

Chemulpo, Korea,

Sept 20, 1905-

My dear Father:-

In my letter to Grandfather, (mailed today from Seoul) I left off at the point of visiting Chemulpo and Seoul. This morning a number of us went ashore and spent about an hour looking about Chemulpo. It is a small place and about its only importance lies in the fact that the Japs have made use of it to enter Korea, and that two Russian ships, the cruiser Variag [Varyag] and the gunboat Korietz were sunk here on Feb 9 '04. The town is full of Japs, (civilians and soldiers) and the Japs own everything of importance. The [sic] have crowded out the natives in every department of the government and to make a long story short, the [sic] practically own Korea. Like all seaport towns, it is full of "compradores" or "ship chandlers" whose business consists in selling supplies to ships. The natives look to me to be about half Japanese and half Chinese but they are a large

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boned crowd. They wear some outlandish rig, which you will see from some Kodak pictures I will send when they are through. We took the train to Seoul and got there after about an hour's ride. The country seems to be very fertile and everything was covered with green. At Seoul we put up at the "Astor House." There is a large hotel company which owns every large hotel in the East, and nearly all of them are named "Astor House." For about four hours we wandered around the city, which is very neat in appearance, to the Chinese cities. The population is about 130000 and they have a very good electric car line. Every house was decorated with an American flag and a Korean flag – in honor of Miss Roosevelt and her party etc.

The party including our admiral and

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his staff were entertained by the Emperor of Korea, and in a speech made by the Emperor, he stated that "Korea and the US were the two greatest countries on earth, and that they would soon rule the world." In every one of these places, the foreign settlement is always [sic] a very nice place. Here the different legations are situated and all the foreigners live. We collected a lot of curios and I only wish I could send them home without having them pinched by the customs authorities in Frisco.

The German gunboat "S.M.S. Lucks" is in the harbor. We can see the hull of the Variag [Varyag], which the Japs have raised. When fully repaired, she will make a fine addition to their navy. I don't know where the Korietz is lying, or whether she has been raised. We will probably sail for Chefoo next Friday, September 25. We are running shy on news of the world around here, and want to get back somewhere to see what's doing.

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Chefoo, China, Sept. 23, 1905.

We got here today at 10 a.m. and found a big bunch of mail waiting for us. I got a letter from Clara Wahrmund, one from Grandfather and one from Henry Burney. We also found the rumor waiting for us, that, on account of the cholera in Cavite and Manila, we would spend the winter

in Japan. Now in a way that would be fine, but the part that bluffs me is the cold weather. A winter aboard a ship in Japan is fierce.

Our admiral has taken his little tender, the "General Alava" and gone up to Port Arthur. I would have liked to go on that trip with him. As it is now, Port Arthur is a closed port to all battleships and other men of war so the only way for us to see it is to get a few days leave and run across. It is only 75 miles from Chefoo.

Grandfather tells me that Hugo Henke is slowly recovering from his sickness, which I am very glad to hear – also that Iago's wife is improving. Iago is playing his hard luck and he has my full sympathy.

From now on, when you write, number your letters

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so that I can always tell whether any are missing. If Grandfather will do the same, and I also, we can easily keep tab on our correspondence.

One of the young apprentice boys on the ship, Joers by name, received an appointment to the Academy and I saw by the last Army and Navy Journal that he passed the entrance exams all right. He left this ship just before we left Frisco, and attended one of the prep schools in Annapolis.

Sunday

Today I officiated, or helped officiate, at a football game between the Ohio and the Baltimore, and let me state I never passed a more strenuous afternoon in my life. And if I ever get roped into another combination like that, it will be because I'm drunk or crazy. You can imagine a big crowd of half full sailors cheering their teams and most of them trying to run out on the field where the teams were. Part of my job was to keep this crowd back on the side lines and it was a job too.

And the finish of the game was a regular mix up. In the last minute of play, the Ohio

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made a touchdown, which, for some reason, the umpire and the referee couldn't agree on. The referee being from the Balt. declared the game won by the Balt., 5 to 0, but the umpire wouldn't agree to that, and you ought to have been in the umpire's and referee's shoes when that crowd of drunks and some sober ones crowded around and yelled etc. and wanted to know who had won the game. It was certainly a mixed up affair.

Shanghai, China, Sept 30, 1905

We arrived here this morning and are now lying about three miles out from the mouth of Woo Sung River. On Tuesday we will go to Nanking, about 200 miles up the Yangtze River, to remain there about one month. The Wisconsin went to Yokohama and I certainly envy them. Nanking out [sic] to be very interesting, though. It has

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a population of about 600000 and it was formerly the capital of China. The admiral will take the General Alava and go up to Hankow, about 400 miles above Nanking. I would like to go with him but only his staff go, so that lets us out.

Well Father I will close now with my best love to Mother, the children, Aunt Augusta's family, yourself and all the rest.

Your son

[signed]

Chester W Nimitz