

THE COLLECTED LETTERS
OF JOSEPH CONRAD

VOLUME 6

1917–1919

EDITED BY

LAURENCE DAVIES
FREDERICK R. KARL

AND

OWEN KNOWLES



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To B. Macdonald Hastings

Text MS Colgate; Unpublished

[Capel House]

Friday. [September 1916–February 1917]¹

My dear Hastings.²

This is V. G.

Let Jones sleep-walk. It's hardly worth while to exercise our ingenuity in discovering another method of getting psychology into this thing. I was much struck with a remark you made in the dressing room: – that “if this is worth doing at all it's for the money in it”. Just so. And from that point of view Irving³ must be looked after first, last, and all the time.

Am interested to see how you use my speeches in the play. My idea of adap^{on} was quite different: Preserve frame, shape, intention, quite intact – but use other words adapted for scene and conveying also things which in novel pertain to narr[at]i^{ve} and comment. You go the other way: make short work of the frame but preserve the words.

The Lena-Jones (dying) scene would be hardly “adaptation”. It's something “out of the record” altogether. You see what I mean? But this is no protest. Merely a remark. No doubt it would be “Grateful and comforting” (you remember Epps' adver[tisem]^{ents}) to the audience and, if they *must* have cocoa . . . Yes. This is a cocoa age, in art.⁴ Only pray remember that one can't say what an audience *will* stand (or swallow) till you try them.

¹ The stationery (ruled MS paper) is undateable. This text could fit anywhere between September 1916, when the correspondence shows a similar preoccupation with Jones's misogyny, and February 1917, when Hastings delivered a completely revised script; in March 1917 it became clear that Irving wished to play Heyst rather than Jones. This letter apparently concerns a sample scene or fragment of scenario. The original meeting with Irving took place at the Garrick Club. The meeting in Irving's dressing-room mentioned here may have occurred while Conrad was passing through London on Admiralty business; he also refers to this meeting in the letter to Hastings of 22 January.

² Basil Macdonald Hastings (1881–1928) had already written several plays and collaborated on two others with Eden Phillpotts. Having originally joined the army, he applied for transfer to the Royal Flying Corps. While an officer-cadet, he began a magazine, *The Fledgling*, which carried Conrad's essay ‘Never Any More’ (‘Flight’). The dramatisation of *Victory* had a successful run at London's Globe Theatre in 1919. After the war, Hastings worked as a journalist, becoming drama critic of the *Daily Express* in 1924. *Ladies Half-Way* (1927), his autobiography, gives further details of his collaboration with Conrad and throws light on the latter's habitual attitudes to the theatre and actors.

³ The actor-manager Henry Brodribb Irving (1870–1919), lessee of the Savoy Theatre, had made the original connection between Hastings and Conrad: see *Letters*, 5, pp. 573, 623–4. By the end of 1917, he had lost interest in the play.

⁴ An age which offered artistic cocoa instead of headier beverages. ‘Temperance’ advocates, who were especially vocal during the war, promoted alcohol-free ‘cocoa-taverns’. During the intervals in the theatrical performances, advertisements for Epps's Cocoa and other products were projected onto the safety curtain.

And if you only make Jones Big enough (for Irving) they will swallow a lot. As to his dislike of women I am damned if I know what to say. They have spoiled so many of his little games before perhaps? Don't forget however that there is a strain of peculiar craziness about the gentleman. The novel only faintly suggests it. On stage it may pay if Irving will try honestly. Something temperamental rather than mental. He's in fact an unusual sort of crank. Voyez-Vous ça?

Yours sincerely

J. C.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]

Tuesday. [2 January 1917]¹

My dear Pinker ²

The Eng: Rev: has I believe changed its address so I must ask you to request A[ustin] H[arrison] to send me proofs of the VI inst^{mt}.³

The secretary thinks she has sent them to me some time ago. But I am certain (after a careful search) that they are not in the house. Assure also A. H. that I never meant disrespect to the Review by letting 2 instal^{ts} go in uncorrected. I am very sorry. As to the IVth I went to sea in a hurry.⁴ With the Vth the fault lies with my muddle-headedness as after looking for it here I finally allowed myself to be overtaken by time. Very stupid of me.

I am carrying on the Ad[miral]ty art: and the story abreast.⁵ I have been however somewhat gouty for a couple of days. However the article will be

¹ According to the letter of 'Wednesday evg.' [3 January], Borys last wrote on 20 December; the first Tuesday in January would be eleven or so days after the arrival of Borys's postcard.

² James Brand Pinker (1863–1922) began his working life as a clerk at Tilbury Docks. After three years in Constantinople on the staff of the *Levant Herald*, he returned to England as assistant editor of *Black and White*, a magazine known for its fiction and jaunty drawings. In January 1896, he went into business as a literary agent – one of the first in London. Over the years his clients included Ford, James, Crane, Wells, Bennett, and D. H. Lawrence. He began acting for Conrad in 1900 and helped him through many financial crises, but a serious quarrel in 1910 suspended their relationship for several months and strained it for many more. By the spring of 1912, however, they were closer than ever.

³ Austin Harrison (1873–1928), editor of the *English Review*, where *The Shadow-Line* was appearing at the time.

⁴ Having been offered the chance of a North Sea voyage in the *Ready*, a submarine decoy camouflaged as a merchant ship, in November 1916.

