

Brockenhurst
22 November

1916

My dear Hazel,

My normal state of mind nowadays is not an ideal one. In spite of all the comforts and kindnesses we enjoy here, I fear I am in a discontented mood - of which there appears to be no present ~~mood~~ remedy. The fact is I will not be satisfied till I am right out on the trip to New Zealand - and very likely I shall then be more impatient than ever. Which is beastly ungrateful and wrong, but I can't help it and don't want to. And by the way, I hope you are very busy, ~~busy~~ with
by the time you receive this

certain preparations, of the actual nature of which I know no more than any mere man, but which I believe are often made the excuse of delays. I am having delay enough here, and I want none of it when I do get back to New Zealand. As for these present delays, they are, as I said before, most annoying, mostly because I can't understand them and the doctor won't tell me anything. Practically all the serious cases from the Somme have already been "boarded" and know what they are going to do, but I am one of the few left in doubt. If anything were a

certainty in the army, I would tell you on ~~a~~ my own authority that I am certain to be returned to New Zealand: but it is possible that they may think I am fit for base work, and intend to keep me here. That possibility of course doesn't fit in very logically with my appeal to you to be ready, so it is just as well I have mentioned it as an afterthought, so that you won't be making premature preparations that won't keep. However, it is only a very remote possibility, and could ^{only} be conceived by a pessimistic brain such as my own (at present). Another

lesser grievance I have is that I look like being last in the race, for those who are shipped off to New Zealand go in the same order as they are boarded, so that if I ~~I~~ were boarded tomorrow there would be hundreds to take their turn before me, and it is rumoured that the boats available are going to be few and far between. Yet another grievance is that I find it impossible to get any leave while here. My aunts have offered to get me a nurse and give me every possible attention, but no, the regulations do not allow a man to leave the military

hospital until he is completely healed - and by the time that happens in my case I shall surely be well on the way to New Zealand.

Well, this is the worst letter I have ever written to you. I have grumbled before and often, but not so needlessly nor so mutinously. And it is all the worse because I am so well off here, and ought to be well content to stay for months if my betters deem it necessary. It is a pleasant life enough for a gentleman of ample leisure. I have breakfast in bed, read the papers in the same, rise and complete my

toilet in time for a breath of fresh air before dinner, stroll through the village (on most undignified crutches) with various friends (all of them so far of the stronger sex), take blameless refreshment at the Y. M. C. A., and come home to tea. The evening is devoted to reading and writing, cards and gramophones, with occasional concerts in one of the wards. I have discovered Anthony Hohe, who hitherto was only a name to me. For some reason I had a prejudice against him as being tedious and Victorian, but "The Intrusions of Peggy" is the cleverest and

most refreshing book I have read lately - always excepting John Buchan's wonderful romances, which are just splendid stories rapidly told. Tomorrow I hope to vary the monotony by going for a trip to Bournemouth, but that depends on various circumstances - the weather, the state of my doctor's temper, the ditto of my proposed companion's doctor, and the ditto of the colonel. When I first arrived here, it was the fashion among the ladies of the district to take our boys out for motor rides etc, but apparently they are tired of the pastime - which is

a cynical word for me to use, but I really believe most of the war "work" and charities these ladies undertake is mainly for their own recreation.

What a horrid grumbler I am! You will really be thinking I am in the grip of the blues, but that is not so, for I am in the best of health and doing famously, but I have a regular habit of grumbling and don't ever hope to cure it. So you see your prospects are not very bright, unless you can reform me.

With lots of love, dearest,
from
Becil.