

3504 Pte. C. Kidd
2/7th Hants Reg.
Ridge Barracks
Jubblepore
C.P.
India

8/4/16

Mr dearest Nellie,

Just a line in extreme haste to let you know I have arrived safely after a most eventful time. This is Saturday & I have just time to catch the weekly mail but I will write you in full detail during the ensuing week. Pleased to say I am feeling Al but it is very hot here as my Dad will doubtless tell you as he was born in Jubblepore.

Very shortly we are to move again, but if you write to the above address it will be forwarded on.

Must close now as the Sergt. is waiting for letters.

Love Cecil.

D. Company.

11th. April 1916.

My dearest Nellie,

At last an opportunity to write you in full detail concerning my adventures since I left England just a month ago. Outside the sun blazes fiercely in the heavens but here in the shade of the bungalow it is moderately cool - before me stands a "punka-wallah" working the punka or large fan which gives the stifled Englishman the only breath of air he is likely to get in this hot climate - but even as I lie on my bed with this pad perched on my knees the sweat pours off me as I write - still now for the story.

A good story must always be started at the beginning and so I will go back to the time when I left a sad face peeping from behind a waving white handkerchief as the train disappeared in the distance. The recollection of that sad face will always remain in my memory and now though over seven thousand miles away from the little girl I love, I am still looking forward to the time when I hope to make that sad face radiantly happy once again.

The journey to Bournemouth passed without event and nothing of much importance took place on Parade next morning. We handed in our blankets, received a few final words of advice, and were told to parade again at 6 p.m. ready for departure. I returned to my billet and the first thing that I did was to drop you a P/C advising you of my early departure. In the afternoon I packed my bag and

just at sunset - the last English sunset we were destined to see - I carried everything I possessed for a final parade at the drill hall. At the railway station there were many sad faces and for the first time I felt really upset at leaving the old country and all those I love - however the piteous partings were soon over and in a few moments we were tearing away at an express speed, packet fairly tight, eight in a carriage with kit and full marching order and equipment. Travelling all night we arrived at Plymouth in the early hours of Tuesday morning. Whilst being shunted into the siding of Devonport Docks I wrote you another P/C to let you know I expected to be shipped that morning. If it had not been for the sequence of events you would have had another letter to let you know we were putting to sea before noon. We left the train and walked with our kit, to the quayside where our vessel the "Saturnia" was waiting to receive us. We deposited our kit on board and immediately were split up into fatigue parties. I was placed on guard - guarding the exits to the Docks to prevent any soldier from deserting. I mounted guard from a quarter to 6 till a quarter past eight when I was relieved. I then returned to the ship, had breakfast (coffee and dry bread) and then sat down at the mess table & wrote you a letter. We were forbidden to write any letters whilst under orders to proceed on Active Service - but it was possible to get a letter away by giving it to a civilian to post. The P/C was posted in that way and so I came on deck with the letter in my hand. Imagine my surprise when I reached the head of the hatchway to find the ship was just steaming away from the quayside - before her time.

I placed the letter in my pocket and stood and watched the shores of old England gradually disappear in the distance.

My impressions of a troopship are anything but favourable. The same space in which we sat also had to hold our kits and equipment and it was in the same space also from hooks suspended in the ceiling we had to swing our hammocks at night. We were packed like sardines round our mess tables so that there was scarce room to move, and at night times the hammocks were so close together that if one started swaying the whole lot started swaying also.

The ship was crammed to suffocation. Besides the 400 men of the 7th Hants, there were large drafts of the 4th, 5th, and 6th Hants, 4th. Wilts, Devons, Somersets, Dorsets and Cornwalls, making it in all a total of over 3000 men, destined for various different parts of India. To walk about the decks in the day time it was a matter of utter impossibility, for one could not take two consecutive steps without having to tread over or stumble over somebody sitting or lying on the deck. Each Battn had its own parade deck but at times it was scarcely possible to get up there on account of the blocking of the gangways caused by the other Battns, also on the move in the opposite direction. At times when the 7th Hants were parading on one particular deck it would be found necessary to clear it to allow "Guard", a "Fatigue Party" to pass, or for the purpose of swabbing. What happened in that case was the cause of much

annoyance in the ranks, for it meant the N.C.Os had to heard the men onto another deck where there was scarcely room to stand and where the same procedure would take place again in less than half an hour. Thus it happened we were herded from one deck to another, and treated not like soldiers, but like sheep. This idea took a strong hold on the rank and file & whenever this herding or packing process took place the men invariably behaved in the terms of the treatment meted out to them, not like soldiers, but like sheep - and instead of quietly obeying orders would commence "bah" ing & endeavour to block the narrow gangways more than was necessary and make matters more complicated than before.

