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6-5-1923

### Letter, Sinclair Lewis to Edwin Lewis [June 5, 1923]

Sinclair Lewis

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10 Bury St.,  
June 5

862

1923

Dear Dad:

Busy times since the walking trip in Devon and the week-end at H.G. Wells'. We saw the first night of John Drinkwater's new play, "Cromwell," with Henry Ainley in the title role. As we know both the dramatist and the leading man, it was very interesting -- though, to tell the truth, the play was by no means as good as it might be. There was a distinguished first night crowd; among them I met, for the first time, Arnold Bennett, who appears to be an admirer of Babbitt, and the Princess Alice. I had met the Prince of Wales at Lady Astor's big reception, but this was the first time I met royalty really personally. Princess Alice, who is also Countess of Athlone, is granddaughter of Queen Victoria and daughter of V's son the Duke of Albany -- the bloomin' royal family were all of them so prolific that London is simply scattered with sprigs of royalty. Princess Alice is a rather pretty, smallish woman, probably not too intelligent; she was the guest of our friends the Cazalets at a box-party. To an American it is slightly startling to hear her hostess, a considerably older woman, addressing her as Ma'am.....After the show we brought Henry Nevinson, the old war correspondent, and Mrs. Thomas Lamont of NY -- her husband is a partner in Morgan's and once owner of the NY Evening Post -- up to our flat for a while, and cheerfully damned the show.

One evening last week we dined with Lord Beaverbrook at his house; nice small party of ~~five~~ six, among them Sir James Dunn, a Canadian banker now living here, very cheerful and amusing but much more like Babbitt than like the fictional ideal of a baronet. It is impossible to keep from calling him "Jimmy" after a couple of hours. Another evening we were given a dinner by St. Loe Strachey, editor of the Spectator. And another we dined with E.V. Lucas, whose books you know.

This past week-end we spent at the house of Mrs. L. Allen Harker, author of rather romantic tales of pleasant quality but no great importance. She lived in a delightful rambling old house in the ancient town of Cirencester (always pronounced Cisseter) and we had a restful time -- loafing in the walled garden in the sun, playing tennis, taking a long walk through country lanes. Last evening we had General Thomson and Lady Maclaren Brown for dinner -- lively and amusing, with exciting tales of the general's experiences in the Balkans. Oh, and last week Claude's admiration, ~~Stefansson~~ Stefansson the arctic explorer, came in for tea; he is here conferring with the air ministry about Polar exploration by aeroplane. He seems to be spending all his time with major generals and cabinet ministers; the powers that be are taking a great interest in his plans.

Next Monday we go over to France for a week or so; we may, possibly, spend next summer in some quiet little country house in France, instead of in England, and we're going to explore a little.

Of course it has been bully for Grace to have all these dinners and parties in London after a dull winter in Hartford, but both of us

have had about enough of them and we are beginning to look forward to getting back to work and to country quiet.

I hope that by now you will have received my account, regarding which you asked, of the number of copies of Babbitt sold. I'm awfully glad that there is a chance for Edwin to get into ~~MADE~~ West Point.....You ask how much gasoline costs here; it's about fifty cents a gallon, and all cars are much more expensive -- two or three times as much as for the same class of cars as in the US -- so many people use tiny light cars beside which Fords actually seem large.....I'll send a note to Donald and Edwin about their graduation. Now to the pile of correspondence which has heaped up the past few days.

Much love,

h

Tell Claude that Stefansson said he well remembered and greatly enjoyed his talk with Claude at St. Cloud.

Some one told Mrs R that  
Edwin said he did not  
want Westpoint but wanted  
to go to Carlton College in fact  
if he does let him buck it  
through alone as we have  
given him the best chance  
he will ever have.

Sonald is getting 4<sup>60</sup> per day  
and sticking right on the  
job. but it won't last long.

Nandy rain here yesterday  
Good thing we did not go to  
St. C. as we would have got it  
in neck on way home.  
I have a suspicion that  
Edwin is playing Jim's  
game of not wanting to go  
to Westpoint and I can't  
find out for sure whether he  
sent in his papers or not.  
Winnie does not seem to know.  
Well after this he can play the game  
alone. Love to all.  
Dad.