

Esperance

April 17th / 96

My own darling

(12.15) I am back with you at last and being back I must tell you what I have been doing the last few hours. Well dearest after dinner I came home and I thought I would develop your photo before writing to you – well I had just finished it and was cleaning out my developing dishes (about 11.30) when Foy and Balding came down and said that I had to go to the dance. I made all sorts of excuses but of no avail and as they would not leave it reluctantly agreed to go for half an hour so I went up

and had two waltzes and then quietly slipped away and here I am. They were a jolly lot there Cis – all the Surveyors with the exception of Riches, but somehow I did not feel in the humour for dancing as I had made up my mind to have a quiet night with my dear little Cis. I do love you my own. The copy I have taken of your photo has turned out fairly well. I will try and run a print off for you in the morning. I do like that portrait dearest it is simply lovely, the expression so natural, well it is simply a perfect likeness of you. -----

3.45am What do you think of me Cis? Well fate seems to have made up her mind to worry me tonight or rather this morning. I

I have been out again dearie Canning the govt Surveyor and Captain Sales of the 'McGregor' came down just as I was writing this epistle and said they had instructions to take me back to the dance – they said they knew I had no supper the old skipper pulling a bun out of his great coat pocket and offered it to me. I was very much annoyed at first but I could not help laughing at old Sales (who is a very old friend of mine) who putting the bun on my bed started to building a pyramid with cakes tarts buns lollies apples pears – all of which he had in his pockets. Then he said to Canning – “Well the poor fellow must be bad if there is nothing in that lot to tempt him. We must take him up to Dr Black for examination.” Canning replied “I wonder if I can coax him” and suiting the action to the word emptied out his pockets – there was my poor bed liked a pastry cook's shop. While I was talking to them telling them what idiots they were the skipper opened the door went to the buggy and brought in a bottle of beer and one of lemonade. I had fully made up my mind I was not going back to the dance, but after a lot of persuasion and carrying me out into the buggy we drove down to the jetty

and went aboard the steamer. After having a little wine Canning and I left drove home after which.....

Kindly give me best regards to all not forgetting Mother Miriam Ruth and Arthur

Yours RJS

P.S. Kindly give Mr B my hearty thanks for his promptness in saving my little girl from being burnt. Cis I don't know what I would do if you were hurt. Really to tell you the truth I dare not think seriously of it. I know I would rush over to you next time. Well I will not hear of you being harmed in any way. Just fancy those horrid people saying you had wicked eyes. My own love.