The effect of this crowding and the general conditions very unsanitary - no matter what one wanted it **was always** necessary to line up for it. The washing water was only turned on during certain hours of the day & **it was** only with **difficulty** that one could get a wash at all - usually I found it necessary to wait about half an hour with a file of eight or more men extending in line behind each wash bowl. In a similar manner one had to line up to get to the latrines, and during the few hours of the day when the canteen was opened it was necessary to take your turn about two hours before it opened - otherwise it would be shut before you could get to the door.

In the lower mess deck where we lived the ventilation was very poor. The roof was very close to the floor and a large amount of space was taken up by kit bags & equipment, so that there was practically no room for the air to circulate. Until we had passed out of the zone of danger we were not allowed to have the portholes open at night & as practically no air at all came down the hatchway, and as every bit of space was taken up by the hammocks, you can imagine what the smell of the bad air was like by morning. If one man had had fever it would have broken out amongst the whole draft - as a matter of fact the Hants Brigade were, considering the unsanitary conditions we lived under, very lucky as regards sickness. Though fever broke out in the mess deck assigned to the 4th. Wilts & though other Regts. crowded the Hospital there were not more than about 50 cases of sickness in the Hants Brigade - & only 2 deaths.

The conditions we lived under made one adopt all sorts of emergency measures - imagine me, for instance, trying to shave without the aid of a looking glass, or endeavoring to cut my toenails in the dark; the latter may not seem very difficult but just you try it & you will see how you get on.

Perhaps the most extraordinary emergency measure of all was the method of having a bath. The difficulties of getting a wash tended to encourage some of the men to remain dirty, and therefore the C.O. ordered "bathing parades" (so called) for every Battn. As there were no baths on board, it consisted of a man stripping, standing in a corner and having a hose pipe turned on him.

What a row the 7th. Hants kicked up about that. I spoke just now of being packed like cattle, herded like sheep, & now we were to be washed like horses. The 7th Hants held an indignation meeting & on parade flatly refused to "go under". The matter was finally settled by the officers themselves stripping & being the first to be "doused". After this the men had no option but to follow - speaking for myself however, I was glad to have a hose pipe as being better than nothing at all; one gets horribly dirty on board a ship - living in company with rats and lice does not make one feel "clean" - & my own opinion is that if this emergency measure had not been adopted, we should before we reached our destination have become "lousy" - if I may use the term without giving offence.

So much for the conditions we lived under - before commencing another phase of my story there is one thing to be described - the food.

About the least thing to be said about the food that it was hopelessly inadequate - it was necessary to fight to get one's share - & even then you went hungry because there was never enough to go round. To obtain reinforcements from the canteen was about a matter of impossibility - & so one had to come down to the bribing unscrupulous members of the crew for provisions from the Officers mess. - And now I will come to describe the voyage itself.

The first thing I have to say is to thank you for the gift of the pocket atlas which made the voyage very interesting indeed. From the moment we left Devonport to our arrival in Bombay it was my constant companion. To make myself clear I must tell you that we followed the most dangerous course of the two (& likewise the quickest) by going through the Straits of Gibraltar & the Mediterranean Sea, down the Suez Canal & The Red Sea, out through The Gulf of Aden & across the Arabian Sea to Bombay.

This route was rendered dangerous by the recent activity of German submarines in the Mediterranean - look in the columns of the-last Sundays paper and you will understand what I mean - but of that more to come. Skirting The Bay of Biscay we did not encounter any rough weather till the third day at sea - but before that I had already fallen victim to "mal - de - mere". About this time I wrote you a long letter expecting to be able to get a mail off at Gibraltar but much to my dismay we did not stop. I also wrote to your Dad & to Aunt Louie & then kept the letters by me & posted them at the first available opportunity - which was not till we arrived in Bombay.

