Diary 13, Jan. 1-12, 1909

a notebook with unruled pages  
last entry on Jan. 12, 1909

[05] January 1st 1909

[07] Hotel Webster, 40 W. 45th St., N.Y.,   
<Friday> Jan. 1, 1909

Lovely day.

We left Washington at 10, and spent the whole day with Mary Gwinn Hodder, listening to her endless flow of talk in justification of her dead husband, who, in the opinion of everyone but herself, was a thoroughly bad lot. She says he was a reincarnation of Christ, speaks of him as St. Alfred, said he was a real Knight of the Round Table, and all the rest. It is almost incredible, yet it persuades you while you hear it, and he certainly was devoted to her, which is altogether in his favour.

We came on here by the 5-9.30 train, and I read this marvellous [08] sentence in Collier’s Weekly, probably written by Norman Hapgood, as it was in an editorial, “Whatever is good and valuable to mankind begins, indeed, in the realm of ideas and plans, but must necessarily descend and terminate in better houses, better food, better clothing, better machinery, better methods of manufacture and distribution, better modes of transportation and communication. It all terminates in the commodities and actions of common everyday life.”

Hurrah for America!! What a fascinating civilization this must produce.

[09] <Hotel Webster, New York> Saturday, Jan. 2, 1909

We lunched with Bessie Marbury and Elsie de Wolfe. Bessie was talking about two young men from California who have come to New York to seek their fortunes. One came before the other, and explained that he had got a position as art editor for a paper, but that his friend, Anthony wasn’t engaged on anything, but meant to be a writer of plays. “Anthony has money, but you mustn’t let that prejudice you against him*,* Miss Marbury!” the boy explained with great insistence.

She used several amusing expressions about getting Rooseveldt [sic] to speak at the Colony Club –said he was “gun shy” of New York (like a dog once shot in hunting) and that he had “cold feet” about New York.

Before lunch Rachel Perry had been [010] to see us and Florence Reynolds with Ray, who is staying with her.Bernhard went into that Talking Shop, Duveen’s. They said no one in America had the influence Bernhard has on the sale of pictures!

Ray and Karin came and we all went to the Fields’ to see New York from Brooklyn Heights. Karin came back to go with a friend to the Hippodrome, but the rest of us stayed on to dinner, though B.B. and I were in agony with indigestion, and I had a beastly cold coming on. Ray watched us with cynical young eyes.

She wrote me the other day, “They ask me why I believe in Suffrage? I find it hard to answer, oddly enough, and I am searching in my head for a formula. The reasons I pour forth from the platform are not my reasons [011] for believing in it. I am not a democrat, nor do I think Women’s Suffrage will bring many material changes: one or two slightly better things, perhaps. Nor do I think that I shall be any better off: in fact, all I can find to say is that I am angry at not being able to vote if I want to, and that I think the vote is a sort of peg onto which a lot of useful morals can be hung so that the agitation is better than the having of the vote. These reasons seem pallid for an enthusiast, and I must get them better expressed before I can set anything on fire with them.”

[012]

writing with an Italic nib

<Hotel Webster, New York> Sunday, Jan. 3, 1909

Ray and Florence came, and Mrs. Norman Hapgood called. Bernhard went to spend the day and night at Mrs. Cooper Hewitt’s at Tuxedo.

My cold was awful, but I took Ray to tea to Bessie’s to meet Anne Morgan. They all seemed very wild and rushing and savage, but Ray enjoyed it.

Karin spent the evening and night with me, and we had a long talk. She says she means to go in for the study of Philosophy, it interests her more than anything else. She is very able, but who can say if she is also profound?

[013] <Hotel Webster, New York> Monday, Jan. 4, 1909

Cold still ghastly.Hutchins Hapgood came, Ray, Mrs. Rice, Mrs. Fabbri, Mr. and Mrs. Crossley.We dined with the Alexanders, and had a general and most sympathetic curse at all the painters and sculptors of this country.At 9.45, however, Mrs. A. brought the talk round to her husband’s work, and we had to look at photographs etc. and admire.It was like the man who was taken round an Insane Asylum by a very clear, witty person, who laughed at all the poor deluded people, and pointed out their crazy fancies. The man thought he must be the doctor, he was so clear and clever. Finally they came to a man, who, he said, was the worst of all, the very saddest case, “Why?” “Why, he thinks he’s God.” “But why is that worse than the others?” “Oh, because I know I am God.” !!