⁵ Presumably the article was 'The Unlighted Coast', published posthumously in *The Times*, 18 August 1925, and in *Last Essays*. The Admiralty had commissioned this and other, never-written, pieces to depict the work of the Royal Naval Reserve. The story would become *The Arrow of Gold*, which, like most of his novels, Conrad first envisaged on a small scale. On

with you soon. I am anxious also to unload the story but that will take a little longer.

Ever Yours aff^{ly}

J. Conrad.

PS Strange! We haven't heard from Borys for eleven days now.¹ Jessie's holding herself in, but it isn't good for her. As to me I don't know what to think.

To R. B. Cunninghame Graham

Text MS Dartmouth; J-A, 2, 181; Watts 185

[letterhead: Capel House]

3^d Jan '17

Très cher ami²

I thought I could run up to say goodbye³ – but my swollen foot does not improve and I can just crawl across a room and no more. So these lines go to you – avec mon coeur – to wish you a safe journey and the success of the “entreprise” the forestalling of the yanks and fine galloping days in the Sta Marta valley.

Your protégé Borys⁴ is expected on leave about the 15th. We haven't heard from him for more than 10 days which is unusual – but I don't suppose it means anything. Still Jessie is worried. She sends you her love and best wishes for your journey.

I can't say I've been very much bucked-up by the change of the government.⁵ The age of miracles is past – and the Yahudi God (Who rules us)

³ February 1915 he had called it a ‘Carlist war episode from my *very* young days’ (*Letters*, 5, p. 441). The references here and in the letter of [15 February] show that, however faltering, Conrad worked on *The Arrow* well before the date given in some biographies.

¹ Borys, Conrad's elder son, was serving at the Front, in northern France and Belgium; at present, he was in France, near Saint-Quentin.

² Robert Bontine Cunninghame Graham (1852–1936) began his lasting friendship with Conrad in 1897, the result of a letter praising ‘An Outpost of Progress’. A socialist, a Scottish nationalist, and (according to some scholars) rightful King of Scotland, Graham had worked and travelled widely in the Americas. He drew on his experiences in many volumes of tales, sketches, and essays and also in his unorthodox histories of the Spanish conquest. From 1886 to 1892 he represented North-West Lanarkshire in Parliament; he spent four-and-a-half weeks in gaol for his part in the ‘Bloody Sunday’ demonstration of 1887. During the First World War he returned twice to Latin America in search of beef and remounts for the British army.

³ Before Graham sailed for Colombia.

⁴ Graham had helped Borys obtain his commission in the Army Service Corps (*Letters*, 5, p. 508).

⁵ In December, David Lloyd George (1863–1945) had replaced H. H. Asquith (1852–1928) as Prime Minister. Conrad was never fond of the new man (see, e.g., *Letters*, 5, p. 319).

seems to develop Central European affinities. He's played out as a patron.¹ Why not turn over the whole Establishment and the Non-Confst organisations² to the Devil and see what'll happen. Nothing short of that will put this pretty business we're engaged on right. Et encore!

Ever affect^{ly} yours

Joseph Conrad.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

Wednesday evg. [3 January 1917]³

My dear Pinker.

As there's nothing from B[orys] and J[essie] is getting awfully jumpy – it occurred to me that you may have a friend amongst the correspondents at the front whom you could ask to look young Conrad up. B has dined twice on Reg's invitation with the correspondents⁴ and so is not an utter stranger to them.

By his last letter (12th Dec or thereabouts) he has been shifted for duty at the *III^d corps' Siege Artillery Park*. His last pc is dated the 20th. Dec. Since then he has not acknowledged his Xmas pudding and other parcels or the 3 letters J[essie] has written him in the last fortnight.

Is my idea possible? I don't like to wire to him for there may be no answer to that too.

Yours ever

J. Conrad.

¹ 'Yahudi': Arabic for Jewish; 'Central European affinities': favouring the Central Powers, Austria and Germany; 'patron' in the French sense of proprietor or boss. These sentences play on Graham's scorn for theocentric views.

² The Liberal Party abounded in Nonconformists (Protestants not in communion with the state-established Anglican Church, such as Methodists and Presbyterians).

³ Following immediately on the letter of [2 January].

⁴ 'Reg' was Conrad's good friend Reginald Percival Gibbon (1879–1926), a war correspondent with the *Daily Chronicle* currently based in Amiens. Gibbon wrote to Conrad on 27 February, with his impressions of Borys: 'And by God, hasn't this business made a man of him! You ought to see him by a muddy roadside with his wagons and his sergeant, and his calm competence and appetite, and his infantile bad language, and his little half-conscious swagger when he invites his uncle to come and have a drink' (*Portrait*, p. 116). Borys remembered the mess's hospitality as 'so lavish that it affected me to a certain extent, and also wrought havoc among a number of my hosts . . . Those few who were still able to stand insisted upon helping Reggie – who, as always on such occasions, seemed perfectly normal – to plant me on the saddle of my motor-cycle, point me in the general direction of the Front Line, and give a good hearty shove' (*MEJC*, pp. 116–17).

To C. K. Shorter

Text MS BL Ashley 2922; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]
[early January 1917]¹Dear M^r Shorter²

Ecco! I only regret the specimen is not of fresher complexion; but I don't know whether I could get a better one if I tried.

A very "young" piece of writing. Very young. I was 37 when I wrote it, about the time of our meeting.³ But at 37 I *was* young. I have matured more rapidly since then. Still, sobered down as I am by years of effort, I can't dismiss it as [a] piece of mere rhetoric. There was genuine conviction at the back of those lines of which much survives in me to this day.