Great excitement prevailed when the coast of Spain (Tarifa) could dimly be seen on the horizon. As we gradually drew nearer the channel narrowed and presently land could distinctly be seen on either side. The Straits are very narrow & presently it became possible to distinguish objects on both the Spanish and Moroccan coasts, and I got an excellent view of the gigantic Rock of **Gibraltar**.

With the Straits left behind us we commenced the most dangerous stage of our voyage. The submarine guard was doubled, & at **night-time** trebled, & whether by day or by night we never for more than half-an-hour at a time kept the same straight-forward course. Our

voyage through the Mediterranean was one continuous zig-zag & in addition we made a tremendous detour, completely leaving the usual trade route & making a course in the shape of a semi-circle. As I look back on it now it seems a matter of pure luck that we got through safely - for it is now an established fact that the Germans were actually out for us. Exactly what day it was I cannot say, but it was late one afternoon when we saw on the horizon what at first sight appeared to be a gigantic ocean liner, but transpired afterwards to be a troopship, homeward bound. Later in the evening (these facts were not officially announced in the ranks till two days later) the news came through by wireless that she had been torpedoed - & sank with 1500 troops on board.

The night that followed was the most exciting of the whole trip, Shaking from bow to stern the "Saturnia" made a record pace of 19 knots per hour, and not for more than 20 mins. at one time did she keep the same course. All night long we were chased - & one torpedo was fired at us - but missed.

I don't know whether anything has appeared in the English papers, but last Sunday's "Statesman" of Calcutta gave a list of various vessels that have gone down in the Mediterranean during the past fortnight including The "Simla".

During this stage of the voyage (between Gibraltar and Port Said) all sorts of unpleasant surprises were sprung on us. We were inoculated twice against cholera - we had any number of fire alarms & emergency calls - & we had one terrible parade - "full marching order", rifles & bayonets & "kit bags" on the upper deck, which meant lugging heavy stuff up narrow hatchways & steps.

The day before we arrived at Port Said arrangements were made for mailing & censoring our letters. Of that you know already but I wonder if you read the secret message - 8 letters by dots - PORT SAID.

We were all very thankful when, one evening just before sunset we were slowly piloted into harbour at Port Said. We were not allowed to land - the decks were cleared - & just after dark the dirty job of coaling commenced.

Coming on deck in the early hours of the following morning a great change struck my eyes, and what a strange sight!

I don't know if you have ever read how a ship is coaled in an Eastern Port. It took me completely by surprise. The work is done by dusky Arabs who carry the coal in small rush-work baskets on their heads up the gangways and then shoot it down the scuppers. They swarm like monkeys & for the first time I saw in the actual flesh the meaning of the expression "work like n****ers". The whole deck was one mess of coal dust - one of our fellows went to sleep beside an open porthole - & when he awoke in the morning he was indistinguishable from one of the Arabs.

The coolies had all sorts of queer curios to sell and I bought a ring, quite worthless & valueless. I enclose it for you to see - please don't wear it - just chuck it in the fire directly you have done with it - which means only a casual observation.

Later in the day other Arabs came aboard - respectable traders - & I was very thankful to buy oranges & bananas - for I had not tasted any fruit or vegetables since we left the shores of old England.

Late in the afternoon we were slowly piloted down to the entrance of the Suez Canal. Where the canal narrows we had to wait for a couple of hours for a battle-ship to come up.

A word of explanation is necessary here. If you look at the map of the Nile delta you will see that the canal is very narrow - as a matter of fact it is not possible for ships to pass at once, and therefore, at certain specified places every ship has to anchor & wait till the canal is clear. The length of the canal is 98 miles & there are several stopping places en route. It was at the first of these that we had to wait for the "battleship to come up".

