THE LETTERS OF ROBERT STROOCK

LETTERS OF ROBERT STROCK

WRITTEN, AT VARIOUS TIMES, TO
MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY AND
TO SOME OF HIS FRIENDS

1880

1905

PRIVATELY PRINTED
1932

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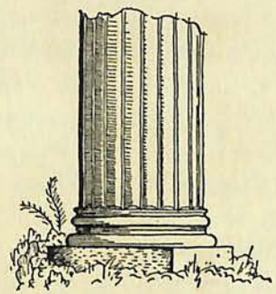
1930



1905

PRIVATELY PRINTED

1932

Alan M. Stroock, 77, lawyer + Jewish leader, NYT 1985
Priscilla Ford 1903-1989

Sol M. Strook died in 1941, 68 years old
Mrs. Sol M. Stroock, a leader in welfare + philanthropy died in 1945, 69 years old

- Gulie Ne'eman Arad, 2000. America, its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism. [about Sol Stroock]
- Check Jewish anti-Zionism → secular Jews → anti-Zionism enjoyed widespread support in the Jewish community until WW II
- Henahem Kaufman 1991. An Ambiguous Partnership: Non-Zionists + Zionists in America (via google)
- Stroock + Stroock + Lavan LLP History
- Sol Strooct w/ Einstein (Getty Images), 1933
- Sol Stroock, 4th president of the American Jewish Historical Society
- "$ 20,000 fund given to publish monographs." The Harvard Crimson, June 10, 1931
- Robert Louis Stroock Fellow: Fred Cooper 1909-1910
- RLS fund for ASCSA library, est. in 1931 — $ 20416 as of June 1946

"Be lowly wise . . ."

Bob was born July 13, 1905. While he was still an infant it was discovered that his heart was not strong, so that he was unable to participate in the vigorous sports of other boys. Otherwise he was physically strong and seemed never to tire, even after long strenuous walks.

From his earliest boyhood he dreamed and wondered much. He was a true nature lover and as "in the love of nature he held communion with her visible forms," to him "she spoke a various language." He radiated love out of the abundance of his selflessness. Because he was a dreamer and introspective, he was frequently misunderstood. He had few intimate friends but these he gripped unto himself with the steel of unyielding affection. His influence upon the lives of many with whom he came in contact at school, at college and while traveling in this country and in foreign lands, was profound and enduring, although so subtle as not to be recognized at the time. Only after his death these many realized that they had indeed "entertained an angel unawares."

By his parents, his sister and his brother he was adored, and to them he gave his love in fullest measure. Early that mysticism which became so marked in his later years, manifested itself. He was genuinely and devoutly religious. Forms of religion meant little to him, but his search for God, the all-loving Father,

Forms of religion meant little to him

was unceasing. He was not content merely to dream. He dedicated himself to learning, constant and unremitting. He spared himself at no time in his consecrated and self-imposed task. He took the whole field of knowledge for his own. In literature his tastes were catholic, and he eagerly read and studied the works of the Masters, written not only in his native tongue but also in French, German, Latin and Greek. Above all, he had an abiding sense and conviction of humility, which he regarded as the loveliest of the virtues —"that low sweet root from which all heavenly virtues shoot." He was neither morose nor morbid for he had a marked sense of humor. His smile was alluring and infectious and his beautiful eyes were radiantly and joyously expressive. He had none of the social graces. He could not bring himself to be at one with those whom in his letters he referred to as "the crowd"; and although he strived to meet them upon their own ground, he failed. For a time that failure made him unhappy but eventually he realized the rightness of his course. Those whose sympathy and understanding he aroused, however, admired and revered him.

In 1923 Bob was graduated from Horace Mann School, first in his class. Honors as such made no appeal to him. His satisfaction was found in "the joy of the working."

While at school and at college, he traveled during the summer months extensively in Europe and in the West, meeting with many men of many minds in his striving to see life steadily and to see it whole.

At Harvard his interests began to take definite shape. History and especially Ancient History engrossed him. That field he decided to make his life work and he plunged into its accomplishment with unrestrained vigor and zeal. He received his Bachelor's Degree Cum Laude in 1927 and continued his studies in post graduate work at Harvard, receiving his Master's Degree in 1928. Then Greece called him and the following year found him a member of the School of Classical Studies in Athens, writing, traveling and incessantly working at the School and in the field, in archaeological research. His odyssey covered all of Greece and he journeyed as well to Turkey, to Egypt and to Palestine. Again he spared himself no hardship. No journey was too hazardous, no labor too exhausting, no research too baffling for him to undertake. Greece with its classic beauty, with its still unexplored wisdom, fascinated him. There his whole being flowered. Many of his fellow-workers were devoted to him and he won their abiding affection. In the School at Athens, in the library where he spent so many happy days and weeks, there has been placed in bronze, as a memorial to him, a tablet bearing these significant words:

"In Memory of
Robert L. Stroock
A Lover of Ancient Greece
MCMXXX"

While still in Athens, he decided to return to Harvard to pursue his studies further in preparation for

his doctorate and to fit himself to return to Greece to "carry on" there. So determined was he to return to his beloved Greece that when he received an invitation to occupy the Chair of Ancient History at Smith College during the sabbatical year of Professor Gray, he declined the honor.

At Harvard that winter (1929-1930) he continued to work unceasingly. In the spring he fell ill. For the last eight months of his life his intense physical suffering was almost constant but his faith never faltered nor acknowledged defeat and sustained him until the end. He died December 30, 1930.

Bob wrote his own autobiography in his letters. His profound religious experience, the depths as well as the shallows of his thought, the fullness of his love of art and of learning, and the humble simplicity of his life are best expressed as he revealed them in those letters. Some out of many have been selected and are published in this volume, not only as a tribute to his memory, but in the hope that some of those who read them may find in them comfort and inspiration so that they perhaps may attain that which he often avowed to be his own supreme goal—"the peace which passeth understanding."

THE LETTERS OF ROBERT STROOCK

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I

New York,
May 11, 1917.

DEAR SIS;

How's your liver! I'm *all right* (with the exception of my stomach so I had to take castor oil!)

But yesterday! Oh, I never had such a time before, Joffre!! Think of it!! At Columbia!! The College invited the upper grades of the Horace Mann School, both boys and girls!! And *I* was included!!!!!! Wonderful!! Beautiful!!! Marvelous!!!! Perfect!!!!!

Bill saw his *hat* from Grant's Tomb. He didn't show his face there. Bill and Fraülein were not so crazy about him. Yes, they misunderstood when he was to be there, so they had to wait *two hours* for him to come.

Yes, sister you missed it. We marched behind the soldiers from a hundred twentieth to a hundred sixteenth. Then we waited a half hour (which seemed like a year) until he came all guarded. Then Joffre, Viviani, and all minor officers marched into the building. They then marched out and had a prayer. Joffre then made a speech, also Viviani and President Butler.

I have now given you the frame of it (with the exception of riding off to Grant's Tomb) but that is not all. The rest is *unbelievable*, *undescribable* and *unduplicatable*!!!!!! *Such* a *welcome* he got!!!!!!!!!!!! !!

BOB

II

New York,
Jan. 14'', 1921.

DEAR SAM;

I feel better acquainted with you than when I wrote last. You see, every time Sis comes in, you sort of come in with her. It happens so regularly that you've become as much of a member here as Bill.

There is really no news that I can give you. Sister has written you so regularly that you know all, I guess. If you don't now, she will tell you in the next two weeks. All I can say is on behalf of Bill and myself. We like your offer of that regimental what-ever-it-is. Bill especially. When he heard of it he named his alligator (in your honor) Sam.

Ma, Dad and Sis (I guess I ought to have put Sis first) have just left. I'm sure that, in your company, they will have a grand time,—especially Sis. (You see, *we've* become friends).

Do me a favor? Tell me how I can get to know your

Mother, Sisters, and some of the rest of the family. I know Emmy (and you) but that's all. If I can not do it in any other way, I will have to write. But I would rather meet them.

I hope that you and Sis will have one wonderful time together.

Love to you both!

BOB.

III

New York,
Jan. 14'', 1921.

DEAR POP;

Ma has just left in the usual manner.—Ma sitting in the machine ten minutes while the rest of us yell so much at Sis that she doesn't know what she's at. I kissed her good-bye, kissed my hand good-bye to her, etc., for such a long time that my arm's a bit tired from it. (Intermission,—here comes Bill! Late as usual.)

Our conversation follows. "Well, Bill." "Oh, have they left already?" He guesses it right away, as usual. (Wait a minute! Ma's on the phone)

"How should I know that Ma's leaving on time for once?" Says Bill, excusing himself.

Tell Ma that she shouldn't worry. She told me and Bill that he should get his hair cut; she told Mamie,

Adrian and myself about Ossining tomorrow. I hope that both will be carried out without Ma worrying about it.

But as to you, Pop, for whose benefit this letter is written (since I believe that you'll take a back seat in Cincinnati unless you have a little correspondence to pull you up) I wish that you have a grand trip,—both ways. Cheer up Pop, the trip home is sure to be nicer than the trip there. Remember the adage: The less you eat the less you spill on your tie. Leave nothing on your nose or chin—for Ma's and Sis's sake—also Sam's. You see it all reflects, naturally on Ma and Sis, and of Sam they'll say "How could he have picked such a father-in-law." I wish you luck Pop—plenty of it. Much love Dad, and through all your troubles, poor, mistreated Pop, remember that you have a sympathizer in

Your son

Bob

IV

Ossining, N. Y.,
Sept. 6, 1922.

Dear Sis,—

I experience a feeling of shame: I have not written you for a long time, and now I can say nothing worthy of what I long for, an answer from you.

I am in a rut. I accept and enjoy all that happens. That is all. There is nothing on which to use my pent up energy. I am in need of a kindred spirit, not just company. There is only one, M—— S——. I see her about once a week (I don't think she would stand me more) and the rest of the time try to lose myself in work, books, and that good old simpleton, C—— B——. Once I thought I more than liked M——, but that illusion was soon laughed down. Oh you life saver, you sense of the ridiculous! You see, I am frank.

I am not gloomy, merely bored. I long for something—God knows what! I yearn wearily for something indefinite. Though happy and finding no cause for complaint, I still am unsatisfied. Can you solve this problem of a lonely jack-ass?

About two weeks ago my golf game improved by about 5 or more strokes. It was all in the long game, my short game being about the same. I will, however, try to improve that too. A week ago I carved my thumb. This set back my long game. I tried to improve my short one. I did. I have two hopes in sports, one is golf, the other pool. *Please* wish me luck? I certainly need it.

Yesterday I drove the car sans Peter (the chauffeur). I am still alive and will continue to drive. It

will be a great advantage to the whole family and not least of all, to myself.

Yesterday I played croquet.

That's all the news and most of my present state of mind besides.

Love to Sam, yourself, and his highness, the kid.

Bob.

V

Ossining, N. Y.,
Thursday (Sept. 1922)

Dear Sis,—

I see what an ass I have been. This final victory over myself was gained by a number of kind people who have taken an interest in me which I cannot understand but which I can appreciate. You are one of these, my benefactors. My gratefulness cannot be expressed, so I will not try.

New Year is on Saturday and I will make the following resolutions:

1) To stop thinking of myself.—I still say that I am no more an egoist than the average man and am nothing of an egotist. This resolution means that I wish to be less self-conscious and kindred things. It is of greatest importance.

2) To greatly improve my golf.

3) To *get out*,—to get out of my rut, out into society, away from myself.

I see that this is only an explanation of what I wanted to say in (1).

My crush on M—— did not explode, it only evaporated. I still like her very much, though, and last Sunday she showed me in an hour what Ma and Dad have been trying to drill into me for years.

It is all very, very good, Sis, and I love you.

Bob.

Perhaps this letter is just a bit neater?

Tell Sam I haven't forgotten him, and kiss my unknown relative. Also whisper in his ear that I'd be mighty glad to see him. Will you?—Bobby

VI

Ossining, N. Y.,
Sept. 14, 1922.

Dear Sis,—

The man who is ashamed because, being wise, he realizes what a fool he is, frequently is heard to praise himself. This form of self-deception is intended to ease his conscience, return his self-respect, and give him a good night's sleep. It is life saving; it is good. We call it "conceit."

The man who is proud, because, being a fool, he thinks he is wise, frequently is heard to praise himself. This form of self-deception is unintentional. It makes the fool a bigger one. It brings him temporary happiness and future loss. It is evil. We call it "conceit."

We are not yet able to always distinguish between good and evil.

ROBERT L. STROOCK.

DEAR OLD SIS,—

I have so often written to you when I was in a mood that was anything but pleasant, that I think I should explain.

I have learned that you would often write letters to Dad on various subjects that troubled you. It is much easier, at times, to write than to talk. I, too, would do the same thing, copying your great idea, but I have an advantage. You, being younger, can sympathize more; and, seeing that my thoughts are ridiculously youthful, I do not care to bother Ma or Dad with them. You are the sufferer, but, if you do not like it, *please* tell me so.

I am cheerful, generally. It is only my best thoughts which, of course, are generally not so cheerful, that I write to you.

I have read many books this summer which have

helped me to think. It is all very good, and I am satisfied.

If I can impress on you the fact that I have had a very good time, I have completed all the news I have to give.

Much love to M., T., and S. (that's the family of M.T. S.) from

BOB

VII

Italy,
July 10, 1923.

DEAR FAMBILLY,—

Of course, the last few people I met on the boat I would have liked to meet earlier. I finally came upon the R——, forgave her everything and found myself decreased in size. When you yelled at me, I understood "Aunt"! She is lovely and sweet, and sensible besides. She is young, and, woe is me! I realize that that could hide a multitude of sins. I am now swearing and calling myself names that I would hit any other person for calling me. But I've decided not to increase my misery by bodily injury.

Met another girl who is a peach but whose name I have already forgotten, and a whole group of youngsters of H——'s age, far inferior to her. They are all travelling in one bunch. If you have not yet guessed my meaning, don't let "youngsters" fool you. They

are all college girls, most, I guess, older than I. But I found, contrary to what Mother generally claims, that this is the group I chum with, not those of my own age or those younger than I.

I awoke early this morning to look out of my port-hole at an etching by Whistler. The sail boats with their stringy, weird, but lovely masts, a beautifully blue bay, a slightly gray sky, row-boats with sails and oars that work backwards, and, as a background, a tremendous hill that is a mediaevil (?) fortress overgrown with grass in a picturesque state of decay, met my gaze. I merely called to Mr. Nagle without moving my eyes.

We had no trouble about landing. We found out that three big boats docked this morning, so the customs officials did not bother to examine anything that was not declared, and did not even ask for our passports. Thoroughly Italian! Since we did not enter the country, we may have some difficulty leaving it. Pray for us!

The more I see of the people, the more I like them, and laugh at them. But their auto-horns will soon drive me crazy. You gaze in awe, admiration and horror at the grand old palaces that are rotting away beautifully and are used as filthy tenement houses, when all at once the sound of something like a boy

taunting you with a tooter and the whiz of a car on the wrong side of the street smashes your thoughts.

The people are gracious and pleasing. When they talk together we feel like separating them before the fight begins, but what they say is merely a little every-day speech.

I read in the papers about how hot it is, but the only thing that bothers us is the direct heat of the sun. The very reflection of the rays on the pavement is blinding. The temperature, however, is not nearly as hard as the heat in New York the day we sailed, and the buildings are positively cool. I am writing with my coat and vest on me.

After three o'clock we go to the Cathedral here; and the Villa Nazionale, which seems to be a park with several statues well worth seeing. As yet, no sign of Faniani. If he does not come tonight, we'll go to Cook's the first thing in the morning. We are now pretty well settled.

My letters will probably all be in serial form. They are far easier to write, and I think that you get a better idea of just what we are doing.

July 12, 1923.

We saw the cathedral, the park, and Naples besides. In fact, between Tuesday afternoon and Wed-

nesday morning I wandered through almost every section of the town and drank in its spirit through eyes, nose, and ears. I never have seen people quite so helplessly poor, filthy, unhealthy, and unhappy; and hopeless except for the golden dream of perhaps—I was going to say becoming a garbage-man in America, but to them the saints are so hostile to such a paradise that it is impossible to others than the extremely rich. They smell disgustingly. They eat, sleep, work and die in rooms that are windowless, or in yards sheltered merely by a roof. Until a beastly death they are cursed by a life as hopeless to them as it seems to us. They live in the fortresses that seemed to me to be so picturesquely decayed when I caught my first glimpse of them from the bay. This is the outcome of the feudal system. The children of the serfs that lived and served beneath the walls of the masters that protected them, have multiplied, lost their protectors and occupied their rotten houses. Naples is "belle Napoli" only when one does not see its life.

Yesterday Mr. Nagle spent in bed to try to get rid of a mean cold that has been sapping his strength. (To-day he is up and much better.) So in the morning I went to the Museum. The guides in the various halls showed me everything and gave me a chance to really examine nothing. Therefore, after I had been

through all the rooms, I began all over again and went completely over everything slowly.

I don't remember your having raved about the place, so I am sure that you could not have been there. The things are all taken from Pompeii, Herculaneum, Cumae, etc. Some of the statues are marvelous. I sat opposite one head of Venus and watched person after person come up and touch her face to make sure that it was not really flesh. The mosaics really took my breath away. I cannot express the effect of the enormous amount of work and the variety of color combining to make such a beautiful whole. (It is now the thirteenth.)

Yesterday we went to Capri by boat, stopping first at Sorrento and the Blue Grotto. (It is now the fifteenth.) Sorrento is charming, and so are the hills around it leading to Amalfi. From the hills of Capri which slope almost perpendicularly to the sea may be had as fine a view as anyone could hope for. The picturesque little town, even, pleased me, particularly because it was clean and the people were healthy. But in the Blue Grotto I found a great disappointment. The water is of a wonderful, rare blue. Otherwise it is not as fine as people say it is. In fact, I never could get out of my mind the fact that it was merely a rather beautiful freak.

On the morning of the thirteenth I had a grand old time over your letters. For a while I felt a bit homesick, they were all so nice; but then we went to Pompeii. The day was hot, and we felt hotter still because among those ruins there was very little protection from the sun. Still, in spite of this, I had such a good time there that this birthday treat made the heat seem like a slight, unavoidable inconvenience. Everything from the millstones and sewers to the theatres and forums remains firmly fixed in my mind. I regretted, though, that the things which made Pompeii so extremely beautiful had to be removed from their real settings and thrown into a museum.

We had lunch there and rested-up waiting for the train. Thence to Vesuvius from the top of which we saw "belle Napoli"—far away. The crater itself is not at all the thing I pictured. If you can fill in with your imagination every conceivable color of sulphur and lava in the photographs I am enclosing, the mountain will be much clearer than a long winded description by yours truly.

I could not get the Piazza Dante. Otherwise the enclosed are the prettiest views of Naples.

Saturday morning, we cleared up our passport troubles, did some shopping for Mr. Nagle, and packed. Again everything went in after a little heat-

ed argument and some force. Immediately after lunch, we paid our bills and tips and rushed to the train. You were misleading, but Mr. Nagle knew the ropes. The difficulty here is not tickets. They sell all of them possible. The trouble comes in getting seats. We got the last two on the train, and two men in our car stood all the way to Rome. In passing through the gates, an officer stopped us and talked long and hotly in Italian. Mr. Nagle suddenly did not know a word of the language. He looked blank. Finally the man sighed and let us through. Mr. Nagle told me that he wanted to examine the bags. Perfect stupidity of manner was a clever way of getting out of it.

The train was on time. We spent a very interesting four and three-quarter hours looking out of the window, reading, and falling asleep. This weather is not uncomfortable or even wearying because it is not "muggy," but when one sits still it urges one gently, but irresistibly to snooze. Everyone in the car dozed off for a while.

So, at 6.45 P.M. on the evening of July 14, 1923, we entered Rome. It was really an event. Mr. Nagle giggled, so glad was he to be back here, and I too bubbled forth as I was charmed by the loveliness of the City. At the hotel, Mrs. Handley had picked out our room. We found also a note inviting us out to

dinner. At eight o'clock they arrived (I am almost accustomed to these hours.) We had a mighty nice evening, perspired, later, over our account books, and so to bed.

This morning we went to high mass at Saint Peter's, and got there a bit late. After the ceremony, which I was interested to see, was over, we went twice around everything in the place. Then we sat on the bottom of one of the enormous pillars and read the guide-book. Mr. Nagle had a little feeling about having the place looked upon too much as a museum, so I walked around once more alone. I was tremendously impressed by the figures which are of such proportions that you only realize the size of the structure by comparing it to the pigmy men that swarm around it; by the babes supporting the holy-water font, which are much bigger than humans; by the perfection, the beauty, and the infinite work and pains represented by the mosaics; by the majestic and graceful impression of the gigantic whole. There is not an oil-painting in the whole building, yet the pictures are so perfect that it is only on very close examination that one can see that they are mosaics. When I saw the dome I had a temptation to ask after her children. We will return to St. Peter's again.

Some things there I did not consider so wonderful.

The statue with its toe kissed off and the four bronze giants on the rear altar seemed stiff and unnatural.

Last night Mr. Handley made a casual remark which is very interesting, and, as far as I have seen, true. He said that there is nothing in Rome except the ruins, that belongs to any one age. It is not a city of antiquities or curiosities. Everything, no matter how old, still lives and will continue to live. Rome is literally the "eternal city."