Yours

J. C.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]
[early January 1917]⁴

Dearest Pinker.

This is the Ad[miral]^y paper.⁵ Had yesterday wire from Sir Douglas Brownrigg.⁶ Please phone him that you have MS. and it is coming along.

I can't write the regulation 3 papers. I send this one and he shall have others as I write them. One at end Febr^y: perhaps. I will write as many as I can.

¹ This is a sequel to Conrad's letter of 31 December in which he had promised Shorter a copy of the 'suppressed' Preface to *The Nigger*. This copy, preserved in the British Library, is inscribed 'To Clement Shorter from J. C. 1917'. In the first paragraph, Conrad corrected the misprint 'prjudices'.

² Clement King Shorter (1857–1926) edited the *Illustrated London News* from 1891, the *Sketch* and the *English Illustrated Magazine* from 1893 to 1900; he then gave up all three editorships to begin *Tatler* and the *Sphere*. His critical works include books on the Brontës. Between 1917 and 1919 he published a series of Conrad's works in pamphlet editions limited to 25 copies each, among them *One Day More*, 'The Tale', and several articles.

³ Conrad wrote the Preface in August 1897, when he was 39. A year later, Shorter acquired rights to *The Rescue*, hoping to publish it in the *Illustrated London News*.

⁴ The letter of [2 January] had promised the article 'soon'. Letters and telegrams from later in the month imply that Conrad kept his promise.

⁵ This was to be the only 'Admiralty paper' Conrad wrote, but 'Flight' (first published in June 1917 as 'Never Any More') also developed from his experiences in the autumn of 1916. See also the letter of [11? April 1917].

⁶ As Chief Censor, Royal Navy, a post he had held since 1914, Vice-Admiral Sir Douglas Egremont Robert Brownrigg (1867–1939) was responsible for recruiting prominent authors willing to write about the naval contribution to the war effort.

But you know that I must now finish the story.¹ Must. Join a covering letter in which you tell Sir D that he would have [had] this before New Year if I had not been so gouty in the last half of Dec.

I am always unloading work on you – but then you see I *am* in your hands.

Your[s] affct^{ly}

JC

To J. B. Pinker

Text Telegram Berg; Unpublished

[Ashford, Kent
12 January 1917
11. 48 a.m.]

Bookishly London

Boy arrived please send me five pound note today probably in town Tuesday²

Conrad

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]
[15 January 1917]³

My dear Pinker.

Borys will call on you to-morrow (Tuesday) about noon. He and Jessie are going up for 24 hours by the 10. 17 to-morrow.

If you are engaged about noon give him an app[oin]t^{ent} as he feels he must see you if only for 5 minutes before going back.

I am staying at home with John & Rob^{t4} to look after these young devils and incidentally to try to get on with the story.

Ever Yours

J. C.

¹ Probably a reference to what would become *The Arrow of Gold*, but on 4 December, Conrad had told Dent of his plans to finish *The Rescue* (*Letters*, 5, p. 682). He did not, however, return to serious work on this novel until the autumn of 1918.

² The 16th.

³ Written the day before 16 January, which was the only Tuesday within the period of Borys's leave.

⁴ Conrad's younger son John and Robert ('Robin') Sholto Douglas. After his arrest in November 1916 on a charge of indecently assaulting a teen-age boy, Norman Douglas had fled overseas and, as they had often done before, the Conrads were looking after his younger son, who was now a cadet in HMS *Worcester*.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]
Tuesday [16 January 1917]¹

My dear Pinker

Please let Jessie have what she wants for her expenses in town. She returns home tomorrow evening. She has to pay for a surgical appliance for her good knee which shows signs of the whole strain it had to bear for more than 10 years now.²

The kid³ discloses himself a good fellow and a really fine officer. It's like a dream to see him and hear him talk.

Ever Yours

J Conrad.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]
Tuesday evg. [16 January 1917]⁴

My dear friend.

Please send the proof to Harrison right off – I want the E. R. text to be correct in last ins^t. I presume the book is arranged for. If you want the end to “set up” you can demand a revise from Harr: In any case I should like to see proof of book form.

The story the title of which may be: *R. T Fragments*.⁵ Will come along before many days. Of course while B[orys] is here I am not likely to do much. But I've worked today and shall push on a bit more tomorrow, till the truant Mother returns with the prodigal Son.

The prodigal is not very bad. Before leaving Eng^d he had to make up a cash deficiency in the pay chest caused by an officer (a professional gambler with a decoy-wife in Portsmouth) whom he and Bevan⁶ had (very improperly) trusted to pay the C^o. He told them a cock-and-bull story and it ended in Bevan paying £30 and B 25. For this and other reasons poor B left his native shore without a penny in his pocket and the gua[rantee]^d overdraft exhausted

¹ Dated by Jessie and Borys Conrad's visit to London.

² Since the operation on the other knee in November 1904.

³ Borys, who had turned nineteen the previous day.

⁴ Borys is in London, therefore the second letter of this date.

⁵ The 'R' may stand for Rita, the central female character in *The Arrow of Gold*; in the published version, her family name is Lastaola.