Dimly it appeared in the distance, gradually becoming a most impressive spectacle, as it drew nearer. As she gradually swung alongside it seemed to make manifest, for a brief moment, how great the British naval power really is. It was the first time we had seen a battleship on the move & as she passed us every man on deck had to stand to attention & the guard presented arms. As she swung past all was silence & she returned our salute - as she disappeared in the distance her name could be distinctly seen "Jupiter" - & then the cheers rang out, from three thousand British throats - & they in their turn were answered from the battleship. It was an inspiring spectacle - a rousing demonstration of British patriotism - the first & only such real demonstration I have seen.

At the shore near where we had anchored lay a refugee camp of Armenians and as we now proceeded on our journey further ravages of war were visualized. With the Arabian desert on either side we now passed through what I may aptly term the most interesting country of our voyage. **It** was across this desert that the Turk, at the outbreak of hostilities with the Ottoman Government, attempted to take the Suez Canal by storm.

All along the canal we could see entrenchments, barbed wire entanglements & British fortifications and here & there a military station or ammunition store scattered along at intervals of 5 to 10 miles.

The Suez Canal being so narrow & having such small banks will not allow any vessel to proceed at a faster pace than 8 knots per hr. Hence when darkness has fallen and we were turned in, there being so sway on the boat it was impossible to tell if we were moving or not. We might have been travelling all night for all I knew when I arrived on deck next morning - but as a matter of fact we had not travelled far but has remained anchored in The Great Bitter Lake, which, if you look at the map, you will find to be one of the largest of the specified stopping places in the canal.

It was 10 o'clock on Sunday morning when we moved off - and well do I remember it was a Sunday morning too - as the worst of the "herding processes" as I term them took place then. One had no sooner got a comfortable place on one deck than it was time to be moved to another on account of various church parades. For this reason I was not able to see as much of the further fortifications as I should have wished - but what I did see was very interesting.

Large military camps were now very frequent & as we passed each they asked the usual questions; - "Who are you" - & "Where are you bound for" etc. Most of the replies to similar shouts from us were very consisive, naming the particular, Regt. Division etc.

The following is one question and reply;

"Who are you@"

"R. W. K's. - Dardenelles Heroes - all that's left of them - Why the Hell don't you come & do your bit?"

Shortly after mid - day we passed out of the canal at Port Suez. Port Suez is one of the most interesting and picturesque places I have ever seen. It reminded me first of an English village as the narrow canal passes down the main street - & one can see a spacious roadway perfectly sheltered by an avenue of green trees - here was the village church - **there the post-office - & now & then came pretty little dwellings alternated** by spacious mansions & consular offices. As we proceeded further through the town the whole place had a typical Venetian appearance, particularly where the canal braches off in side directions.

Outside the canal, in the harbor of Port Suez, we anchored for a few hours & took aboard a shipload of Serg-Majors & Warrant Officers - & also sent ashore **a** shipment of fever-stricken cases from the isolation quarters in the **rear** of the ship.

In the cool of the evening we steamed down The Gulf of Suez & I think that it is no exaggeration to say that that was the pleasantest evening of the whole voyage - we had passed out of the zone of danger - we were allowed to have lights burning - we could keep our portholes open - & **we** could make a noise if we wished - accordingly we held an impromptu our deck & it went down very well indeed.

Coming on deck at about 4 o,cl. next morning I was just in time to see the heights of of Mount Sinai disappear in the distance & a few hours later we passed out of the Gulf of Suez into the Red Sea.

Now came the hottest part of our voyage - we were all ordered to wear our Indian helmets & - despite the fact that most of us left off our surplus clothing practically every man sweated in profusion - speaking for my own part if I remained for more than 10 minutes in our lower mess deck the perspiration rolled off in buckets.

Although the portholes were open at night I found it almost a matter of impossibility to breathe (let alone sleep) on our lower mess deck, - and so when no ortal sole was looking I crept up on deck with a blanket & turned in on the most exposed position that I could find - this was to get a draft for there was scarce a breathe of air - as a matter of fact I got on to the prow of the boat over the crew's quarters & felt myself lucky in getting down next morning without being caught. However the following morning permission was given for the 7th. Hants to sleep on deck, but not for my Company - nevertheless I slept on deck night & every other night till we left the 'ship'. It was quite easy for me to pass myself off as a 'B' company man, or for that matter to say that I belonged to another Regt on board the ship - the risk of detection was very remote in the dark.

