

720 Riverside Drive, New York 31, N. Y.
February 24, 1950.

Dear Laura:

Thank you - thank you - and thank you again for The Rio Grande, River of Destiny, which we have both been enjoying in every word and picture. All these thank-yous would have been written long ago, except that I have hit a couple of hydrants since New Years, and the applecart of our affairs has been teetering along on one wheel, trying to recover its balance.

The first "hydrant" was a nocturnal emergency operation for strangulated hernia, which was performed on January 18 and without any complications or even discomfort whatever. In fact I emerged from this lark with so much bounce that the doctor had to feed me on mild sedatives for a while to keep me in even nominal touch with the attraction of gravitation.

The second hydrant, which hit when the recovery from the first had been pronounced complete, was a head-on collision with a virus cold infection, all coughing and high fever and misery for a couple of weeks, despite shovelfuls of asperin, etc. Even now, I can't think of a word without coughing - but it's lots better. So much for the apologies.

The Book is even finer than I thought it would be - I had gotten a copy for C D before Christmas in a Madison Avenue bookshop (where it was well displayed). This copy has now passed on to other appreciative hands, in favor of our duly autographed one.

A river is a great unit of culture and its movement in time and space, encrusted with the trappings of humanity, is a complex and significant thing. All this the text can suggest. But the thing itself, with its all but changeless setting - its silent reaches of plain and mountain, elemental witnesses to the cultural drama - can only come through in an understanding visual record. What weighings and judgments and decisions those photographs must represent! You ought to make books now on all the rivers - the Hudson, the Thames, the Tiber, the Nile. It would be a grand way to study history. And what an intriguing way to teach it!

Well, the thank-yous go on and on - and will continue to do so while the paper on which the Book is printed, lasts!

With love from us both,

John