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② Still at sea,

23-10-41

Dear Mum and Dad,

This is our second Thursday the 23rd this week, as since I last wrote we have crossed the International Date Line, and have gone back a day. At the moment, however, I am not feeling the loss very acutely.

Yesterday we called in at our first port since leaving Auckland. Expect censorship would not allow me to reveal its name, but we were given shore leave and had a great time. We were driven all over the island in trucks, and saw about all you could want to see - unless you are like Dad, who doesn't miss the smallest details. Later Thos, another chap and I inspected the sights at close range. It was a beautiful sight to watch as we sailed up the harbour in the early morning, and out again in the evening.

You should have seen the three of us in the middle of a clamouring horde of black, frizzy-headed natives, all attempting at the

some time to sell us beads, wooden knives and what-nots. I have picked up one or two little souvenirs and bought some views around the place which I'll send home as opportunity offers.

I had hoped to come across Doug. Burtis somewhere around, but he was nowhere in sight and the station was too far away for me to reach. I'm sorry I missed, but it couldn't be helped.

This morning we are again out of sight of land, and I saw flying-fish playing (or working) alongside the ship. Dad has probably seen them - they are cute little critters, capable of only a short dash a little above the surface of the blue Pacific. And by the way, you really don't know how blue the sea can be until you see its colours away in the middle of the ocean as the sun plays upon it.

Under the influence of the one or two Americans to whom I have spoken I am

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beginning to develop an American twang, and can talk very learnedly about "bucks," "dimes," "nickels" and so on. Our waiter has been of considerable assistance to me in this respect, though without knowing it.

According to all reports we have been very fortunate with the weather. At our halting-place yesterday we were told that until just a couple of days before our arrival it had been raining incessantly. Right now there isn't a cloud in sight, and there is a cool breeze blowing along the deck.

Sometimes the sea seems very empty of life, but just a little time ago some huge fish was giving us a jumping performance a mile or so out to port.

Under the influence of the sea air I have developed an appetite which positively appals our waiter. He is a long-suffering man and he brings me course after course with commendable patience, but he obviously looks upon me as something out of the ordinary

in shipboard appetites. He thinks I'm going to be sick one of these days, but so far I have not had any trouble.

There are ~~three~~ ^{three} quite well-known wrestlers amongst the passengers, and this afternoon they put on a great show for us - it was 75 per cent comedy, and they wound up by dumping the ref. in the swimming pool.

I think that's all, so I'll close with love from

Donald F.