During this intense heat of the Red Sea we found the Physical Drill very irksome, but that was not so bad as being put on "Fatigue". I got caught one day for 'Flour - carrying - fatigue', my job was to haul on to a rope which worked on an a arrangement which I believe is called a 'pulley' - anyway what I had to do was to haul 28 sacks of flour from the lower store deck to the bakers shop - & when I finished I was like a melting icicle - one mass of dripping perspiration.

After that gentle touch I put into practice that ingenious art which is known amongst old soldiers (cunning man!) as "dodging" - & I never got caught again till the voyage was over - though I got caught when it was over, at Bombay, as you shall presently hear.

It was about this period of the voyage, I & about a thousand miles down the Red Sea, that we suddenly received had a dramatic surprise of an "Inspection Parade". All the men who had had previous service in the Army were drafted from the rear platoons into the first five platoons & the new recruits shifted from the first five into the last three. The explanation took us by surprise - that all the trained men were destined to reinforce the 1st/7th Hants & the new recruits (at least 3 platoons) to reinforce the 2nd/7th Hants. This was all the more unexpected as at Port Said we had been told to have our letters directed to Meerut (where the 1/7th were supposed to be) - but we now heard that the 1/7th had shifted from Meerut to Ambala (near Simla) and the 2/7th from Secunderbad to some unknown destination - It was not an hour before the train left Bombay that I knew we were destined for Jubblepore.

The following afternoon land was again sighted on the horizon (earlier we had passed the Farsom, Dahlak, & J.Zukin Islands & about 200 smaller islands or rocks, mostly nameless) & gradually narrowed on either side, & presently we passed the small but most important island of Perim. As you are doubtless aware this island is a British possession & guards the southern entrance of the Red Sea, & stands in much the same sphere of importance as Gibraltar does to the western entrance of the Mediterranean.

After passing this interesting Island of Perim we swung out through the Gulf of Aden and commenced our final lap of 1650 miles across the Arabian Sea. Here it grew gradually cooler (about four times as hot as an English summer) but certainly a relief after the Red Sea. Soon we had to start cleaning all our equipment ready for disembarcation & then we donned on our light khaki drill.

Everything was in readiness & we awaited in intense expectation - you want to be cooped up in a ship, practically unable to move, for 3 weeks yourself to realise what a longing you have to get your feet on hard ground & to stretch your legs. Have you ever seen fowls sent to market, packed close together, one on top of another, in a narrow crate? That was how we felt on board & as we were slowly piloted into the spacious harbor on Bombay we felt like Birds of Paradise about to regain our freedom.

However a disappointment was in store for us - it appeared that the authorities were not yet ready to receive us & so for 36 hours we had to stay on board that wretched "Saturnia" within sight of land. I say "wretched Saturnia" but that is because it was anything but a bed of roses to live on - but really the "Saturnia" has had a lucky time of it during its eventful history as a troopship.

Before the war she plied as an emigrant steamer between Glasgow & Montreal. At the outbreak of hostilities she was the second boat to land troops in France & later the first to land troops in the Dardenelles. The damage by shell fire can still be seen on her funnels - damage which she sustained in those dark early days when Winston Churchill, in blind ignorance, wasted thousands of British lives in a vain endeavour to poke a camel through the eye of a needle. She has been several times with troops to India - but principally she carried the Austalians - & though numerous boats in her vicinity whilst in the zone of danger have been torpedoed and sunk, she has always gone scott free - she has been lucky all along.

At Bombay we were allowed on shore, but not outside the docks. Immediately opposite our wharf was the large refreshment room (or clubroom) of the R.A.T.A. (Royal Army Temperance Assn), a similar institution to the Y.M.C.A. The first thing that I did when I got on shore was to make a dash for this place - first I bought stamps & posted all the letters I had written - & then I had a good feast of all sorts of things that one missed on the boat.

Though I could not see anything of the town itself there were many interesting things, little manners & customs very strange to a European. There was the Water Carrier - the *Carni* walla, the native police, the bullock-carts, a native bazaar - & all the oriental & eastern customs in dress.