To come down from these peaks to ourselves, we are fine; we enjoyed Dad's letter of the third, and hope that you all will write regularly, almost unceasingly; we have decided to "do as the Romans do." In the morning, we will go quietly forth. From twelve to tea, we will remain in our rooms and then go out again for the two or three hours that remain before dinner. Our trips, as far as possible, will be without guides because in this way we can get the most enjoyment out of what we see. We are not here to come back so that we could talk like guide-books (if we remembered all the stories we heard) but to see and love the great art-works of the world and to come back, if the trip does us any good, a little broader minded than before. And, in spite of this seriousness of purpose, I am as I always am when in this frame of mind, having the grandest time on earth.

Love, ever so much love!

And thanks to each one of you for the sweet and original birthday letters. Kiss each other and Tommy for me. Keep as well and have as fine a time as I am. Success to Dad's pool, Sam's golf, and energetic Bill. All my best, sincerest wishes to Ma and Sis.

Arrividerci!

Bob.

Dad,—watch your Italian spelling. I'm afraid it's a bit rusty.

R. L. S.

August 3, 1923.

Dear Old Folks at Home,—

Because of the peculiar shape of Switzerland, the best and most direct route through these lakes takes us from Italy to Switzerland to Italy to Switzerland to France in a trip of about a week. These mountains and lakes are beautiful,—so beautiful, indeed, that they have a direct bearing on the characters of the people. "No bad can live in such a temple!" I have not seen anyone arguing or fighting or even grouchy. You just have to love the world and every person and thing in it. You cannot help it. For Love, and Truth, and Beauty are so closely related, that when a normal human sees and *feels* one, he finds then all three. But, unfortunately, the same thing is true of Ugliness, and

Hatred, and Falsehood which we see breeding cynicism and selfishness in all parts of the world, even in ourselves.

Here everyone is clean and considerate. Courtesy is sincere, not the sugar-coating of an embittered soul.

As to our doings: August first, the night we arrived, is the Swiss national holiday. We went down to Times Square where all the town had assembled to see the parade and hear Mayor Hylan blab. He gave the usual spread-eagle speech amid the usual hearty cheers. Then the parade, which was composed largely of students from the university in red caps and with wildly colourful but artistic banners. Every five people seemed to form an organization that could have a maroon flag with a gold dragon on it or something of that order. It was a torch-light parade. There seemed to be no excuse for order or keeping time to the music, so everyone skipped and jumped and laughed and fooled with the spectators with their torches. It looked like a sincere and riotous snake-dance. They built some bon-fires on the mountains, and, in general, seemed to be out for three or four nights. We didn't feel like climbing mountains at midnight, so we joined the crowd that listened to the concert in the public square (Times Square, alias).

In Venice they have these public concerts every night. The whole city turns out for it and crowds St. Mark's Square. They stand there patiently for hours, listening, or get there early to sit on the bases of the flagstaffs or pillars. I have not mentioned these things before, but we always have gone to anything where tourists were not and natives were. We have wandered through the markets or poorer sections of every city, trying to see how the people lived. It is as interesting and valuable as any museum. When we get tired of standing we sit at a table in the streets. (Restaurants occupy most of the sidewalks of public squares so that those who can afford it can sip coffee while listening to music or watching the crowds.) But this does not allow you to butt in on conversations, so we only do that at the end of the evening. In our little account books, you will see many "teas" or "coffees," to be translated as the price of a ticket to a concert.

This afternoon we go from here. I feel that something interesting and out of the way may happen to write about in my next.

Later.

We are on the boat, watching a "Mother's Sunset" —"Come forth, My Friend, the bride to meet.—"

Stresa was very nice. Yesterday afternoon we went to the top of Mottarone, a mountain close on to 5000 ft., and Mr. Nagle took my picture on top just to show that, instead of dying, I looked "the picture of health." But the chief thing for which I will remember the town, is that it was the starting place of the trip we took this morning. Through the Simplon tunnel and on; around the edges of cliffs with rivers far below and snow-capped peaks far above and every part of the old world constantly turning up new and everlastingly beautiful.

And now we are in Interlaken which would be perfect if it were a little less popular. My words only aggravate me and cannot give you any idea of the real and tremendous beauty of this place. But tonight I honestly understand why people can kiss the earth for joy of living. It takes all my self-control to keep from hugging everybody and everything around me. If someone could only show me the beauty of the world in the gloomy moments when I am tempted to deny its existence, my life would be one long ecstasy! But that is not the order of things which God would command. Even now, a few bitter minutes must arise, but only a very few.

Loving everything, I love God. I am religiously

receiving the greatest sermon I ever had.—But this is too personal. It must bore you. x x x

Bob.

VIII

London,
August 19, 1923.

Dear Wuzzles & Co.

. . . Wuzzles, I am in love again—or still, since it is one continuous performance. The trouble is that I am in love with too much at once. That is what moves me to these long orations. I have counted seven great loves in people already, at least five lesser ones among my friends, two homes, and one race (the last two items likewise violent). Then we begin on dead men. The most recent addition is Rembrandt,—or Sir Joshua Reynolds,—or Sargent. I have forgotten now whose pictures I saw last this afternoon in the National Gallery here. Anyway, they came to my mind in order of magnitude, not chronologically. Many men can see how wonderful trees and mountains and religions and love, etc. are, but the most sympathetic only can see the beauty of old women with fans or nail-scissors and be so moved by it that they toil away their lives portraying them so that others too may see the loveliness of their simplicity and their faith.

Thoroughly shaken I went out and resorted to my usual remedy and aid to mental digestion—a walk. I walked around the famous parts of Westminster, on the outside, naturally, as the insides are supposed to have a rest from the constant gaze of the public on Sundays. Shoe leather may only be wasted in the streets; so I accepted that privilege with an unborn vote of thanks from the assemblage. Thence my shoes found themselves at Buckingham Palace where the guarding was the same as yesterday; that is an overdressed soldier with medals that must have weighed him down stood very still at the entrance and a policeman was on a beat beside him protecting the poor boy from some tempting impertinence.

Three hours had passed. The machinery which had moved my shoes thus far so nobly began to weaken and yearn for home. I let it have its own way so that it should not think ill of me.

At home I finished Shaw. Mr. Nagle suggested Lyons Popular Café which we had not as yet honored. We went. There was dancing which I sat and watched all evening. I experienced many emotions because of that but will only orate on my thoughts.

There were many members of Hebraic extraction—which phrase I hate since it reminds me of a horse's pedigree and I only use it for variety—dancing all

over the floor. A tremendously graceful person is a tremendously strong person or, in the case of the female of the species, a person with, at least, perfect control of the muscles. Every relation between these two is proportional. The same thing is true of the mind, "grace" being translated either as art, appreciation or sympathy and "strength" and "control" in their mental meanings. Now the members of the above-mentioned group undoubtedly have and are undenied as having great mental grace. Only those members of it that deliberately turn their minds towards physical grace or freaks of the race make good, graceful dancers. And yet with most of them having sense enough not to waste their time at it, they none of them know how ridiculous they look at it, and instead of limiting themselves to having some fun at it, they want to sport themselves and pretend before all the gentiles at it. Damn it, say I! Why do they do it? Probably because those who should have, never heard my dear old Dad deliver his favorite—I almost said only, but he's delivered books full to me, thank God—*sermon*. . . .

Bob.

IX

Persis Smith Hall,
Cambridge, Mass.,
Oct. 10, 1923.

Dear Fambilly,—

This evening I had the first argument of my college career. More than one graduate has said that the chief mental development of this period comes through such arguments as the one we had tonight. The controversy started in the definition of Neoplatonism and continued through heated opinions of conscience, religion, psychology and philosophy, and finally came down to rock-bottom on the *premises* with which we start. I supported the view that there was a conscience, a God and a purpose towards which everything which happens in the world tends and helps; that there was such a thing as progress and that this was not merely development or change; that there is a unity; and, chief among all points, as this is the foundation of all, that man has a right to make for himself certain axioms or premises on which to base his views, and that these may be considered truths without being subjected to further proofs than the axioms of algebra: that is, that since every process of thought yet discovered leads eventually to these premises as conclusions, therefore we may take them to be true without further argument in every case and

build our own philosophy upon them. For instance; everything seems to prove that there is a God, that there is an *original* force, and that we need not puzzle ourselves further with questions like what was before the beginning, or who made God.

He took the opposite side advancing the excellent argument, very modern and skeptical (I do not use these terms in a belittling sense, because, since I believe in progress I must naturally believe in the modern) that man has no right to get a placid state of happy mind by saying without suitable proof that a thing is true merely because we *will* to believe it to be true.

I cannot praise Julien Levy, my opponent, or his school of thought too highly, and I cannot overestimate the value that I on my part and he on his, admitted that each derived from the discussion. These are the conclusions on which we agreed; that we each were right from our own point of view and that we would neither be so pig-headed as to deny the good in the other, nor give up our own; but that some day that form of philosophy and religion will be found which is the truth, scientifically instead of metaphysically, and that we should hold it our duty to study and seek after the truth even if we ourselves never discover it, so that all men may come nearer to it by

that infinitesmal bit; and, to sum up, that we should try to see both sides, not only of this argument, but of every one, and, with the help of God, I shall do my best. If each man would raise himself one little bit, then the world is raised. If only one man *vainly* attempts to do so, the world is still helped just a little bit. If Julien received as much benefit from my exposition (and he claims, I think truthfully, that he did) as I did from his, we can consider the evening the most worthy one in many weeks.

Today we went to hear Dr. Dietsch's, the eminent German biologist's, address. I'll tell you about it when I see you. At present I have not touched my Latin for tomorrow and need a thorough review of my Phil. and it is ten o'clock! I just had to get so much off my chest.

Bob.

X

Cambridge, Mass.,
June 2, 1924.

Dear Family,—

. . . Thirty million people! The flower of youth, the mothers, the growing children! Thirty thousand-thousand! Three-hundred-hundred-thousand human beings dead! That is the toll of the last war. The ris-

ing generation is sadly weakened, horribly demoralized.

"Love thy neighbor as thyself!"

"Thou shalt not kill."—"Thou shalt not steal."—"Thou shalt not covet."

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Commandment after commandment broken! "The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me."

And still the world hates. Man hates master, master hates man, nation hates nation. War, intrigue, crime, prejudice, hatred—will it ever stop? No one doubts that there will be another war. Must I too kill? Thirty million people! Thirty-thousand-thousand! Three-hundred-hundred-thousand human beings dead! That is the toll of the last war. What will it be of the next?

Ich aber lieb euch all':
Rose, Schmetterling, Sonnenstrahl,
Abenstern, Nachtigall!

I don't hate anything. I don't want anything more than I have: a love of God and his world.

I have no patriotism. If love of one thing means hate of another it is no love at all. I don't want to kill.

Ignorance—the only crime is ignorance because it

contains the roots of all crime. "Virtue is knowledge" said Socrates long years ago. Ignorance, lack of sympathy for the other man's point of view means *war*. A few men want money, land, power, and millions of men are killed.

What shall we do about it? Rant from the housetops? Revolt and kill more men? Educate people who don't want to learn? No, that is impossible. Some day the world may love. Perhaps, too, the Day of Judgment may come. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; He leadeth me beside the still waters; He restoreth my soul." The hills are green, the lilacs and the tulips are in blossom. Nature on earth lies still before the vast universe. The moon gently bathes all—it sleeps. And here I sit and contemplate, a book of poetry, a pipe. And I am happy. He hath restored my soul. Thirty million people are dead? Yes. But what of that? What is suffering physically if my mind is in Bliss? Mother loves me, and I love the world, Nature, God! And God is good, or how is it that we have poetry? Hate? War? Yes. But here is peace, and the Infinite is infinitely beautiful.

Rose, Schmetterling, Sonnenstrahl,
Abenstern, Nachtigall!

Love

Bob.

P. S. Horace wrote what was probably the most beautiful eulogy on country-life in the second epode. But he was excessively modest and therefore added the following four lines. If I were as great—and as meek—as Horace, I should add something like it to this long letter.

"When the banker, Alphius, had said this, in hot haste to be a country gentleman, he collected his money on the fifteenth; he intends to invest it again on the first of next month."—R. L. S.

XI

Ossining, N. Y.,
July 14, 1924.

DEAR JULIEN,—

It is not forgetfulness or carelessness that has made me shirk the duties of friendship for so long a time, but my incredible weakness. Since the day of your mother's funeral I have shied from writing my sympathy, realizing how poor a support my few words could be; how like a baby offering himself to a lame man for a crutch.

And even now I find myself powerless adequately to express any thought of condolence. I am your friend with all that that implies. You have my sympathy which lies deeper than words. If you call on me for anything I will rejoice to answer.

Down the long road of life we all must pass finding here pain, there gladness, love, or strife. Our dreamlike lives are scattered in all directions.

> Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity.

It is so big that none of us can see it, none but the immutable stars can know. And troubles drive us on, we stagger until death ends all, that sleep on which our little lives are rounded. We must go on, not stop to mourn too long. Why should we mourn?

"No parting! None. But sleep, as the firelight sleeps when flames die; as music sleeps on its deserted strings."

Love from your friend.

BOB STROOCK

XII

Ossining-on-Hudson,
August 3, 1924.

DEAR BUMSY,—

Red and gold silhouetting a great elm. . . . A gleaming snowfall in the blackest night . . . . a garden of white flowers with blue paths on a background of yellow-leafed vines. . . . Dashing colors, drunken planets, whirling waters, leaping flames rolling about in kaleidoscopic forms. . . . And so on, and so on forever. Every kind of thought of fantastic beauty has

passed and repassed through my head in the few days since I have succeeded in getting a date with M—— C——! It is marvelous to what extent man can clothe a poor, weak memory in purple robes and ermine and sunlight. And even more than that, he believes that it can and does exist just as he pictures it. He yearns and weeps when he finds that it is not so, but, generally, still keeps faithful to these creatures of his wild imagination, for, were they to fall, all the good that he has attributed to them would fall also.

How much like Don Quixote fighting the windmill, protesting shadows! We find it safe to pile such high ideals on the memories of loved ones who have died, because there disillusionment seldom comes. But otherwise how painful it may prove! Thus, in the cold light of cynical reason, must most of our ideals of character hide their heads for shame, like the stars about the bright moon.

But still I cannot lose all of my faith in beauty and truthful childlikeness that I have hung almost solely on the memories of Bob S—— and lovely M—— C——; and if I could I would not do it. It is so good, so ennobling to look up to a fond demigod. Now, though I feel as if I walk among the stars, I would crash to earth at the loss of that; I should lose completely the greatest props of my own soul. A little

more than a year ago I rose from my skepticism, and it was only by the hopes that I rested on those two memories.—But they shall not fall, and I can sleep the perfect sleep of the little boy that I have made myself once more, for I know that however heavy the ornament that I may add, the foundations are built of solid facts. And always may I keep and treasure these thoughts in my mind, for they are peace and joy, and with them there can be no suffering. And so long as I see that there is a God in beauty dressed, and so long as I can support myself with philosophic calm they shall remain. And in my thoughts I shall always wander through cool, sunlight gardens, soothed by the slow modulations of the softest melodies.

Come with me, Bumsy!

And now we turn from music to the cackle of hens and other topics. Seven guinea-hens hatched, perhaps more. The garden is doing its duties nobly, producing delicious works of art for all our stomachs. We had our first duck tonight. Daire has lost her collar and is now the most disreputable dog in the neighborhood.

The play Friday night was so bad that we left at ten-fifteen, and luckily Edwin was early. Saturday, we spent the day with the George Wises and had

Cousin Edgar also for dinner.—But that is Dad's job.—Visited Uncle Louis this morning—with more news for Dad to give—and had lunch with the Kuhns and Minsters. It was a perfectly delightful party, though cut short by golf in the afternoon. I played with Emmy. I like her, so I had a grand time and played bad golf. Cousin Edgar left for town. Duck, pool, sniff, and radio at home. Then this letter and now to bed.

Mrs. C—— had to change the date to Tuesday, by the way, and I had to call off a golf date with Arthur S——, having mixed my day of departure.

Love.

Bob.

XIII

New Rochelle, N. Y.,
February 3, 1925.

Dear Family,—

At this time it is far easier and far more natural to say "Congratulations" than it would have been some weeks ago before you left. But it will be long after Ma's birthday before it arrives. Please consider my wishes, not dead in the envelope nor tossed on a restless sea beneath a changing moon, but lively and direct as a sincere thought.

It is a fortunate thing that we may only number the years after birth and not before death, for each anniversary thus becomes a milestone on the way of accomplishment, instead of a milestone on the road to a blissful but inutile sleep. So your conscience may reap the reward of the righteous and hard-working when it hears the blessed judgment of God "It is sufficient" instead of the curse "You should have done better." Congratulations, Mother, on your victory on this annual judgment day!

I mentioned death and his curse of inutility, which is the worst he can offer you, you angel, you messenger of grace, you *Mother*! When we think of life we must think of death, the two are so closely interwoven. But it does not hurt the one it strikes, but, with the bitter edge of its sword, those who love the one it strikes. And so it becomes a purely selfish wish when I add from the bottom of my heart the second part of the conventional birthday greeting: "Many happy returns of the day!"

Happy? Yes, that is another point. But I cannot picture you unhappy so long as you can serve and love, and with these two gifts taken away, you would not be you. To wish you truly alive as you, is, therefore, to wish you happy. But this form of the wish is really as selfish as the other—I love you so!

For what then can I pray to go beyond the conventional greetings? For your health and strength—yes, I do, but that is also selfish: your good and my own are too closely allied, and I am wholly dependent on you. For a pot of sunshine to play eternally in your hair, for the glory of the dawn to spring eternally from your eyes to bless others and thus to make you happy. That is less selfish, but you already have it. I'll wish it eternally. Perhaps I can give you something, a few moments of time to write this letter, and also a gift. Yes, I'll buy you a gift. Those are also pleasures to me, but maybe you will be gracious and consider them also as gifts. More I can not do or say, for you are my joy and what I do for you is my joy as well.

My little successes, you have said, please you. Well, I'll try that, and perhaps that may prove a real gift, for they do not always please me so much, being so very little and leaving so much to be desired.—I know! I'll wish you a smile, and give you one. After all, a real smile is the greatest gift of God. It breaks into a million pieces, Barrie tells us, from which the good fairies are born who bring the lesser blessings back to us. Do not take my letter too seriously. It comes rather from that part of me which was the whole of me fifteen and more years ago than from the superficial parts which are the callous that the world has built on to protect it. That inner heart is the more real me, but it must not be taken seriously, at least no more seriously than you would take a child. And it is addressed to that similar part of you which is holy and would be profaned by being considered seriously, or indeed by being considered at all with worldly eyes.—You see that heart in me is already shivering from being thus laid naked on my pen, and cries to be left alone. Therefore to the callous.

x x x

Bob.

XIV

Cambridge, Mass.,
February 16 (1925)

Dear Ma and Dad,—

Your first letters arrived this morning to my great glee. I have forwarded Dad's and am waiting for Ma's from N. Y. C.

I could see through Dad's long account of delights and various sermons that they were not all passed out to the world in general or even to "Dear Children," but in each part he had someone of us in particular to talk to. I pick out the shoe which pinches me tightest, the remarks on law.

I notice the effect of a certain Mr. Alexander Pope, whose work I am now reading:—

> Cease then, nor order imperfection name
> Our proper bliss depends on what we blame.

That about sums it up. I am sorry that I cannot follow such celestial optimism, but I cannot. It may be that I am admitting a certain fault in myself, and if so, my proper bliss is blocked by my imperfection. I have an inquisitive young mind that refuses to jump at conclusions, and so, when I do find what seems an imperfection to me, not having any proof that it all does fit into an orderly whole, I cannot, like the philosophers, say "I know that it is right." Mr. Pope does not seem to be doing more than expressing a personal belief, son of a wish, when he says

> And spite of pride, in erring reason's spite,
> One truth is clear, Whatever is, is right.

It would take a universally wise mind, which mortals have not, to prove the point, and there are too many unanswered and unanswerable problems to leave it without strong doubt. Why death, war, famine, sorrow, any form of pain? Why ignorance, insanity, sickness? Why passions in man's mind, why pride, and erring reason which do (in me, at least) make Mr. Pope's truth not quite so clear, in spite of his convictions? Granting even that the general, great move-

ments of the divine order are right (which we cannot honestly grant but answer merely "I don't know: it is too big for me") how does it follow that man-made laws are right? There are two answers: the one that man as a part of nature has absolutely no will of his own, the fatalistic doctrine; the other denies that they are right or ever can be right, but should constantly be changed so as to meet the demands of varying conditions. The former is an excellent answer with a well grounded proof, but so obnoxious that we will, as usual, let desire conquer reason and accept the second whose proof is less well grounded. I invoke the first to show that no man is a criminal, but the second for all practical purposes. Again we have an unsolved problem: which is really the correct answer? Frankly I must say as I said to all the other questions, I don't know. Neither I, nor many another member of the "younger generation" can be satisfied that "Whatever is, is right." There is always 1914 et seq. staring us in the face.

All of which is very abstract and so brief that you must take my word for it that we have really tried to think the thing out, and finally going in the misery of doubt to the "older generation" for an answer, have been faced with mere empty platitudes that we passed by long ago.

