

Lagoa, Santa Catharina

February 25 1920

Dear Eleanor:

Here are two long salt-water lakes with a sharp range of granite hills to the east, falling off negligently to the north to let in the fish into these lakes, and at the south to let in the cold rains from the Argentine. Behind us the hills on the west-- we are in a flat sand lagoon -- and if we had a glimpse of surf I think the sunrises here w'd be about as fine as anything I have ever seen. It comes so suddenly here, the dawn is so clean too, and the colors are everything you can think of, with distant island-mountains, bamboo and banana greenness, and fish jumping out of misty flame pink water. It is good to climb up on the railing of the crude bridge across the narrowest part of the lagoon, and while everything is still bright pink and breezes just beginning, leave the blanket behind, see the fish below you scatter in that short but priceless flash before you're in the water, and crash in for a small swim before the 'gente' begin to arrive and you play the role of sanhor doutor once more. I do like the in-the-air part of diving-- you never get enough of it.

I spent a liberal and very agreeable evening in the U.S. last night for the simple reason that I decided yesterday to give up any idea of going there till at least a year from now! Isn't that an odd thing, that when you give something up you get it in all its pleasant flavor of an evening, and if you refuse to give it up you don't have it at all. Quite a trite lesson to learn at this advanced age, I suppose-- but the age you learn it at doesn't make any difference after all. What a funny thing twould be to be brought up without any sense of what was old-- and then nothing would be tarnished by moral bromide.

Your trip to the Rocky Mountains sounds grand. I

cant accept the invitation to join much as I should like to. But the Rocky Mountains have one advantage that I have always been keen about-- they feel your own as you look at them and you dont have to discount any of your pride because they may belong to some one else. And besides that they are very clean and cool and make you feel as if the air was all through you as well as all around, and they dont allow a stuffy feeling, like waking up in a Pullman car. There is a place I am going to see when I get home: it is on top of Cameron's Cone and I am going to take a donkey and camp there a week and evry morning I can watch the sun rise over Colorado Springs and the plains and the evenings I can look at the Peak or down in Crystal Park in the nice purple gloaming that it used to have when I was a kid. The delightful part of this idea is that I am going to do it.

I rather wish I was in the Tyrol or the Dolomites or better in Vienna spending my time on people who have had some fun out of civilized life and dont want to lose it all, here it is a little different for they have never had any civilization and I am sceptical about the possibilities of their being able to carry it. Like shaving, to which barbarism was originally contrasted, civilization takes a certain amount of daily energy, and I am doubtfull if it is worth the time with the people who havent already gotten the idea, and somewhat into practise. I get very low at the news from abroad, I would rather be over in it again.

Dont adopt two neurotic Jew babies, Eleanor, that's flying in the face of their instincts. They like to be in much higher dilutions-- one in twenty or fifty is about right-- then the neurottenner they are the better, but they'll be very domifugal if you have 'em too crowded. You ouhgt to get a wee Scot with yaller fuzz so 'st the Jew'll be misunderstood in his childhood even if you cant misunderstand him. What good is understanding for an artist-- it ruins em. Your plan reminds me of a saying at the Medical School "Oh well everybody has

his pet Jew". Which despite the Middle Ages and many trips to New York City and all the other examples of race hatred I think of is still true, and the funny part of it is that we like our one pet Jew quite a lot; and feel very warm and liberal about it all. I know a few I like a lot but like Americans and English and French and Germans they are apt to have friends you cant care so much for.

