

[postmarked June 28, 1915]

Hotel De Crillon
Place De La Concorde
Paris

My Darling Mother:

I am going to try to tell you about the *Lusitania*. Marjorie will wish to know some day, but I really think she should not hear the details yet. Please be very careful about this. It might have such a bad effect on her and the baby, but you know that better than I, of course.

You left us when they called out "All Ashore!" but I was sorry when I realized we might have had more time together. The ship did not sail for two hours after that; we were taking on passengers from the *Cameronia*, I was told.

When we pulled out of dock I was in the writing-room and saw then the first time in the morning *Sun* the German threat. I said to Mr. Friend; "That means of course that they intend to get us," though the name of the ship was not given. We were a very quiet shipload of passengers. I comforted myself with the thought that we would surely be convoyed when we reached the war zone. I talked with practically no one on board except Mr. Friend and Mme. Depage, as I was tired. The Purser changed my stateroom for one on the boat deck, as there was a very noisy family next [to] me and I could not sleep.

Early Thursday morning, the day before the disaster, I was awakened by shouts and the scuffling of feet. I looked out of my porthole and watched the crew loosening the ship's boats and swinging them clear of the railing. In the afternoon, Mr. Friend read me parts of Bergson's "Matiere et Memoire." Translating as he read. There were passages that illustrated so wonderfully some of the common difficulties in communication. They were most illuminating, and I could see the vividness of the inspiration they were to Mr. Friend; and as we sat side by side in our deck-chairs, I marveled to myself that such a man as Mr. Friend had been found to carry on the investigations. I felt very deeply the quality of my respect and admiration for him. He was endowed so richly in heart and

mind. I had built so much in my future of which he and his work were to have been so very large a part.

After Father's death, I had laboriously reconstructed my life and this structure has also gone. But my agony of mind has been for Marjorie and I have wondered if she would have the strength to see me return without him. I do not think she ought to see me yet. It will be much harder for her than she realizes and it would be too cruel to give her an additional shock.

Friday morning, we came slowly through fog, blowing our fog horn. It cleared off about an hour before we went below for lunch. A young Englishman at our table had been served to his ice cream and was waiting for the steward to bring him a spoon to eat it with; he looked ruefully at it and said he would hate to have a torpedo get him before he ate it. We all laughed, and then commented on how slowly we were running; we thought the engines had stopped.

Mr. Friend and I went up on deck B on the starboard side and leaned over the railing, looking at the sea which was a marvelous blue and very dazzling in the sunlight. I said, "How could the officers ever see a periscope there?" The torpedo was on its way to us at that moment, for we went a short distance farther toward the stern, turning the corner by the smoking room, when the ship was struck on the starboard side. The sound was like that of an arrow entering the canvas and straw of a target, magnified a thousand times and I imagined I heard a dull explosion follow. The water and timbers flew past the deck. Mr. Friend struck his fist in his hand and said, "By Jove, they've got us." The ship steadied herself a few seconds and then listed heavily to starboard, throwing us against the wall of a small corridor we had quickly turned into. We then started up to the boat deck, as I had told Mr. Friend and poor Robinson that, in case of trouble, we would meet there and not try to run around the ship to find another. The deck suddenly looked very strange, crowded with people, and I remember that two women were crying in a pitifully weak way. An officer was shouting orders to stop lowering the boats, and we were told to go down to deck B. We first looked over the rail and watched a boat filled with men and women being lowered. The stern was lowered too quickly and half the boatload were spilled backwards into the water. We looked at each other, sickened by the sight, and then made our way through the crowd for deck B on the starboard side.

There we saw boats lowered safely from above. The ship was sinking so quickly we feared she would fall on capsized the small boats, and it seemed not a good place to jump from for the same reason.

We turned to make our way up again through the crush of people coming and going. We walked close together side by side, each with an arm around the other's waist. We passed Mme. Depage, her eyes were wide and startled, but brave. She had a man on either side of her, friends of hers, so I did not speak. It was no time for words unless one could offer help.

On the port side of deck again we saw more boats safely lowered, and Mr. Friend wished me to join the throng of men and women crowding into one. He would not take a place in one as long as there were still women aboard and, as I would not leave him, we pushed our way towards the stern, which was now uphill work, as the bow was sinking so rapidly. Robinson appeared on my right. I could only put my hand on her shoulder and say, "Oh, Robinson." Her habitual smile appeared to be frozen on her face. Mr. Friend said, "Life belts!" and I went with him into nearby cabins, where he found three. He tied them on us in hard knots and we stood by the ropes on the outer side of the deck in the place which one of the boats had occupied. We looked up at the funnels; we could see the ship move, she was going so rapidly. I glanced at Mr. Friend – he was standing very straight, and I thought to myself, "the son of a soldier." We turned and looked down the side of the ship. We could now see the grey hull and knew it was time to jump. I asked him to go first. He stepped over the ropes, slipped down in the uprights and reached, I think, the rail of deck B, and then jumped. Robinson and I watched for him to come up, which he did in a few seconds, and he looked up at us to encourage us.

I said, "Come, Robinson," and I stepped over the ropes as he had, slipped short distance, found a foothold on a roll of the canvas used for the deck shields and then jumped. I do not know whether Robinson followed me.