Now you can see that we (I speak the "general mind" as Rousseau would have it, of the "younger generation") that we are going to come out at exactly the same point at which we arrived in our opinions on "Processional". Faced with doubts at every point, uncalmed by religion, philosophy, or other platitude for any length of time, many of us give up all hope, and hence you find so many members of this "younger generation," saying "Damn it all!" and giving in to their passions; and others, the radicals, saying "Whatever is, is wrong!" and going to it with as much hot air as Mr. Pope himself; but all saying that there is nothing in life for us but life itself: therefore, live in such a way that you may live longest and most fully. On this proposition those of us who have not yet given up the struggle have built a short way. The ethics of the experience of ages we take as tried wisdom—naturally. But we cannot accept conventionality. Ethics are bonds as well as curbs. And all is not right which is being taught. For instance that law and justice are always one and the same thing is too obviously false and opens a wide field for reform. Also that men are free and equal is as little true by law as it is biologically. Might makes right is a phrase which is denied but constantly acted on, forming, in fact, the basis of social as well as political systems. This

sounds as though I were saying that all is wrong, but I'm not. What I mean is that there is a great deal of wrong in our present social situation and that that situation is practically sole master of the political. I don't see, Dad, how you can ask us to respect the law blindly as a holy thing! No! Just as your generation has seen a tremendous advance in the first real voice of the worker and in the first foothold of Marxian socialism which has power to advance as time advances, I mean the income tax; just so we will advance beyond you. Life, life, life! Solve each problem, each doubt, singly, since we are blind to the eternal truth and Pope's clarity is proved clear falsehood. Accept the present law? How can we?

The common opinion due to sensational novels that all of the members of the "younger generation" either have never tried to solve their problems or have given themselves up to the whirlpool is distinctly false. However, that practically all of us see the problems in approximately the form I have given is true. When Auntie May said to me that "she saw great hopes in the 'younger generation'" I considered it, therefore, somewhat impertinent. Are we of any other mould? Have we not besides every advantage of education which you have given us? Why then should we be pigmies? Several may have given up in despair, but

not as many as never tried at all in the past. And those who do fight on are certainly no less worthy than the past.

This is what I have to say and it will weigh on me until I manage to say it. By giving a cross-sectional picture of the upper and middle strata, I mean to try in my novel. But there I won't preach, which is perhaps an advantage. "Here," I will say "is a picture of what we do and how we see ourselves." I don't deny that we have faults, each in his own way; in fact, I will draw them also. But did you ever before look deeper into the case to see our side? I think not. Well then, look now. I am presenting to you real characters and real incidents (somewhat juggled). I am presenting actual passions and thoughts. We are frivolous sometimes, I admit (see, here it is and here again and all through) but is it not a terrible weight that is about to fall on our shoulders? And we so young, we must dance! Did you do otherwise?

To come down to more personal subjects, for thus far I have been speaking for thousands, the evening at Prof. Haring's last night was fine. Four of us were there from seven until eleven, talking over all manner of things. Also Mrs. Haring, a charming lady, with whom I found a fruitful subject in her having been born in White Plains. Lots of fun and the time passed

like lightning. He seems to be inviting most of the class, so far as I can make out, in small groups like that.

No more news. Love.

Bob.

XV

Cambridge, Mass.,
April 14, 1925.

Dear Family,—

I have been reading—very rapidly—Sinclair Lewis's new book *Arrowsmith*. It is a badly written work like the two previous popular novels by this same author, and it harps pretty much on the same note, the deadness of the Middle West, but this time he turns particularly against the medical profession in a very enlightening way. I am only half through it, although I have had it for over two weeks, as I am also reading another by Chekov, who is a master, and have had to keep up with my work.—Another history exam comes Thursday.—Nevertheless, one character stands out superbly. It is worth skipping through the rest to get that character. It is Gottlieb, a German Jew, and a professor of bacteriology who loves his laboratory above life itself.—"'You Americans,'" he says, "'so many of you—all full with ideas, but you

are impatient with the beautiful dullness of long labors.'"

The beautiful dullness of long labors—I love Gottlieb!

When I wrote that last letter I am afraid I was a little hasty in my expression. I don't want to modify or retract anything I said, but it was unnecessary to say it all. The last paragraph particularly was a little rhetorical, a little youthful and very immodest. I regret that. You have always been so kind, so insistent that I do as I please, that I should not have treated you as if we were having a hot argument. It was a little immature to broach the subject of starvation, though I did really mean it. And then I guess I sounded a little sure of myself. Robert Frost once asked his uncle for a sure income so that he might write poetry. "And how long will it take before you have anything published?"—"About twenty years." It was exactly twenty years—but you must read his poems.

The beautiful dullness of long labors—I know it now, I love it now, but before I am through I shall know it a great deal better and I think I shall love it as much. The lamp, the book, or pen and paper. God how I love them! And sandwiches at midnight such as Gottlieb served in the lab, only I have to go out for

them. Success, of which I sounded so certain, does not matter much in comparison. I should much much rather have the beautiful dullness of long labors.

Of course, in discussing such a subject each one must answer for himself the unanswerable question, "What do men live for?" And with Stevenson and Pater I answer "Life." Oh there are more to sing in chorus: Browning, and Wordsworth, and Shelley, and Keats, and Lamb—ten thousand times ten thousand saints.—But I am rhetorical again. The simple fact is that for success I don't give a damn. I don't believe in immortality (except as the fact is immortal). I don't believe in progress—I don't believe that there is such a thing: it is only change, temporarily for the better or for the worse. I believe only in Life, and I call that God, and I worship it.—It fits in very well with the Bible.

Now, I think, we are ready for a discussion. Humbly I send love.

Bob

XVI

Cambridge, Mass.,
December 7, 1925.

Dear Family,—

So you have gone, and we too are back at work. It was a blessing to have you here; for this we may

thank God and you. Your presence here was like the realization of the spirits in flesh and blood which we always feel beckoning from ahead rather than urging from behind. And now that you yourselves have gone it seems those spirits have returned, still to guide us in your absence. With you we may correspond in this second hand way which Uncle Sam has provided. With those others we may talk day and night.—All of which is a very vague representation of a truth.

Thanks for the food. Friends are here.

Bob.

XVII

Cambridge, Mass.,
January 19, 1926.

Dear Family,—

Inclosed is the much heralded essay on Carlyle. The one comment is the mark, printed as small as possible. No criticism favorable or unfavorable, no questions, no remarks, no suggestions, only a disdainful silence. Thus is a rebel ostracized. I went up at the close of the hour to ask Perry if he had read it himself and if not, whether he would mind reading and commenting. But as four fellows were ahead of me to ask questions, and as I did not want to break my record of never being late for Babbitt's lecture, I shrugged my shoulders and let it go. There are plenty

of adverse criticisms which I myself might heap upon the work, chief among them that I make no mention of the importance of the style in the history of literature, so that I give the impression of Carlyle being like a solitary lion ineffectually roaring in the zoo, which is false. Carlyle has had an influence not altogether bad.—But we'll let that pass.

I do not send you everything I write, but merely those things which I think may interest you.—Kindly return when finished.—As you have probably gathered, I am having a good time. My mind seems to be undergoing a startling change in dealing with everything. This, of course, with characteristic modesty, I conceive as growth, but it may not be. During the vacation the final blow was delivered to one half of my old interests. More and more I have been discouraged with my rich social friends as a whole, the future expert salesmen of bonds or cotton-goods, and the future wives thereof. At first this came through a feeling of inferiority. I admired that poise, that simple effusion of joy, which was not mine. Gradually this turned into a feeling of superiority as I saw the limitations of "the crowd," and esteemed my virtues higher than theirs. Now I feel neither way. They are the crowd, I am non-crowd. I envy them what they have, but yet do not want it as I cannot enjoy it. It

is not that I look down on them, but merely that we are utterly incompatible, a fault rather mine than theirs. But I insist now on facing the problem frankly and boldly. For years I have made myself miserable trying to fit in, trying to make myself understood and to understand, trying to be popular where popularity was not due me. All statements to the contrary were merely my defense mechanism. I tried—God how I tried! I listened to your arguments for a balanced life and I accepted them. Now I accept them more heartily than ever, but my solution is different. That way, though I admire and thank you heartily for your persistency in making me follow it, for I see now that it was essential to keep me from withering before I was mature, led me through misery and can lead me to nothing but misery. But now is not staying crowd merely sticking to forms which have no spirit left in them? May I not declare non-crowd without losing the social element?

I think I may. Delightful as these many acquaintances may be to sip tea with, eating roast-beef with them impresses me as ludicrous. (I am speaking figuratively, of course). Most of them are more virtuous than I—I mean it,—but to think that they with their dinner-parties, their business interests, their utter hollowness, should be my friends for life, the

people from whom my stimulus must come, is horrible. It is like binding the feet in infancy to keep them from growing, like forcing a camel through the eye of a needle—with no reflection on the relative usefulness of the needle. But why may I not substitute for the needle the arch, for the bandage the shoe? (Great examples of mixed metaphors, but you get the point.)

Let us look at the facts a moment. I list my friends: *A*. Crowd, M—— S——; *B*. Semi-crowd, M—— B——, M—— C——, Al B——; *C*. Non-crowd, Bernie, Julien, Louis, Al Roos, Bob S., Margaret S——, Doris F——, Mary E——, Eleanor W——. These are all the people, close or more distant, whom I have a pretty fair right to call friends. Four of them only have any right to be called crowd, and three of these are somewhat broader in interests and activities than that term allows. As for acquaintances whom I meet socially, there are as many in both groups. What would I lose by dropping crowd? The social activities (for which I dismiss other social activities), which have been the chief source of boredom, misery, and disgust during vacation periods; which have made me dread the coming of those periods and made me conceive of life away from New York as, by experience, by far the happiest. In the

course of five years or so, it may, though not certainly, mean something more: the loss of intimacy in the four friendships associated with crowd. But as I intend to hang on tight to those friendships as long as possible, I do not think this a very important matter for the present.

I might go on writing all night and all tomorrow too, for my decision is not hasty but thoroughly pondered. As a matter of fact, my conversations with Bernie and my correspondence with M—— B—— on and around this subject have led to some very interesting analyses and diversions. Both of them agree with me on every point. Both of them have had to face the same problem this year, Bernie's being modified by the fact that he never was crowd and moreover has to choose a career. My last letter to M—— put the point to which we had long been leading up quite bluntly and evoked the enclosed equally blunt reply. I hate to send it to you because it is a hasty and poor letter. She has allowed herself, for a change, to overflow with a little more enthusiasm than the case deserves. She has infinitely more confidence in me than I in myself, so that her prophesies, instead of cheering me, merely make me smile ironically. However, you see how matters stand. The phrases "good automobile agent," "pride to the community," and "successful social figure," and a few more are quotations from me.—Kindly return.

This thing means more than a mere change of accent. Firstly, I am to treat crowd as if they were ordinary people, no better and no worse, let their parties go hang, see them when I feel like it, but not worry about being invited by them or not. In other words, I am to cease considering myself as belonging or trying to belong to their clique. But more important is the fact that it definitely limits my choice of a career: it must be one in which I may continue to associate primarily with non-crowd people. Sufficiently vague still, I grant you.—My objections to crowd are not wholly temperamental. As you may gather from M——'s letter, I extended some Babbittian principles to analyze their group Character. Proposition one: that they worship the god Joy without restraint. Proposition two: that instead of becoming immoral, their innate conventionality due to education has kept them, without morality, moral. Proposition three: that due to luxury and these other influences which have removed necessity for moral effort, they suffer from anaemic emotions, are in every way small fry. If you want me to dilate, I shall. I am still open to conviction, but I don't think that this time it will be forthcoming.—Love— Bob.

XVIII

Cambridge, Mass.,
April 8, 1926.

DEAR RODDY,

You have the tremendous advantage of not having to write answers to any of your birthday letters. I have the disadvantage of having to write you a letter which, for once, will be perfectly legible. When you see the result I shall be very much lowered in your estimation. In a typewritten letter I cannot hope that my hen-scratchings will be happily misinterpreted. But when I admit, as I must, that the reason why I am not now scrawling with my blessed Waterman ($2.75, adv.) is that I went belly-wopping across Massachusetts Avenue today, bruising a ligament in the hand which holds my mightier-than-a-sword, all dignity must fall from the relationship of uncle. The picture of myself prone in the mud (I soiled my overcoat too) is the picture of my reputation in your eyes also. It is gone, that marching to the tune—so to speak—of the Wooden Soldiers! How noble you used to make me feel! I was one who served a king. Now I am one who has not sense enough to keep his belly-wopping for the snow-time. But you need not boast, your Highness. You too have a marvelous propensity for sitting on your lithe proboscis. My yes!

As an old friend I must ask you, though, not to tell

Grandy. Learn now that it is far less troublesome if you keep your secrets from the ladies until it is too late for them to worry. You are growing up. Tomorrow you will be two, as we reckon such things, so it is about time for you to begin to learn some worldly wisdom. One more pointer—if you will allow me—is to let all the soft birds know before your birthday what you think might give them most pleasure to give you on that day. Otherwise they may forget and lose the opportunity. I'll forgive you this time, as no one has told you this before. Just tell Mommy to tell me. (Being your uncle and your Grandy's son, I am one of these soft birds.) Also tell her if you want congratulations besides. They are yours for the asking, as I have no use for them, never having discovered how to play with the many examples which have been presented to me from time to time. And with so many able men to convince you that you are going to be a great man, what can one poor, fallen, booby Bob say, particularly when he does not want you to be a great man so much as a good one? You are your mother's and your father's son, and last year already I congratulated you on making such a good choice. Don't let the fact that you were named after me, if that scandal is really true, disturb you. No one will ever know it. If you are a better boy next year than you

are this, you are on the path to goodness despite all turns of fortune such as this. My best wishes are that you succeed. My greatest hope and confidence is that you will.

Smile on, sweet Roddy. Kiss Mommy and Daddy and Tommy for me, and don't forget to tell Mommy to write. Don't give my secret away to Grandy, and above all, don't bruise any ligaments. I hope that this series of exhortations won't engender any inhibitions in you. *Don't* let them!

Love ad infinitum,

Bob.

XIX

Oslo,
July 18, 1926.

Dear Family,—

This letter is addressed to Mother, Father, Sis, Sam, Bill, Auntie May, and Uncle Hank. Each of you has written me a birthday letter which I treasure. I am answering you all together not because I am lazy (I am, but that does not enter here), but because I have something to say to each of you which I should like to say to all.

I begin, therefore, by asking with you what a twenty-first birthday is, and answer with you all that it is a milestone. The road looks the same on one side

as on the other, but as Sam pointed out, milestones are a convenience. None of you, however, noted the very obvious point that the milestone marks the line where state highway maintenance begins, in short, where I am to assume my civic duties. We all overlook the obvious. It was Bernie who had to call my attention to it. To be a good man includes being a good citizen. I have written elsewhere and shall write again on the philosophy of the state as I learn more and think more about it. Such ideas as I have cannot interest you much, so I forbear now. The point I want to continue is that of duty.

At the sight of this word most people these days will either shrink with horror or laugh with scorn. But if we are to adopt any sort of organic conception of society or the state, which, to apply the pragmatic test, is the only sort of conception which will work, we cannot conceive of each man as distinct from all the rest, as bounded by his skin. In fact, I think Dad's old friend and teacher, W. F. Dunning, goes so far as to say that a man has no reality intrinsically unless considered in relation to other men. Now such a view, unless we fall from organism to deterministic mechanism (also an insupportable position, soon, I believe, to become obsolete) necessarily involves duty in some form.

At any rate, to leave metaphysics and talk horse sense, we are alive, a thing the meaning of which many modern mortals tend to forget. Aristotle had a way of writing a volume in a phrase. He wrote ten volumes when he said "Man is a social animal." Kindly reflect on that and read several of the said volumes so that I shall not have to digress further at present.

Mother urges tolerance. That, as Bernie once put it, does *not* mean to tolerate, which as Dad has so often pointed out (note the authorities: Aristotle, Bernie, you!) involves haughty patronage. True tolerance can only come from humility (a realization of our own weakness and proneness to error) combined with sympathy and understanding. Most men of great experience have found that the differences in human nature, though subtle and great from one point of view, are small from another, like a tall barometer whose fluctuations are measured by an extremely small scale near the upper end. Before God we are all sinners; before the Omnipotent we are all weaklings; before the Eternal we are but fleeting shadows. And in a world filled with toil and sorrow, it is not only our duty to love, but our other duties can only be fulfilled by way of love, a love of God involving a love of man. So much I see clearly enough intellectually. With increased understanding and experience I

hope also to be able to live it. Incidentally, Wuzzles, your letter is the finest you have ever written me, and I wish I could assure you that I genuinely appreciate the time, the effort, and the polish which you spent on it.

Dad's letter was, as usual, perfect. To know all is to forgive all, you say. I should answer that, with you, to know all is to love doubly. From the first my Father, *my Father*, to the end my friend. I have always gobbled up your advice as readily as your food, and so with your "carpe diem." My fault I know has always been to dream in my waking hours, to peer into the future and trample down the flower beneath my foot, sometimes cursing it as a stumbling block. I have tried to break this fault and I shall try again. To Uncle Hank I answer the same thing, but would add one word. Live happily I do. I have great joy in living, and although I do take many things (including myself, I fear) much more seriously than I ought, I suffer less from ennui than almost anyone else I know, man, woman, or child. Perhaps there is a keener, finer, and more lasting pleasure in bumping against the wall than in listening to the clatter of a rattle.—I don't know.

Bill wrote me as fine (and long) a letter as could possibly be expected from a brother, a friend and a

roommate of long standing all rolled into one. He tells me quite frankly and completely that what I lack is maturity, polish, balance, the "symmetria prisca" of the Greeks, the "aurea mediocritas" of Horace, in all of which I agree. To complete the picture, to build up the missing parts will be my constant effort though it take a lifetime (which it should). Meanwhile I accept your specific suggestions, repeating with you the motto which struck us both so forcefully: "Aequam memento rebus in arduis servare mentem."

To-day is Tommy's birthday. Congratulations—Love—Bob—should be sufficient were every word a long letter in itself. Tommy is a bad boy sometimes. I, who am more than five times his age, am a bad boy still. But one thing I have learned is not to kick and whine when being lectured to by my elders and betters. One interesting thing I note about such lectures is that they seldom agree. Therefore I listen carefully to what everyone has to say and end by deciding for myself. Thus, dear Mommy and Daddy (Sis and Sam) with you. One says decide: doubt is the worst of evils; he who hesitates loses. The other says, take your time; look before you leap; don't cross your bridges before you come to them. Obviously we have here a conflict of half-truths, and two half-

truths do not make a whole truth. More of this anon. I deeply appreciate your good wishes, and your love makes me always happy. Even your advice I accept with joy, but—you don't mind, do you?—I am afraid it is not quite sufficient.

Now, Auntie May, I have left your letter to the last to have more time to think it over. I am afraid I do not quite understand it, though I shall continue to try. In the first place you say that the new psychology teaches us that the individual deserves neither blame nor credit, only an inner joy. What, then, is the individual? A passive atom amid the forces of heredity and environment? If so, how can he be said to deserve anything? But it seems to me that I have always had the capacity to discriminate, to exercise a choice, and to will to do a thing directly opposed to the dictates of my passions and desires, and no amount of sophistry will be able to drive me from such a position. The problem of the will—about which I know just enough to realize that I know nothing, is one of the most difficult we have to face. I do not believe we can face it by denying it.

At any rate, Bernie, who is as much a student of psychology as of philosophy, who has, indeed, written a paper upon this very subject which received the highest praise, tells me that the new psychology

teaches no such thing, unless we exclude all but one very doubtful school.

The second point in your letter is on creative expression and creative intelligence, and here you are completely over my head. Not because I have not thought about this much mooted question, but because, having thought about it, I am completely at a loss to know exactly what creation is. If we are passive atoms, how can we create? And if we are free to act with discrimination, to what extent can we be said to make something new? Which of you by thinking, asked Jesus, can add one cubit to his stature? And is not a chief axiom of science the conservation of matter and energy? Perhaps, though, we are like machines, into one end of which we put cotton and out of the other end we watch the cloth proceed. But certainly this is not what you mean, for Dewey says that "a pragmatic intelligence is a creative intelligence, not a routine mechanic." The creator, then, would be the maker and operator of the machine, and who made that? Or did it just happen?

The answer to all this, I believe, is that a work of art is a creation, to which some add that we may make of our lives works of art. But again I must ask all my questions about creation and freedom and mechanism. We have also not disposed of what Aris-

totle calls the chief, the final cause of anything, namely, its purpose. Is the word "Why?" to become obsolete? If you can convince me that it is, I think I shall become obsolete with it.

You see now how entangled I am in a maze of doubts. If you can answer these questions, I have some more to ask you. Only I beg you not to appeal to authority except on matters of fact, or for accurate expression of your own thought. I can appeal to equally good authority on the other side and we can get nowhere. Meanwhile I repeat, Auntie May, that I do not understand your letter, but appreciate your effort so much that I should very much like to do so.

Quite frankly, I do not understand all these things and never expect to.

