



ANCHOR LINE

T. S. S. CALIFORNIA

March

My dearest Ruth, It is Saturday
and early on Wednesday morning we
shall be in Bombay, so the voyage is
nearing its end. I had a scheme of
writing you a little each day, but though
I have thought of you often I have written
~~little~~ nothing. The fact is that the days
after all turn out to be too short. As
you may imagine my first idea has been
to keep fit. It is never very easy in
the hot weather, - though it was cool
enough until we were in the Canal
it has been hot since then - not remark-
ably hot, but hump-hot. For two days
going down the Red Sea we had a following

wind; there was no air on the ship & our cabin with the afternoon soon became insufferable. One night I tried to sleep on deck, with two pillows & two deck chairs to help me, but though it was pleasant enough lying under the stars, too exciting perhaps I got no sleep - in the early morning retired to the cabin. But the nights have been bearable except for that one & the great way to be fit is to perspire freely both before breakfast & again in the evening before dinner. With Beetham & Irvine I do a good deal of throwing - catching the medicine ball & that proves the best way of all. Occasionally I run, ten times round the deck, which is about a mile. Anyway activities

of this sort cut into the time between tea & dinner; - after dinner when I don't play Bridge (ie. about every other night) I don't find I get much done of anything serious - one is hot & stuffy - after dinnerish. However I have done a good whack at Hindustani at which I hope to be very much more efficient this time. I have read a little history; I have written the article for Blackie's Son; and I have studied the oxygen apparatus, & gone through lists of stores & invoices so as to get to know exactly what we have that we shall want from the Base Camp on & have my own list in a notebook. The one serious omission is crampons - nothing but the old-fashioned heavy kind; it is very disappointing; I made a great point of that

with the equipment people. It means we shall have to cut steps up the final slope I suppose. The oxygen apparatus is going to be awkward to carry a particular to cut steps when wearing it will be difficult. I have spent some time too going into the question of organising high camps; but it is difficult to come to any conclusions at present & I think very likely our plan should be to have a strong reconnaissance using oxygen from the North CA to decide the heights of different places suggested and also how many people could sleep there. The point of using oxygen would be to preserve the strength of those ~~was~~ making the reconnaissance. However this plan would be rather expensive of organisation. I doubt whether we shall carry it out.

The ship has been much more agreeable since we unshipped our cargo



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of Scotch tourists at Port Said. There is room now on board & one can find a corner & get away & be quiet if one wants to. We sit right at a table of whom one is Irvine & it is quite an agreeable little crowd. I am always down & have finished breakfast before anyone else arrives unless it is Irvine & then seek solitude, so I hardly see anything of anybody before lunch. If people see one busy - & they have grown accustomed to see me busy - they don't mercifully disturb one. Even so it isn't easy to get much done; if one sits in a wind papers blow about & if one sits out of it one is too hot. They are a nice lot of people

quiet & dullish - unobjectionable.
I fear I'm not seeming very sociable,
but they have asked me to give a talk
about our expedition & I have agreed
to do that to-morrow night.

I've a sort of feeling that I've left all
the difficult things to you. I do wonder
how you'll get on about getting the Holt
& letting Herschel House, & building our
new wall & dealing with the garden.

I came to no agreement with you
about paying bills while I am away
- I think the best plan will be for
you to pay none unless it seems
urgently necessary; I think there can
hardly be any to pay, unless it is the
Army & Navy Stores for post wine;

any essential things, e.g. Bodger's &
Bentley can wait.

Don't forget the wine cellar must
be looked up if you let the house;
& in the cellar is the overmantle
for Mrs Lock.

I wonder where you will be when
you get this. As your plans were
vague I shall post to Herschel House,
& it should get there about April 5
& may catch you. Your first letter to
me should reach Bombay 2 days after
us - so I should only have 2 days in
Denzelby to wait for it.

I haven't said a word to you about my
hips which was bothering me - you will
have gathered that it is better, & it is
indeed perfectly well - strong, so that I
never think of it or notice it; in fact

I am pretty fit altogether; my ankle & its behaviour in new boots are the only anxiety; but I have a comfortable old pair for marching & shoes besides so I should be all right.

I feel this to be a very dull letter. I hope you got my communications from Port Said all right, particularly 2 boxes of turkish delight addressed to all three

^{children} - I want to know about that because had to get them despatched from a shop. And did I ask you to send photos of yourself & them? I do like to have them.

Monday - The end of the voyage begins to loom near. Thoughts of the journey across India & various details obtrude themselves. I shall begin packing to-day, because I don't see exactly how I am to dispose of the heavy suit in which I came on board - you'll remember that I haven't much room left in the suit cases.



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I find myself wanting to see India again
• looking forward to the journey in spite
of heat & dust. How dirt we shall be
by the time we reach Calcutta!

The Indian Ocean has been remarkably
smooth & lifeless, & rather grey as it always
is - until to-day when it is all alive
with a delicious breeze, & blue like the
Mediterranean. We've seen nothing of
interest but a school of dolphins which
performed with a truly amazing joie de vivre.

It is curious that now I am in warm
sunshine I must think of you in a summer
frook - March 17 - perhaps it is snowing
in Cambridge. England does look a little
grim from the tropics at this time of
year. But you'll have an English spring

and sunshine. I wonder if you will go to see Mill - give them my love if you do - I do like the way they have settled down - they've done it very nicely, & they are nice happy people.

How I wish I had you with me; with so much leisure we should have enjoyed the time together; and I would have been able to give you so much more than I can give you in our daily life at home. Supposing that you instead of Hazard had been sharing my cabin & I could have peeped over in the morning from my perch & seen you lying below & we would have gone up into the bows together in our silk dressing gowns to breathe the fresh morning air - sat together here where now I am alone - dear girl we give up & miss a terrible lot of trying

to do what is right; but we must see we don't miss too much.

I shall write again before we leave Darjeeling, one day early next week so as to catch the next mail after this one, which will go out on Friday the 21st.

Great love to you, dearest one, and many, many kisses for the children

Ever your loving

George

P.S. I'm sending a few stamps I bought off a man in the street in Port Said. If you know any small boy of our acquaintance, Bobby, or John, or Frank, will I'm send them on to one of them - Aunt Jessie will probably have them & anyway is old enough to know better.

G.