

Sunday, February 25

Dear Dad:

We're four days out from Barbados, on our way to England, in calm weather crossing the Sargasso Sea—which proves not to be a tiny patch matted with seaweed but a not-very-windy space which takes several days to cross, and which shows tiny patches of bright brown seaweed floating by. It's cooler than in the tropics, but still warm enough to have port holes open and wear light clothes, and there's still tiny schools of flying fish rising like thin silver birds. We've had good weather all the way and, as this southern route is much less stormy than the northern track of the New York to England steamers, may have pretty good weather all the way to England.

I was disappointed not to find any letters from you awaiting me at Barbados, amid the mail from Gracie and Harcourt. If you have written me there, it will be forwarded—I left an address—and reach me in London about two weeks after it leaves Barbados. From now on, till I give you a new address, send mail to c/o Guaranty Trust Company, 50 Pall Mall, London, whence it will always reach me.

Gracie writes me that she hears from you often and that you are having a good time with the radio, and she sent me your interesting letter about receiving an aerial answer to your letter to Detroit paper about the Red Apple Club.

Dekruif and I are very much settled down to a routine on the steamer. While the first-class passengers are all very agreeable and comfortably—most of them well-to-do English business men and their wives, either making the round trip for the fun of it or returning from business affairs in the West Indies and South America; along with one Hon. Gideon Murry, son of a peer and ex-member of Parliament and former governor of the island of St. Lucia – yet none of them are sufficiently interesting to tempt us from work. So we get up at six-thirty, have a sea-water bath in the tub, talk awhile, breakfast, work till lunch. I have a nap and, after some brisk walking round and round the deck, we work again till dinnertime, then read in the evening, with a game of poker (for me—DeKruif never plays) perhaps once in five days, and to bed before eleven. We're getting a devil of a lot of work done.

5:30 PM. Thursday, March 1<sup>st</sup>

We have just passed thru the Azores, right out (tho fairly far out) from the coast of Spain. At it is somewhat misty, we saw only one of the islands—a dark misted mountain, at it's foot the white plaster houses of a Portuguese fishing village, and the surf flung up on the rocky shore in great plumes. Last night and today are the first roughish weather we've had since Puerto Colombia, and not too uncomfortably rough – a cross swell which makes her roll, not too badly, and a wind and “following sea” behind us which urges us on. We ought to be in Plymouth next Tuesday morning.... Since I wrote you above, I've done practically nothing but sleep, walk the deck, read in the evenings, and work, but of the work there has been a very devil of a lot. From the beginning, the book has never failed to go well. There's still months and months of work on it, however.

I had a little bellyache, lasting only a couple of hours, a couple of mornings ago, and that's the only time I have not felt well on the whole trip – and it's two months ago today that I left Hartford, two months minus three days that I sailed on the Guiana. But the officers of this ship have not been so fortunate. First, between Barbados and Colo, the chief engineer came down with bad bronchitis, pneumonia threatened. He's still aboard the ship, sits for some hours daily on the deck, but is not well by a whole lot. Then the second engineer came down with something—don't know what—and was left in Trinidad on the way back to convalesce. Finally the captain had, three days ago, some kind of stroke—Paul suggested it might have been a brain hemorrhage (I think that's spelled right). He is better but still confined to his cabin. However, the minor officers are still extraordinarily competent, and the ship goes on exactly as if nothing had happened. It happens, too, that the least trying part of it is not here on the broad and often rough Atlantic, as they steer a pretty straight course—just keep going. The bad part for the officers is the easy part for the passengers—down among the islands and along the South American course, where there are reefs, rocks, dangerous currents, tricky tides, none of which the passengers note but for all of which the officers must watch incessantly. And landing at piers exposed to a sweep of sea, or already crowded with ships, are anything but easy.

The ship's doctor does not seem very competent—naturally a man who would, while still youngish, be willing to spend his life in a practice in which he couldn't, with normal conditions, keep busy more than an hour a day, and where he just about earns his keep, would not be likely to be worth very damn much—would not be likely to be any Frank Billings and Will Mayo!

Gracie has, guided by Harcourt + a bank vice president invested \$30,000 for me, all in gift = [?] Speculative, [?] + industrial + government bonds- this makes, with \$10,000 worth of Harcourt- [?] stock, \$66,000 permanently invested, with about \$80,00 still to come from Harcourt + from Bobbett novel, or now in the bank + in the [?] of credit I carry with me.

Monday, March 5.

England tomorrow! And it's been a beautiful trip. Today is perfect – cool with sweet air, yet the sun warm; no roughness but the waves sparkling—deep blue this morning, now an emerald green. Though this has, I judge from newspaper at solon and by the wireless news abroad, been about the worst winter for storms at sea in a generation, I've had astoundingly good weather – in two months of steaming covering somewhere about 7,000 miles, I've had only two rough days and nights (and they certainly not stormy) and two days and nights of fog—yesterday and day before—and they not bad, but just a thick mist, with the steamer's fog horn (the only way they have of warning and avoiding other vessels when it's too thick to see ahead) only going three or four times and not more than half an hour at a time. .... it's been a great trip; very happy, interesting places to see, and tremendous amount of work done as well.

I spoke in a previous letter of how nice it would be if Claude and you could run over to Europe for six weeks or two months this coming summer. It would be tremendously interesting, very comfortable—both as regards the luxuries boats and food and cabins, and as regards the weather, which is almost always fine all summer—and not very expensive. As I said, if you could come, I'd get a motor and drive you round to the most interesting places, and then when you were tired,

you could shoot back home. It would probably be impossible for Mary to come if Claude did—they'd want someone to stay with the children—but certainly he's done well enough to afford a two or three months lay off and then later come across again with Mary—and he needn't worry about so exhausting the interesting things that later Mary and he would merely see the same thing again. Tell Claude that if her puts off going across too long, he might never do it. Do come!

I'll mail this in Plymouth or London tomorrow. Lots of love!

H

The captain's still confined to his cabin, but the 1<sup>st</sup> officer is a bully sailor, + it hasn't seemed to make any difference to our serenely going on.

\*note from Edwin Lewis\*

From this I [dont all much show?] of Harry coming to the states.

Dad

Mrs. [Fritzier?] is coming to see you soon. You did her gallbladder and a [?] to me she is going [?]. I cant find where her [?] is but denied an Xray Exam.