extremely well"!!  
Frank.