

Civida Cal

Sept 19, 1941

Dear Nannie -

As has happened before, such a long time has passed since writing to you, that I don't know where to begin. The whaling expedition not only did not materialize but, as I found out later, when my Field Museum friend John Albrecht and his wife and daughter spent a day here a couple of weeks ago, even they with all their pull were not allowed once on the boats. They dragged out three weeks in Eureka, after he had gotten all he could get out of the whaling Co. in three days, which shortened his sea-otter hunting in Carmel. When they saw Civida they wished that they had spent that time here. Their few hours here however was quite amusing since Emil Ludwig <sup>author of "The Nile," etc</sup> and his wife happened to call at the same time. Albrecht had lots of photos of his big game expeditions even photos of himself with Haile Selassie in Addis Ababa. Ludwig gave him a 3<sup>rd</sup> degree questioning about everything and then offered to send him one of his books if Albrecht would give him a certain photo of lions. Albrecht, not to be gotten the best of, asked him to give him an I.O.U. on the back of a photo, which seemed to be the first piece

of blank paper at hand. Ludwig turned it over giving it a quick glance and then wrote "Portrait of Emil Ludwig". It was a life size close-up of the face of a hideous baboon!

When in Santa Barbara <sup>we</sup> visited the garden of the house which Ludwig occupies: The Gillespie House which is one of the if not the most magnificent estates in Montecito. We did not go into the palatial house but we did see Ludwig's dirty underwear hanging out of the bathroom window: an almost too human touch in such surroundings!

Edmund surprised me with a small birthday party on Sunday afternoon the 14<sup>th</sup>. It began with a general swim and then a strawberry punch bowl which continued to flow thru an albacore dinner served among the rocks and oaks behind the house. Cit dusk Japanese lanterns were lighted and, with soft music composed by the Episc. organist in Santa Barbara and inspired by a previous visit here, the house seemed like an Oriental flower boat drifting thru space to some unknown destination.

The main event on my real anniversary, the 16<sup>th</sup> was not so pleasant: a completely wrecked car as a result of colliding with a highway gravel truck. I was drinking and was unhurt.

2 but I smashed the windshield with my forehead which was gouged out in several places, and was pretty ~~thoroughly~~ shaken up otherwise. However it might have been worse: my glasses were broken but my eyes untouched, and the car has full insurance coverage. I had planned to drive up to S.F. this week end but that trip is now postponed.

This is the reason you were expected to visit Ovila and you should be here. Bright hot-cool days - a foamy surf and evenings with the tinge of Autumn. At last I've started doing larger pictures in color and am enjoying this more vigorous style. Countee Cullen's cat book wants to be illustrated but I'm in no mood to put myself into it. And I have two handsome (yellow - and pink champagne) Persian kittens waiting as models. They are growing so fast that they'll soon be out of the kitten class and I'll have to get some more.

When are you going to take that long vacation of yours? I wish you could look upon Ovila as a possible place to retire. I am still uncertain as to whether



I should keep the property or not. E.E. is looking for a teaching or library job (hunting recently in L.A. for ten days but in vain) We may go up together next week to S.F. If he doesn't find a niche there he may go back to N.Y.

I don't look forward to spending another rainy season in these leaky shacks and yet it's no time to build or even remodel. And I am being continuously urged to come to Guatemala to visit in a handsome house on the most beautiful lake in the world (Atitlan) Besides I am not as productive here as I have been elsewhere. On the other hand every one insists that I should hold on to the Avila acres for my own good. So what? I think you and Stan should fly out and look the place over.

Love

Tom

P.S. Roy Partridge and his third wife spent two days of their honeymoon with us. He still teaches at Mills College.