

Sunday
18 Oct.

My own Hazel,

I was mad to think I could go away and leave you. But it is too late now to repent, so I must just see it through.

We left Wellington sure enough on Friday morning, and are steering apparently for Hobart. We don't get there till about Wednesday, but I ~~do~~ won't finish this till we are nearing port.

The time is passing very comfortably and lazily on the whole, so far, although half the men are sick. The first day was glorious, but yesterday and today have been rather windy and rough. It is fine if you can get a sheltered corner on deck, but there are not many such, in proportion to the crowd of men, and sometimes one is driven down to the stuffy sleeping-quarters for shelter. There are no

P.S. I nearly forgot your exams. There's my sincere sympathy, but wishing you the success you deserve, is the same.

seats, of course, on deck: you just have to sprawl, or else lean on the rails. I have been reading a very solid problem novel by an unknown female, but I have bagged "The Master of Ballantrae" for a change after I have finished it.

Sunday is just like any other day on board - same hours, same parades, same food, and the canteen open as usual. Only there is a short service in the morning, taken by Chaplain Taylor, whom you and I dislike - you by intuition, I from observation of his character.

The fleet presents rather a fine sight. There are ten transports, steaming in two ~~rows~~ lines, one behind the other. We are the second ship of the left hand line. The boats keep about two hundred yards behind each other, with about 300 yards between the two lines. The warships each keep a distance of about four miles from the fleet - the Minotaur in front, the Jap on the right, the Psyche on the left, and the Philomel

bringing up the rear. You could never imagine how beautiful the sea is out here - such a deep, dark blue, with the white tops of the rollers just broken by the wind.

The men are much more jolly than I ever hoped to find them. I was horrified at first at the prospect of their company - low, foul-mouthed, thieving, immoral drunkards they seemed. But "there's so much good in the worst of us", and I find even the lowest of them brave and good-natured, and good soldiers.

We passed within sight of Farewell Spit lighthouse on Friday evening, just as they were lighting up. I hoped my brother would see the fleet and know we were off, as I promised to let him know and didn't find time.

At the rate we are going, I think we are likely to spend Boxing Day at sea. We are only doing ten miles an hour, and that would make it a nine weeks trip. Besides I think they are sure to exercise the horses for a day or two at the

different ports we call at. I can only hope we
will be back by Boxing Day next year.

Tuesday,

We will reach Hobart, they say,
about seven tomorrow morning, and
will go ashore probably for a route
march. No general leave is expected.
I have felt grand all the trip, and
enjoyed every minute of it. The sick
are all recovered now, and everybody
is happy. The rough and tumble exercise
we have on the top deck is good fun.
We have seen lots of whales - in fact,
like experienced mariners, we hardly
bother to look at them lately.

I can see that news is going
to be abnormally scarce on the voyage,
so I had better not exhaust my
description of our daily life just yet.

I would like you to have my
mother's address - Mrs H. P. Malthus,
Grasmere St, Timaru, and would you
mind if I gave ~~of~~ her yours?

I am trying not to think of
you too much, my Hazel, and I am
rapidly getting to a healthy point of
view. Good-bye now, with love from

Basil