

27 December

**8, SION HILL,
CLIFTON,
BRISTOL.**

Dear Mother,

I do hope I have not let a mail go without writing. I couldn't find out here when the mail closes, but I think it will be tomorrow. I have been intending to write sooner, but my right hand has been rather weak and cramped for some reason, and besides Aunt Lucy has kept me so busy enjoying myself. I told her several times I must write letters, but she, good soul, has not a very good memory, and always accepted some invitation or arranged some outing for me.

Now you will be wondering how I came to get here so unexpectedly. I forget whether I told you about Sylvia Banbury, who so kindly claimed me as a cousin, though she is really only a cousin of the Frys. They have a lovely

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place called Castle Malwood, near Lyndhurst, eight miles from our hospital. She wrote to the colonel to ask for me to spend Christmas with them, and as it happened the same morning I put in a humble hopeless application for leave, so it was granted, and when I told the colonel I had a prior invitation from my aunts, he made no objection to my coming as far as Bristol. I would have had a much gayer time at Castle Malwood, but of course I wanted to come here first, and I may get more leave later. The Samburys called for me on Monday week, and took me to stay the night with them. I felt very nervous, as they are frightfully big guns, and I had no chance to get any wardrobe or belongings whatever. However they

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were very nice indeed, and all their guests too - seven or eight of them. Next morning they motored me over to Salisbury, about twenty-miles over glorious country, a very bright sunny day with a fall of snow on the ground. We had time for a visit to Salisbury cathedral, one of the finest in England, then I caught the train to Bristol, where Fitty met me and brought me here. Aunt Etta has been spending Xmas with Aunt Bella at Sidmouth, but returns today, and I am going to stay with her tomorrow. I expect to find her house very quiet, but no doubt it will be pleasant for a few days. There are only Aunt Lucy and her son Bertie here, but plenty of children and grand-children coming and going. Bertie is a

bachelor, aged sixty, very eccentric and amusing. He was head of the cocoa firm for a time, but retired ten years ago, and has been all over the world since, including New Zealand. Aunt Lucy is a dear old lady, with old-fashioned views of course, but very broad-minded.

The house is very towny, standing right on the street, but with a lawn at the back, and a lovely view across the cliffs of the Avon, which runs deep down in a gorge. We have had some lovely drives on the Downs and surrounding country. But Lucy keeps a carriage and coachman in the old style. We have also been to two concerts and a theatre - all matinees - but have not done much visiting. I have missed two appointments for lunch through being kept waiting at the Infirmary.

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where I go to have my foot dressed. It was only supposed to be done twice a week, but the foolish doctor there is putting on hot fomentations daily - quite unnecessary, I think.

I had a double Xmas - one at Kitty's on Sunday, as she was helping at a hospital on Monday, Xmas Day - and one here. I like Kitty and her husband, but the three boys - one sixteen and the others mere babies - are spoilt. There were sixteen of us here for Xmas dinner, which I enjoyed immensely, and specially liked Mrs Robinson, a grand-daughter of Count Lucy.

I have been feeling rather pampered and lazy, but am really very well. No N.Y. mail has reached me here, though I left my address at hospital. Hope you are all well. With love and best wishes from

Your loving son
Cecil.