

(19)  
117 Masselin Avenue,  
Los Angeles.

March 27, 1939.

Darling Mummy,

I was very sorry indeed to hear from your last letter of Francis's continued illness. When he is feeling bad he mustn't on any account do up my copies of The Times, and you must tell him that from me. I do hope that your next letter will report an improvement. We had actually heard nothing of Edward's engagement and are writing to congratulate him, hoping that his old address (to which we have been sending weekly magazines) will find him. If Mrs. Wheeler should know of his present address, I should be very glad to hear it.

Your criticism of All This and Heaven Too accords very well with what was said of the book over here. It is to be produced this year by Warners with Bette Davis in the leading part, and from her work in The Sisters (which I strongly recommend you to see) and Dark Victory, I am sure she will do justice to the book. I was very interested to hear of Cicely again, and hope that you will tell me more when you have seen her. What have her latest European books been like? And what does she think of the present situation? Dinah and I woke up at 2 a.m. yesterday to listen to Mussolini's speech which was relayed to this country with a running translation. A few hours afterwards there were comments broadcast directly from England, France and Italy, and it showed how bad the situation was when the speech was considered reassuring, seeing that it was a compound of violent threats and incitements to the Italian people to take up arms. With the better spirit which had seemed to be prevailing between England and Italy, I had hoped that the speech would have been

calm and conciliatory. But I'm sure that if you heard it you'll agree that its tone was no less violent than Hitler's. The tension seems again to be relaxing a little, but I see headlines in this evening's papers that there have been threats against Poland. Correspondents of Leroy's in Switzerland say that people in that country are feeling very uneasy, and a Danish friend of mine is worrying about his country too. I should think that the Schleswig question might well be reopened soon.

But of these uncertain speculations there is no end, and all the time diplomacy is skating on very thin ice indeed. What this means for your nerves I can well imagine, as we feel it even all this long way away. The future is so impossible to discern, like a dark curtain which sometimes recedes a little way and then draws in until it is almost in front of you.

Apart from this constant anxiety, life goes on very smoothly. This is the worst time of the year in California, for the sky is entirely overcast sometimes for days at a time. Yesterday we drove out some distance in search of the sun but instead got into a heavy storm. We drove up into the mountains through veils of cloud until we could see nothing of the precipices which fell sheer away on one side of the road. Five thousand feet up the road ended beside a lake, where we hope to return in the summer for the place was certainly very beautiful.

At the end of last week we went to a concert of the L.A. Philharmonic, at which Hindemith was the guest viola player and conductor. Two of his latest works were played. We went with Leroy and a friend of his who knew Hindemith well in Switzerland and was instrumental in producing his opera, Mathis der Mahler. Music is rather in the air just now as one of the L.A. papers in conjunction with others throughout the country is offering albums of classical music and gramophone records at quite absurdly low prices (\$1.39 for 3 or 4 records). They come out every two weeks, and we went downtown to get our first set today.

I am glad to think that your recovery is really continuing, so that

you can go to the theatre and take drives in the country with real enjoyment. Certainly to have the West Country at your door is a great blessing and a man like Francis to see it with. Enjoyment of natural beauty can be either immensely magnified or reduced to nothing by one's companion, and I am certainly fortunate in having someone as responsive and spontaneous as Dinah.

Do continue to let me know how all the people are whom I know in Bath. How is 'France' and how is Mrs. Kingsley? When you see her, could you ask her for Jack's address. Though the Philippines are a good long way off from here, they are so much nearer California than England that I feel quite close to him. Also, has Miss Woodcock quite recovered from her illness? It will be good to see Bath again if only this awful cloud of war can have lifted somewhat. It will be so beautiful when the Festival is on, redolent of the century which I have always admired more than any other. This Western country is so very new that I shall probably go into ecstasies at the sight of any old building and show abominable taste until I have readjusted my mind.

With all our love to you both,

T. L. S.