We have been down here in this little place nearly a week and have done almost nothing at all because the people are disconfiado and are sure that there is a string to this charity somewhere. So I have lost all my natives to be amused at and life has been very very slow. The sun is amazingly intense at noon and we have to pile out across a long field of mandioca to get to a dirty little store where we have bananas and hot chicken soup and jerked beef and weak lemon pop and coffee and very tough rolls. So that after the return journey --and I hate to always walk in a slow aimless digesting sort of way after every meal--we all fall on our cots and sleep, while the sun rolls across the north of the sky and finally the afternoon breeze starts up. People in the U.S. only guess at the stupidity and backwardness of these countries-- it is hard to imagine that if your best friend was bitten by a rattle snake you would not be able to get 7 dollars to buy a syringe to cure him-- but no; the people leave all that and shrug their shoulders, saying that they are very poor,-- and the next day he is much worse. They refuse evrything but what is put in their hands and use even that sparingly.

The ^rescivao has just arrived to pay a call. He pays one each day and says "Entao como vae?" and then sits around for half an hour or so saying nothing at all, which gets to me sooner or later and I start typewriting again and he watches for about ten minutes and then goes out and talks to my men, who are not bothered by a silence that is unhappy and a speech thht says nothing at all. It is a country where you talk not as some say to revert the sooner to silence, but for the form

the choice of words and the oratorical beauty of it all.
 Well you can imagine the unbearable boredom of listening
 to them six and eight each in a harsh voice proclaiming the
 beauties and wealth of Brazil or screaming jeremiads against
 the politicians who talk and do nothing! So I take to work
 and all evening long the noise of their arguments keeps
 me from falling asleep over it--- but to listen to it -
 Nevair!

Good luck and thanks for the letter



Malaria in Hoochow

8 yrs

Lagoa February 26 1920

Dear ... Here I am on the north side of this house and it in the quiet and rapidly getting hotter kind of a morning with everything very green and pleasant looking but the air very very close. We are waiting to clear out and around the porch of the old wireless station which we have used for a laboratory are still the victims of this mornings treatment waiting round for their final dose. The automobile will come over the hill about three hours from now and my trip to Rio will soon be beginning. Hurray for that trip to Rio!

Bamboo here grows in big feathery clusters called bamboozals which are a perfect paradise for birds --if the noise they make from the cool green inside is anything to go by. There is one that they call Alma de Gato or Soul of a Cat which is just like a kitten wandering round half lost and half enjoying it. Then there are a lot of perfectly wonderful humming birds of all colors and in a field nearby some wonderfully tame pheasants-- so that it is rather pleasant to sit out in all this pleasant weather and see the birds in a bamboozal like this. I am completely bamboozaled by it.

Well, wouldnt it be a nice thing to find you in Rio when I get there. ? You would be bored to tears there is so little to do as to theatres and dances etc. but you would like it when the new moon shines down there and all the smell of the tropical plants and all the bright plaster houses and all the strange part of it struck you. The beauty of it is hard to bear at times-- it really is !

I am getting so used to Brazil now that a lot of it doesnt seem strange to me anymore. But I am a long way from thinking of staying here for good. The people are not amusing and not being among my own people at all gets tiresome after a good long while. But I havent seen anything like the Brazil I want to see before going home and it may be that I'll have a few adventures yet before I turn home. I hope so.

The good old cigarette holder continues to hold out in splen-

dor and usefulness and gathers compliments unto its giver
 evry little while. I am still looking for something to
 fit neatly over your fet neck or put more zip if it were
 possible into that cute little face of yours-- Gosh it
 will be a long time before I forget it and that's the
 truth. Why arent you there in Rio---waiting for me in
 white silk at the International for dinner up there on
 the terrace above the bay! Damn it I wish Brazil wasnt
 such a rotten place for girls to stay in-- and there'd be
 more here, as you might say.
 I have just had a half hour's symptoms from a local
 beauty-- and I am glad the Americans dont come if that is
 the result of Brazil on vimmen.



Geeta's cousin

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November 20th 1920

Conceição de Arroio

Rio Grande do Sul

This has been a grand day of travel. Tomorrow I shall see crocodiles and pink flamingoes, but today I have seen white cranes and little wild ostriches called here avestruzes, and I think in our geographies emus.

