

JUNE 1921

al ed ahine! ed oibo! che libro! L'episodio d'*Itaca* adesso
etria, algebra e matematica e dopo *Penelope* finalmente!
are la mia testa in un mare di ghiaccio! È già sotto i torchi il
petto le prime bozze domani l'altro. Sarà pubblicato però
ottobre o novembre. Trattandosi di tre edizioni costose
tare i refusi. I colori della legatura (scelti da me) saranno
anche in campo azzurro—la bandiera greca quantunque
l'origine bavarese ed importata colla dinastia. Eppure in certo
simboleggiare bene il mito—le isole bianche sparse nel mare.
al lato materiale credo se l'edizione va bene (le sottoscrizioni
gni giorno—oggi 3 dall'Australia) riceverò qualcosa fra
50.000. Ma non è questo che mi preoccupa. Nessuna somma
pagarmi il lavoro e lo sciupio. . . Si potrebbe scrivere qualcosa
nte comico sui sottoscriventi di questo mio libriccio—un
ote di Bela Kun, il ministro della guerra britannico Winston
un vescovo anglicano ed un capo del movimento rivoluzion-
ese. ¹ Son diventato un monumento—anzi vespasiano!²
è a Zurigo per le sue vacanze. Ordinerò il libro di Papini³ ma
tto di leggerlo per il momento. Salutami Benco e Silvestri
ditore.

JAMES JOYCE⁵

Desmond Fitzgerald (1889–1947), Irish politician. He was Minister for
from 1918 to 1922, for External Affairs from 1922 to 1927, and for Defence
1932.

Papini (1881–1956), Italian writer. The book was probably his *Storia di
s son. The ellipsis following is Joyce's.*

ancini: I suppose this article in the *Era Nuova* is your work. Thank you.
s fine. Here I am, forced to move again (and Silvestri, who wants to send me
xainings, where does he abide? If I had a house of my own I should be very
t his pictures there, as well as some knock-knacks left behind)—my fifth
even months. The flat on the Boulevard Raspail cost me a good 2000 lire a
t this one costs me nothing. The French novelist Valéry Larbaud is beside
account of my *Ulysses* which he proclaims the vastest and most human
en in Europe since Rabelais. Apart from that (which the future will settle)
on how to corroborate his opinion with deeds. Having had some indication
up he had his flat redecorated and put it at my disposition for the summer
f little park, with access through two barred gates, absolute silence, great
s (not, mind you, the sort you're thinking of!), like being a hundred kilo-
n Paris. The furnishings are tasteful. He and the principal actor of the Vieux
theatre have designed a kind of furniture which is fantastical but very
e. Is it possible that I am worth something? Who would have said so after
perience in Trieste? Larbaud says that a single episode, *Circe*, would suffice
e fame of a French writer for life. But oh! and ah! and alas! and ugh! what a

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To FRANK BUDGEN

MS. Yale

[*Late June 1921*]

71, rue du Cardinal Lemoine, V^e, Paris

Dear Budgen: Have you seen Lewis? If nothing has come out of the
Lady Cunard suggestion the Ellerman one is still open. The friend I
spoke of is here. Write to me. *Ithaca* is giving me fearful trouble.
Corrected the first batch of proofs today up to Stephen on the strand¹
which I read out to you on a memorable night in Zurich (Universitäts-
strasse 29) with mirthful comments.² Hummel and Giorgio left for
Zurich on the 4th. In the words of the Cyclops narrator the curse of my
deaf and dumb arse kept sideways on Bloom and all his blooms and
blossoms. I'll break the back of *Ithaca* tomorrow so 'elp me fucking
Christ. Write by return JJ

P.S. There is an article about me in *Today's*³ but I haven't seen it, the
fly strike (for which *YOU*⁴ are responsible) seems to have disorganised
the parcels bloody post again. (English undefiled!)

To HARRIET SHAW WEAVER

MS. British Museum

24 June 1921

71, rue du Cardinal Lemoine, Paris V

Dear Miss Weaver: Apparently we were both alarmed and then re-
lieved for different reasons. I can only repeat that I am glad it is not any
trouble of your own and as for myself having been asked what I have

book! The episode of *Itaca* now is all geometry, algebra, and mathematics, and then
nally *Penelope*! I'd like to dip my head in a sea of ice! The book is already in press
and I expect the first proofs day after tomorrow. It will be published only in October or
November. Three expensive editions being involved, misprints have to be avoided. The
colours of the binding (chosen by me) will be white letters on a blue field—the Greek
flag though really of Bavarian origin and imported with the dynasty. Yet in a special
way they symbolize the myth well—the white islands scattered over the sea.

On the material side I think if the edition goes well (subscriptions come every day—
three today from Australia) I will receive between 100,000 and 150,000 [lire]. But that
is not what concerns me. No sum of money could compensate me for my toil and
trouble. . . Something really comic could be written about the subscribers to my tome—
a son or nephew of Bela Kun, the British Minister of War Winston Churchill, an
Anglican bishop and a leader of the Irish revolutionary movement. I have become a
monument—no, a vespasian.