The next thing I realized was that I could not reach the surface, because I was being washed and whirled up against wood. I was swallowing and breathing the salt water, but felt no special discomfort nor apathetic. I opened my eyes and through the green water I could see what I was being dashed up against. (It looked like the bottom and keel of one of the ship's boats.) It was the under part of a deck. I could see the

matched boarding and the angle iron over the railing. I had been swept between decks. I closed my eyes and thought, "This is of course the end of life for me," and then I thought of you, dearest mother, and knew that Gordon would be a comfort to you. I was glad I had made another will, and I counted the buildings I had designed – the ones built and building, and hoped I had "made good. Quietly I thought of the friends I love and then committed myself to God's care in thought – a prayer without words. I must then have received the blow on the top of my head which made me unconscious. My stiff straw hat and my hair probably saved me from being killed by it. Then for perhaps half a minute I opened my eyes on a grey world; I could not see the sunlight because of the blow on my head. I was surrounded and jostled by hundreds of frantic, screaming, shouting humans in the grey and watery inferno. The ship must have gone down.

A man insane with fright was clinging to my shoulders. I can see the panic in the eyes as he looked over my head. He had no life belt on and his weight was pulling me under again. Had I struggled against him, he would probably have clung to me, but I never even felt the inclination to. I said, "Oh please don't" and then the water closed over me and I became unconscious again. He must have left me when he found me sinking under him. I opened my eyes later on the brilliant sunlight and blue sea. I was floating on my back. The men and women were floating with wider spaces between them. A man on my right had a gash on his forehead; the back of a woman's head was near me. I saw an old man at my left, upright in the water and, as he could see the horizon, I asked him if he saw any rescue ships coming. He did not. An Italian, with his arms around a small tin tank as a float was chanting. There were occasional shouts; I could see the crowded ship's boats far away. I wondered where Mr. Friend was. I noticed the water felt warm and saw an oar. I reached for it and pushed one end of it toward the old man on my left, and then as my heavy clothes kept dragging me down, I lifted my right foot over the blade of the oar, and held it with my left hand. This helped to save me. I tried to lift my head a little to see for myself if there was not some aid coming. Then I sank back very relieved in my mind, for I decided it was too horrible to be true and that I was dreaming, and again lost consciousness. This was about three o'clock.

The next thing I was aware of was looking into was a small open grate fire. This was half past ten at night and I was in the captain's cabin on the rescue ship *Julia*. I decided that the opening of the grate measured about 18x24 inches; I did not remember the shipwreck. I saw a pair of grey trowsered legs by the fireplace and, turning my head, saw a man leaning over a table, looking at me where I lay wrapped in a blanket on the floor. I heard him say, "she's conscious" and two women came up to me and patted me and told me the doctor was coming. I thought they looked alike and asked them if they were sisters and what their names were. When I tried to talk, I found that I was shaking from head to foot in a violent chill, through there were hot stones at my feet and back. A doctor came and picked me up, calling two sailors, who made a chair with their hands and lifted me. I was too stupid to hold on to them and fell back, but the doctor caught me by the shoulders and I was carried off the ship and through the crowds on the dock, and the sailors shouting "Way, way!" They lifted me into a motor and in a few moments we stopped at what proved to be a third-rate hotel.

I told the doctor I could step out of the car myself, but in trying to, I crumpled up on the sidewalk and was picked up and carried in. I was left on a lounge in a room full of men in all sorts of strange garments, while the proprietress hurried to bring me brandy. The Englishman of our table, who had been so anxious to eat his ice cream, was in a pink dressing-gown; he came and sat by me. I asked him if he had seen Mr. Friend. He shook his head without answering. I was given brandy and with help walked up stairs and was put in bed. All night I kept expecting Mr. Friend to appear, looking for me. All night long, men kept coming into our room, snapping on the lights, bringing children for us to identify, taking telegrams, getting our names for the list of survivors, etc. etc. I kept asking officials for news of Mr. Friend and giving a description of him.

A civil engineer who lives near Hartford and knew of me took it upon himself to look everywhere for Mr. Friend – in hotels and hospitals and private houses. He returned every two or three hours, brought no news. I will write more now of that night and my illness and frightful anxiety about Mr. Friend.

Three days later, when I was taken to Cork by Mr. and Mrs. Haughton, I became convinced that Mr. Friend was delirious from injury and unidentified and Mr. Haughton, at my request, put notices in two papers for a week. I simply cannot write any more

about it now. Write soon and often to me, my darling mother. Tell Marjorie I have written, perhaps you can judge if she would better read this. She must take no risk.

P.S. Did Mr. Haughton tell you of the way in which I was saved? Mrs. Naish, to whom in a great measure I owe my life, saw me pulled on board with boat hooks; the oar had worked up under my knee and kept me afloat. I was the last one rescued by that ship and was laid on deck with the dead. Mrs. Naish touched me and says I felt like a sack of cement, I was so stiff with salt water. She was convinced I could be saved and induced two men to work over me, which they did for two hours, after cutting my clothes off with a craving knife hastily brought from the dining saloon. They say that one suffers greatly in being restored from drowning, but I was totally unconscious of it all, owing to the effect of the blow on my head, and was unconscious for some time after breathing was restored; had also severe bruise above and below my right eye, which disfigured me by swelling and discoloration. I seem to have escaped several separate deaths in a miraculous way and yet I truly believe here was no one the ship who valued life as little as I do. I had told Mr. Friend one day as we stood by the rail, that if the Germans did torpedo us, I hoped he would be saved to carry on the work we had so much at heart.

I have tried to tell you it carefully, but I cannot dwell on it.

Thy,

Theo.