Yesterday I got up at 5 in the Grande Hotel in Porto Alegre said goodbye to a youth named McGurk with whom I had been rooming and took a nigger-driven barouche to a funny little wharf owned by one Edmundo Dreher. There was a queer little side-wheeler the Camaquam, which consisted of a Captains wheel house and cabin combined, and a large stateroom filled by the clothes of an old couple about 75, and a lower deck which was lunge and dining saloon combined in back and engine and boiler room in front and cargo space in the middle. Thus coming down the stairs one landed on sacks of salt and cans of Standard Oil or Brindilla kerosene, to your left standing bored looking mulatto engineers and to the right a saloon full of gente arriving. A curious smell of lemons leather and oil.

All day we sidwheeled through mud colored water, I reading and thus greatly impressing some of the passengers who see a book very rarely. Brazil in a year imports the printed matter that Argentine takes in a month, and Argentine only 8 million to Brazil's 20 or 25. At por do sol or sun set we peacefully ran on a bar, and with no swearing from the Captain nor impatience from the passengers quietly settled down to chicken soup and beans and rice, three kinds of beef, and coffee. Then the leading citizen on board told about a recent experience of his in being among those poisoned by arsenic, and a stern fat woman unravelled the motives of the culprit to her own satisfaction and to a dumb audience, the first citizen being too canny to interrupt her. I very soon went to sleep on the lounge and woke up occasionally to see all my frineds in all the usually agonized positions sleeping and snoring. Possibly the least artistic thing in the world.

November 20th 1930
By seven o'clock we were sliding up a still river over-hung

with low flat trees with long wavy grey moss on the lower

side of the branches and cactus, orchids and gravata on the

upper side-- looking like a big tangle of everything green

all the way up to the top. There were lots of blue heron

and a bright green jagged-backed young crocodile who didn't

move enough to make me sure I have seen a live one yet.

There was a bird on the reeds, jet black with a thick finch

beak and a crest and head as bright a scarlet as you could

imagine. After many curves we came up along a big crude

stores building along the and I got out thinking it was

Palmares. There were a dozen or so big two-wheel oxcarts,

wheels I think the broadest and largest I have ever seen

and thatched with rushes woven in a broad arch, with an

cow-hide untanned over one end. It is used for all the heavy

carriage here and is drawn by six pairs of oxen all stung

out in a line of pairs, a horseman or two to take care of

the affair with a long pole. They oil the axles here so

you don't hear the unending squeaking and humming of the

carro de boi of the North. On asking for Dr George Roy

an engineer to whom I had a letter from the Secretary of

State (last company these days!) I was told by a very

pretty and fearfully bashful little Dutch girl that he

was la adiante and so I went to find him.

Sure enough out came a short little Frenchman

speaking such terrific Portuguese that I asked him to

say it in French which he was only too glad to do and

we had a grand time. He has been in one place or another

in 26 years outside of France-- several years in Tonkin

with the French Chinese "empire builders" and then in Mexico

the last one in the Argentine except for the war time when

he was in France. A very cheerful soul indeed who was awfully

nice to me and took very good care of my food and drinks.

He waved me into his quarters with a grand gesture but found

a hen nesting on the bed which he was too kindhearted to

shoo out, and who watched me shave in the noncommittal attentive way that hens have, but laid no eggs for me, all that, and also in spite of my polite silence.