—— !! —— Where is our insane spot I wonder?

[014] <Hotel Webster, New York> Tuesday, Jan. 5, 1909

Pouring.

Karin returned to Bryn Mawr. Ray took me up in Alice Dike’s electric car to the Metropolitan Museum, where we found Bernhard, wick and furious about the German Exhibition, of which he has refused to write for The Nation.

Rachel Perry and jolly Miss Richter, Dicky Dana and his friend Mr. Dean came to lunch.Afterwards I went over slides with Lucy Perkins, and then joined B.B. in Bryson’s room. We came quickly away, for even Bryson cannot make that Museum atmosphere anything but deadly.

I looked over my speech; it seemed very dull.

We dined at the Abbes’, really an interesting dinner. Mr. Abbe talked to me about Radium. A piece as big as a pin’s head costs a thousand dollars, [015] so there can’t be much in my beloved “Radiozone”!A Mr. Eno who sat by me was very nice, also his wife, who is a great believer in the spiritual power for Good of Mrs. Piper. She had an illness, in the course of which everything changed for her. She couldn’t explain it very clearly.

I had a long talk with the musician son, Courtlandt Palmer — rather interesting. He is afraid of becoming a Catholic. I said I had been one, and it never hurt me, so far as I could tell. It must be taken aesthetically.

Mrs. Fabbri was there, chattering like a parrot on the the most serious subjects. They all said that “Equal Suffrage” was becoming quite a fashionable fad.

[016] <Hotel Webster, New York> Wednesday, Jan. 6, 1909

Bernhard called on Duveen, etc.

I went down town and chose slides for my lectures, then went to have lunch with Ray and Florence.

B.B. lunched at the Union League Club.

At 2.30 Jo Widener came and took us to Mr. Frick’s where presently his father also came. Mr. Frick was very jolly and asked B.B. to tell him about pictures. He has the Titian Aretino, and a fine Greco, also the Ilchester Rembrandt, which is *colossal*. His daughter has studied “Berenson” at school!

We called on Mr. Winthrop (out), Mrs. Lydig (out), and Mrs. Blumenthal, who owns one fine Lotto and a Rossellino.

Dined quietly here and in the evening heard 4 Acts of *Pelléas et Mélisande* with Debussy’s music — frightfully tragic and full of the *lachrymae rerum*. We could not stand the last act.

[017] <Hotel Webster, New York> Thursday, Jan. 7, 1909

Cold.

Hutchins came in to breakfast, and was as sincere and “elemental” as ever.

Bernhard lunched with Lamont (editor of *The Nation*), and I stayed in and worked upon my lecture.

Bernhard called on Mrs. Hewitt and met a very nice Mrs. Tiffany.

Grace came to see me, and Mr. John Van Dyke, and various other people.

We went to the Boston Symphony with the Spaldings to hear Alberto’s rival, Mischa Ehman, play. He is a horrid youngster, but plays, I think, better than dear Alberto. They gave an *awful* thing of Noren’s first ‚ a disgrace to the orchestra, but a piece of German advertising.

[018] <Hotel Webster, New York> Friday, Jan. 8, 1909

Cold.

Hutch came to breakfast and stayed a long time talking. He said the Mormons spoke of “Revelations” — i.e. they see an attractive woman and the Lord reveals to them that they are to marry her. Such revelations apparently are not uncommon. What a pity I never have them!

I went to Dr. Clarence Rice about my throat, and then joined B.B. at Mrs. Samuel Untermeyer’s for lunch — a company of Jews, but the Elys (she a Dutch actress) were delightful. A Dr. Ansbacher, who lectures on Kant, and the Drama, and everything else that comes along — a handsome, rhetorical man, who made us both sick.

We went to the Philharmonic with Mrs. Untermeyer and heard the agreeable unfinished Symphony of Schubert [019] and Tschaikowski’s \_\_ Symphony which we liked far more than we at all expected to, especially the second movement.

We then called on Mrs. Sherrill and Mrs. Codman and Mrs. Croswell, who were all out, then on Mrs. Flagler, and saw Bryson’s lovely panel decorations — quite exquisite.

