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congratulated on this effort: the readings are an event of the day, & so are acceptable, apart from the merit that many of them possess. A third project of his is only yet talked of: it will depend on some one who has the special talent, being patriotic enough to devote it to the general good: & this is unless then starting a newspaper. Several efforts of previous voyages have been handed round to stimulate rivalry in our bosoms, but really the most of them are such contemptible literary efforts that I fear they fail in that object. I expect the Atwoods are at the bottom of this move, as they like anything which can be put in print as a tangible proof of the eclat attending their voyages. Smythe as an acknowledged Pressman is attacked, but he declares he will have nothing to do with the shop when he is out on a holiday. But unless he is some practised hand under

take it, it will be dreadfully stupid & sure to enter into personalities which Heaven forbid. 65

We are now beginning to find out the capabilities of the ship, & how far we are likely to be comfortable - as far as the table goes, comfort in the rough John Bull way of ancient sailing ships is all we must look for; plenty of rough good material put on the table but no art used in preparing it. 'La Bourgogne' no doubt has opened my eyes, for there is a sad contrast between the caddy table of the one & of the other. Perhaps we could not expect such an artiste as we had on board the Frenchman, no chance of tough ship ducks being metamorphosed into savory 'cane-ton-our olives', but they might for their own sake use a little common sense in feeding us. We are 50 at table, & before we sit down all the joints poultry & sidedishes have to be brought from