Dr George Roy is the Chief of a railroad which the French are building here-- perhaps the the queerest I have ever seen. The guage is 60 cm, which makes the width of the cars just wide enough for two people and a tiny passageway. The engine wouldnt work, so we had dinner, and then afterwards the Spanish Chief Engineer (he had one mulatto helper to distinguish him thus) sent in word as happy as a kid at Christmas that the engine would work after all. Dr George was not to be fooled, and had three mules hitched to a buckboard as un autre corde de mon arc and amidst a perfectly gratuitous and luxurious whistle we set off over the green prairie in the rain, sitting up on two benches right behind the engine. Numerous birds started up very near as the road has not been running very long, and the excited pleasure of the engineer and the Superintendent of Construction grew simply boundless as we passed the tenth kilometer without a breakdown, and perhaps ten yards ahead of the mules. We suddenly realised we needed more water-- out jumped the engineer and raked out half the fire while the fireman clattered down the track to borrow a bucket at the last ranch we'd passed. Then for twenty minutes they emptied muddy water into the machina, and soon we went away again, later to meet a deserted engine and a few cars on the track. Out we got again, and dumped the cars off the track, and decided to push the engine in front. Suddenly we came to the end of the line. The cambion that had come to meet us for the 35 remaining kilometers was broken down in mid prairie. The little Frenchman told me "Restez tranquille" and we both got into the buckboard behind the mules. Six hours more said he would see us at the hotel in Conceicao de Arroio. It had stopped raining a little and I didnt care.

The prairie was too interesting. It was quite flat, and in some directions stretched off to the horizon without a break in its green smoothness. But in many places you could see bamboo hedges and trees surrounding some far distant ranch-house, looking like Arnold Boecklin's Toteninsel, in a vast sea of prairie. Sometimes one was close enough to see the white plaster house and the red tile roof, or the thatched outbuildings and the bamboo lattice work of the walls. But usually from a distance only the green trees and bamboos leaning together over an unseen house. The prairie was bright green, our path was the smoother stretches of grass, almost like a lawn, and shallow puddles and poals were everywhere. A gray bird about as high as a chicken but much thinner, with a slow deliberate and rather choosy walk, gray on the body, with pure white wings edged with a broad black stripe, was on all sides and very tame. The name for it is quero-quero from the cry, and it has a beautiful way of flying in unison. We saw queros quite close thinking they were hiding (ten feet away) and white cranes nabbing frogs quite undisturbed. Then came a Ford over the hill and as it was for us we got in and rocked away at twice the speed for the low line of blue mountains to the west. The ostriches were not at all frightened when we caught up on some I got out and tried to get a picture and they rattled away easily-- they are only half the size of African ostriches but are really prettier and more graceful. I got about within 50 yards up to them before they got frightened. Then suddenly we got to a place where the houses with bamboos around them began to be bunched together and turning a corner we found a big green square with an old church in the centre and pink and white and blue houses all around it, --- which was Conceicao do Arcoio.

It had stopped raining a little and I didn't care.

Sunday the 21 of November 1920

I am for the moment the king of the Bungaloos ! I am in a special boat chartered for my benefit and going a three day journey along a string of lakes. It is a humorous journey and there are some 23 men crowding into the cabin to see this process -- really a very funny sight, great big brown devils with hip boots crowding round and saying " Barbaridade!" and "Tao ligeira!" --- the first time a good many of them have ever seen a typewrite. Now that the ones who were here at first have stopped calling in their friends and the crush has abated the discussion has turned on the advantages of being educated and the amazing skill it requires to run a typewriter ! The things are synonomous.

It has happened this way. The question of where we would establish a post down in the State of Rio Grande do Sul came up and I had to decide the place and when. So the Secretary of State Dr Protasio Alves gave me a letter that must have said a good deal more than it seemed, for when I gave it to a very good little French engineer named Dr George Roy, he simply put everything at my disposition and I have a large sidewheeler to myself with the only drawback that I have to take the large part of the voters of the town of Tramandahy home after the election and the caboose of the boat is cheia de gente which is so much more than merely full of people would be.

Eastward we have a few dunes and then the sea, westward a range of irregular and heavily wooded hills, and we are winding in and out over a long chain of shallow lakes which tomorrow will be more a long swampy river and there I shall have great fun. Fun because I have never seen a crocodile in nature yet, nor any pink flamengo's, but these I am assured we shall pass in great abundance. And tonight after the voters have gotten off the boat I shall be boss of it completely and shall have to do nothing but command the ship to ~~WXY~~ weigh anchor early in the A.M. That will be my idea of a good time-- and I luckily

brought plenty of films and I certainly do hope I can get something worth while.