In the evening we dined with Mrs. John Ellis (Miss Warder). Mrs. John Jacob Astor was there, very lovely, and Mrs. Norman Hapgood, wonderfully beautiful, looking, as B.B. said, like the Whore of Babylon. A nice Mr. and Mrs. Robert Maynard were there, and Mr. Elliott Gregory. It was a pleasant dinner, without being very interesting.

[020] <Hotel Webster, New York> Saturday, Jan. 9, 1909

Warmer.

Bernhard went to see Glaenzer.

We lunched together and then he went off to Barrytown-on-Hudson, to the Chapmans’, and I worked on my lecture.

Mr. Rutgers Marshall (“Pain, Pleasure and Aesthetics”) called, and Mr. and Mrs. Eno, whom I really like.

I dined with Grace and Bond and Frank.

<Hotel Webster, New York> Sunday, Jan. 10, 1909

Warm.

Throat bad, so went to Dr. Rice. Lunched at Elsie’s with Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Codman (very nice), and gave my lecture at the Club to a very fashionable and friendly audience. I was introduced by Mr. Blackfield. It went off all right, and they all came up to say it was “the best lecture the’d ever had at the Club” and so on.

I went back to tea with Elsie and Bessie, and then came here, [021] where I fell into such a depression that I telephoned to ask if Alberto would play to me. They told me to come and dine with them, and we had one of those awful over-cooked Plaza dinners, eaten by over-dressed people to the sobbing of violins.Afterwards Albert played the 5th violin and piano sonata of Mozart, a lovely one of Beethoven, a suite by Veracini and some Bach — too heavenly! But what an awful horrible ghastly milieu for that poor boy! His Mother made me take away this to read, because she knew I would love it so!

“The first thing young Albert Spalding said when he left the stage was: ‘It is wonderful. There is one of the best orchestras in America!’ Already he [022] had forgot the applause echoing through the Auditorium.

He is still a simple boy, this prodigy of 20, this gifted youngster. When he played yesterday, upon him were bestowed the frank admiration and plaudits of an audience that filled every seat.

With him there is no particle of pose. He was so genuinely interested. His bow leaped from string to string, sometimes with a breadth and bigness that seemed impossible, again with a touch of dreaming and poesy that made one a little sad to think of the temperament behind it all, for temperament is the precursor of what hurts, and Spalding is only a boy yet. To criticize such playing is beyond one: one only listened to the faultless intonations, watched the supple wrist and swift-moving white fingers, caught glimpses of the trailing garments of the spirit he invoked and then thought of that proud fond mother, as near him as she could be, for she was sitting, all the time, just outside the little door where he came and went. To think that money, [023] his by inheritance, did not mar but made. It is enough to wipe out all faith in the copy-books!

<Hotel Webster, New York> Monday, Jan. 11, 1909

Bernhard came back, and we lunched here.Mrs. Gardner called, Mrs. Flagler, Mrs. Taylor and various people.

B.B. called on Mrs. Latham.We dined with the Blumenthals, who had Glaenzer, Judge Cohen, Mr. and Mrs. McClellan (Mayor) to meet us. I had had my nose operated on earlier in the day, and it was still bleeding, which was a bore!

The dinner was most sumptuous, and B.B. ate a little piece of canvas back duck (“canard daubé de toile”, as Miss Elkins told the Duca degli Abruzzi) that simply did for him. He was ill all night.

[024] <Hotel Webster, New York> Tuesday, Jan. 12, 1909

A Miss Eames came with a XVII [century] drawing which that miserable Fischer of Washington had pronounced a Carpaccio!

Bernhard was still ill, and spent all day in bed, only getting up to go to a grand lunch at the Fabbri’s and again to go to the Sherrills’ ‘formal’ dinner.

Mr. Winthrop called on him and a man named Emmett about a Titian he thinks he has.

The lunch was pleasant. I sat by an architect named Hopping and there were some nice people named Bell there.

Cora Hardon came to see me, and various callers.

The dinner at the Sherrills was very grand. Paul Morton was there, whom the President protected from a legal investigation about his complicity [025] in certain illegal railway rebates.

Dr. Puton also, Miss Cross, Mrs. Page and the Archer Huntingtons. The latter sat by me and we had a great talk. He couldn’t get over it that I liked reading and cared for Milton!