Giorgio is in Zurich for his holidays. I will order Papini's book but I don't promise
to read it for the moment. Greet Benco and Silvestri the painter-shipper.

Good wishes to your wife and to Daniele. . . A handshake James Joyce⁵

¹ The *Proteus* episode.

² Described in the second chapter of Budgen's book, *James Joyce and the Making of
'Ulysses'* (London, 1934, reissued, Bloomington, Ind., 1961; 2nd. ed., London, 1972).

³ The leading article, probably by Holbrook Jackson, in *7o-Day* (London) viii. 46
(June 1921), [133]–4.

⁴ Budgen was a onetime socialist.

to say why sentence of death should not be passed upon me I should like to rectify a few mistakes.

A nice collection could be made of legends about me. Here are some. My family in Dublin believe that I enriched myself in Switzerland during the war by espionage work for one or both combatants. Triestines, seeing me emerge from my relative's house occupied by my furniture for about twenty minutes every day and walk to the same point the G.P.O. and back (I was writing *Nausikaa* and *The Ozen of the Sun* in a dreadful atmosphere) circulated the rumour, now firmly believed, that I am a cocaine victim. The general rumour in Dublin was (till the prospectus of *Ulysses* stopped it) that I could write no more, had broken down and was dying in New York. A man from Liverpool told me he had heard that I was the owner of several cinema theatres all over Switzerland. In America there appear to be or have been two versions: one that I was almost blind, emaciated and consumptive, the other that I am an austere mixture of the Dalai Lama and sir Rabindranath Tagore. Mr Pound described me as a dour Aberdeen minister. Mr Lewis¹ told me he was told that I was a crazy fellow who always carried four watches and rarely spoke except to ask my neighbour what o'clock it was. Mr Yeats seemed to have described me to Mr Pound as a kind of Dick Swiveller. What the numerous (and useless) people to whom I have been introduced here think I don't know. My habit of addressing people whom I have just met for the first time as 'Monsieur' earned for me the reputation of a *tout petit bourgeois* while others consider what I intend for politeness as most offensive. I suppose I now have the reputation of being an incurable dipsomaniac. One woman here originated the rumour that I am extremely lazy and will never do or finish anything. (I calculate that I must have spent nearly 20,000 hours in writing *Ulysses*). A batch of people in Zurich persuaded themselves that I was gradually going mad and actually endeavoured to induce me to enter a sanatorium where a certain Doctor Jung (the Swiss Tweedledum who is not to be confused with the Viennese Tweedledee, Dr Freud) amuses himself at the expense (in every sense of the word) of ladies and gentlemen who are troubled with bees in their bonnets.

I mention all these views not to speak about myself or my critics but to show you how conflicting they all are. The truth probably is that I am a quite commonplace person undeserving of so much imaginative painting. There is a further opinion that I am a crafty simulating and dissimulating Ulysses-like type, a 'jeune jesuit', selfish and cynical. There is some truth in this, I suppose: but it is by no means all of me

¹ Wyndham Lewis.

(nor was it of Ulysses) and it has been my habit to apply this alleged quality to safeguard my poor creations for on the other side, as I stated in a former letter, I removed so much of any natural wit I had that but for your intuitive help I should be destitute.

I cannot understand the part of your letter about a new circle of friends here. Most of the people to whom Mr Pound introduced me on my arrival here struck me as being, as the elder Mr Dedalus would have phrased it, 'as I roved out one fine May morning'. The director of *L'Oeuvre* theatre who was so enthusiastic about *Exiles* and bombarded me with telegrams has just written a most insolent letter in slang to say that he was not such a fool as to put on the piece and lose 15,000 francs. My consolation is that I win a box of preserved apricots—a bet I made with Mr Pound (who was optimistic) after a cursory inspection of the director aforesaid. I signed a letter giving him *carte blanche* to do what he liked with the play, adapt it, put it on, take it off, lock it up etc knowing that if I refused to sign in a week it would have been said that I was an impossible person, that I was introduced to the great actor Lugne-Poe and given a great opportunity and would not take it. I have been a year in Paris and in that time not a word about me has appeared in any French periodical. Six or seven people are supposed to be translating *Dubliners* in different parts of France. The novel¹ is translated and presented but I can get no reply from the publishers (?) about it though I have written four times asking even for the return of the typescript. I never go to any of the various weekly reunions as it is a waste of time for me at present to be cooped up in overcrowded rooms listening to gossip about absent artists and replying to enthusiastic expressions about my (unread) masterpiece with a polite amused reflective smile. The only person who knows anything worth mentioning about the book or did or tried to do anything about it is Mr Valery Larbaud. He is now in England. Would you like him to visit you before he returns?