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on; And our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep

says Shakespeare, perhaps with his "small Latin and less Greek," taking the thought from Pindar "Man is the dream of a shadow." And since I have stooped to quotations, let me take one more from Professor Babbitt: "The only thing which approaches the absolute in man is ignorance, and even that is not quite absolute." But even if our lives are as pre-

carious and ephemeral as dreams, we have our work cut out for us to keep them from becoming nightmares, and the way to do this is what I would chiefly seek to know. This, as I see it, is the meaning of being alive. If I could say to a man, *you are alive*, and have him see what I mean, I should have preached the only thought I have, the one which comprehends all others.

But, having said to myself, I am alive, I have yet to answer the question, what are you going to do about it? Not what you are going to do for a living, but what you are going to do for a life, is at present all important. For that question your advice, Sis and Sambro, is insufficient. Now, after many wanderings, we return to the question I posed at the beginning of the letter, and we see it in a new light. Wherein does my duty lie? To myself, but how?

Before I left home I was suffering from an enormous sense of failure. The ship, which had sailed so unbelievably well and smoothly for six months, stuck in not one snag but a dozen. Fortunately, I still have time. The thing got worse on the boat, but your letters to me, the confidence and the love you and the Bandlers all showed me, lightened it again, and allowed me to find hope in despair itself, courage in my fears, strength in my weakness. You all flattered me on being a source of unalloyed happiness to oth-

ers. I know well enough that this is not so, for I know that I have often been the source of needless worry to my parents and of needless pain to all with whom I have associated. I am not going to apologize, for that would indeed be crying over spilt milk, but, like Christian, I shall bear my burden through my whole pilgrimage even through the Slough of Despond; and, I fancy, there will be many another such, and many a worse, en route.—Meanwhile I enjoy my vacation.

Just before midnight, July twelfth, we cast anchor in the outer harbor of Gothenburg. At either side the entrance to the inner harbor stood a great lighthouse, and all about stood lesser lights to guide our path. At my side stood Bernie. We did not speak, as we both had something dry in our throats which would not be swallowed down. The old ship had crossed the ocean. Before us lay, all unknown, the land.

I shall only add one thank you and my love to you all.

Bob

XX

"Gripsholm,"
July 20, 1926.

DEAR FAMILY,—

We have left Skein (pronounced Sheen) and are en route to Dalen. We make the trip by boat, from seven to seven.

Thus far I have written very little about the trip. There is really not very much to write, for besides the beautiful palaces in Stockholm, the most beautiful city I have ever seen, a visit to a rather poor art museum there, a visit to a fascinating anthropological museum there and again at Oslo, and a visit to a viking-ship, we have done no sight seeing, strictly speaking. The scenery, particularly that which we saw yesterday on the train from Oslo to Skein, and that lying about me to-day as I write, is indeed glorious. But scenery makes a fine background for reading and meditating. As a foreground, however varied, it becomes monotonous. And as for writing about it, such scenery as this beggars description.

This is just the sort of trip which I wanted to take. The greatness, the permanence, and the peace of the tall cataracts, of the rocky, unpopulated hills, preach their own sermons, and quiet a mind which, quixotic in its own way, has been warring with windmills. (This letter is a mess, but I can't help it.) Here, unpressed

by any of the little, annoying details of living (the greatest I have to face is that of getting my letters written) I can think some things through and recover the equilibrium which I recently lost.

Norway is a poor and hungry country. The people are gloomy by contrast with the ever-rollicking Swedes. One can see how Ibsen and Bojer are typical products of this hard, lonely, fruitless soil.

Oslo is an ugly and depressing city from which we were glad to escape. We note in passing that the mädchens there are not nearly as good-looking on the average as those in Sweden where everyone seems to have positive pretensions to being pretty. (I except from this statement young Miss H—— who is a German Jew from her ankles to her forehead.)

The natives we have met are all fine. Still waters run deep, and as I think I have remarked before, all Europeans have an ease and grace, a breadth and depth, which we Americans lack. Perhaps it is the age of their institutions, like the age of these hills, which drives into them a becoming humility and impresses them with the comparative brevity and unimportance of their own lives. Perhaps it is something in their education which we lack which teaches them that four minutes saved for business or pleasure with great effort is four minutes strenuously wasted. I can

draw a parallel in the respective ways of driving an automobile. The European starts in low gear and never shifts to high until the car is going rapidly and smoothly enough not to strain it. A car so treated improves with years. Americans always want to start at top speed, with the result that the strength of youth is sacrificed to the great god time, and the graces of years never come. My generality is far too general, but still there is sufficient truth in it to be impressive.

Sufficient unto the letter is the mess thereof.

All well.

Love.

Bob.

XXI

Bergen den Norw.,
July 25, 1926.

Dear Family,—

It rains in Bergen three hundred days of the year, and we are seeing it in its natural condition. Tonight we sail.

The Telemarkan trip ended, as it began, gloriously. Mountain after mountain, lake after lake, and more water-falls and mountain torrents than you can imagine. One cannot go a quarter of a mile in any direction without finding at least one beautiful stream.

Tourists are rare in this district, and peasant costumes plentiful. I mention again the beautiful, brilliant, though moonless and starless, nights.

The hotels we stopped at are about a century old and seem much older. The only real discomfort, however, is the lack of running water, and of hot water of any sort; also, in one place, of electricity and gas. The whole assemblage eats at long tables, seating thirty or more. Most of the food is placed in the center of the table, or on a sideboard where one rises to help oneself.

Dinner consists of soup, fish and boiled potatoes, meat (generally poor) and boiled potatoes, and dessert, generally strawberries or prunes (delicious). This comes in the middle of the day (2 p.m.). Supper is at 8 (in the larger cities at 9 or 10). It consists of fish with boiled potatoes and a sideboard (a degeneration of the Swedish smorgas-board) with cold everything; sausage, ham, cheeses and poached eggs (intolerably cold). No dessert. Breakfast (8-10) consists of bad coffee, milk, one boiled egg (generally cold) and the same sideboard left standing from the night before.

Vegetables are rare. Boiled potatoes are universal and omnipresent. So is salmon. Mrs. Bandler has the recipe for the prunes, and I can give you one which,

if it is not too late, I beg you to try: the shells of *young* green peas, the peas taken out and used previously, strings taken out as with beans, boiled. The result is fine. Bertha really ought to know about it, as this is a dish very common in Norway and Sweden. We first had it on the Gripsholm.

Though Sweden is rather prosperous, and always happy—never have I seen such a people!—Norway is a poor, hungry, and sad country, now more than ever. Incidentally, there are more Swedes and Norwegians in the U. S. to-day than in their home country, and the exodus is continuing as fast as we allow it. The vast majority go to the farming districts in the West.

The people we have met have interested us tremendously. Every day some one new passes across the scene, leaving his (or even more often her) footprint on the trail. My German, under such pressure, is now learning to swoop out like a torrent, to ask questions, to comment, and to answer them. The better people have refined but rather stolid features when in repose, but they have the most marvelous way of lighting up, not only the eyes, but the nose, the mouth, and the cheeks. It is like a dazzling lightning flash against a somber, heavy storm-cloud. Incidentally, the more I think of it, the prouder I am of my

comparison of human nature with a barometer. In a foreign land with customs, ideals, and habits so widely different from ours, where types and social positions vary even more widely than at home, where education may be far greater and ignorance almost as great as in our U. S. A., it is startling to note how, fundamentally, we are all alike. Jumping back through the ages, two centuries to *Tom Jones* (I have nearly finished that enormous work); two or three more to Shakespeare, two more to Chaucer; across a gap to Horace, to Virgil, to Cicero, to St. Paul, to Christ; across five centuries to Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Job; and through countless time to Joseph and Pharaoh (Rameses II?) and Potiphar's wife; to Abraham, Noah and his sons, to Eve; it is the same, always the same. "Plus ce change, plus c'est la même chose." Ever so little goodness makes an age great, and its absence brings evil times ("from the fathers upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation.") In history we note how, the higher the civilization, the more precarious its continuance. Its virtues come from difficulties conquered. Its vices come from having no more difficulties to conquer (at least, such is the self-satisfaction of man that he thinks so). Thus its virtues breed its vices, and its vices breed its destruction. Plato, by the way, stole

this thought from me in his *Republic*. But more than once the ebbing tide has been stemmed, and more than once has it been turned back higher than before. We must be careful always how we use our history, for just because a thing has happened does not mean that it will happen again, and just because a thing has not happened does not prove that it can not be.

Having wandered far enough from the point, and being pressed to come to lunch, I quit.

All well. Love. BOB.

XXII

Oslo,
August 8, 1926.

DEAR FAMILY,—

The last days on the boat were a triumphal march. Those older people to whom we had not yet talked came up to talk to us. Everyone was kind, everyone took an interest in us, and almost everyone asked for our addresses.

On the last night everyone received from the captain a diploma and a nick-name for having crossed the Arctic Circle. Mine is the Arctic Night Owl.

We had to get off the boat by 7:30 to catch the train for Oslo, so most of the tearful farewells took place the night before. Frankie insisted on presenting each of us with a sisterly kiss. To her consternation

we presented only our cheeks. Poor Maggie tried to get farther but did not get that far. Vally—sweet little Vally, I'll never forget her—got up at six-thirty to have breakfast with us.

Elsa was with her friend the third officer, but Luisa Scola talked late with Bernie and me. To my great surprise I found out that she was not more than a year or two older than I. She looks and acts at least thirty. These European girls seem to mature so rapidly. For them there is no outlet, no chance for non-social activities, and not so much chance for that. Some people don't grow old—which is a somewhat different matter from growing mature. (Again our two adjectives, childish and childlike, and the "except ye be as little children," etc.) Not to grow old is not to resign oneself to ennui, and ennui is an exhaustion of the interests of self. When a person says with a sigh and an averted look, "But then—I have good things, too" he has grown old. Poor Luisa, cultured, fine, brilliant, is a might-have-been. Quotation from King Lear: "Oh world, world, world! Were it not for thy strange mutations, life would not yield to age."

Copenhagen, Aug. 9.

What surprises me as I look around is the number of people that suffer boredom. It is the rarest man

that does not. Some allay it by trying to be jolly. They buy their "five cents worth of forgetfulness" when and where they can. I note also that wisdom and sophistication have become synonymous; also idealist and fool.—Of course, I am not talking of you, for you are rare. I am talking of your friends and my friends as a whole; of "the bunch"; of most of the many people I have met on this trip, and of the poor as well as the rich.

Johan Bojer's *The Great Hunger* is a fine book. The hero starts in boyhood with a superstitious, fearful awe, evidently prevalent among many peasantries. He becomes an engineer and a success. His philosophy is then Promethean, to drag down fire from heaven, to defeat the oppressive gods. Then comes tragic failure. In his beggary he cries against the fates. The problem of life is advanced one more step. Finally he finds hope and salvation in his love for the rest of mankind. There is a God, he says, and he will make his life a temple to that God. It is the indomitable spirit of man. He gets rid of Job, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away," with a rather summary "disgusting." But the difference between this final attitude and the Promethean, when one comes to examine it, is really only one of phraseology, blind will is softened by despair.

What is this "divine spirit of man"? It is a multiplication of the individual spirit, and judging by my own, it is certainly nothing that I should care to worship. One handful of goose-flesh or ten million barrels is still just so much goose-flesh. Multiply love and it becomes a treaty; hate, and it becomes a war; Promethean zeal, and it becomes an ammunition factory; etc. If there is a divine spark in man it is not to be found in these things, and it is not to be worshipped in man, but in the Author of the spark.

Is not our gospel of service, our gospel of the Promethean (or the indomitable) human spirit, merely a form of self-love? Is not the idealist of this sort really a fool, worshipping in mankind a projection of himself upon the infinite? Is not the sophisticated man at least honest in seeing himself as a wretch, and the rest of the world as not very unlike himself? I am ready to answer all these questions pretty definitely in the affirmative. If so, we have an answer to the previous question. The world is bored because it has been oscillating between two types of self-love—or the same thing under two names—so that it has now exhausted the interests of self. This, according to our definition, means ennui.

Produce—to what end? Increase colonies, possessions, population—to what end? Even feeding hungry

mouths and clothing naked skins seems petty while we leave *all* minds, hearts, and souls famished and shivering. It is not that these things are evils. Far from it. But *they are not enough.* They are not even primary.—Do you remember *Loyalties?* It would seem that I have carried that theme just one step farther, to include our type of loyalty to mankind, our blind worship of what?

It is under the force of examples which I count in the very warp and woof of my life that I have been doing my own kicking about. Minds superior to mine which, because of a wrong attitude, are doomed to a hell of materialistic paradise. The steady, awful, dramatic descent from the working class to the leisure class, from the leisure class to the working class, which may be traced in all families through the generations. What shall I be? And my children? I see but one way clearly to an answer. The Lord liveth.

This is Bernie's twenty-second birthday. I am going to quote something of his which is, perhaps, not entirely out of context (for I know you are shaking your heads now and saying that I am entirely too serious.)

We had been talking about something delightfully petty. I said with half a smile: "I wonder, if an angel were to look down on us and our affairs, whether he

would laugh or weep." "He would probably join us," was Bernie's immediate reply. I agree.

We slept most of the way from Bergen to Oslo. Wandered around there yesterday, and took the train in the late afternoon. Dumped out at Helsingore Elsenor at six-thirty this morning, and completed the trip, ten to eleven-thirty.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio—

Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all—

Alas, poor Yorick!—

All well. Regards from the reunited Bandlers.

Love. Love. Love.

Bob.

P. S.—This letter is very staccato. I have reduced hours and mountains of thinking to short phrases. May I beg you *please* to read it again very slowly, very carefully and thoughtfully? Fill in the gaps. Omit nothing. The whole thing really does make sense. I have omitted only the immediate conclusion, as that will take some hours of talking things over. If you read this messy looking thing carefully it may simplify what is to come.

XXIII

Cambridge, Mass.,
January 14, 1927.

Dear Steve;

In the Times the other day I read: "Visited the Senate today. Yes, nothing. Yours, Will Rogers." For a month now it has been a case of "no, nothing" so far as my letters are concerned, and now, were anyone to ask you, you would be able to say: "Heard from Bob today. Yes, nothing."

Indeed, although it is hard to be quite as bad as a Senator, I have been almost as busy and unproductive as our honored representative non-entities. On the tenth of January I handed in a paper of seventy-four typed pages with an extra three paged bibliography. I put a good part of my vacation into the writing thereof alone, besides a week at either end, and months of preparation. I cursed my verbosity in this instance, because I do love to be brief. Although I did not waste many words, I did discuss a great many books which did not, in my opinion, add much to my education. But a scholarship of scholarship is long always, and that was what was required of me. In dullness the paper might be compared to a senatorial report. But I did throw in a number of thoughts, for which mice the mountain had labored greatly during the preceding months and was therefore quite proud of its offspring.

Then comes the reading period. As you probably know, between the end of vacation and mid-years no classes are being held here this year in advance courses. The result is that I have been reading as you have, only more hurriedly. To be quite honest, a very little sociableness, like a grain of mustard seed, has sufficed for me all year. I write letters or talk just enough to keep from going stale. Otherwise I much prefer staying alone,—with my books, a little music, or perhaps art, serving only to stimulate myself—to examine, criticize, and develop what I have in mind. I don't know if you can understand this strong thirst for privacy, this desire to withdraw from that great Senate of many parts known as the world, and not to be forced to listen to its inanities and answer in suit until you have found the way to say something that is not so inane. There is a sense of "know thyself" which is not introspective and yet requires privacy and long thought. It asks what is the meaning of this or that, what is its significance, and wherein lies my joy. To answer these questions, to know myself in this sense, has been my aim.

Therefore, I find it hard to bring myself to write letters, though I love to receive them. For I feel that there is something dishonest, or at least dishonorable, in the letters that I do write, as in the speeches of a

Senator, for I can give so little of myself in them. My problem has been, then, to find out what I mean when I talk about history, which reduces to a matter of knowing myself. I can be sufficiently abstract and objective to write a paper, but not sufficiently personal yet to write a letter.

You may therefore say "Yes, nothing" about everything in my letter except my sincerest good wishes.

Bob.

P. S.—Write again, if you have courage. I'll try to improve.

XXIV

24 Apley Court, Cambridge,
May 11, 1927.

Dear Mr. Wise:—

I have been very busy with examinations and theses recently, until this morning when four professors set me up and knocked me down in a forty-five minute affray known as an oral examination. My troubles are not over yet, but at least I can write now not over-hastily.

Thank you very much for sending me the article. Though I sometimes read the "New Yorker" myself, I should have skipped it. You see, I have acquired a certain amount of information about the business and

organization of a law office in the process of being brought up. I have visited one at 30 Broad, one at 141 B'way, and one at 18 St., so I know what they look like—not very different from a large office of a bookstore, department store, or broker, except for the library. As for the working of the machine, I think I could add something to the knowledge of the Reporter at Large. Nevertheless, what he has done he has done well.

As for my own views regarding lawyers, they are of the highest, much higher than that each senior of the firm mentioned gets a hundred thousand a year. I don't remember having said anything else, although I do at times say a number of things that I don't mean or cannot support. But that I respect lawyers and their profession does not mean that I should follow it myself, even considering my opportunities. Though I think Dad would rather like to see me take up the thread where he drops it, he never has urged me to do so, nor even expressed any strong wish of the sort. Personally, my first reason for not doing so is that I do not think my capabilities lie in that direction. Secondly I believe that my capabilities, and I know that my desires, lie in another direction. A number of my friends will go to the bar, and I am pretty sure Bill will, too. Of lawyers there

is no end. For good lawyers there is plenty of material. These will always be able to get people out of trouble and to oil the way for big business, and that with a much greater will than I. It is, however, my belief that there is more to civilization than big business, and more to life than making money. There are a vast number of problems that do not worry most people, but which do worry me—which I think are of the utmost importance both for myself and for the men of business. For myself, I want to find in the experiment of life good living; and others, who have made a sufficiently good living, I should like to turn to a consideration of the good life.

All this is rather vague and general. I know, as far as my own course is concerned. But perhaps it is specific enough to indicate the attitude of mind, about which you asked. If it seems too childish and "idealistic" in the rush of your office, please take it home and think a little more about it with the proper accoutrements of arm-chair and slippers. Then, even if you do not agree with me, I think you will at least have some sympathy for the point of view.

Thank you again for your interest.

Sincerely,

Bob Stroock

XXV

Los Angeles,
August 27, 1927.

Dear Family,—

Enclosed is the letter you forwarded to me from Julien. I wrote Bernie; and have just destroyed a note to E—— announcing the fact that he was married, with only a few coldly unemotional and impersonal sentences which I thought would be appropriate. I wanted to make sure that she and M—— S—— knew before seeing him, but I did not want (1) to put my foot into anything (2) to announce something that was not so, for until I see Julien's wife I cannot be certain (3) rub something in (4) hint that I thought Julien had not written them himself. So I destroyed the letter.

I find myself unable to appreciate very clearly just what it means for a young man to be married. And yet it is a common thing: almost everyone does it. There is something so possessory about it—my own. To desire, to love, to see the universe summed up on the gleam of the eyes of one person. A woman, a life, an experience in time, that which has been produced by all the ages, the possession of which would put me in harmony with all the ages. Life. Life. A flash, a vision—and we see but are inarticulate. That I know and can understand. But to be married—wedded to

a person. To have the flash go and awake to find myself yoked as an ox to another ox drawing a plow, to lose my individuality in a new unit, a family, for the functioning of which I exist either wholly or in part. —In part—there is the salvation. But I cannot say that I understand that part, that assumption of responsibilities for a thing of which I am only a part. Of course, I have been a part all my life, but so far, as a member of a family, I have been the part that was drawn. My knowledge of the drawers is not as immediate as my knowledge of that other experience, and I know it.

You see, I have been looking at things this summer from two points of view, one taking myself, or a person merely, as center and asking why he should want to live, what he should want to live for, what meaning he had or could have to himself, what relevance things had for him. You remember, Dad, the *Mainsprings of Men* and its "wish for worth"? Well, I have expanded on that. It is an important question for an historian who wants to know what he should talk about and why. A man lives for his ideals. That is the most general way of putting the wish for worth. These ideals or standards are illusions, e.g. power, wealthiness, munificence, saintliness, sensitivity, etc. He expresses his illusions by means of symbols,

e.g. armies, servants, gold, god, beautiful objects, etc. To find the value of his ideal and to present it by another illusion through other symbols, to resurrect values, to revivify symbols, to tell a story that may open eyes to other values and give to the life of the modern man, even to the slightest extent, another meaning which he has forgotten that it once had—that is the business of your humble historian. He is an artist who uses the past as his medium. When he becomes a philosopher teaching by example, he is extending the standards of the present into the past, the true meaning of which he has not a chance of finding. When he becomes a moralist and wishes for a return of a past era, he forgets that he is living in the present and that his past can not return except if it can be assimilated. Of both faults yours truly has been guilty. But by taking himself as center, yours truly has found himself this summer in a very literal sense.

In a month, to work with a will.

On the other question which takes a social group as center, an age, a civilization, or a country, yours truly has gone far but not far enough to issue a statement which he is willing and able to defend. The other answer does much to clear up this and perhaps has given the clue to a complete answer.—But first I shall

read some social psychology, and take McIlwain's course in the subject, and go back to Kaplan.

