
Two hours later we move off. Sunshine & clouds. Along the Isle of Wight. Then a squall with heavy rain. A winding course which takes us back along the Isle of Wight in the contrary direction, then twice close in.

All this takes quite 3 hours. Then the Isle of Wight felt smellier and dimmer, and the last thing to be seen of the old country is the
High Greensand cliff behind Ventnor.

Already dark when we arrive at Cherbourg where we stay for another 3 hours. Must be 9 p.m. before we move off on the next voyage.

Share a cabin with a sympathetic Canadian Scot. And so to sleep.

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Oct 8th

Nothing.
In general nothing very exciting. Cabins of the usual type, and plenty of ship-like lounges, smoking rooms etc.

Food more too food, but decently served. No "dress" or suchlike elegance. Orchestra more too food. Cinema nightly. This evening a dance in proper - restful or 'nary.

Fairly smooth now, but during the day rather a heavy swell that resulted in a distinct up-and-down movement, so that I felt more comfortable lying down than walking about.

Clock put back one hour every night
Sunny day today; yesterday the day before very dull and cloudy. It's getting warmer as we make our way towards the south.

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A good library. Plenty of books to read. I do little else besides. Still feel most unfit for work of any kind.

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Letters were delivered to me the day after we started. One from Heffer, another from Harry Welta, but nothing from Folkestone.

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The Tourist Class is quite nice and luxurious and all that — until you have visited the First Class. The First class where all are in evening wear, where the waiters are waiters and not boat stewards. I have had occasion these evenings to note the difference, for I was invited to the First Class and spent an hour there in the company of the one who invited me. Guess who it was? — H.G. Wells! I had sent him a note reminding him of various exchanges of letters, and he asked me to come around "for a gossip." Most eligible and charming. He gave me the views on various things and persons (including Bernard Shaw) and asked me many things. We parted just now, he assuming that we are bound to meet.
again on this boat. He probably did not spot that I came from the Tourist portion of the boat. Glad I had my evening shirt handy and so was presentable.

I note that on the Aquitania, the Tourist and First Classes are not so rapidly barracked off as they were on the Majestic. One can stroll all over the ship without being stopped or questioned.
Festive night to-night. All at dinner presented with comic-as headgear and racket-making instruments. To be followed by a dance.

Cloudy but calm. Warmer.

Apropos of my talk with H.G. Wells last night: what manner for a published interview! H.G.W.'s private opinion of Bernard Shaw, for instance! But no! I shall not easily forget the impression. Chatting over the coffee and liqueur. I sometimes intent only on answering his questions concerning Basic English et al. and then he look up and see this smiling and genial face - so very familiar to me through pictures. Like a dream in which you are hobnobbing with the mighty. By no means a formal or perfunctory talk, but a
reel exchange of ideas. Said he, for
instance, "Excuse me if I'm talking
nonsense, but I am speaking as one
to tell ignorant . . . . you understand
shall I say, dull, or? I mean . . .
. . . . I mean, the rubbish I'm talking, you'll
be thinking, and yet I sometimes wonder.

I was able to confirm his espoused ideas
and queries by telling him that Robert
Nichols had often observed the same
thing. I added, nevertheless, I.H.G.W.
agreed that I had caught and expressed
his point. (I.H.G.W., his son, and
Julian Huxley have collaborated, as
you know, on a wonderful book, so
I mentioned my meeting with Huxley.)

I.H.G.W. seemed to take it for
granted that I knew everybody and
everyone, and I wisely refrained from
making those little faint boasts that immediately reveal the inferior
or the inferiority.
This morning, according to the chart, we struck the "Newfoundland Banks," (i.e. Fog-banks), and almost to the minute we ran into a pretty dense fog, which has at last dissolved into rain. Fog siren blowing every minute. Another 36 hours we should be in New York.

This afternoon ran across a delightful couple from Kobe; Icelandic-American missionaries -- we exchanged reminiscences. They knew of me and my work. For instance -- your daughter married? I thought she was your secretary. (and at Shanghai)

This afternoon coming round a corner of one of the corridors I nearly ran into somebody, a well-built fellow with a humorous face and a very easy suit. He recognized me before I had recognized him and at once grasped my hand as
we swung towards each other, with a friendly "Hello... I'm just looking for somebody by the name of.... extraordinary difficult to find anybody once boat like this.... " It was H.G. Wells.

He chatted casually for a moment or two, then he set forth on his search again.

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Sea quite calm. Hardly a movement except the vibration of the boat, which is particularly strong.

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I have hardly ever felt or been so lazy in all my life. Lying down, reading. An occasional game of chess. Impossible to work, the few letters I write are written with an effort.

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Yesterday tremendous variations in climate and weather. Starting warm, cloudy and calm, afterward, colder and colder, and a positive gale in which the ship pitched and rolled so hard half the passengers didn't turn up for dinner and the concert that followed. Then calmer and warmer.

This morning is the first real good weather. Brilliant sun, warm (almost uncomfortably so) and a very calm sea. We are due at "Quarantine" at 3 p.m. Which means the entrance to New York Harbour some six hours from the city. This is where the mails are landed and we pass medical inspection. It will be late in the evening when we dock.

A few boats already have been — almost the first. The Atlantic is a
very lonely place; just nothing but back sea for 5 days.

Packing, Tipping, and similar fine preparations.

Shell post this budget on the boat, which starts on the return voyage day after to-morrow.

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Noon

Must close now as this is the time limit for the Aquitaine post-box

Still frightfully fine and warm.