⁶ Borys's comrade Desmond Russell Bevan (1882–1931) whose father, fortunately, sat on the board of Barclay's Bank.

up to the last pound. Now he has paid it back and has 20 to his credit after spending another 20 between Arras and Capel House. When you consider that he had 3 days in Havre and a day in London – and that he had no break of *any sort* for fully a year this does not seem so *very* outrageous. Please pay him £5 from me – good conduct money.

Ever Yours

J Conrad.

To R. B. Cunninghame Graham

Text MS Dartmouth; Watts 186

[letterhead: Capel House]

17. Jan '17

Cher Ami

Thanks for Your good letter and enclosure for the officer – of your creation, really.¹

I am glad and more than glad to hear that he has produced a good impression on you. I've heard he has “the respect of his seniors”. His friends amongst his Contemporaries are not a few. There is a sort of quiet enthusiasm about him – et il a naturellement des idées de gentilhomme, combined with a deep democratic feeling as to values in mankind. Indeed he might have sat at your feet except for Your divine indignation which is a gift of the gods to You especially – and which in any case is not of his age – and certainly not in his mentality. Car il n'est pas brilliant.* – All good luck go with you très cher ami and whatever happens pray believe in my inalterable* and admiring affection.

Yours

J Conrad.

To B. Macdonald Hastings

Text MS Colgate; Unpublished

[Capel House]

17 Jan 17

Dear Hastings.

This is great news.² Do devote your talents to extracting some leave from the stern military men.

Yours all expectation

J. Conrad

¹ Another reference to Graham's intervention at the War Office on Borys's behalf.

² Hastings had finished a clean draft of *Victory*.

To J. B. Pinker

Text Telegram Berg; Unpublished

[Hamstreet, Kent]

[19 January 1917]

2. 53 pm

Bookishly London

Please cable metropole magazine as follows will you print conrad article sea warfare earliest date 2000 words no payment¹ but admiralty reserving power publish same in english and colonial press any time ends this is my suggestion adopted by Sir Douglas Brownrigg give it your help if you approve

Conrad

To Iris Wedgwood

Text MS Private collection; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

21 Jan 1917.

Dear Mrs Wedgwood.²

Jessie and Borys were so sorry. Your wire did not reach them till they were back here. You see as I could not leave home they did not stay any time in town in order not to deprive me of the boy's company too long. The wire must have been delivered at the hotel directly after they left for the Station.

Speaking soberly I am pleased with him. He has been in his year in France all along the front from Ypres-Arm[enti]ères Vimy ridge to the Somme offensive which he saw well, being always well to front with his battery of Howitzers.³ The same one he joined in Portsmouth – an unlicked cub,

¹ The *Metropolitan Magazine* of New York had been a good market for Conrad's stories. As with other writers who described the Navy at war, the Admiralty paid Conrad's travelling expenses on the understanding that he would not accept payment for his articles.

² Conrad met Iris Veronica Wedgwood (née Pawson, 1886–1982) through Richard Curle. She and her husband, Ralph, were the dedicatees of *Within the Tides* (1915). In the 1920s she published several novels (*The Iron Age*, *The Fairway*, *The Livelong Day*, *Perilous Seas*), and in the 1930s, topographical studies (*Northumberland and Durham*, *Fenland Rivers*).

³ Short-barrelled artillery pieces firing shells on a flatter trajectory than that of a mortar; Borys was working with lightweight howitzers designed for easy mobility in the field.

18 months ago. He has been gassed a little, has flown in action, has been knocked down by shell concussion (once in the distinguished company of General Gough¹) has squatted in observation posts, had a joy ride in one of the first tanks² – unfortunately the one which had its hind wheels shot away in the first half-hour. So he didn't go very far. He has been doing lieut's work since he went out, and, since last Nov., he has a captain's job: C[ommanding] O[fficer] of the advanced post of the S[iege] A[rtiltery] P[ark], where he lives in a sandbagged cottage and is strafed by Fritz every day. He expects to be promoted soon. He celebrated his 19th birthday here. He said to me: "I am a veteran. When we were first appointed to batteries the M[echanical] T[ransport] for guns was a perfectly new thing. We didn't know what it was we had to do and there was no one to tell us. We had to learn our work under shellfire and sometimes under machine-gunfire. One of my lorries is riddled with M[achine] G[un] bullets." He gave me every minute of his leave and we had many long talks. He was absolutely serene.

I am telling you all this because I can't forget how good and kind to him you were at his emergence from early boyhood. He left us yesterday at 4 o'clock and there is a great emptiness in the house. My wife has been very good. She sends you her love. Pray remember us to the General³ and believe me always,

Your very faithful and obedient servant
Joseph Conrad.

¹ General Sir Hubert de la Poer Gough (1870–1963) commanded the Fifth Army, first mustered for the Battle of the Somme and designed to be a flexible mobile force. He had a name for being the most visible general at the Front, taking more risks than other staff officers, and was far more popular among soldiers than among politicians and editors. In *The Fifth Army* (Hodder & Stoughton, 1931), he describes conditions in early January 1917: 'rain, sleet and snow, piercing winds, a bitter and penetrating dampness' (p. 176); Borys, however, would be returning to what Gough described as 'seven weeks of the hardest frost that I had ever experienced in Europe' (*ibid.*).

² Tanks could cross trenches, break through barbed wire, and resist small arms fire or shrapnel. They were first used on 15 September 1916, during the Battle of the Somme. The first major penetration of enemy lines, however, did not occur until November 1917, during the Battle of Cambrai.