The notes I made about the frogs eggs proved to be about as accurate as most of the information you get from Brazilians about their own flora and fauna. They are exceptionally unreliable it seems to me-- a duck and a robin a passaros --- and beyond that not much distinction is made! I opened some of the beautiful pink eggs and there was curled up the nicest little snail shell, the open front part yellowish and the finer spiral part a very bright cochineal red color. This tiny shell were floating in a gluey fluid, but were very plainly nothing to do with frogs at all.

Two customs which I have noticed again here but which I have not made any note of before I think are worth mentioning. When the steward came in to light the lamp on the Camaquam he turned to everybody as soon as the flame was going and said solemnly "Boa Noite!" and everybody answered "Boa Noite!". This I have seen widespread here but the other trick I noticed may not be so common for I have never seen it before. When a girl about 19 came into the breakfast room at about 6 in the A.M. she first went to what was either her brother or a very indifferent husband and waiting patiently for him to outstretch his hand finally took it rather perfunctorily, as I thought, and kissed it. I heard her say no "Bom Dia!" nor did he either.

Tramandahy proved to be a desolate sort of Provincetown-in-the-winter sort of a place and as the wind was high we rocked all night at anchor and in the morning went on to the bamboo surrounded fazenda of one Diehl where we telephoned for more gasoline. And finally towards dusk tied up in the lee of a mud bank-- Barro de Joao Pedro-- and when it was morning the sky had almost cleared and I knew it would be warm enough for the jacares (crocodiles) to be out when we got to them.

Along the river and even on the reeds in the Lagoa dos Barros there was a great abundance of bright salmon pink splotches about $3/4$ of an inch wide and 2 inches long. I thought at first that these were eggs of some moth, but the invariably wet and exposed positions were contradictory, so I asked what they were. Frogs eggs! The individual eggs were 0 size a bright pink glue on the inside and pink but with a powdery white color on the shell which was a little stiff. On breaking one the glue dried very quickly and the big Dutchmen told me they used a paste of the eggs for sores in horses-- they cured immediately was his observation.

In these plains there is an enormous number of cattle nearly all wild and when the engine came near they hurried away over the smooth prairie at a great rate. Occasional horsemen passed by with palla or poncho sweeping down from their necks to cover almost completely man and his horse. They have a curiously dignifying effect; the rider seems to be sitting very erect and still and moves with his horse as one piece. We passed two men in the late afternoon who had encamped in the lee of a bamboo grove with their huge waggons providing shelter, for they use the tongue of the wagon as ridge-pole for a rawhide or canvas tent. They were lassoing ^a stakes on the end of the wagon tongue. The lasso here is always fine braided rawhide. They were hauling railroad ties in these big carts which take 50 to 65 ties (short and small of course) and get 60\$000 for the load which takes some 5 to 7 days (sometimes 4 to 5). This is with a normal exchange \$15.00 but here has more value if they do not buy foreign goods-- which there is scarcely an opportunity to do. Just as on the Amazon where 3 kilometers from Manaus you're in the jungle, here one has to go but a very short distance from Porto Allegre to slide back 200 years into the middle ages of agriculture, religion, medicine, music, and many customs. They plant by hand, they buy blessings for

the mares, they wrap up a compound fracture of the tibia in a dirty bandage and leave it till the owner dies, they sing Gregorian music mixed in with the carnival music of two years ago--- perhaps 200 years is stretching it a little. But bastante atrazado it certainly is.

Today is election day--- the hoteleiro begged my pardon for the noise that he is sure will take place here in the hotel about lunch time ! Muito barrulho sem qualquer duvida, Doutor.