I have written nothing this summer, but soon I must write. By thinking night and day along the same lines I have been able to rehearse and review every branch, so I think nothing has gone out of my memory that is of much importance, but now I must work for roundness, completeness, and hardest of all, lucid expression. I am considering writing for Kaplan an "Essay toward a History of the Jews," not that the history itself will be immediately or ever forthcoming, though I should like the idea, and for McIlwain I'll try something about nationalism so as to get myself through that awful muddle of questions of interrelationships, of the individual and the group, involved in the social question.

You cannot appreciate how much this vacation has meant to me. Practically all my abstract thinking was done before I left Banff. The trip brought me out of my solitude into a vast and varied aesthetic experience, not merely restful, but giving to all that I had thought life and pungency and immediacy. The chill and irrationality and restlessness of the mountains, the romance of harbors; the stresses of cities; the simple completeness of farms; the uncivilized fecundity of Californian valleys; the color of land-

scapes; the picturesqueness of architecture;—all rolled through by our magnificent Fritz.

I talk too much. Bill joins me in loves and all wells.

Bob.

XXVI

Cambridge, Mass.,
October 1, 1927.

Dear Family,—

"My friends, this is Shabbat Shuvah." Those, I think, are the words of a great sermon which Dad once told me of. One hears even to-day its noble simplicity. The day is a symbol. Its name is the symbol of a symbol, just as all words, all creeds, all forms of worship are. When one can use the symbols thus simply, forcefully, without explanation or apology, one knows that they are symbols of a great and abiding faith above or beyond which nothing exists.

Nine years ago I was bar-mitzvah. Forty-one years ago Dad was bar-mitzvah, fifty-nine years ago, Uncle Louis. We have inherited in this symbol the shadow of an old faith. Strange, is it not, that last night, after pacing the floor for a half-hour, my shadow was filled with the slightest substance as I became definitely convinced for the first time that in one respect, and that, perhaps, the most important of all, Judaism surpassed all other religions of which I know?—This

after some historical reading in which I saw the weaknesses of Christianity revealed in the very breakdown of the Roman Empire, which was its victory.

Nine years have passed since the time when my life as a Jew supposedly began. I am no longer a little child taking things for granted. Problems arose, and problem begot problem. Gradually, I am getting to know more precisely what it is that I want. Moreover, through frequently suffering the tragedy of mediocrity, I have come to recognize that there are distinct limits to my capabilities. I see, also, that *all* men are weak, miserable creatures. And yet, though they can grasp little but the lowest, they can look toward the highest and say something about it with their symbols. What they have said about it, it is my business to find out as best I may, and to translate. In our meanness and in our strivings we are all brethren, and what man has the right to judge of another's success? Let us look to God for judgment without expecting an answer. Let each strive for his own good as he sees it, and love his neighbor as his brother in weakness. Ultimately, a social community built with this as its highest ideal is an essentially Jewish community. Outside the community Judaism does not fully exist, though religious experience may. —"With malice towards none, with charity for all,

with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right; let us strive on to finish the work we are in."— Let us see in what is our faith and whether we have not a right to a greater and broader. Do we worship the opinion of other people—or do we fear God? Do we want power, position—or righteousness? To be quite brief, have we faith or have we none, for with the real thing there is no compromise.

"My friends, this is Shabbat Shuvah."

All well. Love. BOB.

P. S.—This is a most confused letter—or ten letters.

XXVII

Cambridge, Mass.,
October 27, 1927.

DEAR FAMILY,—

I was sorry to hear of the death of Dr. Mendes. It is hard to get accustomed to the idea that all good things must go, and, so far as I can see, few but very old people or very wise ones ever do get accustomed to it. I heard him speak only once—at Mrs. Levy's funeral—but the impression he made on me there will never be wiped out, for I saw that, with his tremendous personality, he ranked with Dr. Kohler and Dr. Adler (I have seen each of these also but once) as summing

up all that was best in the old school. Of those left, Schulman alone is comparable.

I confess that this "best" of the old school arouses more of my respect than my desire to imitate. Their ideals are too airy, their ethics too near-sighted. They are crosses between worldly wisemen and visionaries: they are not men of vision. So in the next generation, their ideals float off like balloons, their practical morality becomes obsolete in a changing, grinding world. But all honor to them that in themselves they bound the two together for a moment! There is strength and courage.

That Judaism was once the new Judaism—weak but lofty, strong but ephemeral. It has been superceded by a newer Judaism, in which I am at present immersed. Because, for avocational or light reading, besides Plato and Aristotle, I have taken up Klausner. I find myself rather close to Klausner and Kaplan, and, in general, that group.—I'll write you a criticism of it some day. A complete criticism of Klausner would sum up pretty nearly all that is best in what I have thought this year. For the present, I'll just remark that there is only one important thing that they have left out of their conception of a new Judaism (or of their interpretation of the old), but that one thing happens to be God. However much

I may admire their work, therefore, and wish to study it with the most extreme care, I think we must go beyond it for a basis of the newest Judaism.

All well. Love.

P. S.—You might drop me a postal once or twice a week.

Bob.

XXVIII

Cambridge, Mass.,
January 24, 1928.

Dear Bumsy,—

This letter is written at a most wretched time to be read when I hope that joy will be unconfined. There is, perhaps, something fitting in the situation, for it makes me look toward you as some one apart from, above, beyond, at the end of, the completion of, the perfection of weary toil. The situation is a sort of allegory of the reality, in both of which you play the part of the object of my faith and love which is the great cause and moulder of what I do.

And so I must be brief, for on what is near and easy many words may be spent, but the greatest things are the most elusive and only a few words can even hint at them. An ideal is no more subject to acquisition than a star, and all that has been said of a deeply felt love or faith reduces to two simple

words, love and faith, and to a being possessed of an untold joy.

Congratulations, therefore, as I have repeatedly said in birthday letters to you, has a hollow ring, for congratulations are for an acquisition, not for the being, the living, itself. And thanks, though nearer the point, seem rather to belong to God. The only course is to make a simple attempt at the expression of something which is deeper than the words or even the thoughts of man, of something which seems to me of the deepest essence of existence itself, of something which in its various aspects gives words and thoughts and hopes of this or that themselves, whatever meaning they possess. An attempt, then, in just one much worn word, and silence:

Love.

Bob.

XXIX

60 Mt. Auburn St.,
Cambridge, March 3, 1928.

Dear Steve,—

A feeling of intense joy pervades my whole being for no reason whatsoever. That is, its causes are to be expressed in negatives. There is no desire or ambition on which the salvation of my soul depends.

That is, I feel independent. No man is ever really independent. Cut off his supply of food, for example, and he is in a bad way. But then, when his necessities are few and supplied, and when he is free from worry over them, he feels himself free from them. "Call no man happy before his death"—aye, aye, Sophocles! But is there no moment when he may forget his ultimate ignorance, and poverty, and impotence in order to rejoice in the glories that are borne in upon him? Is there no moment when, with no more and no fewer human attachments than are necessary or good for him, with no fewer comforts than will make him free from worldly cares, and not so many as would be an impediment to his action or drown him in dullness, he may add a tone of praise to one joyous shout of affirmation—"Life"? And when his position as one pebble on top of the grinding, shifting pile is lost, and he is pinched and crushed, may he not recall, or rediscover in his inmost heart at least in part, or perhaps even intensified, that freedom, that joy, disinterested, the very essence of faith, which produces once more that affirmative shout of praise—"Life"? Surely at the end of your tragedies, Captain Sophocles, there is serenity, and this not dependent on the re-establishment of a rigid moral order. (Indeed, there is no such rigidity for you, but that is beside the point.)

Anyway, here I am, nearly as much an eremite as anyone ever was, working—that is living with an attempt at constructing a pattern out of more or less homogeneous material—absorbing, digesting, ordering, enjoying.

Best of luck to you and yours.

Bob.

XXX

Cambridge, Mass.,
May 12, 1928.

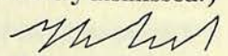
Dear Steve,—

Personally, I don't put much stock in progress, first, because I don't understand what it is. Prosperity increases and decreases. Knowledge of science seems to do much the same thing. I see no particular reason why a false hypothesis should not ruin the structure that has been built, or another Middle Age come upon us in a general lack of interest and misconception.—As to the mere technical construction of Shakespere's plots, I disagree with you: they are to me the greatest miracles of complex organization I know—which may or may not be the highest of virtues. As for invention, they were once, apparently, convincing. Webster was more realistic, but, apparently, less convincing to his age. In fact, the prodigality of Shakespere in point of invention has been

notorious (especially in France) from Ben Jonson's day to our own. If you are going to criticize Shakespere, it must be, I think, on different grounds than those you have selected. I see no reason for calling our *idioms* better than his from any universal or ultimate standard, and on that alone could your criticism still rest.—Then, too, there is no single degree of excellence for any one age or place. This makes an idea of progress a little complicated.—However, unless we assume a biological development in historic man (for which, so far as I know, there is not the slightest reason) what is it that progresses? Apparently it is not our ability to fit ourselves to our environment. There seems, at least, to be no less misery in the world than there was some seventeen or eighteen centuries ago. Therefore, however shocking it may seem, we must assume that our socially-ethical code is no better than it was then. That part which is contained in law seems to be in a more anarchic condition.—Perhaps we have suited our environment better to ourselves. But that means only that we are softer, and need more comforts.

I have written vastly more on this subject than I intended, being in a somewhat ramblingly analytical mood at present. Bury's *Idea of Progress* contains a complete historical treatment of the subject, which,

if you are earnest, you ought to read and try to refute.—But my second reason for putting no stock in progress is that man's capacity to live, his capacity to enjoy, or his capacity to find a way of life which his faith tells him is *the* way to live, to which he feels that nothing in the world is quite irrelevant (though not everything in the world need be assumed as essential meat for his activity)—this capacity, I say definitely does not progress. One proof of it is that I am simply incapable of expressing myself more clearly, or of pointing to any modern work which expresses my idea more clearly, whereas, let us say, some seven centuries ago any young student could have pointed to scores. The only incentive to live supplied by the idea of progress (if we may take the appearance of the idea as an indication of progress) is that supplied by the sanctity of labor, and that incentive appears in the religion of the primitive Greeks and Hebrews.—"Remember Thou the works of our hands"—etc.—Much more immediate.

My father sometimes likes to believe in progress. (And, after all, the idea cannot be absolutely dismissed.) But he says that it goes this way  etc. If this is so, there is room for the complexity of the movement. My persistent opposition can then be explained by an innate blindness.—You see, I duck the

question of art, my feelings about which are the key to my whole second contention, because my reasonings on that subject (even less than those of far more capable people who have also failed) could not convince a man from Missouri.—My best wishes always.

Bob.

XXXI

Cambridge, Mass.,
May 15, 1928.

Dear Family,—

Sing, sing sing,—Hey, you all, make merry! Cambridge—loveliest spot on earth in the Spring, anyway—green, shady, luscious—Cambridge is lovelier than ever. I've turned Christian Scientist for the nonce:—"the world is lovely, and I am lovely too!"—Pride cometh before, etc. English gone, head gone, everything gone, gone, gone! Ach, du lieber Augustine, alles ist weck!

Yup, Morison gave me an A on my paper on the Constitution. He told me I should have submitted it for the Bowdoin Prize, but I'm a year too late. Then he told me I ought to have it published. He recommended the "Political Science Quarterly," then said that, if they would not take it, he would for the "New England Review" (now two numbers old), though a little out of its line. Said he would take anything else

I could dig up that was in that line.—I hit the ceiling —just once. It had a sobering effect. First we agreed that McIlwain should have the last word. Then I insisted that I should have to do more reading, rewrite completely, work out some ideas. I could be specific.—The fact is that I am not yet ready to publish. My immaturity is patent to myself.—And as for you, witness this letter—among other things. When I am sober on successive rebounds from aloft I realize that I have nothing to be especially proud of in that paper. It is not as good as it might be, and at its best it would lack something of being thoroughly worth while, according to my standards. The paper is of far greater value to me than it could be to anyone else, for it contains certain things which are important for the future development of my thought. But in themselves they are not very much.—Then, too, I see very little to be gained from the publication of an immature piece of work, and much to be lost. It is not the ideas to which I am afraid to commit myself. I think I could defend them with my dying breath. It is the *littleness* of the ideas to which I don't wish to commit myself.—All this, of course, I did not say to Morison. Only, in telling him what I should like to do before publication I hinted at a little sanity. For "my late Spring no bud or blossom sheweth" as yet, so far as

I can see.—However, as I agreed with Morison, McIlwain shall have the last word.

Anyway, now I can send you a copy,—'mid the soiled wash tomorrow (if I remember).—In the laundry she shall go, in the laundry she shall go!—All well. Love.

Bob.

P. S.—Jim was feeling good this afternoon, too. Hence the gift to Ma, for which he refused to let me pay.—It comes from Worcester Bros., where he got himself a lovely little thing, and I myself a small pewter cup. We were looking for wedding-presents, but did not find any.—R. L. S.

XXXII

Ossining-on-Hudson, New York,
August 25, 1928.

Dear Ernestine;

My plans for the Winter, I beg of you, please keep quiet still. The fact is that they are still unsettled, and although I do not care who knows anything I have ever done, I do not like those who have time for nothing better to discuss the broad and vague field of things that I may do, and to have to explain to the inquisitive my motives for not doing what I have not done.

There is a great deal in knowing what one wants. In fact, to discover what one wants and why one should want it must be the major inquiry of the cultured man or woman. Only if this question is solved (and, most likely, it must be repeatedly solved throughout one's life) can one hope to have control of one's own being, to avoid a drift through the conventionally fixed (the possibly contented but deadened way) or toward a wreck, a failure, and to give to one's life, on the other hand, a balance and a fullness which constitutes the health of this abstraction, or, as it has been put, makes of it a work of art. If one knows that one wants to know what is worth doing and why, one does not like to have one's plans mauled by those who do not know that such a desire is possible, not to say important, for it resembles the mauling of one's own person. So that there are two kinds of privacy, one of which is the privacy of leisure with which one weighs the values of actions, and the other of which is the privacy of the self, of its ends, and needs, and ideals. It is for the sake of the latter that I have made my request.

Knowing what one wants has also its effect on other people who know what *they* want: it makes one their companion. My plans are not yet made because I have found some difficulty in making appointments

with some busy men during this at once busy and vacation-torn month of August. But, indeed, I think my way is clear nevertheless. Opportunities seem to be broadening out before me. But one is never sure, and I am certainly not in the least able to be precise. More of this when more is known.

Please do not delay a single moment to write me back, if you can possibly help it. For I should very much like to know when you are coming East and where you will be stopping, so that, if you will, I may fit you into my program for September. Could you possibly come to Ossining? You may name your date.

My best regards to your family, and, as always, my best wishes to you.

Bob.

XXXIII

Athens,
October 18, 1928.

Dear Ernestine;

Your little program of activities with which you start your letter reads much like the inscriptions of some thousands of years ago, recording something long dead. For not only is it two weeks old for me now as I reread it, but it is distant by more than a fourth of the globe. Like the inscriptions it gives one a terrible feeling of being utterly irrelevant to the buzz-

ing life about you, but like the inscriptions its value is seen as the writer emerges to memory or imagination. I see you again enjoying everything equally as always.

Now to answer the questions which the invoked image asks:—

1.) I certainly did know of the marriage of Sis Marcuse by no less good means than having been invited to the wedding. Unfortunately, I could not spare time for the trip to Richmond.

2.) The trip has been grand.—There is no sense in my describing it to you in much detail as I am afraid that it would not mean much to you. For example, an ocean trip is an indescribable experience. There being nothing but the sea and one's fellow voyagers, who are comparatively few in number; and there being nothing to mark time except the clock; one's feelings are different. There is a sort of leisure unknown to life ashore. There is a sense of companionship that is lost in the middle of the descending gangway. I can only add that I made friends with a peach of a fellow from Central America who was traveling to Oxford, and that the trip was especially luxurious.

Then you arrive in France. The first thing that is rubbed in is that *you* are the foreigner, distinctly inferior in several ways to the porter who carries

your bag. The only possible way to get on well is, of course, to know French, but even that does not solve everything, for one still remains ignorant of French customs and must step slowly and learn. France is the most civilized country in the world to-day, and if one has a sense for civilization one recognizes himself as a barbarian. Almost all Europe has a background, which means a solid block of inherited ideals and experience. That makes a great difference. So does the general density of population and the rub of many local differences. All that I experienced again, and strengthened again thereby my sense of vital living.

There is one further sense that I had this time for the first time in my life—that of being free from immediate responsibilities and objectives. The result was a very subtle psychological development—another reason why I cannot write about myself.

In Paris I spent only twenty-eight hours, which was only enough time to refresh my memory of some of the pictures in the Louvre, to see one oh-so-serious play, "Siegfried," which had been recommended to me, to meet one fine fellow—brother of my friend on the boat—and to arrange the details of the next stage of my journey—a most complicated matter. Then through France, Switzerland, and the glorious plains and cities of Lombardy; a day and a half across

ugly Jugoslavia, and some twelve hours through the mountains and valleys of northern Greece—rugged, unclimbable, but low mountains, separated by broad, flat, stony or fertile plains, unlike anything I've ever seen elsewhere—to Athens. It was a total trip of three days, and I was very dirty, hungry, and tired. I found myself late at night in a city in which I knew no one and could not speak the language of the people. But French gets one through most crises in almost any large city on the Continent, so I got to the hotel without having been cheated more than I had expected. There I found a letter telling me that the whole School was away. Seldom have I felt so lonesome and down-trodden, so I had a very brief supper in my own room and went right to bed. But yesterday morning when I awoke I felt very differently. I was full of joy at the idea of being alone in Athens for a while. So I began to establish connections with people and things and to visit places.—You have no idea how many relations go to keeping you happily alive, even when the hotel gives you so much in one scoop, until you have been placed utterly alone in a strange city whose language you cannot speak or understand and of whose society you know not one member, not to speak of the manners and customs. Nor would I advise you to try to find out until you

Arrives in Athens in Oct. 1928

know yourself very thoroughly.—I have not established connections with the School yet, but in other respects I am getting on beautifully.

All best wishes always—

Bob.

XXXIV

Athens,
Nov. 18, 1928.

Dear Allan;

My address is American *School* of Classical Studies —*not* "*College*," which address causes dreadful complications in the machinery of the Greek Government, there being an American College which is run for the sake of Greeks.

I am having a great time here, everything, especially the company, being far above my expectations. Of about twenty students there are at least two girls and two men who are well worth knowing—and there is nothing in the least archaeological about the former. In fact they are extraordinarily clever women of the Boston and Virginia aristocracies respectively who are in search of something of some magnitude with which to occupy themselves and happen to have lit upon Greek art and literature.

20 students

I shall not go through all the members of the School, nor trouble you with meaningless names—ex-

cept one, E—— A——, brother of K——, just as sensitive, but more sensible, substantial, forceful, and active, who graduated from Harvard last year. It is too bad to mention his relationship, as it can only be misleading. The tone of the whole group is high. Socially, the women are of great importance. In Athens conditions are not over civilized, though in some points it is a finely European place and I love it for this. But Greece outside of Athens and one or two other places is more primitive than anything, I am sure, with which you have ever come in close contact—disregarding camping in the Canadian woods which, with your N. Y. C. equipment and standards of cleanliness, is not really a primitive occupation at all. The coat of arms of the School en tour is "a Flit-gun on a field of argent, with a bed-bug dormant, a flee rampant, and a mosquito couchant." At some places the men sleep in the halls and dining room (from which the goats have been chased) and the women are crowded into the rooms. Running water is unknown, etc. I shall not go on. The point is not in the difficulties, because I found them considerably more than tolerable. The point is that these American women (and the American School alone is able to make these trips) are able not merely to bear such conditions by night and to climb acropolises which

horses die on by day, but to make the desert blossom like the rose. They hold up standards of cleanliness and conduct in dirty and intimate circumstances higher than they would in accustomed circumstances. And the men meekly accept them. More than this, the purposes of the trip are never for an instant hidden by the difficulties of the journey: the standard of scholarship is high as it should be in any graduate school, discussion and criticism over the work of the man who has reported any site is serious and complete—an attitude expected of the men but in which the women in no way fall short. And because of all this one never thinks of the difficulties as anything but unavoidable nuisances. Moreover, except for one case of malaria which developed since our return and was finished in two days, and a normal number of bad stomachs from bad food and hurt limbs from bad climbs, health has been positively rampant. I think this School pretty well proves that from the point of view of bringing up healthy children with healthy minds and healthy bodies and will and imagination sufficient to live well under almost any circumstances, American civilization is reasonably successful. I also tend to attribute a great part of this success to that strange conglomerate of freedom and old-fashioned Puritanism which seems to form the better aspect of

the character of the American woman—If they only had something to *do*! (That being intended by the way, for the most profound remark in this letter.)

There is too much to write about. I'll wait to give you a digested account during the years to come. For the present I'll rest content with asking two questions:—

(1) The common Greek wine is "retsinata," i.e. rozinated, the instruments used in its manufacture being made of pine. This is supposed to be a classical survival, and probably is. The bacchantes, we know, stirred their wine with a pine-knot, and Bacchus held a twig of pine in his hand. There are more things. Anyway, new wine, which is hard to obtain as the Greeks consider it poor wine, has very little of the pine taste in it, but after it has fermented it tastes like a cross between vin ordinaire and spruce gum. Do you know, or can you find out, whether or not this is due to the action of bacteria? I'd very much like to know what I am drinking. It is very good, by the way, after you get accustomed to it.