³ From 1916 to 1919, Honorary Brigadier-General Ralph Lewis Wedgwood put his civilian experience with the London and North-Eastern Railway to work as Director of Docks for GHQ, France.

To F. N. Doubleday*Text* MS Princeton; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

22 Jan 17.

Dear M^r Doubleday.¹

I regret not having thanked you before for the books you have been good enough to send me. I have been specially interested by the Mount Vernon monograph.²

We had our boy here for a ten day's leave after a year's continuous service in France. He has been all along the front with his battery, which during the Somme advance was well forward all the time. He has been gassed a little (to begin with) he has flown in action, he had a joy-ride in a tank the first day they went over the German lines. He saw Fritz run for dear life. Unluckily the tank in which he was got its hind wheels shot off – so they didn't get very far. He was also knocked down twice by shell concussion – the last time in the distinguished company of general Gough. He celebrated his 19th birthday with us. We found him greatly matured. But what struck me most was a curious serenity of manner and thought as though nothing on earth could startle him now. And though he gave us every minute of his leave he confessed to me that he was anxious to get back to the battery and to his beloved men. He commands the M[echanical] T[ransport] section and through deaths and changes is the second senior officer of his battery.

He wishes me to remember him kindly to you, and to tell you that the glasses you have been good enough to send to him are the object of general envy and have done some excellent good work at more than one forward observation post of the artillery of the m^d corps.³ He says he often thought gratefully of you while using them.

¹ Frank Nelson Doubleday (1862–1934) was born in Brooklyn. He began his career in publishing at Charles Scribner's Sons (1877–95); he allied himself with S. S. McClure from 1897 to 1900 before going into partnership with Walter Hines Page as president of Doubleday, Page; in 1927, the firm became Doubleday, Doran. He numbered among his authors Frank Norris, Ellen Glasgow, Stephen Crane, O. Henry, Jack London, Booth Tarkington, and Rudyard Kipling, with whom he maintained a close friendship. Between 1912 and 1914, initially at Alfred Knopf's urging, Doubleday's interest in Conrad changed from casual to serious, and Doubleday started to plan a collected edition. The North American publication of *Chance* was Conrad's first financial success; for the rest of his life his association with Doubleday was rewarding and often cordial. When Conrad made his exhausting journey to the USA in 1923, he made Effendi Hill, the Doubledays' Long Island home, his headquarters.

² Given Doubleday's tastes and what he would have suspected of Conrad's, this is more likely to have been an example of fine printing from the press of William Edwin Rudge of Mount Vernon, NY, than a monograph on George Washington's estate.

³ Field-glasses were in high demand at the Front; Conrad had presented Ford with a pair in 1916.

My health has been fair lately. But mentally I am without much grip on my work. We are all feeling the strain more and more, but the national determination to see this thing through hardens as the cruel days go by. It's a pity better use is not made of it. But leaders of genius are rare.

My wife (who has need of all her fortitude) joins me in kindest regards to Mrs Doubleday and yourself and hopes that we will have the great pleasure of seeing You under our roof in better days.

Believe me always

very sincerely Yours

Joseph Conrad.

To B. Macdonald Hastings

Text MS Colgate; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

22^d Jan '17.

My dear Hastings.

My respect for your "cleverness" is greatly increased. In an adaptation that's what counts. I remember your saying (in Irving's dressing room) – "This thing if it's worth doing at all then it's for the money in it." And from that point of view my wife (who represents marvellously the "general public" audience) anticipates the happiest results.

Let us "accept the omen."

I haven't touched the play. Unless we read it together: and follow the inspiration of the moment, that sort of meddling can do no good. The devil of it is that I have no influential friend about the W[ar] O[ffice] – and anyhow you don't send me the name of your corps or of your CO *nor* Nothing. Suppose you do? There is always a "perhaps – !"

The mere detail remarks I venture to offer. *Imprimis* Instead of Hans (?!!) Let the Javanese waiter be called Saridan[?]. If he must have a name. Nobody would address him otherwise than Boy! Speaking to Sch[omberg]: he had better say – Yes Master – No Master – instead of *Sir*. 2^{do} People must [not] speak of *South Sea Islands*. It's no more south-sea than Norway is Italy. There they say Archipelago as eas[il]y as you would say Lancashire. Or simply: the Islands. 3^o No Italian-led orchestra would dream of playing God Save the King – and in a Dutch possession too! 4^o The speech contrasting Sourabaya with a desert island detonates. ("Sourabaya is bad enough but Samburan etc etc") Sourabaya is let me tell you a bigger, older and much more amusing town than Winchester.¹ And in its own island quite as important. However an audience probably would see nothing funny in the phrase. But why name it at

¹ The venerable Wessex city where Hastings was currently based. Surabaya is a large port in eastern Java; Samburan is the fictional island setting of *Victory*.

all? 5^o Heyst would never say “we shall travel on his ship.” He has wandered too much to use tourist phrases. He would say “he (i.e. Davids[on]:) will give us a passage in his ship.” 6^o Heyst wouldn’t remark (to Davids) like an indulgent clergyman or jovial shopkeeper “Sailors! Sailors” H is very much *homme du monde*. Davids is his inferior – if a chum. That thing grates – and is so objectless. You can find a telling phrase instead something in accord with his state of mind. – All trifles as you see.

