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Letter, Sinclair Lewis to Ida Compton [December 28, 1949]

Sinclair Lewis

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VILLA LA COSTA

TEL. 20244

PIAN DEI GIULLARI 123

FIRENZE, ITALIA

December 28, 1949

Dear Ida:

This will reach you just after New Year's, with a cargo of good wishes, even tho they are inscribed on this rented typewriter to which I have not yet got used.

Two good letters from you hebe. I cannot say that I feel any/special regret at the death of Jack M Roberts, but I do feel sorry for the him that was; I do not feel that he ever had much fun.

No, don't come to Italy any time in 1950, with or without an escorted party. It is the Pope's Holy Year and there will be several million extra pilgrim-tourists from almost every country -- probably three million from the U.S. alone. Already, every good hotel room is booked from April to October, and almost every good airplane or steamer passage.

Even if you joined a tour or party which could guarantge you rooms and transportation, still, the trains will all be so crowded that half the time you will have to stand, the restaurants crowded to madness and, worst of all, every interesting church, museum, jammed with sweating tourists herded by maddeningly babbling guides.

This rush has already started, and will continue all thru 1950. Sp come over in 1951. There is a fairly good chance that I shall be somewhere in Italy from now till summer of 1951.

The rush will not affect me, because I have the

secluded villa and because next summer I shall stay in some quite mm untouristized place -- probably some village back in the Italian Alps. But M it will be precisely the worst in all the places you will most want to see -- Rome, Florence, Venice, Siena, Assisi, Naples.

We had a gay, fairly quiet Christmas -- Claude, my son Michael, Alec Manson my incredibly capable and pleasant secretary, my old friend Jamie Campbell, an Italian diplomatic couple -- the Gerboris -- and a gt friend of Claude's daughter Virginia, a navy nurse stationed in London -- extremely nice.

And two days later Claude sailed from Genoa for Port Said, Ceylon, India, Australia, Australia, where he will also see New Zealand and Tasmania, then another ship for San Francisco, probably by way of all sorts of lovely islands. I think he has enjoyed the whole European trip immensely, has astonishingly taken to Italian food and been gallantly able to wait for dinner at eight after a lifetime of supper at six.

Now, after Christmas, with bad weather, we are living almost as quietly as I would at Thorvale Farm....When it brightens up, we'll see a lot of churches.

the best

red