There was barrulho, some hundred and fifty tall dark men in high boots or in sandals and clinking and jangling with spurs were drifting in and out all day long. The election as usual here was absolutley uncontested-- there was no other candidate than the intendente of Borges de Medeiros' party. The newly elected Intendente when I met him in the evening remark that Cox's telegram of congratulation to Harding was "correctissimo" and a phenomenon you'd never see in Brazil between two parties.

The day after the election Monday-no Sunday morning early Dr George Roy the little Frenchman took me down to where the dredge was getting its deadly work in and showed me with pride a cut from which they had taken 400,000 cubic meters with an apparatus built on the spot with every bit of iron hauled 60 kilometers in carro de boi. The dredge was built there too and really seems to be a very effective apparatus -- though I'm a better judge of aspiration apparatus than dredges.

He had to warn me several times of going into huts saying "Dont go in there! It's all bicho de pe there!" And sure enough a few days after I was digging one out of my foot. Three of his workers have had to stop work altogether and it is pathetic to see some of the dogs. Fleas too are no joke in this good ship "General Ozorio".

Leaving Corneilhos --which was a venda with a rather graceful
old tree sprawled out over the roof, a little pink chapel
with BOM JESUS written over it, and a few little hovels
with sick children sunning themselves or lying on the floor
saring at us-- we started up a winding stream through a huge
marsh that stretches for miles between the ocean sand dunes
to the east and the irregular flat topped mountains to the
west and north west. Not five minutes later I was seeing
one crocodile after another flop off the low banks and dis-
appear in the muddy water, or if at a greater distance
stealthily glide into the stream and wait with his head and
evil eyes just showing above the water until we were perhaps
twenty feet from him when he would whisk out of sight.
They are evil beasts to watch-- outright ferocity would be
more agreeable than this non-committal ~~xxxx~~ silent
guileful retirement. The size I did not remember to
estimate and memories are unreliable. Their eyes are wonder-
fully placed, on the top of their heads and elevated just
enough to be the last thing to disappear, periscope like
beneath the muddy water.

I never have seen such an amazing variety and number
of fresh water birds-- many I never have seen the like of before.
There was a huge goose with black and white wings and a gray
body and a very short face covered with red wattles. There
were lots of bigua, an ungainly duck like thin blackish
brown bird with a long sharp beak, that looked and dived much
like a loon. There was a black hen like looking one with
a red face, and two white patches on its wings, that almost
always ran and couched in the reeds rather than fly. One huge
black and white stork and another soft blue gray crane
and a beautiful little golden brown bird about the size of
a pheasant and a habit of holding up its almost transparent
golden wings when it alit. And another---but so it went on
fifteen or so new birds that I watched with the binoculars

from the prow of the boat. I would like with a ~~small~~
canoe to spend two weeks like a savage in these ~~marsh~~
swamps, sleeping when he world about me sleeps and
feeding and wandering through the long days with the
peaceful content that comes with practice at living
so. The more one notices of living things the more
completely does the Scotchman's remark express the
situation -- "It's a grand life if ye don't weaken".
It does not seem to be as much of a universal slaugh-
ter house as it is considered by some. ~~Death that~~
Death that has been preceded by some few "crowded
hours of glorious life" is no great tragedy, and
death that ends a life of misery and insufficiency
and sickness is a relief---- in nature these are the
two varieties. The death we abhor is the one of our
own making--- we keep putting off the crowded hour
and suddenly comes the end before we have run our race
and had our fling--- then of course it is bitter, and
of our own making the more poignant. But here in the
swamps if there is an abundance of food there are more
strong morrhens and more strong-winged ducks that sur-
vive all the other struggles of living and the hawks
live on the excess weaklings-- which must bear some
fairly constant ratio to the total. To me wild life seems
a less brutal balance than I was taught to believe it,
and civilised goings-on considerably more so !

I always feel in places like this the way
you feel when two very agreeable looking people are
talking a language you cannot understand and but half
catch the ideas of. There is some sort of communion in
the wilderness that strangers cannot enter into with-
out a year or so of novitiate-- and perhaps much more
than mere time is involved as well.