Lena’s costume My wife points out to me that L wears a body sarong all the time – which is practically a night dress. No malay girl would do that let alone a white woman. If you want L in Malay costume we can concoct a complete one: sarong at waist, belt, scarf, open jacket. Of course that requires warm brown skin for effect but still in the artificial light – The other an actress would feel awkward in. And I am afraid that with sarong under the arms she would look grotesque. I speak of some “fumbling”. I didn’t notice any. Now we ought to know what Irving will think of it.

Yours cordially

J. Conrad.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]

Tuesday, 7. 15 AM. [23 January 1917]¹

My dear Pinker.

I believe you are perfectly right. But I have *given* per agreement this sort of copy to the Ad^{lty}. No question me keeping money. Please tele^{ph} to Brownr [i]^{sg} about 11 o’clock to whom your letter goes by this train.

JC.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]

Wednesday [24 January 1917]²

My dear Pinker.

Thanks for your letter. I am sure you don’t mind me having opened the matter with Sir D. B[rownrigg] direct; but I am afraid I have given you trouble for nothing that will be much good. I am curious to hear how you have settled the matter. I suppose there can be no doubt in Sir D B’s

¹ The reference to the ‘Admiralty article’ indicates a place between the telegram to Pinker of [19 January] and the letter of [24 January].

² Conrad has read and returned the script of *Victory*. A telegram to Pinker of [22 January] reads: ‘Of course if you say so but should like to see your letter first and after it* looking over Hastings adaptation prevented me writing verily believe it will do well’ (Berg).

mind that I am *not* after money in this connection. The copy *belongs* to the Admiralty.

We don't remember receiving the MS of the Shad-Line. But it must be here, somewhere. Jessie's much distressed at the failure of her memory but the boy's visit seems to have driven everything out of her mind for a time. Search-party will be organised this afternoon. But pray my dear friend try to get balance of proof from E. R. You see the text as given to ER. is so different from the MS. *Brain wave!* If I can find the N^o of the Met. Mag; with the last instal^l I will send it to you.¹ That will be nearer the final text than the MS.

I creep on with the story.

Hastings' adaptation is horribly efficient. You know what I mean. As he says himself "That sort of thing is done for money". I have sent it back to him. The worst is that he can't get leave to come here and talk over a point or two of importance. I want Irving to see the play as soon as possible.

Yours ever

J. C.

To B. Macdonald Hastings

Text MS Colgate; Unpublished

[Capel House]

25 Jan '17.

My dear Hastings

I am afraid I have given You a wrong impression. Forgive me for being so inexpressive. I am aware under what cramping conditions you've had to work, and I admire – I really do – your skill and your fidelity. My *enthusiasm* I keep for your own plays. They do command it. And you can't very well be angry with me for that.

You can have no conception of my ignorance in theatrical art. I can't even *imagine* a scenic effect. But reading your adaptation I, even I, felt something, what I imagine to be the scenic emotion, come through to me – get home. And also remember that I was trammelled by my knowledge of the book, where I had visualised everything in my own way even as I wrote. Think my dear Hastings – it's no joke to have to adjust one's artistic focus to the swift movement of dramatic presentation.

¹ The American *Metropolitan Magazine* began serialising *The Shadow-Line* in September 1916.

January 1917

17

Well – enough of this. Only don't imagine for a moment that I fail to appreciate your labour and your gift of loyal rendering.

My note on Lena's dress was but a warning. If I weren't afraid of you charging me with irreverence I would say that I don't mind her coming on in a bath-towel. I know that in the book (here and there) she's by no means overdressed. But then consider the heat of Samburan – whereas the stage of a London theatre! . . . I shiver at the mere thought! You must drill and dress your Lena exactly as you think fit – of course. But first you must catch your Lena. Have you got her? Is she anywhere in sight? I confess *this* is my great anxiety. For – granting Irving – the success must depend on Lena. And speaking very seriously it strikes [me] that it isn't her garments that will be [the] difficulty its what she will bring to us within her very skin.

Our boy has just left us at the expiration of his leave. My poor wife snatched nine days of fearful joy¹ – and now that he has gone back to his beloved battery (after celebrating his 19th birthday with us) there is a great aching emptiness in this house.

Always yours Cordially

J. Conrad.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]

[c. 25 January 1917]²

Dear Pinker

We have found type-copy of Sh-Line, which will do. Please ask the revered Dent³ to let me have slip-proofs of the last 20pp at least – if possible. And soon I am thinking of motto and dedication.

Your

J. C.

Enc¹ 3 small bills for household furnitures.

¹ 'They hear a voice in every wind / And snatch a fearful joy': Thomas Gray (1716–71), 'Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College'.

² Soon after the letter of [24 January] which refers to hunting for a text of *The Shadow-Line*.

³ J. M. Dent, publisher of *The Shadow-Line*.

To A. T. Saunders

Text MS South Australia; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

26 Jan 17.

Dear Sir¹

Many thanks for your very interesting letter and the curious Hayes pamphlet.²

Yes. M^r Jacques came back with us in the *Torrens*.³ He was laid up all the passage and I hardly ever saw him. This will partly account for my extraordinary mistake in the Personal Record.^{†4} Strange lapse of memory! E. L. Sanderson (also a passenger that time) pointed it out to me a long time ago.

The J. Galsworthy is *the* John of course.⁵ Our intimate friendship dates from that passage. He left us in C[ape] Town but sought me out in London afterwards.