(2) Can you find out and write me during the next couple of months (no hurry) whether Victor records of Greek folk-songs can be obtained in toto in N.Y.C. There are some hundreds of them here, but that proves nothing about the U.S.A.—The music is ex-

tremely interesting, not being written in our scales, but apparently in modes, with an accompaniment (as far as I have made out so far without studying any scores) in fifths. Some of the things, played by the peasants on a rude sort of pipe that looks like a large clarinet with accompaniment on a five stringed instrument about the size of a guitar or a little larger, with a smaller head—(both instruments apparently classical survivals, as well as the scales) are extremely fine. There are some dirges which go very deep and—can you believe it?—"My Ma gave me a nickel," with the relative importance of verse and chorus reversed, is a popular Greek peasant dance. It was one night at Andritsaina, with the whole company sitting around the dining room (our bed-room) consuming quantities of retsinata that mine host brought in two old peasants and gave us an opportunity to learn the fund of laughter and excitement in the primitive monotony of repetition in that piece.

Don't forget the two questions—does the pine taste develop by bacteria, and has Victor a complete library of Greek music?

Best of luck.

Many thanks for the letters. Thank Alan for his note. When I find a spare minute I'll write him. Meanwhile, if you like, you may show him or tell him about this.

Bob.

XXXV

Olympia,
November 22, 1928.

Dear Ruth;

You should be here. About that there can be no doubt. "Here" at the moment is Olympia and at the moment Olympia is the greatest spot on earth. But as Athens was last week the greatest spot on earth I'll try to be broad-minded and say "here" means "in Greece." Here there is not everything perhaps—in fact one could and some do point out much that is lacking—but here is the best and what more can one desire? Besides, here you must come if you ever expect to illustrate any of my books for here my note-book is starting in all earnestness.—And you are going to illustrate my books, aren't you?

Here one is not in the midst of that mauled race which we call fellow Jews—in fact here there are no Jews at all besides myself—but one does find an art with which to establish connections, and which was, perhaps, not so very remote from our more famous ancestors. At least I see it so. Here you cannot indeed study anatomy by dissection but you can study anatomy in art. Do you want precision? Study your classical architecture. Do you want clever associates—though it would not seem so from the place you have chosen to go to. Here there is a higher level of in-

telligence than in any other group of twenty diverse people I have ever found—Do you need your comforts?—Ah then you had better stay away.

I am active, terribly active. I am almost perfectly happy. Generally I have found myself with too much material thrust upon me to digest. Now I hunger and thirst after knowledge. I wish I knew ever so much more and all at once. Then metabolism could start.

Greece O Greece what you have done for me in these few weeks! How you have opened my eyes and swept through the cloggings of my brain! Bright, bright Greece how through your clarity, clarity for me seems in sight!

America's being ever so distant helps one to get a sense of proportion. It is quite as useful to the study of America as to the study of Greece.—On the job with the rest I am an enthusiastic archaeologist. Studying by myself I am getting on. Being physically very active has an effect as to balance which should not be under-estimated. But putting it all together with my memory of things across the water and reminders from those parts, my future course is clear. I shall write the history of the Greeks but not in Greece nor for the Greeks. I shall return to America and write as an American with the Americans as a background and for my great American generation. In

fact never did I feel more American than when I saw this prospect for myself here in Greece.—Allons enfants de la patrie! . . .

Bob.

XXXVI

Athens,
November 25, 1928.

Dear Ralph and Alice;

Many, many thanks for the letter. When ordinary news is so stale by the time it arrives, and the locus so extraordinarily remote anyway, it is something of a relief not to receive any details. But it is an even greater relief to hear from friends, indicating that the long anchor chain is still attached at the other end.

Here one becomes an archaeologist. If I had come primarily for that purpose, it would have been a good idea in the first place, and the trip would have been a success. As I did not come primarily for that purpose, it is a most happy accident to receive more profit than one had reckoned. I came in order to get away from the university atmosphere and to gain perspective. The rest was an unknown quantity.

The physical activity and the widely different (to be specific, rather primitive, often disgusting) environment, together with an absorption in material

facts, has at last succeeded in making me sheerly objective. (I feel, somehow, that my spelling in this letter is even worse than usual. Forgive it, please!) I see my course now clearly, fearlessly. I have no qualms about it. In a month I have attained my first object. Then, as to perspective, the fine examples of American manhood and womanhood in the School, the fineness especially brought out by the difficulties of existence, together with the absence of the overwhelming momentary detail (all "news" is stale—seven "Nations" lie unopened on my desk).

It happens to be the twenty-eighth now, and I am back in Athens. Out seeing things and going places makes it difficult to find time to stay at one's desk. Hence I am a thoroughly bad correspondent.

To finish the above sentence, I was about to say that the extraordinary situation of being in Greece where I can observe the elemental good in American education undistracted by the elemental pettiness of ordinary American interests has given me something akin to patriotism. The simple fact is that Americans adapt themselves to the unusual conditions far more readily than Europeans, and, when they have something to fight against, as they do here, retain a higher moral and physical standard. What is more, because of the economic situation of the world, the

Blegen had left

American School is now far the most active of all. But the economic situation alone will not account for the fact that no School can list men superior to Carpenter, Dinsmore, and Blegen.

Now the School here is merely a bit of some of the metal of America extracted from the ore. Looking westward over the world from the Acropolis of Athens this is about as clear as it can be. From that point of vantage it is equally obvious that what has been the trouble with Americans who have ceased to be pioneers—taken literally and otherwise—is that they have had nothing important to do. The meaning of that word "important," which I should hate at present to be asked to define accurately, may possibly be hinted at by contrasting the life of such a non-pioneer American with that of an Athenian down to Hellenistic times, or even in Hellenistic and Roman times, politically, socially, intellectually, even physically, or in any way you like. There are so few Americans who could possibly plaster onto any one of their acts—figuratively speaking—the thrilling, simple words "Jones ἐποίησε" with all their *weight* of meaning.

Now part of the reason why American products blossom so in Greek soil is just because they are turned back to the pioneer stage. I don't see to what we may attribute the rest of the reason except Greece's

old greatness. The situation is, therefore, distinctly artificial. The problem still remains to ἐποίησε in America—the error is intentional—on the civilized or sophisticated level rather than on that of the pioneer. And if we can have only the Hellenistic social environment and not the more stimulating one which preceded it, ἐποίησε-ing is by no means denied us, nor do we have to consider ourselves inferior potentially to any period in the history of the world. Furthermore, America may be our rational as well as (possibly) our sentimental choice of community.

If I ever got started on Greece I'd never be able to stop. Hence the rest of my letter, as I should logically develop it from my start, will have to wait for the conversations with you in the years to come. With earnest joy I look forward to these times. But write again, will you? And in my future letters I shall try to be less general and more satisfactory.

All best wishes always.

Bob.

XXXVII

American School of Classical Studies,
Athens,
November 30, 1928.

Dear Ernestine;

The above is my address. As a matter of fact, I am living at 18 Academy Street, The Annex, so-called, but mail is better sent to the above.

Greece is great—but how shall I continue? I have so much to do here that opportunities to write letters are very few and far between. And when there is an opportunity I am so appalled by the prospect of even beginning, that I generally find myself doing something else instead. My only hope—or yours, if you will—lies in not hoping for a description of Greece or an explanation of my conduct in it at all. Very briefly, though, as for modern conditions, the country is liveable, seeing that even Americans can live in it, but is often very close to the line. Outside of Athens one is never very comfortable, and even Athens does not pretend to be a first-rate city. But it is all delightful in its own way—Athens and the rest. After all there are many luxuries which we rather needlessly consider necessities at home. I have become so accustomed to going without them that I stand less in dread of facing again even the worst I have known than I do

of writing this letter. If asked with a view solely to information about myself and not to implied information about Greece, I should say that I was perfectly happy here.

Briefly again, the Greeks as a race I like extraordinarily. Their constant good-nature, their sense of fitness, and their self-respect are three inestimable qualities exemplified in innumerable ways. They lie beautifully, thrillingly, on most occasions, yet the lies are not of great importance. Paradoxical as it may sound, one would rather trust a Greek than an American. To put it epigrammatically, the American too often loses the spirit in the fact, the Greek embroiders the fact to fit the spirit.

Briefly again, I like the School, which I really think may be taken as representative of all that is best in America. The members have been somewhat educated before they come, i.e. they are all graduates of American colleges, and most have done some previous post-graduate work. They also show some sense of humor and good sportsmanship, or they would consider the ordeal as an ordeal, which they don't. Finally, they all have something to do or they would not be here. The fact that almost everyone has an important fellowship may indicate that the intellectual level is pretty good, though not astounding. Anyway, please

take my word for that. But it is the fine character which they show under all circumstances which pleases me most and has even succeeded in making me something of a patriot. The plane of living—the difficulties in the way of living well and rightly and the determination to do so despite all difficulties—brings out this character, especially in the women, who become positively extraordinary people when thus artificially transplanted back to the pioneer stage. The second great force which extracts this character from its usual lethargy is the having something of some magnitude to do, and that something of a sort which requires both physical and mental energy. I understand that American civil engineers in Africa or South America undergo a similar development.

With such companions he would be a woeful specimen who was not happy. I have perhaps idealized them a little as a group in order to bring out the major point. Each has his peculiarities, his individuality, which you may like more or less well according to your tastes. That which one knows in America is not bleached in the sun of Greece. Only something more than one is likely to know in America blossoms here.—Which again reminds me of the fact that I am in Greece ostensibly to study the ancient Greeks. Of them as yet I have said not a word. Yet they oc-

cupy as large a part of my attention as my subjects last year did at Harvard. But for reasons explained at the beginning, I dare say no more about them than that I love them with genuine passion. Perhaps I have accomplished something already. I think I have, but one is never sure. Of the passion there is no doubt.

Many thanks for your letter. I was delighted to hear how well you were getting on in every way, and deeply hope that you will continue to do so. Write me again and let me know all about everything. If it rains enough to keep me indoors for long periods, as I understand it may, I may write again before hearing from you. But don't keep me waiting, and forgive my slimness of speech.

With all best wishes always.

Bob.

P. S.—It seems that you may see my article on the Constitution in print before I do myself, for I hear that the thing may appear sometime this year. Keep your eye on the doings of the New England Quarterly Review, and let me know how my work looks on the page and how badly they misspell my name.

Merry Xmas!

Bob.

XXXVIII

Athens,
December 13, 1928.

Dear Family;

The first set of pictures with my new contraption are not an overwhelming success, but here they are. One of them went completely bum.

Yesterday we went to Sunium (the cape at the end of Attica) where there is a glorious Temple of Poseidon, an interesting Temple of Athena, the remains of a building which has hitherto been called an unidentified temple, but which we proved pretty conclusively to have been a warehouse or market-place, and the remains of some docks. The wind was strong, the day lovely, and the ride pleasant in spite of the fact that our rubber-neck bus several times got stuck in the mud, and boiled over, and blew out tires, and died. On the way out we stopped to examine the amusing theatre at Thoricos, the first excavation of the American School. (IN 1886)

To the Library until eleven, then out with Algie for a couple of hours with whom I had a very real conversation despite the consumption of a couple of whisky-and-sodas. Up early to go with Arthur Young unobserved to the theatre.—We were given the inscriptions to study and date for Broneer, I because I said once that I wanted to learn something about

Arthur N. Young, Univ. of Pittsburgh. PhD Harvard in 1930. Died in 1938 at 97.

epigraphy, and Arthur because he is the best Greek scholar in the School. We arranged to split the job. I took all the seats and inscribed thrones, and scanned the volumes of the Corpus Inscriptionum Atticarum before 403 B.C.; he took the rest. But whenever either of us got into difficulties the other would help out—reading letters or taking notes, suggesting emendations, translating (his—all his), measuring, dating. But there was one job that was particularly mean. Broneer had heard it rumored that someone had sent someone else down the drain and had there found an inscription which he was withholding from publication until he brought out his own book. Now the American School can not wait for a thing like a book, so we had to crawl through the drain and locate the inscription ourselves. This being rather a dirty job, we did not care to be observed. Hence the early morning date. We found not merely the inscription but a lot of other material to add to the general confusion. But I really think that between the lot of us—I myself have found so much that has hitherto passed unnoticed—we may at last come to some satisfactory conclusions. If we do it will be a tremendous victory for the School, because, although theories are rampant, the theatre is one of the biggest thorns in the sides of archaeologists.

Broneer + Theater of Dionysus, inscription in the drain

When I returned to have my clothes boiled and my body right earnestly scrubbed, I wondered what on earth had induced me to crawl through a hundred feet of antique sewer-pipe, in order to find out something for which I would give only the slightest rap about a place whose interest to me is relatively unsubstantial. And I found that I had acquired pride and loyalty concerning three things. First there was myself, whose self-respect was far better off by virtue of having gone through the drain than it would have been had I not gone through it. Second there was—and this was the oddest thing of all—a loyalty to the American School. Lastly there was Mr. Broneer—and that, too, impressed me as very odd. No two people could be more unlike. At dinner we are constantly on the point of breaking into some hot argument, and occasionally we do. But I like him tremendously. He is a beautiful machine. His whole bent is toward the grip of the hardest facts, and nothing disturbs that view. He does not think, for example, that being a good archaeologist means any more than being a good plumber, for he recognizes as fact the enormous element of chance that enters into the definition of the course of any man's life. Perhaps, after my morning's experience, I should have to agree with him about the similarity of archaeologist and plumber. But here is

where the difference between us comes in: he does not care about the possible minute element of choice involved, and I do: I don't wish to be either an archaeologist or a plumber. A man functioning so perfectly as Broneer, marvelously cold—sometimes I think utterly insensitive—intellectually, scrupulously honest on any subject—sometimes I think this is his only passion—keenly alive to every fact, with a sense of humor not subtle but unswerving, with an admirable mind at analyzing, with such a complete and naive faith in the scientific provability of almost anything as not to have the vaguest notion that faithlessness in such a matter can really exist; with all this and more besides, Broneer is a fine, strong, healthy, active man and a consummate scholar. He is a delight, aesthetically speaking, just like a perfectly cut diamond. And I have found his charm and his strength so telling that perhaps neither myself nor the School would have pushed me so unflinchingly through that antique sewer this morning if he had not asked it. And of course he did not thank me. Why should he? It was not for his sake that I went through. I went through because the set of circumstances induced me to go through. And so, if I asked him, would come an immediate dismissal.—But unless I asked him the problem would never arise in his mind.

The one thing, besides its being natural, which did impress him about the incident was its being somewhat humorous.—There is nothing in the least bitter about any of his humor or skepticism, by the way.

Slight dribble of letters at last.

Must get some sleep.

All well.

Love. Bob.

XXXIX

Athens,
January 4, 1929.

Dear Ruth;

Shrieks from America. Groans from America. Horrible yearnings unfulfilled. Emotions unexpended, falsely expended, drowned. Worries—little worries. Follies—little follies. Self-ignorance.

It sounds almost like a poor poem by Carl Sandburg, or one of the other screech owls of Chicago. But what is one to think when almost every letter contains thoughts, worries, emotions that shrivel up and blow away as one opens the envelope?

Little Americans who know not what to do, or dare not do it, who do not realize that making is a part of one's self. Have you in your medical studies come upon the subject of malformations—incomplete bodies,

imperfectly functioning organs? Can you state what a perfectly functioning organ is? It is a worthy study.

Athens, city of glory! Pictured as dead stones by Americans, being a place where Americans may learn what does matter and what does not, what to value and what to disdain. City which teaches wisdom without uttering a word, teaches why one should do, make and stimulates one to find out how *he* should do, make. Teaches one that the thought, the sensibility and the emotion, when healthy, are one with the doing and making. What happens to these little Americans when they come to you? In capacity they are not overgreat. But in coming to you they grow to be people.

City of poverty and happiness. City of ambrosial dregs. Poverty and dregs that don't matter. Ambrosia that does. Dregs that have the value of proving silently that they don't matter. Ambrosia that the gods might drink, but that men do drink. Man-made ambrosia. Immortal glories of mortal weakness. Athens, I love you, stand in awe before you. Athens, silently wise, you have fought me, beaten me, taught me. Yours is the victory, the prize is mine. Losing, I have gained. Giving, you have lost nothing.

While others travel away, I have remained. I study and enjoy. I sleep little in order to save time. If I can only bring the gift of Athens to America! For Athens

has not everything. It does not hold the possibility of my activity, and to be active I must if the gift of Athens has any meaning. To the U. S. A. I must return.—But not yet. Athens must develop her lesson further. . . .

Bob.

XL

Athens,
January 4, 1929.

Dear Ernestine;

Athens—charming city of the gods! The temptation is strong never to return to America again, or at least, not for years to come. Others went to Italy, Rhodes, or Egypt over these Christmas holiday weeks. I stay on and on, possessing Athens almost, sharing it at any rate with those I like best in the School and with the Athenians—charming people—I am almost tempted to say wise people, so much have they taught me. Here I stay in the enjoyment of all that is lovely and all that is great, sleeping little that I may enjoy and learn the more, dreading the return of those whom I really rather like. Here I stay, with America so distant that her faults, her petty worries, vanish from the view of the serious into that of the ridiculous, where they belong; here America seems great and lovely after all.

But this is rather a dream, for Athens has not everything which I hold dear, and to stay here always would be a kind of sleep. America must be the place of my activity ultimately. I must transport Athens to it.

Dirty people whose dirt does not matter! Poverty stricken people who live happily on ambrosial dregs! Just to think that I could not only say I would enjoy this life, knowing that I should do so, but really enjoy it from the depths of my soul! Just to think that I not merely read and believe what wise men say, that one can live on the beauties of life under well-nigh deathly conditions, but that you, fellow Greeks, have showed me how it is done, have made me do it, have proved to me that I can do! I have learned, I have succumbed, *you* have gained the victory, and the crown and prize is *mine*!

Exclamation upon exclamation, and no news. I have given up trying to describe Athens, its life, or my life in it, for though I have made a few remarks on it in all my previous letters, no one has noted the fact, no one has understood. Those who know me best find me here ununderstandable. It is not their fault, but the virtue of the Greeks, for this apparently cannot be transported directly. It can come to America by me only as an effect on what I write in America and in the language of Americans.

So farewell! Write me again. Write me of the heart of America, of the heart of yourself. Write me of the most permanent things in life, or your words will shrivel and die in this air—or even before they touch it, so remote am I—for this air can support and give life only to the greatest glories. But to these it gives great life.

All's well with me.

All best wishes to you always.

Bob.

XLI

Athens,
January 11, 1929.

Dear Family;

Everyone back, and the situation very different for me than it was before they left. Unfortunately my distinctions have grown wider and sharper, my likes and dislikes consequently intensified. No one, however, will know this if I can help it. In some way I shall continue to get on with everyone as if I deeply liked them all, a matter which should not be very difficult seeing that I do like them all and that it is only the extraordinary qualities of some that make others occasionally seem poverty-stricken.

More or less organized work started anew, and I, with an overwhelming load of correspondence, etc.

still on my conscience, am appalled at the pace of the grey-bearded Father with a scythe.

Amusing letter from Cousin Hermann enclosed, may be read and destroyed. Unfortunately, the day before I received it I had written him a letter of condolence.

Otherwise all well. Love.

Bob.

P. S.—My frank opinion of Nicholas Miraculous's Xmas note to his friends is that it is pretty bad, especially seeing that he woos the limelight of greatness. No successor to President Eliot here! R. L. S.

XLII

Athens,
January 15, 1929.

Dear Ernestine;

With me it goes on and on as it started. Always new—every day brings something new—it is not new insofar as there is no change of direction. Moving rapidly, so far as the general composition is concerned, I am standing still. The Parthenon gives way to the Hecatompedon, Herodotus to Euripides, inscriptions on stones to inscriptions on vases, sculpture to sculpture, and so on. Art varies, life varies—there is no lack of variety in art or life—and yet I

am always very near the center, very near control, and therefore very nearly at rest.

This may make for good book, but it makes for bad letters, or very nearly none at all. I could tell of all the little things that amuse me, but the telling of those things would not amuse me in the first place, and furthermore it would give you no idea of myself.

I regret it, dear Ernestine, but I can offer you no more in the way of epistolary satisfaction than I can offer anyone else. Tomorrow we go to Phyle—should I sit down and write about Phyle to you? Today we had a School Tea (capitalized as it is an institution) at which I met loads of people as usual to whom, as usual, I spoke badly as usual three languages with attempts at a fourth. And yet the tea was different, stimulating, new. I'd have to write an essay to give you an idea of a European salon of the grand style. And yet they come only twice a month. This morning it was a lecture on sculpture that amounted to the best possible in the world to-day by the best man in the world to-day, on some of the best pieces of all time—and in the presence of them. Shall I describe that? Yet it was only one lecture, and we have one of these every week, and we have three more lecturers each giving one lecture a week. Or shall I describe my confrères—my extraordinary schoolmates—analyzing

and spoiling them thus? Or purple Hymettus, or the Saronic Gulf, or Parnes, or the Parthenon, the inexcusably blue Greek sky, or the people—so different from anything you could imagine—or other things about Athens, my love?

