



Tuesday Jan. 16.

ON BOARD S.S.

Olympic

My dearest Ruth, I really must write to you for a little before I begin my work this morning, for I know there'll be little inclination left for writing, though I would dearly love to talk to you after dinner. You see it's proving rather a wearisome task. I can get along well enough when it is calm - but it almost never is; the second day out from Southampton was smooth enough - I remember bathing that afternoon, after some sets of deck tennis in the Plunge Bath. But the following day the same Plunge Bath was a malignant pool of turbulent waters threatening to dash me against the sides (rather fun all the same) - after that the water was let out because it simply wouldn't stay in. We have run through some pretty bad storms - one, during the night, quite a moving affair with a furious wind & lightning, & torrents of rain & great waves hitting the ship with a terrific punch so that one could hardly believe she wouldn't have her bows knocked off. Wonderful how a ship this size

trembles - shudders with the shake of the wave & is tossed up & down by the swell to which all ships must come alike, & sometimes sticks her nose in & takes the water overboard like any wretched tramp. I'm glad not to have been in a tramp all the same! But the point is that though one is never sick & not often even squeamish to any point of anxiety as to what may happen next, the motion somehow gets to one's head; one feels ~~off~~ fuzzy & stupid. Consequently the writing is apt to get on too slowly & I have only managed to do about 2000 words a day with great efforts. That should be enough to bring me to the end of the time we reach New York, but I'm making as full a narrative as I will can; it's more interesting that way. Even so I'm not satisfied; I get into a dull mechanical way of writing; repeating tiresome rhythms & it is difficult to break the monotony when all the time one doesn't really want to do it. I have still the Third Attempt & a chapter of Conclusions to write & I shall hardly get all that done before we dock midday tomorrow.

After the misery of the first day or two I have been fairly happy with my table companions - & I hardly speak to anyone else - American tourists, a man with his wife & sister. It was almost impossible at first ~~what~~ to understand what they said or to make them understand what I said - the vowel sounds are completely different. However we get along more easily now. I'm often much amused, more particularly by him - his accent is almost a caricature of America & he's somewhat of a wag in a broad way. Sometimes he says delightfully naive things; as when he proposed to have a mesconigram addressed to himself by the wiseless people on board as he explained for the "réclamer" (from the French réclame, I suppose). They talk much about food & he orders sometimes a "dandy oump steak" which always tickles me. His manner of eating is disgusting - the women are better & he often forks things off his wife's plate. They are kind hearted people & will pour out advice during a whole meal as to what I must do in order to avoid being done. I carefully refrained from ~~the~~ telling these people what my business was in America & warded off their importunate questions rather adroitly I thought. But one day they began

talking about a General Huxley & his wife & I soon made out
that these people had been on the Narkunda. I went on hoping
to avoid them until I walked straight into them after dinner
- & that of course was the end. However I ~~don't~~ fancy
these people ^{have} kept my secret pretty well & as they understood
that I didn't want to be bothered about Everest - they have
not asked me a lot of questions themselves.

In bed. All the day, except for brief intervals wandering round the
deck & sniffing the cool air - it is really quite cool now, though
it has been warm all the way - all the day writing, & then
after dinner packing.

I'm glad the voyage will be over to-morrow, though I should
have been happier had I quite finished my story. It would have
been more fun if I had had more leisure & very much happier
had you been here - but it's not a thing we should have really
enjoyed together. We could have practised the American
accent - I'm getting quite good at it & evidently I shall
have to use it if I'm to be understood by porters & such.

I ought to hear from you before you hear from me & I wonder
what you'll tell me. The garage must be done by now & I suppose
you'll soon be having the motor with you at home. The handbook
by the way is in one of the pockets, & you might look at the
oiling chart to make out what ought not ~~not~~ to be left undone.
Anyway don't forget the engine oil etc.



ON BOARD S.S. _____

I'll have to send you some pics from New York very soon for you to show the children - sky scrapers. Do you realize I shall have 9 days before my first lecture at Washington. I hope I shall collect some invitation quickly or it may be rather a dismal life. I shall have to spend a little time preparing the lecture, weeding out some jokes that won't go down & so on.

Good Night - dear love. Perhaps I'll add a few lines to morning.

Jan. 17. What a cold morning - with a wind like Tibet & at least 20° of frost. Not many trouble - a long queue in the dining saloon before the passport official & I suppose there'll be some waiting again at the customs.

We're anchored outside the ~~the~~ mouth of the Hudson River & when we start - it's already 10 o'clock it will take an hour or a half to New York. On this bright sunny day the statue of Liberty (backed) sky scrapers should be a good sight.

Letter - Comfortably established at Waldorf Hotel
[18th] Fifth Avenue, N.Y. (address)

Interview with press - very busy

Saw my cousin Ethel Wether last night - very nice
& interesting.

Great love to you dearest - for fear of missing
the mail I'll send this now in haste
but I will write some tonight.

Your loving George