I spoke a while back of having been successful in "dodging" fatigues, but in being caught at the end of the voyage. It was about three o'clock in the after-noon

when my troubles started. It **was about 3 o'clock, in the afternoon when my troubles started. I was** up in the R.A.T.A. when Lt. Hine the Officer commanding the draught to the 2/7th blew his whistle and gave the order "fall in all men of the 2/7th".

It appeared that he wanted a Fatigue party for the purpose of unloading a cart & placing our travelling rations on the train. He picked out 7 men, including myself, & dismissed the others. He scanned his eyes over the 7 men & then rested them on me - & from that moment I was "in for it".

It is perhaps necessary to explain that Lt. Hine already knew me. On board ship I had volunteered to help him with the clerical work of making out the Roll Sheets of the Draft - & he had kept me at it till the work was done. Of course I did not mind as the work was done in the Officers saloon, which was very comfortable - & it passed the time away, pleasantly enough.

Now he fixed upon me & placed me in charge of the Fatigue Party. We marched out of the docks to the train, unloaded the cart, & placed the rations on board. Lt. Hine then left me in charge of the party - I had to check all the stuff over with the Railway clerk when he arrived - & then to bring all the papers to Lt. Hine in the Officers Saloon. I also had to leave 2 men on guard & arrange for their relief at periods of 1 hour.

I managed the checking alright & after arranging about the guard, wended my way with the Railway clerk to the Officers Saloon. After he had signed the papers, Lt. Hine explained the true position of affairs. Every trained man was being sent on the draft to the 1/7th & so amongst the 150 men of the 2/7th draft there was not one man trained, and not a single N.C.O. He therefore made me "temporary Orderly Corporal" for the train journey & gave me the orders to announce to the men - every man had to parade at 6 o'clock with full marching order & rifles (our kitbags had been put in the transport) & I was to be responsible that every man was on parade. He was very decent about it all - probably knew more of the difficulties that lay in my path than **I** did. He actually invited me to take tea in the stewards compartment which **I** gladly availed myself of - & I think that this was the only decent meal that I had on board the "Saturnia".

My duties as Orderly Corporal were more trying than **I** expected. Being the only N.C.O. on the draft I had all sorts of jobs to do - jobs which scarcely fall to the lot of a Corporal in the ordinary way - for instance I had to set out markers on the quayside, fall the draft in, give the order for Section Commanders to call their rolls - call the Parade to Attention - & report to the Officer commanding - all of which is really the work of a Serg-Major.

Just think of it! A couple hours previous I was but a humble private - & now I was still a private, but acting one of the highest ranks of the non commissioned officers. After that **I** had all sorts of jobs to do - guards to place on Ammunition Wagons, Officers baggage etc - & the whole time we were on the train **I** had the work of looking after the rations & serving them out.

The carriages on the Indian Railways are altogether different from those at home, We travelled in 3rd class carriages which held 28 in each compartment - but on an average only **12** men in each compartment so as to allow room to spread out & to sleep.

Third class carriages are fairly comfortable, but in the ordinary way they are used by natives only - a soldier travelling on a Pass goes 2nd class so as not to mingle with the native population.

However I was fairly comfortable but to be candid, very glad when the 2 1/2 days journey was over, as I found my duties as Orderley Corporal very irksome. We made frequent stops & at every stop Lt. Hine found some special job for me to do - I think about the limit was at about 12-30 in the night when he fetched me out of my sleep & made me go from carriage to carriage & make a roll of all the men travelling.

That was at *Itzafah*, & we also stopped at *Bunkanpur* & *Khandwa* for me to do special jobs so you can tell that I was very glad when we arrive at Jubblepore at about 7.30 last Saturday morning.

My temporary rank did not cease until we actually arrived here, at the barracks - & so I got a grand rush on Jubblepore Station, looking after various guards and fatigue parties.

From the station to the barracks **is** just under 3 miles & this march had to be done in full marching order (full equipment, pack & rifles) in the burning heat of the noon-day sun. The barracks lie on a Ridge of a range of hills & as long as I live I don't think I shall ever forget that 3 mile climb.