I did serve in the *Loch Etive* with Capt Steward* (at one time of the famous *Tweed*). I was 3^d off[ic]^{er} and kept my first *Officer's watch* in that ship.^{††} Steward died at sea, but I don't remember the year.⁶ Capt Cope⁷ lives now in Herne Bay, but I haven't seen him for many years. Of the Angels⁸ I know nothing.

† Some Reminiscences title has been altered since first Eng edition was published.⁹

†† I mean as a British certificated officer of the Merchant Service.

¹ Born in Queensland in 1885, Alfred Thomas Saunders of Adelaide, South Australia, was an accountant and amateur historian who often published the results of his researches in the *Adelaide Mail*. In 1888, when Conrad commanded the *Otago*, Saunders had been working as a clerk for her owners, Henry Simpson & Co. Saunders was fascinated by the career of the South Seas pirate 'Bully' Hayes (1829–77). In Chapter 38 of *Lord Jim*, Marlow cites Hayes as one of the ruffians who were not as vile as Gentleman Brown.

² Either *Bully Hayes: Barrator, Bigamist, Buccaneer, Blackbirder, and Pirate* ('For Private Circulation', Perth, 1915) or *Bully Hayes, Louis Becke and the Earl of Pembroke*, a reprint of columns from the *Adelaide Mail* (1915).

³ William Henry Jacques (1869–1893) made the voyage in the hope of easing his tuberculosis.

⁴ The first section of *A Personal Record* has a vivid and circumstantial reminiscence of Conrad's asking Jacques to read a portion of *Almayer's Folly*. Conrad was mistaken in his assumptions about Jacques's end. Rather than catching 'a fatal cold' and dying either in Australia or homeward bound in another ship, Jacques returned in the *Torrens* and died of consumption two months after reaching England.

⁵ He had been travelling with Sanderson in Australia and the South Seas. Conrad's first mention of Galsworthy in surviving correspondence comes in a letter of January 1897 (*Letters*, I, p. 335).

⁶ Conrad served in the *Loch Etive*, an iron-built wool clipper, from August 1880 to April 1881; Captain William Stuart, who died in 1896 while still in command of the *Loch Etive*, was accustomed to the speed and light handling of wooden-built ships such as the *Tweed*, whose master he had been from 1863 to 1874. The *Tweed* was famous not only for fast passages but for her improbable conversion from the *Punjab*, a paddle-wheeler built to carry troops. Conrad remembers Captain Stuart in 'Cobwebs and Gossamer' (*The Mirror of the Sea*).

⁷ W. H. Cope had been Conrad's captain in the *Torrens*.

⁸ The famous sea-going brothers, H. R. and W. H. Angel: the latter commanded the *Torrens* before Captain Cope.

⁹ To *A Personal Record*.

If the firm of Messrs: H Simpson & Sons still exists in Adelaide please tell them that J. C will never forget the generosity, the courtesy and indeed the kindness of the head of the firm in '88-'89 when he commanded their barque *Otago*.¹

Pray believe me, with great regard

Yours faithfully

Joseph Conrad.

PS I saw L. Becke once in 1895 or six in a publisher's office and I must say I wasn't favourably impressed then. I haven't read many of his books. Reef & Palm was the last I looked at I think.²

To John Quinn

Text MS NYPL; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

[late January 1917]³

My dear Quinn.⁴

My wife wanted to write herself the letter of thanks for the lovely apples; but our boy has just left us after his first leave from France and she does not feel equal to talk about him on paper – and yet she feels that she would have to write of him. So I am deputed to tell you how much we have appreciated your gift and then to tell you something of the boy.

He celebrated his 19th birthday with us. He said to me: "I am a veteran. When we, the first batch of youngsters, were appointed to the heavy batteries as Mechanical Transport Officers it was an altogether new thing. Nobody

¹ The Adelaide firm of Simpson's, owners of the Black Diamond Line, had long gone out of business.

² The Australian fiction-writer Louis Becke (1855–1913) was known for his tales of adventure in the South Pacific, often drawn from his own experiences. These included being tried for piracy with Bully Hayes. Conrad, whom early reviewers often compared to Becke, read *By Reef and Palm* 'again' in 1896: see *Letters*, 1, p. 298. They would have met at the office of T. Fisher Unwin while he was publishing both authors.

³ After Borys's return to the Front, so probably during the last week in January: the envelope was stamped by the US censor: 'Received February 12, 1917'. Typically, letters to New York were taking about fifteen days. The time could have been several days longer if a mail had just been missed.

⁴ John Quinn (1870–1924), the son of Irish immigrants, came from Ohio. As a New York lawyer, he had a highly lucrative practice in commercial and financial law, particularly the law of tariffs. As a supporter of the arts, he won an exemption for artists from sales taxes and built up a great collection of modern painting and sculpture; he was the chief private buyer at the Armory show in 1913. He also amassed modern literary manuscripts; among the writers he collected on a large scale were Yeats, Pound, Eliot, Joyce, and Conrad. When Quinn auctioned off his Conradiana in 1923, several years after relations between patron and author had chilled, manuscripts and inscribed volumes bought for a total of \$10,000 fetched \$110,000.

could teach us then because nobody knew the practical conditions and the way to go about that work. We had to learn all this by ourselves under shell-fire and sometimes under machine-gun fire. And we have all done pretty well.”

