

CUNARD LINE

ON BOARD



R.M.S. Aquitania

Oct. 7/1931

News-Notes

Early breakfast. Taxi. Waterloo. Beach to meet and help me. Train almost full up. A two hours' run (through Weybridge, Basingstoke, Winchester). Straight on to docks. Queues and formalities. Passports. Ticket control. Then on board. Explorations.

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, this time close in.

All this takes quite 3 hours. Then the Isle of Wight gets smaller 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 when we stay for
another 3 hours. Must be 9
p.m. before we move off on the
real voyage.

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

Oct 8th

Nothing.

HEP TOUR CUNARD LINE

ON BOARD



R.M.S. Aquitania

Oct 9th 1931

News-Notes

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

Food none too good, but decently served. No "dress" or suchlike elegance. Orchestra none too good. Cinema nightly. This evening a dance in progress - rather ordinary.

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.

Clocks put back one hour every night

Sunshiny day to-day; yesterday & the day before very dull and cloudy. It's getting warmer as we make our way towards the South.

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

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

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R.M.S. Aquitania



Oct 9/1931

News-Notes

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 evening 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 round "for a gossip." Most affable and charming. He gave me his 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 thrip handy and so was presentable.

I note that on the Aquitania the Tourist and First Classes are not so rigidly barricaded off as they were on the Majestic. One can stroll all over the ship without being stopped or questioned.

CUNARD LINE

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R.M.S. Aquitania

Oct 10th 1931

News-Notes

Festive night to-night. All at dinner presented with comical headgear and racket-making instruments. To be followed by a dance.

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Cloudy but calm. Warmer.

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Appropos of my talk with H.G. Wells last night: what materice for a published interview! H.G.W.'s private opinion of Bernard Shaw, for instance! But no! I shall not easily forget the impression. Chattering over the coffee and liqueur. I sometimes intent only on answering his questions concerning Basic English etc. and then to look up and see his 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

real exchange of ideas. Said he, for instance "Excuse me if I'm talking rubbish, but I am speaking as one totally ignorant..... you understand what I'm driving at? I mean.....
.... If I'm talking rubbish, you'll be thinking, and yet I sometimes wonder...
etc."

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

H.G.W. seemed to take it for granted that I knew everybody and everything, and I wisely refrained from making those little faint boasts that immediately reveal the inferior or the inferiority.

CUNARD LINE

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R.M.S. Aquitania

Oct 11th 1931

News-Notes

This morning, according to the chart, we struck the "Newfoundland Banks," ~~and~~ (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 & 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 "Hallo.... I'm just looking for somebody by the name of..... extraordinary difficult to find anybody on a boat like this...."

It was H.G. Wells.

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

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

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.

CUNARD LINE

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R.M.S. Aquitania

Oct. 13th 1931

News Letter Notes

Yesterday tremendous variations in climate and weather. Starting warm cloudy and calm, afterwards colder and colder, and a positive gale in which this great ship pitched and rolled so that helpless passengers didn't turn up to 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 ten 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 to be seen — almost the first. The Atlantic is a

very lonely place; just nothing but
bare sea for 5 days.

Packing, Tipping, and similar
fine preparations.

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

Noon

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

Still frightfully fine & warm.