

7.11.40.

Dear All,

Well here we are once again writing this time from the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. We sighted land just before mid-day. It was Belle Isle. Large patches of snow covered the apparently rocky surface. There is nothing much to see, just a long strip of rocky jutting out from the water, but presumably there is some habitation somewhere. Several ice-bergs were floating about, two of them being in the river mouth. It is roughly one thousand miles up the river to Montreal, so we shall be four or five days yet. I seem to be a little ahead of my story as I have not yet told you of the crossing, but it is no matter:

We had lovely weather for the first four days, but on the fifth day it came! A gale sprang up from nowhere, and blew really hard. Knowing the old ship of old, we quickly made everything fast. Surely no ship could have acted more awkwardly than she did. She rolled and pitched and tossed to most alarming angles and took seas over from every quarter. Her bulwarks were continually dipping under

under the water. The <sup>2.</sup>cabin boy was so miserably sick that I fetched my own water that afternoon. To get to the pump in the galley, I had to cross the open deck from 'midships. Oh! what fun. For ~~some~~ ages it seemed, I was clinging like a leech to a piece of rope whilst the ship was at a preposterous angle. Water that was swilling about on deck, soaked my feet quite thoroughly, and the spray soaked my body also quite thoroughly. When I did reach the galley, I was confronted with a scene of utter confusion. To see the hulking six foot negro cook sliding back and forth on an oil-and-water covered deck; a bucket of newly peeled potatoes shoot one side of the galley to other, spilling ~~their~~ <sup>its</sup> contents in the filth; a bucket of flour suddenly shoot off the bench, and ~~upset~~ <sup>upset</sup> its contents all over cook's feet; and to top all a nice big sea come in through the door and wash it all around, was something bordering on amusing! Accompanying this great pantomime of course, was the continual clanging, and banging of pots and pans sliding about on the galley stove, the sound being similar to the modern rendering of "Tiger Rag." After much sliding and banging about I eventually got the can of water to my room. By the evening, the deck of my room was soaking wet from upset water! When I went on watch.

at midnight, it was as black as could be. All I could see was the white foam of the waves as they came over the side, a ~~glow~~ phosphorescent glow being <sup>given</sup> off by the fish and various sea plants. Many and varied were the bangs that accompanied my watch that night. ~~It continued~~ The weather continued with unabated force for four days, and we lost the convoy ~~two~~ days before we should have done.

At present, the estimated damage done is in the neighbourhood of £3,000.

All four lifeboats were smashed, two of them carried completely away; three of the four rafts broke loose and were damaged; sections of the bridge and lower bridge were knocked in; the D.G. shorted and caught fire; a steam-pipe casing was knocked in by a spare derrick which broke wire hauler lashings as if they were so much string. This damage is not counting the various pieces of twisted iron-work and smashed <sup>wood</sup> that one sees everywhere. All the rooms on the main deck were washed out.

I think with the only exception of the old man, my senior and myself, everybody has stated that they are leaving this ship at the earliest possible moment. Apparently this was <sup>the</sup> worst she has ever behaved, so I suppose you can't blame them. It is the general opinion that if we had been light ship, we would have turned turtle!

Even Jack is putting in for a transfer!  
He says he has had enough!

The cabin boy by the way, is the ex-galley boy! He's a scream. To tell you the truth, the amount of time that he's put into my room, nearly adds up to a minute quantity! I've given up all hope of getting anything done (so has everyone else), so I do it myself. Not being particularly well up as far as education is concerned, he often makes some rather amusing statements. The latest and best was told us by the steward. I know it's cruel to laugh, but you just can't help it. Here it is:-

C.B. "I'm awfully glad Roosevelt's got in, aren't you steward?"

St'd. "Yes. I'm very glad."

C.B. (After short pause) "By the way, who is Roosevelt? What does he do?"

As you read this Dad, you are probably turning round to Iris and saying that that's nothing to what I sometimes say. No, well maybe you're right. But anyway it is funny.

Things seem to be getting along quite well at home, from what I hear of the old man's news, although I heard tonight that London has had the heaviest raids of recent days. I hope all are well, and presume you still troop down to the cellar at the usual zero hour, and 'scoff' biscuits and sweets all night! Are Mrs Evans and Joan still with you? If not, what do you

do for a shelter now? Excepting that a log looks more alive, I suppose Iris still looks like one when she lies in state in the gallery. Has Renee left the L.A. yet, or not?

The scarf has been a real marvel, and has been in use all day and every day. Admittedly Mrs. Evans's tassles are not shown off to their full advantage when residing round the regions of my abdomen, but still that's where I need it, so . . . .

A Frenchman was travelling in a train, accompanied by an Englishman, and he would keep leaning out of the window.

When the train approached a tunnel the Englishman yelled "Look out!" — The Frenchman did!

I don't know quite what made me say all that; I must be overworking or something.

Hour after hour I have spent in drawing during this voyage. Oh! boy! have I enjoyed myself. The six hrs. on and off, is rather annoying though. I have attempted 3 paintings, but I have still to get used to ~~simplifying~~ <sup>every</sup> thing down. There is so much detail in a wave of the sea, that you feel that if you miss out one of those details the effect will be spoiled, but of course the reverse is the case. I am very glad I brought my drawing book, Architectural Building Construction book, and Perspective book with me.

If you people <sup>6</sup>only knew what it was to have to write to ten different people about the same subject, in five days, then you might be sparing in your criticism of this one; for honestly, although I like to write a line to everybody, I could get all I want to say on a page, but evidently you don't think so.

~~At~~ Its a strange thing you know, but I always seem to feel much fitter whilst I'm at sea than when I'm ashore, inspite of the food etc. Oh that reminds me. The new galley boy left the stopper out of the ice-box during the heavy weather. The sea went in, the ice went out. The meat was dumped. Result - tinned beef. Salt beef. Salt fish salt, salt, salt ..... etc. ugh!!

Well cheerio for the present. I will add a line when we arrive.

So that I shall be able to get all these letters posted directly we arrive, I have decided ~~not~~ to close them now. It has been lovely coming up the river here; most of the hills have a slight covering of snow. The weather is very clear, sharp and fresh.

Give my love to all, and tell them I am very well, and enjoying life to the full. Aurevoir,  
Your very affectionate son and brother, Len.