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1117 Masselin Avenue,  
Los Angeles.

Jan 11/39

Darling Mummy,

Very many thanks for your letter written just after Christmas. It was nice to hear details of who you had to share the day with you and what you did, which was some substitute for being there ourselves. That must be next year. I'm afraid that letters from both sides of the Atlantic most grow less frequent as many boats are cut off during the winter season. A good many things, therefore, have happened since I wrote to you last.

On New Year's Day we went to Pasadena to see the Rose Tournament with Charles Pratt and Charles Crawford. This institution is 50 years old - really quite old for these parts. It was originally intended to prove to a supposedly astonished world that Southern California could boast flowers galore even in the middle of winter; but with the amount of advertising this state has since received, no one could conceivably be even mildly surprised. A few of the floats, however, were really very beautiful and we had a chance (tell Constance this!) of seeing Shirley Temple ride on one of them only a few yards away. The local universities had sent bands dressed up in comic opera uniforms, in front of which marched girls called "drum majorettes" who were dressed in satin tights and disported themselves in a provocative manner. Despite the gloomier prophets, Oxford and Cambridge have still quite a long way to go on the downward path!

Last Sunday we took a 50 mile drive up the coast and back, and even in that short distance found that the scenery altered to a remarkable degree. Now that the rainy season has begun (though so far confined to two short spells) the parched appearance of the land is vanishing and the hills are mantled with a green which seems all the more marvellous for its rarity. We went by the sea

coast route and came back inland so as to get the maximum of contrast, and then having changed set off for a tea party in Beverly Hills with the Fudgers. (I think I spelt them incorrectly in my last letter. Moreover it seems that Mrs. Pinkham made a mistake in supposing that they were related to the American branch of our family.) They are people of extraordinary wealth who have a mania for building houses - and indeed the prize remark of the week was Mrs. Fudger's to Dinah, "Now do tell me about the houses you've built!" As a matter of fact the one she lives in now is very beautiful indeed. It is built in a most restrained Georgian style and much of the furniture is English. The formal garden was designed integrally with the house, and all the ground floor rooms open onto it. The bedrooms upstairs have windows which slide into the walls and disappear, giving access to balconies which overlook this lovely garden.

The surprise of the afternoon came when I was introduced to Mrs. F's son-in-law, an Englishman who is the very image of Verdon, or rather what Verdon will be in about ten years time. In his looks, his speech, his very mannerisms, the resemblance to Verdon was astonishing; even his attitude to life was similar. Yesterday being my free day, we went out for a short run (you can't go less than 100 miles here all told and see anything new, for there are so few roads outside the towns). This time we visited the Kellogg ranch, which is a large farm containing one of the few Arabian studs in this country. W.K. spends part of the year in an adjoining house, but has given the ranch itself to the University of California. After looking at the horses (it was queer to see Rudolf Valentino's) we went for a walk on the estate. It was the first time outside the mountains that we had got away from all sounds of life, and particularly of cars. This was a blessed relief, and for some time we sat down on the newly sprung grass and listened to the birds which are now appearing in ever-increasing numbers. We also bought some walnuts at a nearby farm where we talked to the farmer who had a dog 17 years old. When Dinah pointed out that it grinned widely, the farmer said, "Yes, that dawg's got a smile on him like Teddy Roosevelt's." I laughed and said, "When you've trained a dog to smile like Franklin D., then you'll really have got something!" Roosevelt I (as he is often called) is

still a very vivid memory with the older people. I think I told you that Mrs. LeVino's husband was a pressman attached to him when he was President and in this way became his personal friend.

Now I must finish this letter to catch the mail with it, and so send my love to you both. Many thanks for Peter's address; I'll try to get a letter to him.

With my best love,

Raymond.