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10 September
Chu Lai

Dear Family -

What's absolutely new and earth-shaking since I wrote last? Not a lot, I'm afraid. Zack, in lieu of trying to write, sent along a copy of a paper on 17th-century Bordeaux he did over the summer - so, just to be annoying, I'll have to send him a critique - & to see just how much I do remember. In the meantime, I'm still finishing the Holborn Germany & Europe - which, in my present mood, is a pure delight.

Reminded of my sister's story of a woman at a party gushing over "important books" as opposed to the novel, I picked up a copy of The Greening of America - and spent the first 50 pages howling with laughter. It's the sort of writing that would be much more appropriate in Look magazine, i.e., vague generalities & simplistic "truths." It seems that the supposedly literate segment of the public is composed to a rather large extent of somewhat flaky-minded individuals. At any rate, before I'd gotten very far, I'd thrown it down & gone back

to Holborn.

It's still extremely warm here - & it looks as though it might stay that way until the end of October (I hope). There are heavy clouds forming on top of the mountains at the end of the day - but so far they're quite innocuous - and are producing what are unquestionably the most spectacular sunsets I've seen - with colorings that, unfortunately, I doubt a photograph could reproduce - opaque purples and huge luminous areas of reds & pinks, all laced by heat lightning.

Did I ever mention that I got to see "Waterloo" some weeks ago. Rod Steiger as Napoleon comes off rather unusually, to say the least. That, combined with cutting it down to a length tolerable to American audiences and the ~~elongated~~ ^{elongation} effect one gets with wide-screen film on a small screen, produced a somewhat unreal effect. Not a particularly good flick, certainly, but lots of costume and panache - which are thoroughly enjoyable. Napoleon addressing the troops, and, of course, the ball on the eve of the battle [A scene which has been

ruined for me by the "Saturday Review" cartoon: "Gentlemen, isolated enemy units have been sighted..." "as a muddy enemy private waltzes happily with one of the ladies.]

I've noted that, for some odd reason, there's one affectation in wearing uniforms here that involves turning jungle fatigues into something as close to a jäger suit as possible - though I'm sure the people who do it ~~aren't~~ ^{aren't} aware what a jäger suit is - or its association with GBS. It involves ~~blousing~~ ^{blousing} the trousers at midcalf - but is most convincing when a walking stick (an affectation most noticeable among the blacks) is added. The jacket looks almost right with it; although the end result is generally somewhat comical.

That's about it. I love you all very much. Be happy. Stay well.

Bob