My dear Hall Caine,

Permit me to express to you my admiration of the completeness and logic with which you have advocated reprisals on the recent German air raid outrage.

In succeed in setting up a case which it is difficult to assail. It is all the more impressive because everyone who knows you feels that your very nature must recoil from intrinsic cruelty. Yet I am unable
to yield to your argument.

No doubt reprisal is of the essence of war, but war—to the credit and benefit of society—has been limited in the exercise of reprisal by known and recorded regulations and customs. Any other situation is that I cannot be induced to waive these except upon grounds of military necessity or at least advantage. What you have to prove to rank me on your side is that retaliation on our part would deter the Germans from pursuing their course of useless barbarity.

At present I am not convinced
That any reprisals on our part would cause them, or even suggest to them, that they should cease their violation of military usage.

It is never necessary to commit a futile absurdity. Practical utility is the test of war morality. These acts on the part of the Germans are not acts of war except as a new and unauthorised invention of frightful minds. Bacon's definition of war as a wild kind of justice was probably more accurate.
in his days than it was in ours
before these abominable innovations.

I remain, my dear Hall Caine, congratulating you on the
argumentative and literary quality
of your writings on this subject,

Faithfully yours

Edward Russell

Hall Caine Esq.
June 6, 1917

My dear Hall Caine,

I send you my little letter. It is not important enough or good enough to be used as you propose, but I leave it entirely in your hands.

Thank you very much for your interesting general letter received yesterday. I only wish I could have had in addition your 'voice' which is always of the highest merit. Was Robert Cecil of your own view of things? I am
particularly glad that your American writing has made so great an
impression.

Give your wife our joint congratulations and best hopes for
her rapid progress. We should
think that she has now turned the
corner she will soon advance.

The "Honours" question
has long been a great nuzzle and
a mortifying consciousness. The best
justification for the Party Nurse on
either side is what Lord
Brougham advanced ages ago in
behalf of Whig bribery at elections,
namely, "If I cannot get to my
destination by a clean road I
must take a dirty one." If it
can all be got rid of the change
will be very advantageous. As to
the action of any Prime Minister in
such affairs, I have always understood
that they are scarcely mentioned to
him; that the thing is entirely left
in the hands of the Parliamentary
Secretary of the Treasury, or at least
that he is the only person who ever
expresses himself on the subject to the
Prime Minister; and that he does
so in terms that cannot be alleged
To bring the Prime Minister under moral responsibility. This of course is absurd but I fancy its very absurdity makes it valuable as a modus vivendi. There is much humour in Northcliffe’s moral indignation.

Let me know anything authentic that you hear about Russia.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

Edward Russell

Hall Caine Esq
Hall Caine Esq.
Heath Brow
Hampstead Heath
London