To return however to the indictment. What Mr Lewis and Mr McAlmon² told you is, I am sure, right but at the same time you may have misunderstood what they said. I do not attach the same importance to the "excess" mentioned as you do and as Mr Lewis does, apparently. And yet you are both probably right. This is another reason why your letter relieved me. I suppose you will think me an indifferent kind of rascal. Perhaps I am. Mr Lewis was very agreeable, in spite of my deplorable ignorance of his art, even offering to instruct me in the art of the Chinese of which I know as much as the man in the moon. He

¹ *A Portrait of the Artist*.

² That is, Robert McAlmon. See p. 289.

told me he finds life in London very depressing. There is a curious kind of honour-code among men which obliges them to assist one another and not hinder the free action of one another and remain together for mutual protection with the result that very often they waken up the next morning sitting in the same ditch.

This letter begins to remind me of a preface by Mr George Bernard Shaw. It does not seem to be a reply to your letter after all. I hate pose of any kind and so I could not [write] a highflown epistle about nerve tension and relaxation, or asceticism the cause and the effect of excess etc etc. You have already one proof of my intense stupidity. Here now is an example of my emptiness. I have not read a work of literature for several years. My head is full of pebbles and rubbish and broken matches and bits of glass picked up 'most everywhere. The task I set myself technically in writing a book from eighteen different points of view and in as many styles, all apparently unknown or undiscovered by my fellow tradesmen, that and the nature of the legend chosen would be enough to upset anyone's mental balance. I want to finish the book and try to settle my entangled material affairs definitely one way or the other (somebody here said of me 'They call him a poet. He appears to be interested chiefly in mattresses') And in fact, I was. After that I want a good long rest in which to forget *Ulysses* completely.

I forgot to tell you another thing. I don't even know Greek though I am spoken of as erudite. My father wanted me to take Greek as third language my mother German and my friends Irish. Result, I took Italian. I spoke or used to speak modern Greek not too badly (I speak four or five languages fluently enough) and have spent a great deal of time with Greeks of all kinds from noblemen down to onion-sellers, chiefly the latter. I am superstitious about them. They bring me luck.

I now end this long rambling shambling speech, having said nothing of the darker aspects of my detestable character. I suppose the law should take its course with me because it must now seem to you a waste of rope to accomplish the dissolution of a person who has now dissolved visibly and possesses scarcely as much 'pendibility' as an uninhabited dressing gown. With kindest regards gratefully and sincerely yours

JAMES JOYCE

TO FRANK BUDGEN

MS. Yale

16 August 1921

[71, rue du Cardinal Lemoine, Paris]

Dear Budgen: Thanks for your letter. First of all send me that *Siegges of*

Gibraltar and also Conan Doyle's *History of South African War* published by same house Nelson in their cheap collection. By the way please be sure to send these by *book post* registered and express. Parcels of books sent as parcels take 6 weeks! Incredible but true. As regards that 60 pp book would it be too much to suggest to you the following: get an exercise book and detach the leaves of it. If you read rapidly through the book again you could jot down on the sheets anything in *the words of the book* you think interesting and a quick sketch of those views (not artistic I am *not* an artist) this plan you might follow with the other books and then simply put the sheets in an envelope and send them on to me.

Penelope is the clout¹ of the book. The first sentence contains 2500 words. There are eight sentences in the episode. It begins and ends with the female word *yes*. It turns like the huge earth ball slowly surely and evenly round and round spinning, its four cardinal points being the female breasts, arse, womb and cunt expressed by the words *because*, *bottom* (in all senses bottom button, bottom of the class, bottom of the sea, bottom of his heart), *woman*, *yes*. Though probably more obscene than any preceding episode it seems to me to be perfectly sane full amoral fertilisable untrustworthy engaging shrewd limited prudent indifferent *Weib*. *Ich bin der* [sic] *Fleisch der stets bejah't*.²

Enclosed 20 francs about 8/6. More will follow. Send on that letter.

J.J.

Molly Bloom was born 1871.

TO MRS WILLIAM MURRAY

MS. National Library

14 October 1921

9, rue de l'Université, Paris VII

Dear Aunt Josephine: Thanks for prompt reply to my letter. *Ulysses*, a huge book of about 800 pages, about 11 inches by 7, ought to be out in about three weeks or so. The cheapest copies cost £2 each, the dearest £7 each. I shall send you one. I got very few free copies they are so dear.

I want all the information, gossip or anything you remember about the Powells—chiefly the mother and daughters. Were any of them born abroad? When did Mrs Powell die. I never heard of a 3rd brother, only Gus and Charley. The women were Mrs Gallaher, Mrs Clinch, Mrs Russell. Where did they live before marriage? When did the major, if that was his rank, die? Also any information you have about the Dillons

¹ French for 'star turn', or topper.

² 'woman. I am the flesh that always affirms.' Joyce is playing on Mephistopheles' identification of himself in Goethe's *Faust*, Act I: 'I am the spirit that always denies.'