One could see he was fairly pleased with himself and extremely proud of his men. He had a year of continuous duty all along the line right from Ypres to the Somme. He has been gassed a little in the early days – a sort of welcome from Fritz. He managed to get in as many side-shows as possible – has flown in action, has squatted in observation posts; went sniper-hunting, had a joy ride in a tank the first time they went over the German lines. But what seems to afford him the greatest satisfaction is having been knocked down by the same shell-concussion with General Gough. The boy had just put the last gun of the battery in position, then got his lorry back on the road and was waiting for a bit because the landscape ahead was full of German shells. He saw a general’s car come along from the direction of Pozières. It pulled up opposite him and the general got out, apparently to speak to him. Just at that moment a H.Z. shell¹ landed on the car’s forewheel blew the whole thing to smithereens and flung the general covered with his drivers blood and shreds of flesh under B’s lorry. B had been flung there too; the lorry (an American-Peerless) was half demolished and of the two men with B one was killed and the other had his hand blown off. B and the general crawled from under the wreck together. The Gen: was a horrible sight. He said to B: “For Goodness’ sake lets get out of this”. And B said: “Certainly Sir” and pointed out to him an enormous shell-crater quite near the road. So they crawled along over there taking the wounded man with them. In that crater there were a good many people some dead and some alive and luckily two stretcher-bearers who bandaged the man’s arm. Meantime B wiped the general down with some rags he found lying about, the best way he could; and then they both sat in that hole for an hour and a half shivering and shaking from the shock. Later the Gen. got away down a trench and B went back to his battery where he helped around generally till the evening, when his junior off[ic]er arrived with an ammunition convoy with which B returned to the replenishing station. But before daybreak he was back with the batt^y with another ammunition convoy. And now said B “whenever the Gen: sees me on the roads he waves his hand to me, though I am certain he doesn’t know my name”.

We found B matured very much. What struck me most was a sort of good-tempered imperturbable serenity in his manner, speech and thoughts – as if nothing in the world could startle or annoy him any more. He looks

¹ A shell from a howitzer.

wonderfully robust and has developed a respectable moustache. He gave us every minute of his leave; wouldn't hear of going to town except for a day and a half with his mother to call on the more intimate of our circle of friends. We got on extremely well together. We talked not only of War but of the other two W's* also. Where the fellow got his taste for wine I can't imagine. As to Women, Cunninghame Graham who went on purpose to meet him in the salon of a very distinguished lady (the world says that she is his last flame. About time. C. G. is sixty-five if a day) wrote to me with great glee that he found the boy "très dégoûrdi"¹ and that he thought he "will be un homme a femmes like You and I, for he has a way with them". My wife who gave a lunch party has also observed that aptitude and was very much amused. She has indeed snatched a fearful joy during these 10 days. Her fortitude is admirable but I am anxious about her health. She sends you her most friendly regards. What a war-letter I have written!

Believe me always

Yours

Joseph Conrad.

To J. B. Pinker

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[Capel House]
[late January 1917]²

My dear Pinker

Will you transmit the three scraps enclosed to Dent. They relate to the Sh-Line. – Title p[age] – Dedication – Motto.³ Just look at them please as the book is very much your affair. It's you who said: "Let there be a volume". So you ought to control the details.

The enclosed off[ici]⁴ paper belongs to the usual poisonous crop at this time of the year.⁴

Thanks for your letter rec^d this morning. It's all in your hands. I suppose the cable went all the same.⁵ Or have you and Sir D B[rrownrigg] given it up?

Affct^{ly} yours

J. C.

¹ 'Very sharp' – resourceful and alert. Graham would be 65 in May.

² Between the 19th, when Conrad asked Pinker to wire the *Metropolitan Magazine*, and the 31st, when Conrad thanked Dent for a mock-up of the three pages; he commented on their appearance the following day.

³ The dedication to Borys, and the motto taken from the text.

⁴ A crop grown by tax collectors? ⁵ To the *Metropolitan Magazine*?

To J. M. Dent

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

31 Jan^y 17.Dear Mr Dent¹Many thanks.²

I hope the book will come out end March.

I am just now held up by gout.

Yours sincerely

J. Conrad

To J. M. Dent

Text MS Berg; Unpublished

[letterhead: Capel House]

1st Febr^y 17.Dear M^r Dent

I return here the sp[ecimen] pages with my thanks. The only suggestions I venture to offer is that perhaps the heavy-leded (inner) lines round the author's name might be removed. I can't very well judge how the t[itle] p[age] will look without them but the effect now is strangely funereal. I would propose also a slightly smaller type for the words *A Confession*.

This said I leave it all to you. It's rather absurd of me talking typography and "get up" to Aldine House.³ The sp. p. of the text seems to me perfect.

I am laid up with a severe attack. This joke has lasted 22 years⁴ and I am beginning to be tired of it.

Yours faithfully

J Conrad.

¹ Joseph Mallaby Dent (1849–1926) set up in business as a bookbinder in 1872, and turned to publishing in 1888. Among his great successes were the Temple Classics, the Temple Shakespeare, and Everyman's Library. In Conrad's lifetime, Dent published *'Twiixt Land and Sea* (1912), *Within the Tides* (1915), *The Shadow-Line* (1917), *The Rescue* (1920), *Notes on Life and Letters* (1921), and most of the Uniform Edition. The rest of that edition appeared posthumously, as did *Suspense* (1925) and *Last Essays* (1926).

² For sample text of *The Shadow-Line*.

³ Dent's London headquarters.

⁴ On [21 March], he writes of suffering for 'more than 24 years'.