

June 19

Dear Ones -

I think the last batch of collected mail from APO 7769 has reached me ; now it will come in a relatively steady flow and will improve, of course, when everyone learns that I am at 708. I also got the Center Bulletin, letters from Judy, Uncle Don, Dot F., and Willie Stein. Now to delve into the stack from home.

By this time you know that I received that 10 dollar check and have sent it back with instructions. The news and the picture you paint of home make it all the more attractive way out here in the Pacific, under the Southern Cross. As for packages - I repeat: I need nothing - I will request whatever I do need if something comes up. Food is the least of my worries - we have superb chow. This is a Service Command - nothing but the best! I am looking for your first letters answering mine - so I can know what questions you have. Willie's letter from Frisco acknowledged a letter of mine, so I am looking for yours shortly. Thanks for all the clippings; I almost split my sides thinking about Miss Pitt saluting Arad Linscott in Latin - good old high school days!! I am still looking for any of my magazines. I repeat what I wrote before: your picture of Major Bernstein, Prima Donna Fournier, the perpetual cottage problems assure me that things are not amiss at home. The report on the political front is fine. I got a kick out of the play the soldier, the returning veteran is getting. I only hope that that soldier takes as lively and intelligent an interest in politics as the politicians are taking in him. Good for Hank and Judy. (What was I supposed to say?!) .

I received your letter of May 30. Toots, it looked as if you took the holiday to write to me. You certainly are leading a busy life; Boston and movies and circuses, oh, my. I was afraid, however, that your critical faculties are still overwhelmed by Hollywood glamour. I was reassured when you said that you didn't like Taylor in Song Of Russia, though. Wait 'til you reach the supercritical, sophisticated college freshman level - then everything without social significance will stink. Then eventually you settle down to enjoying the average movie as good casual entertainment. I guess everyone goes through this process. Your enthusiasm for music is infectious - I'm going to a concert tonight - mostly because they are playing Rhapsody in Blue. Your report on school was properly pessimistic; it never does to be optimistic just in case something does go wrong; the other way you are always covered. I am looking for your next letter and your report on the end of the school year and your plans for the summer.

Your second installment on Holmes Pere and Fils finally caught up with me, Daddy. Holmes was undoubtedly one of the clearest thinking jurists of his time, a man capable of new ideas and progressive thought. His willingness and desire to accept change, to reject a static society without bluntly defining a new course of right and wrong, was and is still a remarkable feature. We need more men of his ilk to keep us on a true course. ~~The~~ next figure in your discussions has a much more controversial position in American civilization at the present time. - Bernard De Voto. In this question of the mental attitude of the returning soldier, I think he is wrong. If you must make a general statement, you must remember that the average soldier will never actually see the front line; and those that do will even more than ever tend to glamorize and desire the simple lives they left. The exceptions - who seek excitement at its former level - will be the exceptions. At least that is my notion. (And I

*to prove the rule, and will be few.*

must briefly and bluntly say that I am not a front line soldier so far.) The danger is not in the returning soldiers attitudes - very few will have chips on their shoulders - but in the civilian ability to absorb them quickly and smoothly into the pattern of civilian life. That is why post war planning is so vital. We need not have a nation of killers - but it will take a continuing effort, a sincere willingness to plan and cooperate, to avoid the dangers. Still, as the extreme view, De Voto may serve a purpose in arousing the interest and concern necessary for this return to individual normalcy and to social progress. As for the other question raised by DV - in the 'Literary Fallacy.' I think there is a great deal in what he says - but primarily the fictional literature of an age reflects the social picture, does not create it. I said "primarily." That does not deny his point that critical writers should point out the failure of that social picture in positive terms. But even if they had I do not think the influence would have been of a decisive value in current popular thinking. Fictional literature in our age of press, radio, and film is of necessity relegated to a secondary position as a political thoughtstream. It still should be constructively critical however, and it must have a perspective + complete vista of the social scene - not a limited view which falsely pictures + fails to evaluate the whole society. Well, I have to run now to catch my ride to the concert. I'll continue later - to tell you of "Herb Schreiber my tentmate."

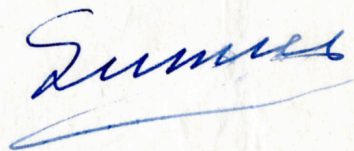
The concert was fine - the Rhapsody, Emperor Waltz, Quartet from Rigoletto, and Beethoven's Fifth. This afternoon I played some volleyball - not that that has anything to do with music - but it just occurred to me to tell you.

Schreiber is 28 years old. He finished the U of South Carolina, apparently Phi Beta, in three years after waiting a year after high school to start college. He majored in English and History; went to Med school in New York city. Is married, wants to make South Carolina his home. My first impressions are based on just two days friendship. He has a mind like Lou Raybin's with a personality like Juj's; he is very likeable; his personality is pleasing. Essentially he is serious; he claims to be asocial: why? His ideas are fairly set - not quite to dogmatism - but he knows what he wants for society; he wants friends who can contribute to him. He feels like the chess player who plays with inferiors much to their benefit, but with no improvement for himself. He politely but firmly stays away from small talk and sloppy thinkers. He does not deny the individual his individualism, his emotions, his artistic expression, but he judges his value not on these facets of character but on a social-utilitarian standard. He looks for a man with a solid system of social tenets, who studies humanity and its problems within a framework of positive social values, who recognizes the interrelation and the importance of the many problems facing the world today in education, in literature, in politics, in economics, what have you. He can have no use for a man who loves beauty, who writes marvelous poetry, if that man is in his thinking a fascist. The social evaluation outweighs the total of all other aspects of the man and his character. He is not a revolutionary; he sees correctly that progress is the hard uphill gradual fight of ideas and counter-ideas and compromise as humanity moves towards its social climactic Utopia in the far distant future. He does not deny to any individual his own expression in any form he desires, his love of beauty, his uniqueness, as long as that man recognizes the basic social truths as they evolve - and they are always evolving and developing. The state is for the individual and not vice versa, but the individual can not deny society. Now all this is just my first impression of Herb.

I may be misinterpreting him. I think there is a lot in what he says. It is a plea for a very mature, thinking people: it is admittedly no more than the goal which will take centuries to achieve. But he certainly is stimulating and I know I will gain from this contact. I await your comment. Please note that ~~in his~~ his idea that ~~the~~ theory of the evaluation of a framework of social principles' being preeminent means that it will be agreed upon gradually by men in time and in logic, not that it will be forced on unprepared men by some philanthropic super mind. He is a democrat with an idea of what the ultimate progress of the democratic structure will best lead to.

It is late and I should be nitting the hay. This turned out to be a long letter.

Love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sumner", with a long horizontal flourish underneath.