The band of the 2/7ths headed the column & they kept up a fairly stiff pace. My duties as Orderly Corporal involved, at the last minute, the searching for a missing man, & so it happened that when we started on the march I was at the rear of the column, but when we **arrived at top of the hills I had regained my place in the 2nd platoon so that I went faster than the others.** **The** sweat literally poured off & it was a wonder the fellows stuck it as they did. It may not sound much to you but when you get the burning dry heat of Jubblepore and the arid smell from the sand to march with you will find it a very strenuous task indeed. As I passed up the ranks **I** found the fellows sweating to such an extent that their tunics were soaking wet - the perspiration came through the kharki drill & dripped off the end of their tunics & it was almost as if they had been through a sharp shower of rain.

However the march ended at last & we arrived at our destination & for the first time since we left Bournemouth we sat down to a decent square meal - liver and bacon, eggs & tomatoes, bread & butter & coffee. "Some breakfast!" but jolly well earned.!

.....

Well my dear little girl there is the promised account of the journey from start to finish I hope you will be able to understand it - it has been scribbled out while I lay on my back on my bed in my bungalow, the pad perched on my knees - rather an uncomfortable position after about half an hour - & it has taken me three day to write it. I must ask you to excuse pencil & occasional dirty thumbprint etc - but please remember that I am on active service.

Of Jubblepore itself I can say nothing. As yet I have scarcely stirred from my bungalow except to go to the cook house **for** meals - you see we are still in isolation on account of the fever in the Wilts. on the boat & **I can't be** sure yet, whether we shall be free from isolation before we leave for a Himalayan Hill Station on the 24th of this month.

The sleeping accommodation is excellent & so is the food - in fact after the hardships we have come through it seems as if this place is "some" paradise. It would be a heavenly paradise if it was not for the fact that the heat is more like the atmosphere one would expect down below (and not up above).

I suppose it is scarcely possible for me to convey to you a realistic impression of the intense heat - but it so hot that one can scarcely do anything at all in the heat of the day - we stop I our bungalow & sweat - it is hot in here even now although the punka-walla is hard at it with the enormous fanning arrangement. It is only possible for one to stir out of doors in the early hours of the morning or after the sun has gone down at night.

Well, dear, I hope you will be pleased with this account - it is the first time I have written you a decent letter since I left England - still as far as concerns length I think that this one breaks all previous records.

The number of letters I have written you now must run into a far hundreds - please add this one to the collection and treasure it above all the rest for it is the only consecutive story of my travels that I have written - & when I return to England when the war is over - & when we two settle down in life together it will form a most interesting document to read - and you can add to it from mail to mail as further details come to hand - in my next letter I hope to be able to tell you something about my surroundings here - at present everything is so different & so strange.

.....

MAIL DAY 15th April, 1916.

My dearest Nellie,

Since writing the foregoing **I** have been laid up in hospital with a touch of dysentery but I am pleased to say I have got over it now and have just been let out in time to get this letter sent out by this morning's out-going mail.

I trust that you will take the foregoing account in the spirit I have written it - I admit that it is not much of an attempt at good composition, careful, tidy work, or clean handwriting - but then you must take into consideration the conditions that it is written under.

Anyway, if you are anything like me you will be pleased with any old thing so long as it comes from the one you love - you told me that many months ago in one of your letters - & now I am going to be cad enough to smack it back in your face.

Yesterday the incoming mail arrived & **I got my first letters from the old country - from my Dad - written just** after I left **and addressed "C/O G.P.O."** Whilst in hospital I wrote him a long letter (8 pages) & gave him a description of the voyage and this place here.

By the time you get this letter I shall have been moved to a hill **station** but if you write to the foregoing address they will send it on wherever I am. (probably St. Matthen in the Himalayas) - so **I** am looking forward to a letter from you in about six weeks.

Well, dear, I must draw to close now as I shall miss the mail. I hope you are keeping fit and adapting yourself as well as you are able to the new conditions of life - I know you must feel lonely at times, dear, but do not forget that one day we shall make our little nest together in that little world of ours - & until then we must just meet in the world of thought - somehow that though the sea divides us our hearts will always remain united.

I am reminded of those lines of yours; -

"Think not the distance that thou art,
Thou canst forgotten be
While memory lives within my heart,
I will remember thee."

With lots and lots of love and kisses,

ever your loving Cecil