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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

26 Aug. 40 -

Dear Miss Curtis,

Your letter was delivered here about 2 months
 after parting: on the other hand nothing has reached
 me from Ireland for nearly 3 months. Such is
 life today. Yesterday I was dining with a
 woman in Alexandria who has 2 young
 children. The little girl returned with an Aunt
 in the winter, but the small boy just started on
 toiling & staid came in, his mother to ascertain
 whether he may not have been taken to America
 by another relation -

The accretion to my
 letter (wh. you enclosed) must have been incurred
 at some Censor's Office where the discipline was slack.

You are not only ^{well} acquainted with Teomania, as
 a very good brand of Quince jelly reaches my
 fires from the firm of Jones. I am continually
 urging Egyptians to produce (at present for local
 consumption) ham, lamb, & other game, ^{quince} ~~condiments~~
 fruit & vegetables - all of which are excellently prepared
 domestically in better class households, but all in
 vain. They lack initiative & business method. From
 the other hand foreigners take up such enterprises
 they have actually to bring over a certain no. of
 competent experts, for whom entrance visas have
 to be procured. The Egypt. Govt. ^{apparently} ~~is not~~ ^{is not}
 sees "why not from Egyptians to do these things?"
 and is unwilling to grant them. Foreign firms
 left to deal with their business in their own way,
 are properly satisfied, w. Govt. and Egyptians
 to their staff, if for no other reason, because the

were paid would be so much lost.
Here at Bary, abt. 40 miles W. of Alexandria,
we are on the road to Italian Libya, most evidently
has been evacuated from the district. Hence the
Barmlys & I remain, & I see a good deal of the
Country at a season new to me out here, as I
climbed west some time - Oct. The summer fruits
include mangoes, prickly pears, grapes & excellent
figs - I am trying to get an experiment started
in sun-drying figs, wh. has not been attempted.
One of Egypt's best products is sun-dried dates
- wh. come abt. November - usually I send many
boxes home where they are much appreciated -
the actual cost here is 1^d to 1¹/₂ a pound, so
the only serious change is the freight -

The Italians dispose of large numbers of
troops, mostly from their Tunis & Algeria are out
of it, available for advance in this direction.
However the belt to be passed over is waterless
at this combined with the temperature - probably
30°C by day - may be the reason wh. hinders
on any scale has yet been attempted. Production
of their aircraft has not been as a very great
height, the intention being to bomb the shipping
fleet at Alexandria - All things considered
their air arm seems singularly ineffective,
wh. rather surprises me as their air lines, in
wh. I have travelled, are very efficient. I judge their
boats are not in the east forced on them by
Mussolini wh. possibly supposed we might not
be going on after the French fell out -

However, I suppose a crash is inevitable sooner or later, and this place might also become Battlefield - you have now what many hope for in war. So I shall hang on as long as possible and then stand away to some "Healthier" district if or when the occasion arises - not wishing to be interrupted for the duration!

The main interest is at home, where, as I know from my tour, ~~that~~ the spirit is extremely good, esp. since the ~~Swiss~~ ^{Swiss} was reconstructed - But ours is a big task with the coast line of Europe from Norway to Biarritz in French hands.

The cross-channel bombardment is probably just a shop-window effect to try & frighten us - though pretty serious for people living at Dover, Folkestone, etc. But there is no sense

writing about things which have no application by the time this reaches you.

I met a leading Dutchman the other day who told me that still the officials in London try to encourage as they still independent the Germans were threatening to bring them to heel by putting the families of all

Dutch officials into concentration camps; a similar procedure to be employed under analogous circumstances with the French - a swinish trick.

He also knew Verhoeven (who is now chief of all Dutch reclamations). He complained that Verhoeven's chief fault was that he was too enthusiastic as a reclamer of land. I asked for explanations, as after all that was his job - a Holland had to consider future requirements.

His answer was that Holland had certain
 treaty obligations with Belgium it included
 the maintenance of the Scheldt as a waterway
 to Antwerp. So there you have a side-
 light on Espionage from the angle of the
 Dutch Foreign Office.
 I told me could want to Cairo to look
 after a son aged 12 who has been brought
 there from Lt. Assouan by an uncle, for surgical
 treatment. He has not returned here yesterday.
 It seems that the boy has climbed a date
 palm to cut some fruit & has fallen
 60 ft. In falling he has broken his left leg
 (or down) & his left arm above the wrist
 & above the elbow. His father says he is
 doing well & is expected to make a complete
 recovery.

It might be worth your while when
 you have been in Tasmmania a year or half
 or so to write a short sketch of the vegetation
 was I thinking you a few animal can sometimes
 do these things more usefully than an old
 inhabitant. Though I think you couldn't expect
 to know the flora so fully, and a visit to a
 local paper w. probably print the stuff by
 instalments & eventually print them off into a
 small book or pamphlet. Such a book being
 here a certain propaganda value as well as being
 interesting to do. Have you access to the
 still quite virgin? Have you access to the
 Tasmannian flora - an expensive! Last time
 you may have quite other ideas - how & tried from
 I was at Poole & one at Cambridge - how & tried from
 action, work & living with a married couple of daughter & son
 says his opinion, giving & Reuben Poole 1861. at the time was being
 in the spring by Empress Adelaide - seen on the beach between Tasmannians.