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May 22, 1939.

Darling Mummy,

No letter from you for the past week, but I expect one will come tomorrow after I have posted this one. And I'm afraid I'm even more guilty for having missed the first transatlantic air-mail. There was no announcement in the papers on this coast, and as I hadn't expected the service to start till the very end of May I had made no inquiries at the head post office. Anyway, there it is and I'm terribly sorry that I missed it. That would have been a stamp for Mrs. Wheeler! Actually, 30¢ is rather an exorbitant postage for a letter, but it is nice to think that in an emergency a letter could be carried so quickly.

I don't think I told you that Dinah and I are going to a series of historical films arranged by the Museum of Modern Art in New York, and incidentally described in a recent issue of The Times. In the first ^{pro-}~~XXX~~ ^{gramme} ~~XXX~~ was shown Queen Elizabeth with Sarah Bernhardt, which I'm almost certain you once told me you saw. It was rather tragic seeing Sarah in her old age (I think she was 68 in 1912) when deprived of her voice and presence and left only with the stilted and exaggerated gestures which I suppose she considered appropriate to the screen. And of course the story was absurd. The second programme contained a film called A Fool There Was which apparently introduced the word "vamp" to the language. Certainly the leading actress, Theda Bara, was described on the credit titles as "The Vampire."

The next programme (Intolerance) we shall unfortunately miss, as I have a chance of taking off three days together. This will enable us to see Yosemite in spring, which would otherwise have been a very tiring journey

as it is about 330 miles away and of course there is an enormous lot to see there. As the Pinkhams can lend us sleeping bags, we are thinking of camping out as we want to learn to be resourceful in the open and would anyway enjoy it. It wouldn't be worth it to buy a tent for the short time we are here, but if it is warm enough at Yosemite altitudes to sleep in bags we shall do that. Then it will only be necessary to get a cooking stove. Excellent camping grounds have been built in many places throughout the National Parks, and these have sanitation and running water.

We saw Good Bye Mr. Chips! the day after its premiere here. It is a really magnificent film, acted and directed with wonderful restraint and brilliantly portraying the traditions and influence of an old English school. It is a great tribute to Robert Donat's acting that you never think of him as a young man playing an old man's part, nor does he ever allow pathos to lapse into sentimentality. It is throughout extremely moving, and the events of the outside world, especially of course the War, are wonderfully reflected in the life of the school without being shown directly. The whole thing is amazingly free from blemishes (unlike Wuthering Heights, for instance, though that was far from deserving The Times review in my opinion) and is a much more mature piece of work than the cinema usually produces.

I do hope my letters to B and H, addressed as you said, have reached them. I know you'll let me know their permanent address as soon as you have it and also news of how they are. The photographs of Capri which you enclosed with the latest parcel of papers filled Dinah with longing to go there, but I'm sure I could never return unless those two were there also. They are so bound up with every tree and stone in the island, and with everyone to whom one gives a greeting. What an influence for good they have been through all the years of their stay, and how many thousands of people - the simplest as well as the most learned - must be happier for having known them!

Love Pa - Bob to you + Francis, P. G. L.