I am wordless, therefore, Ernestine. Pity me, condemn me—I but state the fact.—But write me again.

All best wishes always.

Bob.

XLIII

Athens,
February 8, 1929.

Dear Family;

Today you sail, and today for the first time in nearly a month I write you a letter. This is easily done. I can begin from where I left off without any feeling of a break, because nothing extraordinary has happened.—Snow, yes—two or three inches of it for a day or so, and more on the mountain tops, over whose pathless faces we trudged on a couple of the trips, amid much joy and freezing. Trips, yes—to various points in Attica, all of them glorious, that being their one element of similarity—all of them glorious in vastly different ways. One extra trip to Phaleron where the E——'s on the Resolute landed at

nine A.M. I arranged to get out on the tender, and I waited on the gangway for an hour as the tender went back and forth, for they were the last ones off. I went back to Athens with them leaving them at the foot of the Acropolis to attend to my own business, and although I arranged to meet them on top of that hillock again in the afternoon—I was up there to study the Propylaea at the time—apparently they got cold or tired of the place or decided to visit the museum after all or something, for although I was there from 2:30 until 5:00 we did not meet. I declined to meet them for lunch as they were to eat with their gang. By six o'clock they were on board again, having done Athens.—I like Mr. E—— tremendously, he being a grand sport and having that light in his eyes that indicates superb, mature intelligence. He is far less paralyzed than either his wife or daughter, who, frankly, annoyed me considerably. Though they were about as appreciative of my attention as I deserved (which was not much, as my attention soon stopped) it was in rather a sleepy, unaware, unintelligent fashion. They treated my offer to do anything for them in a fashion that was kindly, but patronizing. The attitude was bound up with that which they had toward Athens, which could be seen in a day, and was almost challenged to present its treasures to them. I felt that

they saw me in the back of their minds as a poor fool to desire to stay longer, as a simpleton to be so well pleased with something so uncivilized, as a lazy mule to have so much time on my hands as to be able to meet at a boat people whom I scarcely knew, as distinctly odd in thinking that, mayhap, *I* might be able to help *them*. I do not think that this attitude was conscious (I do not think they were tremendously conscious of anything) and I know that the Judge felt anything but this; but I cannot say that I felt sorry when we did not meet again, and when I received a thank-you post-card from "the E——s" I put down a period in my mind with a sort of sigh of relief.

One cannot see Athens in a day, and I, at least, cannot understand Athens after some months. The Parthenon, among other things, is such a very subtle building that the most intelligent visitor almost inevitably makes some very stupid remarks about it (if he has anything to say at all) when he first visits it. But day after day of study, morning, night, and noon, allows our dull senses finally to receive some sense of its ever so delicately perfect majesty and grace. And months of this study reduce one to awe and subjection. To be anything but humble seems ludicrous, to challenge is blasphemy. From this stage, how many

years, how many life-times, or what miraculous gift of God, to understanding? I do not know. I love—am appallingly in love with the building—and that love and that passion has profoundly affected my character. That is all I know about it.—And the Parthenon is not alone.

The other elements of life here also continue to have their constant pressure. Talks, food, teas, concerts, people, and so on, and add to this list of the social, romantic, intellectual, and dreadfully practical the new element of ill-heated houses.—I have been reading considerable Greek of all kinds, but especially Plato and the Bible. Facility, thank God, grows. Also trying to reconstruct the Cornice on the South wing of the Propylaea, and doing wide reading on vases. To talk on the meaning of certain classes of inscriptions on them, concerning which I have been forced into some rather new ideas, which has in turn meant an enormous amount of work, next Monday.—Which just about tells my story. I have, with all this, become more negligent of letters and other American affairs than ever.—But thanks for Breasted and other American clippings which I enjoyed tremendously.

I don't know yet whether I shall meet you in Rome or not, wishing to take a day or two to think it over calmly. It takes me a day longer to get from here to

Rome than it takes you to get from Rome to Constantinople. And then you cannot count on the Greek boats. You never sail on the boat on which your passage is reserved, and then it is lucky if you get a boat that was due to sail a week or so before on or about the same day you wish to go. I suppose it is possible to go around by train in about the same scheduled time, counting on the Simplon-Orient more than has been warranted by recent experience.—Yet I may come after all.—Only let us have no more telegraphic correspondence on the matter. Whatever I decide must be settled finally, as I have to settle matters with the School. They have already held off for me almost a week.

Well—All well. Love.

Bob.

XLIV

18 Academy Street, Athens,
February 15, 1929.

Dear Arnold;

Word has just reached me, much belated, and in a very roundabout way, of your loss. I feel that it is a loss in which I too share, for I respected your father greatly, and loved him for that fund of manly kindliness, sympathy, and honor, for which all who ever met

him could not help but love him. It is almost as claiming some honor that I ask to be admitted to some small share in your sorrow, for I was proud to love him.

The untoward tries one's faith. To be bereaved of one whom one held as dear as you did your father, is, as it were, to have the keystone of one's plan for life crumble and fall. Because of faith alone does one renew the work of building his life. A priest, assuming to himself the faculty of being God's mouthpiece, might help one then by saying, as from God, that God lives. The priest helps as long as he speaks with authority, as long as we have faith in his opinion of himself. It would be senseless for me to try to play the priest for you. But although I cannot tell you why we are tried, nor to what purpose we were born, or suffer, or shall die, this much I know: that though we are weak, ignorant, and ephemeral shadows on the face of the earth, it is our nature to love, and to make every move in our power to obtain, directed by our vision, the purity which we feel exists, and which does not have the flaws of our mortality; and that, although it is part of these flaws for men to be always more or less strangers to one another, a friend is less a stranger than another man, for his longing is felt as near to one's own. I would but glory with you in

the glory which we love, glory too in every step we may take toward her—a step for one being likewise a step for the other—until, striving still, we pass to where we know not what our nature will be; to a place of which we can only hope that there our nature may be such that glory will take us to herself. Then if our love will be so satisfied as to disappear completely I do not know. But I doubt it, and expect to be loving with you still beyond the grave until the world may lose its flaws and its existence.

Please extend for me to your mother and your sister my warmest sympathy and remember me always as your friend, and so far as my power extends, your servant.

Bob.

XLV

Athens,
Feb. 22, 1929.

Dear Ma and Dad;

Letter from Dad. Indications therein of a letter coming from Ma, but as yet no letter. Itinerary at last. Many thanks.

Short of breath. Panting! Whew! Liar in intent. Really busy having a good time.—Got a new idea. Looks like a success, but doubt my capability to handle it all myself. Turning it over to Luce Monday at

three to see what he thinks of it. If it is any good, I'll give the field up to him. Idea, you see, comes under the head of interesting, in fact rather important, if true. —Starting on a new tack tomorrow, waiting for Monday.

No other news of much note. Mean weather, and last night and today a snow storm, has kept us largely within, with only a few experiments on the Acropolis and no field trips.—Oh yes, one—a week ago or so, to Marathon and Ramnos, the latter a heavy 15 mile hike after the bus got stuck in the mud and would go no farther. Only two slight casualties among the women, despite the pernicious softening effects of Athenian civilization.

I have never felt a harder pull on my heartstrings than I did by the great mound over the Athenian dead at Marathon. They have raised there a fine, small copy of an archaic stele, the original of which you shall see in the museum here, and written under it in the old Attic alphabet: "Fighting for the Greeks the Athenians at Marathon dispersed the power of the gold-bearing Medes"—which goes even more simply in Greek, in just eight words. As I stood in reverence I could not help repeating to myself "This is done because of that which the Eternal did unto me, when I came forth out of Egypt." I was not alone in the feel-

ing.—After examining the topography of the battle we moved on.

Letter from Aunty May does not sound too cheerful, but don't tell her so. Passing mood, suppose she's all right.

Other news as usual. In short, all well.

Love.

Bob.

XLVI

Haifa, Palestine,
April 26, 1929.

Dear Family;

All very well.

Had a fine time sleeping on deck, reading on deck, walking the deck at sunset and at dawn, talking in every language which I know and don't know to all and sundry. The last day a lady novelist (who, you will remember, is on Gilbert and Sullivan's list of those who never would be missed) spotted us, brought us chocolate and apples, an invitation to her home and an opportunity to speak correct English. Name, Mrs. Oliver.—We were the only 3rd class travelers to sleep on deck. The rest preferred the hatch. A visit we paid them once left me an indelible memory: all manner of people spread all over the floor sleeping on all kinds of food and luggage, and over in the corner, three old,

noble-looking Arabs, kneeling on gorgeous rugs, almost their sole possessions, and praying to their God. —Dawn on the Mediterranean is something one never would have seen unless he traveled thus, and that is an untellable glory. But greatest of all for me were some first hand experiences and lessons in human-kind.

Port Said, far from being as bad as I had heard, was, though dreadfully ugly, fairly modern and clean. We enjoyed much beer and a clean-up there, and so out on the evening train. Took third class to Kantara so as to be with a crowd of Arab pilgrims who were going to Jerusalem. There we had a first class supper and took swell sleepers for Haifa. Cousin Hermann met us a half hour or more down the line. He had started down the other way with Felix Warburg and party en route to Jerusalem, but as our train was nearly two hours late, he had underestimated and waited for two hours. Cousin Molly waited those two hours in the station at Haifa. Could anything be sweeter? Not a sign from either of them of anything but delight at seeing us.

I like these Arabs and I like these Jews. I suppose everyone does who approaches them with a modicum of sympathy and understanding. And one has so much to learn from them, to drive home the lessons of Greece and to add quantities of new material. Unfortunately

I have not enough time, and cannot speak or understand a word of their language. But I can observe a little both the better and the lower classes, and this alone gives me more than I can rapidly absorb. The best Jews one meets right here. There is a steady stream through the ever open doors.

Carroll is now off in Galilee. He returns tomorrow night. I am under stricter surveillance for the sake of Cousin Hermann's conscience, but rather like the forced restraint to Haifa and its neighborhood. Things go too fast anyway, and I have plenty to think about, and think I may seize even more time to myself on Mt. Carmel, whose advantages as a retreat, I think, Elijah was the first to discover.—Sunday I go with Carroll to Jerusalem, to stay about a week there and in the neighborhood. Back here, and roundabout. Baalbek, Damascus, and back again. Cairo for a couple of days, and home to Athens.

There seem to be always new things to see and to do, new problems and new delights. But the old difficulty always presents itself that one has but a fraction of the time one would like. Otherwise all well.
Love. Bob.

Love and regards of great warmth from Hermann, Molly, Carroll, and the Baerwalds. Bob.

XLVII

Tel-Aviv Hotel, Jerusalem,
April 30, 1929.

DEAR ALGIE;

Our trip has been full of substance. To have known "the arrogance of office" in fawning stewards toward steerage passengers; to have seen the sun and the moon rise and set and cover the whole of their passage over the Mediterranean, turning the waters from gold to blue, to silver, to black, and then to rolling gold again; to have seen one's bread supply vanish in half its allotted time; to have met such varied people on what are (for us) such extraordinary errands, and to have visited the hatch where Greeks slept hideously in their chairs, with their bread or luggage for a pillow, and where glorious, almost princely, Moslems, on fine old rugs, almost their sole possession, knelt praying endlessly to their God:—all these were joys and stimuluses, reminders of a fundamental life, primitive or civilized, that has largely defined my thought ever since.

The East has been a fascinating place to observe. Within a half-hour one either judges the Arabs according to Evanston or one becomes impressed by the quantity of life. The number of external forces, including the forces of other men, the little new that

one can do in these crowded districts, is almost indescribable to one who has not seen it. Granted, then, the geniuses to point the way, one can build here a philosophy and a civilization based on acceptance or resignation on the one hand and the simple joy of the free spirit on the other. At the lower end of the social scale one can go far on a minimum of effort, and child-like people, fishermen, or keepers of toll-gates, can show elements of genuine religion, and continuing in their professions or just wandering under good leadership, can lead most excellent lives. But the geniuses have made a civilization of their material, so that when one finds people of greater capacity, whatever their station, there is a nobility in them which I do not see how one can miss. Tremendously aware of the quantity of human sufferings and joys about them, they stand composed holding in their souls a quiet sympathy for the pangs and efforts that bear no great result, no tolerance merely but love for their human kind whom God made, not altogether godlike, and who therefore wander and are goaded by external law. They are mature as we understand maturity: they *know*, and knowing, have laid their vagrant and unruly desires to rest. But they know more than any whom we might call mature, for they know the glory and the peace of the life that lives after the death to

the things of life more intimately than any Westerner could. It is so much easier here where desires are actually so much more fruitless, and I know now why Xenophon thought that the Persians made his fellow Greeks look like puppies,—and I know, too, why Herodotus, seeing in the art, and life, and political and commercial activity of nearly the same Greeks not merely the glorification or service of God but the glorious creation of man guided by an ideal of personal creation, glorified the independence, the customs, the freedom of thought and the intense activity in many a field which the Easterner, willy-nilly, could at best but slightly enter, glorified the humanistic civilization which he loved.

The handful of alert Jews in Palestine are doing more great works than I can begin to describe. Their communistic experiments are unexpectedly successful thus far, and in their intellectual and artistic development they are fully abreast of the most important movements in the modern world. With ideas they are omnivorous. In their intense faith that they can create once more for themselves a live humanism they are unsurpassed. Of course, except on this point of faith everyone is in disagreement with everyone else—a most healthy atmosphere—and I am confident from what I have seen already achieved that something fine

will come of it. Through my cousin and my father's name I have met dozens of interesting people, of some of whom you probably know. Unfortunately Einstein and the Baron de Rothschild, both of whom I should very much like to know, are not here at present, and Moshe Halevy was behind the scenes. If one could only add Trotzky to the list of Zionists, one would have an impressive group for a little and far from independent society, each member having a nice little following.

If one only had a few more facilities here, no matter how much he disliked the nationalistic aspect of the general situation, he might consider going home only to pack his effects and say good-bye. But the country, from the point of view of intellectual aids, is not quite self-supporting yet, so that even the most ardent are constantly going and coming. If a person is told that, because of a difference in background, his deepest ideals and efforts arouse no great intellectual sympathy in an American whose capacity for understanding he had greatly admired (and one expects no sympathy from those of less understanding) there is really no chance of being attuned to America, but he had better retire to a smaller world in the hope that he might be more intimate to it. Especially is this so when he can at the same time retire from the dreadful preju-

dices which he must meet in America at every turn, and by which he is only too often beaten, frustrated. One may not hope ever to be of very great service or meaning to anyone anywhere, but there is some chance here of breaking even—provided one is fitted for something first. One might even join the ardent groups of young people who, having seen their parents or their children murdered before their eyes, their homes ravaged, their very ideals insulted, retired here to drain swamps in order to make farm-land for their own hands to work and died by the score with joy in their effort. Only we have been made unfitted to be farmers. We must not be carried away by an emotion, but confess our failings, if we would try to be sane. However, to be perfectly sane, we can draw no definite conclusions far ahead of time, but must live from day to day, for there are many important complications.

Here much archaeology also, but I know you don't want to hear my inadequate archaeological comments. Only let me highly recommend two books, neither of them archaeological, and neither requiring a visit either here or to Egypt: Fosdick's *Pilgrimage to Palestine* and Meier-Graeffe's *Pyramide und Tempeln* (the Tempeln part on Greece). The latter is in rather more difficult German than you may care to tackle as yet, but watch for an English translation.

The style is extremely light and colloquial—hence the difficulty. Both authors, I assume, you know. I can tell you about guides to Palestine if you care to come sometime.

Aside from archaeology and such other things as I have mentioned, I have wandered over Mt. Carmel alone, wandered about the caves in which Elijah lodged until he heard the wee, small voice, and wandered over the Mount of Olives to see the sun set behind Jerusalem, where Jesus, seeing Himself deserted, was sorely tried, and uttered a great prayer. At such times I was able to reflect a little on some such matters as are here set forth, and on the meaning of some history. Some of the thoughts seem to hold something after sleeping them over, so I feel that I am getting my bearings again—a wiser and a sadder man, in the language of the cheap novels. And my life is again filled with a multitude of joys in what I see and do, and I can again laugh and be light from time to time and smile quite often as is right. . . .

Bob.

XLVIII

Haifa, Palestine,
May 13, 1929.

Dear Family;

I have forgotten when I wrote you last. Was it before we found the gilgal? Very interesting, but utterly without the artistic excellence of the Greek prehistorics. In fact it was most amusingly crude. Saturday did practically nothing except visit Baerwald again. He is drawing plans for a house for Weizmann. He hungers for praise like a child—receives it, therefore, only coldly from Hermann. They are glorious together. There are also rumors, thank God, of his remodelling the Hebrew University somehow, of which, in my humble opinion as well as others, the much vaunted Geddes made rather a mess—architecture proving to be an art and not a pastime.

—Message from Baerwald—Sol Stroock, ein sehr nette mensch, was so kind as to promise to do something for the Technikum—and why should not the whole world be interested in the Technikum?—specifically to speak to Herr Paul Baerwald—to whom, on the basis of mere name, a crazy letter seems to have been written. Sol Stroock, ein *sehr* nette mensch, seems, however, to have done nothing, despite a picture which was (on Hermann's theory) perhaps sent as a reminder. Would I remind this sehr, sehr nette

mensch—my father, nicht wahr?—of what he promised? I certainly would—being very much taken by Mr. and Mrs. Baerwald anyway, they being among the most extraordinary people I have ever met, and very nice to me, too.

Sunday (yesterday) away. First stopped at Afullah, where Mr. Pokatchoff experimented with communistic principles in an orphan asylum, failed, went completely kosher, etc., under Hermann's aegis, and now runs it as a model farm school. An interesting little man, whose late shift of principles has only improved his good disposition, if anything. Next stop Beth Alpha (for I had already been through this territory) where they have recently excavated a 5th cent. synagogue containing one of the crude mosaics of the period—naive, charming and, so to speak, proto-Byzantine. The interest lies in pictures of the sacrifice of Isaac and human representations of the four seasons and some of the twelve months, which is unique to say the least.—Next stop Tiberias, where we visited the famous hot springs, a couple of uninteresting Roman ruins, the tomb of Maimonides, the fine old walls. Also had some lunch. Six hundred feet below sea level, and hot as Hell. We spent the night at Safed, 3000 ft. above sea level, having meanwhile been considerably up and down, and starting from

Haifa with a slight Hamsin. The total effect of the trip for the day was to have been driven in an automobile from room to room of a huge Turkish bath. (I hope, by the way, that you have not cabled, for we did not spend the night at Tiberias, and here there is no Cook's. The same probably at Baalbek).

But I am previous. At Tiberias we also looked for a moment at the only new, first class hotel in Palestine, and then on to the glorious new home of Sir Alfred Mond. The architecture, though good, did not ring a very loud bell with me, but the grounds, and more especially the interior, done by a decorator named Sirkin, seemed to me one of the achievements of modern art. What attracted me about the outside was the regularity and proportion of the plots of ground, fitting the whole scheme, and also the low, concrete edges to replace the never-orderly grass borders. The inside, however, is the supreme demonstration of what can be done with straight lines, and perfect curves, and machine cut surfaces, and indirect lighting, and perfectly blended colors. There is in everything a recognition of modern methods, modern materials, and modern needs. This is not the art of Greece, but it is the only art I know which at once in its directness, its balance, and its charm, as well as in a handful, perhaps, of basic principles, is really com-

parable to the classic. The furniture and the tea-service are perfect, but as yet no pictures are hung, and if there are to be any, this will be important.—If only Baerwald, with his superb eye for proportion and *his* recognition of the substance of the modern world, especially the modern Palestinian world, had been employed to correct the exterior design!—I said to Carroll the other day that I delight as always in the glories of this and that in these Oriental towns, but that two weeks after my arrival in Greece I ceased to delight in their picturesqueness, and that now I should think nothing so picturesque as 42nd St. and Broadway, New York. Whereupon Carroll went around to Cook's, picked up a list of Cunard Line sailings, with a picture of 42nd St. and Broadway, New York, on the cover, and brought it to me to weep over. But Sir Alfred Mond's home is an achievement, not like, but comparable to the Medical Center—or, for that matter, in a way also to the glories of the old which still send a thrill through my diaphragm.

On to see the famous synagogue at Capernaum, which is first class Roman work. I don't like to be a snob, so I always try to like Roman work, and I do like it very much in a way (though much more when they are trying to be little more than engineers), but it is so like the Greek that one cannot get a hundred

comparisons out of one's mind, and it's very, very nice, but I don't know.

A couple of interesting old colonies, then Safed. We went to three fine old synagogues—I certainly like the Sephardics—and poor Hermann was caught for Mincha twice. Between the Chasidim and the Cabalists one gets a very different idea of what Judaism means and has meant to its followers, especially those of the East. Within its rigid form has developed a variety of orders. It reminds me somewhat of the varied development of the Doric style by the Greeks, who, knowing perfectly its stringent demands, realized fully how much could be done by accepting them. There are many more parallels, leading, if you would like to follow them through, to some rather interesting reflections.—In Safed, as also here, Hermann was recognized and button-holed. By following him, I am drawn rather deeply and intimately into the complex imperialism, with its omnipresent militaristic overtone, of England and France, as it works out—rather badly—in these possessions. And everywhere, besides their separate imperialisms, they stand facing one another. One hears and sees a lot of things in even such a supposedly free and independent country as Greece. But it is all very much beyond a humble student, for the truth is so thoroughly hidden: the sub-

jects don't know what the governments are about and the governments don't understand the subjects; in fact one has a faint, though perhaps baseless, suspicion that no party knows precisely what it is itself about. Anyway, the mandatory system of the League of Nations is apparently no stimulus to world peace.

