

L.A.

(26)

July 24/39

Darling Mummy,

Your letter was at home to greet me when we returned yesterday afternoon, and I'm hoping that you've been having as beautiful a holiday in Devonshire as we have had in California. We did 1700 miles all told in the ten days of our trip, but didn't feel that we had been rushed as the journeyings were well spaced with stays in beautiful places. Both of us enjoyed San Francisco enormously, but found little of merit in the Fair except the art exhibition. Then, as you know from my postcard, we traversed the gold country and went to Reno, after which we camped at Lake Tahoe. This is a gloriously beautiful place, and is, I believe, very much like some of the lakes in the Canadian Rockies which Francis must know well.

Then we went on through more of the gold country and spent $2\frac{1}{2}$ days in Yosemite. I did two fairly strenuous climbs and took a lot of photographs, while Dinah did one less strenuous climb. She wisely insisted on my wearing a hat, and though it looked like B's "Chinese Maniac" hat and only cost a dime, it protected me well from the great heat radiated by those massive mountains. Dinah had got a lot of colour by then, and looked very well and attractive - and I believe I had also got quite tanned and certainly felt very fit. As I did both climbs at about 1500 ft. an hour (one slightly more, the other slightly less), I think I am in quite good condition. The second climb was about 20 miles in all and rose 5000 ft. above the valley, and I was not unduly tired afterwards. My eyes gave me no trouble at all. Dr. Avery has recommended a very slight change in one long distance lens, but he advises me to keep the old lens as he expects this trace of astigmatism will prove only a temporary condition of the eye. He has certainly been wonderfully kind, and has only charged about three pounds for six visits, during one of which he also examined Dinah. He also takes a most personal interest in the welfare

of both of us, and is in all things a model of the doctor of an older generation, setting a standard which few of his younger colleagues, at least in this country, come up to, with all their chromium plated instruments and erudite diagnoses.

Though the car had climbed high mountains again and again on our holiday, at one time reaching 10,000 ft., the most arduous driving was reserved for the last, though it was perfectly flat and straight. This was crossing the Mojave Desert. The temperature in Mojave was over 110 in the shade - but there wasn't any shade! It was such a heat as I would never have believed possible, beating on our heads and making our minds go dull. Dinah had the excellent idea of applying cold handkerchiefs to our necks and foreheads, and our large water container carried in the front of the car proved invaluable. This heat went on for a hundred miles, but at last we climbed into the mountains as we approached Los Angeles, and the worst was over. I expect Francis, accustomed to Equatorial Africa, would have made light of it, but it was nearly too much for us, especially as we had camped the night before at 9,000 ft. where it was very cold.

I was exceedingly sorry to hear about Dick's ill luck, and hope that in spite of it the Army will give him the job he deserves. Will you thank Francis especially for the most interesting reports of the Imperial Policy Group, which I am reading now and will afterwards circulate at the studio. If he could spare future copies of them, I should indeed be grateful.

With best love to you both from us both,

Richard.

The girl who showed us round the state buildings in Carson City (the capital of Nevada) told us that her father came for Bert. Was it that funny?