

*Handwritten letter from Ernest Blythe to Anne Blythe (Dublin)*

Geneva, 8 September 1926

Darling,

I am sitting in my room writing this with nothing on the upper part of my body but a thick coating of cold cream. The Assembly after voting the admission of Germany this morning adjourned from 12 o'clock till four. We immediately rushed to the bathing place and were in the water about ten minutes past twelve. We did not put on our clothes again till about a quarter to three. In consequence my shoulders and the upper part of my back have the colour of lobster and the feel of a hot linseed poultice. I am in hopes that the cold cream will make it possible for me to lie down after a while. When we had finished our bathe we got out a stall in the enclosure i.e. lunch consisting of sausage, potatoes and onions cooked as in Irish stew, bread, a cup of black coffee and two bananas. We paid about two francs and a half for it and ate it sitting in our bathing pants on the sand. The bathing is the mixedest possible. The men's boxes up at one end of the enclosure and the women's at the other; but wives seem to dress and undress in the men's boxes. None of the women wear dresses with skirts and most of them have no backs. Girls up to fourteen or so wear six inch pants like the boys and can only be distinguished by their bobbed hair. In the water and on the sand are to be seen a good many Chinese or Japanese and a big number of Indians. Scores of the Europeans are burnt so brown that from the back they cannot be distinguished from Indians.

Yesterday's meeting of the First Commission was very funny. The President a Swiss named Motta made a long speech in French about the admission of Germany and the impossibility of proceeding with the Commission's work until the German delegates had taken their seats. While it was being translated he thought of a few more things to say and said them. While they were being translated he had a number of other bright ideas and let us have them. So it went on until he and the translator had each spoken about five times. Then M. Motta said that if nobody else wished to contribute to the discussion he would adjourn the Commission till Friday.

The Assembly business this morning was the admission of Germany which was voted unanimously after a few well-justified protests about the way in which the Council had insisted in coupling it with the increase in the number of non-permanent seats from six to nine. In the evening session the Assembly was discussing the report of Council on the work of the League for the last year. There were a number of long speeches which as far as I could see were made in

order that they might be reproduced in the home newspapers of the delegates who made them. I left after about an hour and a half.

The social side of the League is just beginning to operate. The Swiss Federal Council is giving a reception for all delegates (et dames) on Friday night. We are invited to a Canadian luncheon on Tuesday, and are ourselves arranging a couples of dinners for next week – one to the British Commonwealth delegates and one to members of the Second Commission of which Desmond is chairman. We are leaving this Hotel for the Hôtel de la Paix tomorrow or Friday. Address letters there.

Love

Ernest