

Magistrate's Court, Bamenda
5th March 1962

Darling Mummy and Daddy,

Just a quick note, as I want to get on with my circular letter. We've been on tour once more, and it has just occurred to me that, during the three weeks, you will not have received any news from me – or did I send something off when I had returned?

The March rains have started, and from my follow I have wonderful views of the thunder storms breaking all over the mountains. The harmattan has abated at last, and it's extraordinary how, with the dust laid to rest, the horizon has folded back to reveal further glorious ranges beyond 'Wonderful clear air with the sun;' smells of wet earth and drenched lilies. Godlove's mother came to visit him last week, very poor and worn-faced. She gave me a hen, and I got her a gallon of palm-oil, which is the traditional gift to a wife. She had a remarkable way of shaking my hands, taking them one by one with both of hers, and slowly pulling the joints of the fingers. This denoted, apparently, a special feeling she had for me: also a lot of clapping of hands. Next weekend we are to going to bicycle to Bafut-sho, Godlove's village, and stay the night with the family. [How splendid about Alan – do give him my love. I don't envy anyone living in Kenya at the moment, and I rather hope that he will try to find roots elsewhere.

When I come across people from the East Cameroons, (where there is a large colony of French settlers) or, more uneasily, those from the Congo, I can't help being aware of a terrible complaisance and acceptance of the Master race principal. Hey go about in fast cars, and wear sunglasses, and totally ignore the Africans who stare silently at them from the side of the road. Their high, petulant voices are chilling to hear, and it's shocking to see how they have brought their own glittering hallmarks into the countries which they have appropriated. It's so important to realize that we are guests, and I think we are welcome as long as we can be regarded in that light. The strange thing is that the Fulani, some of whom we have been seeing recently, hold as part of their Moslem faith, that the white man is the superior of the black, and nearer to God. There is a strongly buttressed system of caste, graded according to the pigment of the skin, so that a Fulani will believe himself the master of the Hausa, and will acknowledge in his turn the supremacy of, say, the Syrian or Persian, who are almost white races. To the Moslem, who is an invader himself, the indigenous African is regarded, however educated he may have become, or sophisticated, as a bushman. A further paradox is that the standard of education in the Fulani is lower than in any other tribe, instruction being limited only to the Koran, and other traditional aspects of Islam.

Pete has just bought a portable gramophone on which, at last, we can play our records. The other night we played right through Boris Godounov, and it's nice that we can at any time have music. I've just finished off Graham Greene's 'A Burnt out Case' – very good indeed, showing just how shoddy such books as Morris West's 'The Devil's Advocate' – which was very much raved about as a great novel – really are. We are lucky in having a first class library here, and we have just sent off a long list of boos to Bumpus in England to be sent out as soon as possible. Diddy, Pete, John Nicholson and myself, had a delightful evening going through all the old numbers of

the Observer and Times, and ticking off in the literary reviews all we wanted. Unfortunately, the £20 we were allowed proved nothing in face of the huge lists we made out. Aren't the Lawrence Stories good? I thought that 'The Borderline' was the best, and 'Sun' – much less overblown than his novels, which I find impossible to get through, though not so beautiful as the poems. It's wonderful to get your letters, but mustn't bother again to send all those enclosures. News is much more valuable than letters from the SPNM. Sorry for scraps.

Lots of love - JEREMY