

On board the good ship Montoro, approaching  
Surabaya, Java, February 18, 1921.

Dear Peggy,

What do you suppose I saw from the boat when I got up in the morning a day or two ago and looked off across the sea? There was a beautiful green land full of sharp steep hills and mountains, and one of the mountains seemed to think it was a smoke stack or a stove or a bonfire or something hot and smoky. Right out of the top of the mountain came two streams of smoke and they rose up until the wind blew them to one side in a long gray streak across the sky.

But there was more than smoke coming out of the mountain. Something hot was running out of the tip top of the mountain and sliding and slithering down the steep sides and making hot white steam come up from the rocks, and nearest to the bottom there was smoke from burning plants. Do you know the name of the kind of mountain that has fire inside and spits out hot melted stones and ashes? If you don't, Mother does, and she will tell you all about it after you have undressed and crawled into your downy beds to-night.

There are quite a number of young children on the boat and they seem to have a pretty good time most of the time; the rest of the time they spend quarreling and making each other unhappy. Children are funny that way, aren't they? One little boy has a coaster and likes to slide down the deck and see if the old men and fat ladies can get out of the way in time. Another has a scooter made like an aeroplane, and he rolls around the deck and gets tangled up with the scooter.

The grown up people play too, and some time they almost quarrel, but not often. The other evening they all dressed up to look like other people than themselves. One man borrowed a sailor suit from one of the Malay sailors, and painted his nose red. Another was dressed in a Chinaman's clothes. One of the young ladies made her own costume and won the first prize. She didn't have to have much for her costume, because she dressed like a South Sea Islander. Two of the ladies blacked themselves all up and wore coal sacks and old clothes and showed their white teeth and grinned the way they thought Australian aborigines would do, and they did very well at that. One of them won the second prize. No, I don't know what the prizes are like, not having won any as yet. Your lovely mother wasn't here to pin me up in a bath towel and turn me loose in a brilliantly lighted ballroom to represent Moses in the bull rushes or the Knight of the Bath. So I had to let others take all the prizes.

Now I want you to do something for me, Peggy dear; just kiss lovely Mother for me, and help her all you can, and take the best care of her until I get back. Tell Gertrude and Ruthie that I think of them every day and wish I were home to play with all three of you. I can just imagine the way you three will chase poor old Papa around the dining room until he falls over a chair or breaks something or gets caught and tumbled over by his fierce little daughters,

Good Night, Sweetie,

Papa,