Letter posted @ Alexandria 16.
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Letter. 17.

P. & O. S. N. Co.
S. S.

Aug. 14th 1915.

Dear Mother.

In my last letter I told you about having arrived in Alexandria on the 11th — on the 12th we had permission to go to town about 10 a.m. but by the time we got sufficient boats to take us to shore etc. it was fairly late; then we had to hunt up cabs etc. as we were a long way from the shopping district. Our Matron came in our rig consequently she was attached to us all day, which delayed matters more than I can say — but this so far been decent to us, so here's hoping it may continue. After writing on my letter that I ~~s~~ wouldn't mention in cable where we were going, I changed my mind. However now there is again some doubt, but it will either be Lemnos or the island of Imbros, which is rather nearer, the Dardanelles. Well to go back to the cab — our drive tore through the streets in the most reckless

manner, I thought every minute we should be thrown out. He couldn't speak a word of English, ~~but~~ so it was useless to remonstrate. We went through I imagine what would be considered the slums of even Alexandria. But it really is wonderful, & brings to mind continually bible stories. One no longer is surprised at Christ having been born in a stable pr apparently that is the only place the poor live in. The buildings have the appearance of being dwelling Houses & you see inside a regular stable, & the members of the family live on the street & only go inside to sleep. Through this part you see no Europeans at all. It is impossible in one letter to give an idea of all we saw even in that one short day. The squalor, dirt, smell, poverty, humble dam looking Houses, dust & heat, & yet in spite of it all the wonderful picturesqueness of the whole. The brown men in their many colored clothes, the wonderful way they carry themselves, throw themselves down to rest in all kinds of corners & places in the most graceful positions, & yet they appear most insolent.

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And then there are the black men, many in rags — the veiled women. As I say it is too much to describe. The men watering the streets carry a large pig-skin filled with water, making it the shape exactly of a pig, & it is weird the way they swish the water around. We passed one little kid in the door-way asleep, just a picture, & it gave you the creeps to see one of the men passing, slink up & put his hand inside the youngsters shirt & steal some treasure he had in a bag. Several saw him do it, but beyond smiling took no notice. It is all such a mixture of picturesqueness, sogeery & filth it positively makes one pie ill. Well finally we arrived in the shopping district & here one came in contact with sogeery but in slightly more respectable clothing. The shops are the queerest mixture of all that is modern & the reverse. One gets such surprises. We had to waste time

while Miss Charleson bought various things, as the Col. had said no nurse was to appear on the street alone, & amongst other things she needed boots & do you know we could get much better looking ones here than in England. Also we had the most delicious ice cream & iced coffee. We ever lasted even in our own country — & the following day (I'm rather going ahead) I got my hair shampooed in a French shop in the most luxurious (if rather expensive) fashion — they use a wonderful moveable basin with running water & waste pipe which you use as pillow (more or less) & they work from behind.

Well we shopped like mad until 12.30 noon, (when they close until 3 p.m.) getting numerous necessary odds & ends, as we heard at Lemnos we couldn't even buy a hair pin, then had sand-wiches & the most delicious cakes in a French pastry shop, took a cab & drove out to Sans Gardens to fill in the time until 3 p.m. Everything has rather a dried up look, of course this is nearly the end of their dry season, so perhaps is worse than usual, but the acacia trees are beautiful; so green, feathery & healthy looking, some

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covered with the most exquisite blue blossoms. Being ~~fes~~ some big festival day, everyone was out in holiday attire, & the crowds were immense, but it is surprising to me at least, how few Europeans are around, we saw <u>none</u> outside the shopping district & then they were either men in khaki or a French speaking people, & ~~we~~ very few of the natives knew a word of English, although I am told in Cairo it is quite different. When we got back from our drive I was about all in for the heat was beyond description, but we got one or two things, (its like dragging teeth to really settle on a price for anything & get out of a shop) had a cup of tea & drove down to the wharf, (there are miles of it) & meeting one of the officers were told our boat had finally docked; then we had some difficulty in finding where, but finally arrived just at 6 p. m. laden with parcels, to discover during our absence our

trunks & hold-alls had been transferred to another boat in spite of only being half packed etc. However such is active service; & it meant we all had our arms full of huge parcels. We had expected to land in the p.m. but no order came. The following a.m. about 9-30 we were given permission to go to town on Cardelian we were back @ sharp 12 - so I rushed off to a hair dresser with Mildred & had the shampoo I spoke of. We had an extra early lunch expecting to go off to another ship, immediately, but owing to several delays, we stood on the deck, our parcels beside us, until the dinner gong went!!!!

But finally we went at 7-30 p.m. to another Hospital Ship called the Delta, while our officers & luggage went on another boat, Col. McKee coming through to look after us, T.G.

The orders are to proceed to Mudros Bay, Lemnos Island, but whether we land there or not remains to be seen. In the mean time Mildred & I have only the clothes we stand in & they are now too cool; our nightlies & tooth brushes are with us thank fortune, which we carry in a canvas school bag bought in Alexandria, the ordinary decent kind being altogether too expensive. This ship is not quite so comfortable or nearly so large as the Asturias, but there is

nothing really to grumble at, & the meals are the best we have had since leaving home.

It seems very different for the Stewards & Sailors on the other boat were all English, but here the Stewards are French-Indian, only I should reverse that, & the Sailors from India, black, & Mohammedan. The latter wear supposedly white trousers, a blue shirt that comes to the knee, tied around the waist with an old & red bandana handker. & on their heads a cross between the red fez & turban.

The fighting in the Dardanelles as you no doubt have heard by now has been very heavy,

but suppose I mustn't enlarge on this, being a forbidden subject.
Well Sat. a.m. there were no orders but the O.C. wouldn't give anyone leave, & at 1 p.m. without a word we steamed out of the harbour, leaving the green water behind, & once again saw the wonderful blue sea of the Mediterranean.
To-day (Sunday) we have occasionally had a glimpse of one of the many islands, rising in the distance looking bare & barren; but just at sun-set a wonderful picture.
Mildred & I both went to 7 a.m. service, & of course again at 11. The Chaplin's only fairly interesting. ~~Wes.~~
We expect to arrive in the a.m. (Monday Aug. 16th) & I am posting this immediately in the hopes it will go direct. Hear knows when we will get any mail. There are heaps of interesting things to tell you, but we are put on our honour regarding mentioning troops, & as our letters are censored by members of our own unit think it wiser not to ~~tell~~ say too much about what I think of the various members.
~~I may be able to get so~~
Here our lights were put out so couldn't finish.

Monday a. m. Aug. 16th

We are just @ Lemnos but haven't reached the harbour yet — but must finish.

Heaps of love dear. & if you don't hear very regularly don't worry.

They say it is at least much cooler here — this is the only item on which all agree.

Always love

Tom Lollie.