

"Marama"

3 March '17

Dearest Hazel,

I think this will reach you a day or two before me, if you are at Ashburton, and if you are away somewhere else, it is all the more necessary that I should write. At least it is not necessary, but it is nice of me, I hope you will agree. We are just off the Three Kings tonight and will be running down the coast to Auckland tomorrow. We will stay there all day Monday, reach Wellington at mid-day on Wednesday, and Lyttelton on Thursday, probably in time for the second express. I will be going through to Timaru, of course, and I am afraid I shall be classified as a hospital case, but no doubt I can be fixed up as an out-patient in a few days. My foot has made very good progress during the voyage. At one time it seemed a certainty that it would be

healed before I reached home, but it slowed down before Albany, and I fear the last little bit is going to be obstinate. In fact from the experiments I have made at walking, I think perhaps it will not prove satisfactory in its present state, and may require another operation. But that is making the worst of it, and it is much more likely that I will be quite right soon and able to get my discharge.

We have had a lovely trip, quite remarkably cool through the tropics, and calm, except for a few days this side of Durban, when we lost some time in a very heavy sea. The only other excitement was the third day out from Southampton, when we picked up a boat's crew whose ship had been torpedoed, and immediately afterwards sighted a German submarine. We landed the survivors at Dakar (French Senegal) but did not get ashore there. The time has passed pleasantly enough.

though it seems ages since we left England. They gave us a splendid reception at Durban, where we stayed three days, getting leave from ten till ten the first two days, and ten till four the last day. We also had an afternoon ashore at Albany, and those were our only ports of call. I am just telling you this much to forestall some of the questions I expect to be bothered with, because I want to talk about much more interesting subjects than mere me. I wonder if you will be able to come to Timaru next week-end. Of course you may be at Nelson or anywhere else, but I will wire to your father to find out. It will be horribly disappointing if you are away somewhere, but somehow I expect to see you at Ashburton. I won't care much if you can't come to see me passing through, because I would like our first meeting to be better than that, but come if you can.

With lots of love to you, dearest
from Cecil