In Damascus, besides a grand old town in general, there is a fine mosque—one of the best—the Omajaidin. Also some examples of bad late Roman work, chiefly from Palmyra, and Persian of all periods. Also some city walls, some impressive ravages of the French in establishing their supremacy and the finest bazaar yet. You are receiving some brass work from me—two plates and a brazier from Haifa, and a huge vase which Hermann wept over because he could not buy it himself and finally induced me to buy for you. The Haifa things are mine, so kindly charge all expenses to my account. The vase is for you if you like it as much as Hermann says you should. He also says he would advise putting the drinking picture in the hall into the store-room and using this as decoration instead. It has, by the way, a Hebrew letter standing for "Stroock," which Hermann scratched on the base for identification. It will arrive in two parts which a brass-fitter must put together. Price £3½ plus 1 for packing and shipping.

Afterwards we went onto the hill and sat on a wall for Hermann to sketch the city. A man leaned over the balcony and invited us in. Promptly came coffee, and cigarettes, and a quantity of courtesy that almost interfered with the sketching. All translated into French by the son. The man himself, though he could speak no English, French or German, was a prince, an Emir by title even, and the nephew of Emir Abdel-Kader, who, Hermann tells me, was the great leader of the Syrian revival before the war. His nephew spends his old age looking from his balcony over the French military camp in the city of his ancestors.

With me all well. Love.

Bob.

XLIX

Athens,
May 21, 1929.

Dear Family;

My last notes were from Damascus, from which I was catapulted and riquocheted(?) into Athens, where I have spent the last three days regaining my balance before continuing the narrative.

Baalbek, with its great Roman acropolis, the next day, crossing the Antilebanon en route, and on the same afternoon over the Lebanon to Beyrut. It was a glorious trip. The reasons for again changing the

program were some slight passport difficulties with Hermann and my need for an hour or two of open shops at Haifa. At Beyrut we met Kokoschka, one of the great modern artists, with whom we talked late and I became very friendly. He expects to come to Greece about the middle of June, and I may delay leaving the country in order to see him. Also met Ehrenstein, a lyric poet, from whom I expect a call in a day or two.

Kokoschka

Haifa and details,—Binah called in the evening, though tired as ourselves as he is preparing for law examinations to help him in his career. Phone message of greetings from the Auerbachs. Did not see Mr. Baerwald again, but Mrs. was around at seven the next morning to help accompany me to the station, with apologies for her husband who had a class, and with a photograph and a copy of a play they had composed together for a keepsake. And so off amid deadened excitement. Hermann gave me my pick of his lithographs of Greece, and received ten pounds for his schools. (A couple of minor remembrances had preceded.) I think you will be surprised at my choice.

Boring trip all day to Cairo, where I arrived late and tired, and went to bed without supper. The next day (the 17th) was the last on which a boat left until the 23rd. Carroll had not yet arrived, but I could ex-

pect him in a day or two, and six days in Cairo would have been very nice despite a slight heat. Nevertheless I decided to return home. Home is to be accented. I was not prepared to see Egypt. It would have been a stimulating experience, but I had not time to digest it, and, especially in the heat, not the energy to face the loneliness that seeing and not grasping thoroughly would mean. Of course, one might have seen, and enjoyed, and stored things away in one's mental photograph album for later perusal. It is stimulating not to be at home, too. But Palestine and Greece and Constantinople and Syria had given me all year between more settled periods as much of that as I felt able to bear, and Greece called loudly to me over the great, blue, sunny waters: Greece where I have seen and learned so much and where I have so much more yet to see and learn; Greece, where I have already stored away so many photograph albums that it will take years for their perusal, and yet to which, so my conscience told me, I had not yet done justice in my stay; Greece, where every moment almost can be counted on to bring immediate profit in just reactions and pleasure in immediate and full action of mind; Greece too, where I had friends who knew me well and to whom I could talk easily. So I succumbed—was it to the Syrens?—and left for Alexandria on the 9:30

train. That afternoon I set sail on the fastest boat that plies these waters and landed, after an uneventful trip, at Piraeus at 8:00 on Sunday morning.

Almost everyone I knew intimately had gone—Arthur Young for good—but Ess was up from Corinth for the week-end and with him I spent most of the day until he left on the mid-afternoon train. Mary Caperton and Frances Capps are also wandering in the neighborhood, the Luces have just left for Corinth to-day, John Tenney is doing a paper, and Mr. Broneer is mournfully away from the excavations as Mrs. B. is expecting a baby in a couple of weeks and is not doing extremely well. Everyone else is gone, though some will return again.

In the afternoon I went to a fine national pageant of Greek costumes of all ages in the Stadium. Unfortunately I did not wait for the last number, which they tell me was most spontaneous, as I know the various modern Greek costumes at first hand much better than do most native-born Athenians. To bed early after reading my letters, which I don't think I'll ever finish answering, and slept ten hours.

Next morning began—after the disappearance of the beard which met with too general disapproval—with some of the details of settlement. Then to Priscilla Capp's shop to buy what is known as the School

uniform, a dozen or more being already in existence among both men and women: nine feet of washable, raw silk material which one then takes to a tailor, at a total cost for the whole suit of about $20 and five days. I had my first fitting this afternoon. My next comes Thursday morning, which makes me proud and excited.—But some things I put off until this morning, and even later, as I wanted to start reading about Delphi. It is a thrilling subject. My next move will probably be about this week-end.

All well. Love.

Bob.

P. S.—Lots more photographs to come, but I can't send them yet on account of duplicates, etc.

L

Delphi, Greece,
May 30, 1929.

Dear Family;

Like Olympia and the Acropolis of Athens, if Delphi were not a fact one would be tempted to say that it was impossible. As it is it still seems so improbable that I shall have to remain several more days to settle definitely the question as to whether I am sane or suffering from hallucinations.

I came here rather thoroughly prepared, with a

considerable list of books and articles to my credit and tolerable well-traveledness. And the books were thrilling, and the memories sharp and strong. Yet here I find that all the reading could only absorb a small part of the shock. In a way it heightened it—as if one were to see suddenly in a familiar face superb qualities never realized before, which, if the general features had not aroused recognition, would have passed half unnoticed with all the other faces and their qualities in a crowded place through which one merely passes. And all the travelling?—Again the pleasure of recognizing similarities only attracts one's attention the more to previously half unrecognized qualities. At each successive trip to the Acropolis I became a little less inarticulate as to the objects there, but still on my last trip I was much discouraged, for I feared that real articulateness would never come, that mystery actually encompassed the things and my love of them, that vague, magical suggestion, therefore, was the only description to which I could attain. Here, now, the mystery has changed its locus. Nothing can explain it to me except some magical quality in copious draughts from the Castalian Spring.

A more prosaic reason—which may satisfy you, but which to me seems only accessory—is that I am alone at Delphi; and nothing stands ahead of me in

time except in misty distances on which the eye does not care to dwell. I can therefore indulge in a rare opportunity for truly unhurried thought. I expect to see no one, and, so as to bed completely all conscientious scruples, I have practically finished a complete round of everything of importance. Only some letters hang over me, and as we have only candle-light at night, I can satisfy myself about these whenever they enter my head. The program for the day is thus easily determinable by a few natural necessities. Up early, breakfast, and to the museum, where I am close friends with everybody and am allowed every privilege including having the objects moved around. Here I study and formulate some thoughts until my head begins to tire a little, whereupon I go out, drink from the very source of Castalia, and proceed to some architecture. "Delphi is as idly and irrelevantly marshalled as the accretions of a cemetery," writes Carpenter in his *Esthetic Basis of Greek Art*, and if one would study adequately all the architectural remains he would require months. I am content with a more general survey in this field, with specific investigations here and there—they may become more numerous now that I have finished the rounds.—Sometimes I return to the Museum before lunch, but I am studying Carpenter more during these middle

hours. The afternoon repeats the morning. A few minutes of thunder-shower, which regularly occurs during it at this season on Mt. Parnassus, is the only thing that might possibly be taken into account—but there are the fine, broad plane trees of ancient fame by Castalia. At night reading and writing are out of the question, so one just goes for a walk about town and picks up someone to practice Greek on. The great popularity of the School and one's utterly pitiful struggles with the wretched language make one tolerable, so that one never wants friends. Everyone knows I am here now, and is on the lookout. This lasts until nine thirty when sleep enshrouds the valley and every modest candle is extinguished.

I think I may shift the program tomorrow morning, by making one of my break-of-dawn starts and climbing to the Corycian Cave, returning via Aracova. But we'll see tomorrow morning. Then we'll start some notebook jottings.

Angela Johnston has left for Italy, and I had lunch once with Algie Whiting, and dinner once with Broneer, etc. On the train I met a fine, intelligent young Serb of the foreign office and had lunch with him most enjoyably. Among other things he had a theory that the common man, i.e. the peasant especially, was much the same everywhere; simple, kindly,

honest, and ignorant. My friend was not ignorant. Whatever he touched he treated with fine urbanity.—On leaving the train I found myself in the middle of nowhere on account of misinformation—the second time that has happened to me—from the American Express. But I had the good luck to get out of it better than if I had known of the difficulty beforehand.

I guess that's about all.—Oh yes! Congratulations everybody about Bill. Your cable arrived just after I had sent mine. All well. Love.

Bob.

LI

Volo, Greece,
June 26, 1929.

Dear Sis:—

Many, many thanks for your letter which arrived just before I left Athens and which I am answering with my last Greek stamp. At the moment I am in Volo, a town which has a little very fine stuff which I came to see. But it is most of all a very charming place, and I shall spend my remaining hours in just being luxurious. And first I shall write you this letter and then I shall take a bath—for this hotel, being one of the handful of summer resorts for rich Greeks, is comparatively expensive (about a dollar a day) and has running hot water.

Your letter sounds like practically all American letters, a little pressed and worried. You have so much to do that *everything* is just squeezed in between times. You want to pack them in, and the activities gasp for air. I would ask if you could not possibly arrange matters so as to leave some out except that I fear your letters to me would be the first to go. Anyway, one should be grateful when he finds so much of interest to occupy him, provided he is satisfied with it, so we'll let that go. Besides, I am not quite in the mood just now for dwelling on the cloudier sides of American activity. I want very much to return, and for several reasons. First, because one cannot be completely himself except when he is completely in the atmosphere where that self is accustomed to function, to recognize every element and to understand every word, to be, in at once a very subtle and a very general sense "in the know." I suppose that those of intellectual power will condemn me for such a statement, saying that the man of free spirit should be at home everywhere. But it seems to me that such a one should be free in spirit anywhere but that to be at home involves a larger and more worldly activity, which is allowed by the acceptance of an enormous number of otherwise difficult matters, as matters of course. To go to Europe for the summer is not so dif-

ferent from taking a tour out West, except, perhaps, in the quantity and quality of material that one has a chance to be stimulated by, to absorb, and to bring home. But to go for a longer stay is to be forced to drive one's roots, and new roots too, into a new soil. And one soon realizes with what difficulty this is done adequately, and finally how impossible it is, especially without a family or long-tried friends to do it satisfactorily. The contrast between immigrants and their children may illustrate.

Home, of course, is not merely at one's house, nor even in one's own country. Once, when the East and the ways of Cousin Hermann got slightly on my nerves, I exploded gently—I knew it would hurt—and said that I should much like to get up only to Western Europe. Whereupon he reproached me gently for having what he terms the common American failing for good, clean W. C.'s. But it is not that, and he knew it when I answered merely with a shrug of my shoulders and a "but——," and then he confessed that he feels that way himself though he is much less committed than I. He returns to Germany part of every year. Finally I found out by accident that he was not a citizen of Palestine. He told me it was so that Molly could return when he died.

You said that I did not have to return home. That,

frankly, has occurred to me before. One could with much greater ease create even something of a home for oneself in France, Germany, Italy, England and after one learned Greek, even in Athens. Not as easily as the common people. I agree with my Jugo-Slavian friend that the common people—I don't mean to be odious, so let us say the great commoners—are pretty much the same everywhere. And in every country, if they have not too much culture and are able to override the first great elemental prejudices, and if there is room for them without overcrowding others, one can see them carving out new and tolerably stable and satisfactory homes for themselves, though they are, I think, never completely absorbed. Americans in Western Europe do something slightly different. Not as much, perhaps, as Englishmen in India, but, it seems to me, they make for themselves little islands. To a considerable extent they control their environment, and this is their advantage. But to exactly the extent that they desire and accomplish this—it may occasionally be slight—they are hothouse products, and not in the heat of a living world that is *their* world. Their spirit is not so different in this respect from "Take me somewhere East of Suez," and I don't think, though I can't give a further reason, that this is the finest ideal of a man's life. At any rate, it is my

faith that another is better. So by the question of just plain environment, and by the question of aim in that environment, I am driven more and more to seek the center of home.

There is another reason for my wanting to return which is of a very different nature. I don't want to press it too much as I feel that I may be too ignorant. But it seems to me that, for more reasons than W. C.'s and like matters (though I don't want to underrate their importance, too), America is *the* land in which to live. It occurred to me last night as I looked at the sleeping deck passengers that I might use them as figures. It was no longer the wild and golden and untroubled youth. I could call that youth innocent if you promise not to understand by that that I think he has done no one any harm. By innocence I mean merely that he has not been especially conscious of his injuries as wrongs, regardless of his intentions, and that he has not set such forces into play as crashed somewhat beyond his reckoning and crushed others and himself. Intelligent Americans are conscious of an awful lot of difficulties, and I guess that by America I mean chiefly them. America is rather like the remarkably handsome young Greek woman who sat in a steamer chair on the 1st class deck (fine looking and well dressed, she could do this with impunity in the

face of the impertinent stewards). She slept sometimes and the rest of the time read a French novel by the light of the moon and the dim deck lamp. She paid no apparent attention to anyone. Her face was composed, but not relaxed, unworried, but intensely serious, apparently about what she was thinking. She intended to *do* something.

The woman—not at all old—who represented, in exaggerated form, Europe to me, wore that expression, half of resignation, half of dulled despair, which seems to say the person feels his life is over. The women in these parts often look that way—far more than I have ever seen West of here, for there I have never seen really *dulled* despair—when their husbands have not yet reached the bloom of manhood. And poor people! their lives being not very different from those of our cows, I don't well see how they could look otherwise. They do the heaviest work, and all the time, and bear child after child, most of them to die. This description is not much exaggerated for them, though it is for Europe. But one does hear that terrible note from Europe. Not that its life is over, any more than the woman's, but what precisely is it to do with it? Not as in the woman, the question haunts European papers and books, so far as I have seen, like a ghost. I have seen that *fear* of despair personally working

in others this year, and for a short space I had a faint echo of it myself, so I know what it means. And me for the land where one is not tied from the start in knots of steel and me for the work and the life! Love.

Bob.

P. S. Would you mind giving this to Sam, and, if you wish, to Bernie, and save my repeating?

Much, much love to you all, and duplicate for the kids.

Bob.

P. P. S. Now that I've had my bath, fine!

LII

Karlsbad,
am July 14, 1929.

Dear Family;

Grand letters from both Ma and Dad, cables from Saminette, Madad, Goldbergs, Chas. Levy, Jimmy, and a letter from Aunt Al and Uncle Sandy, who thought that the occasion was Bill's twenty-first, greeted me here and at Prague. A letter from Uncle Moe inviting us to meet him, which we shall be unable to do, was oblivious of my birthday. Uncle Joesie and Bernie—so far—have forgotten for the first time—Altogether it was a grand birthday.

Many, many thanks for your letters and cables. I

think the best way to answer your messages is to tell you of what we have been doing instead of expanding copiously on the thank-you theme, which is never a convincing success.

Tino met us at the station in Prague, took us to our hotel, where he had already engaged rooms, and had lunch, dinner, and the evening with us during the whole of our stay. Finally yesterday afternoon he saw us off. He was charming as he could be—so different in Europe where his manner is fitting and where, feeling so much more at home, he can show himself for much more of a person. Never have I had a more living and vivid example of the entire difference of atmosphere that prevails in the societies on the two sides of the Ocean. That he is as much a master of Czechish as of English, French, German, and Italian is only part of the story.—He mapped out our sightseeing in the grand old city, and wandered about with us considerably himself.

Arrived in Prague, Bill also began to blossom forth and to show his stuff, either finding places to go to, or showing how to act in those that Tino knew of, and judging with the touch of an expert. He is certainly a grand person to have around on all occasions, and even without girls, whose lack is becoming appalling, we are having the time of our lives.

The houses in some old sections of Prague are piled on top of one another on the hill slope in such fashion that you have to climb over one to get to the next only not so regular. The grand little restaurant from which we sent Dad a beer-stand to cheer him in his office is on the sixth layer. Bill came forth there with frankfurters, pickles, Bohemian cheese, and eight seidles of beer of which Tino had one. I hope you like the stand.

On ehref Shabbas, which was also ehref birthday, we did the Altneuschule, the grandest thing in all Prague, right proper by going to services. They only began at eight, so we led up to it by a visit to the cemetery and the Jewish Museum, and a meal at the kosher restaurant. Here we were getting on fine with the proprietor, having just discovered Hermann in common, when the question of paying beforehand, so as not to run into sundown, was raised. The proprietor offered us credit over Saturday since he expected us to eat there again, when Bill, trying to be complimentary, showed himself for the first time inadequate in a restaurant. He said we could not come the next day as we had to be gone to Karlsbad. The break was enormous and permanent. Tino burst into laughter. Mr. Hirsch was really very nice about it and somewhat amused, too.—Then Schule, which was very good,

followed by a party, which was fine. By mutual consent we did not leave for Karlsbad until the afternoon train.

This is one of the places for the new German very rich. We are having a very good time but don't want to stay long. Had lunch with Janet Wolff's parents today.

My birthday was a success from my point of view as it did not stand out much qua birthday. Tino came with a gift which is lovely and Bill with two fine pipes from Paris. Then there was the party, which was a good party and not a birthday party with all its formality and nonsense. We slept half through the morning and traveled half through the afternoon. The letters and cables did not come until evening. So my birthday was not, as it generally is if it stands out as birthday, a day of atonement. I did not even feel the need to make special resolutions, which I, frankly, do much more naturally on July 13 than on either of the New Years. Probably I would have spent just such a birthday this time in any part of the world. In the last year has been crowded a life. The result is that the force which guides me now is no resolution or determination analytically arrived at but an inner force of necessity which leaves me no choice as to actions, or at least no doubt when the possibilities are seen.

The atonement is accomplished with everything that I can atone with, and I stand awaiting, pressing toward, each moment the life that the gods unfold. But the beginning of the next move of importance seems certainly to be toward America, and for this, at quieter moments, I can scarcely wait.

And now perhaps you can see why I cannot expand on the theme of thank-you for letters and cables from you who are dear to me, who have, each of you, done so much for me, without being inadequate. Only—all well, and love ad inf.

Bob.

LIII

March 2, 1930.

Dear Ruth;

The other night Bernie called on me at midnight and we discussed Hell until 4 A.M. Finding no salvation I went to bed. It was the same day (or, literally, just the day before) that you wrote me your letter which I awoke to receive. And yet your letter does not sound any more despairing than I felt, though you do mention casually your wretchedness. We all of us grow sturdier through wisdom-bearing experience—I even to being a lost soul without the sight of a redeemer. For there are good things and bad a-plenty and powerful are the forces which carry them and

weak are we. But if one *can* only be humble (which one cannot always—that being the central point of my discussion of Hell) God is still there, and the great peace, which first depends on it and then, as Paul says, passes it.

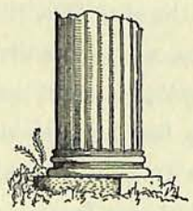
"An echo," you write, "of the past two years." I wonder if you mean the same thing by your small letter word as I by my fully capitalized one? Had God turned his face and you knew it—knew it well because you could not pray? Were you conscious of a *sin* (not fault or mistake) which turned you first and brought you to these worst of straits? (You see I know no place better than the deepest Hell). An echo, too! Do you know what, regardless of Hell or a way out of it, is the meaning of suffering throughout your life the consequences of the faults or mistakes that may have accompanied the sin? It is this which weighs on me now and faces me with some dreadful moral problems for which, as yet, I am not sure that I see at all the right solutions. But I am by no means depressed for I am no longer in Hell where I had no hope, no sight, no control, but was forced, stumbling through each little movement like a slave, without knowing a why or a whither. I have been given once more a God, a soul and a light. I have to face once more a problem. But the solution is conditioned by the past and I

may yet be a lost soul if a redeemer does not appear or the Redeemer again fails me.

If however, I know the living glory, what more has the best of men? And who holds it less precariously in this beautiful dangerous life of ours?

BOB.

"He shall grow not old as we that are left grow old;
Age shall not weary him nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning,
We shall remember him."



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