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159, Colaba Road,
Bombay, 5.

January 21st 1952

My dear Devika

Though I have no noticeable resemblance to a plutocrat, even superficially, you will be surprised to hear that I have been constantly approached, at regular intervals, with invitations to return to the film industry. Until now I have steered clear of all such temptations, largely because no propositions were put forward based on building an industry as opposed merely to collecting money any old how. However, I have recently looked into a proposition to organize a production company put to me by Mr. K. T. John, introduced to me by Dadi Wadia, with which I was much more favourably impressed. He is associated with the well-known Director Sri Phani Majumdar, late of New Theatres. He has himself been associated with the industry for many years. He is very anxious to have you on his "Advisory Panel" and also as a Director of his Company and asked me to write

to you on the subject. He has extended the same invitation to me: but, since the Directors qualification is Rs 5,000, though a modest enough sum, my miserable bank has so far lost its nerve that it is unlikely to look on any cheque of mine for that amount in the right light - would you believe it? I have, therefore, had to content myself with the "Advisory Panel". I suppose one can hardly expect somewhat battered old gentlemen to be commercially an attractive proposition. Mr John is busy registering a Public limited liability Company and appears to have substantial financial backing to support his own resources. He is young, full of zeal and ambition and with sufficient experience to understand what he is tackling. He has no get-rich-quick ideas nor any inflated notions of fantastic profits. I think he is likely to succeed and is worth encouraging. I am still paying my Trustees at home every quarter for my earlier filmic ventures which, together with income tax at 17⁵/₄ in the pound leaves a balance for old gentleman which requires a microscope to be readily discernible. At my age - 73 - my economic

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value at home is exactly nil. In fact I feel that they consider it most unpatriotic to keep on lumbering up the ground in these hard times instead of carrying out one's proper function of manuring the potatoes. But here the competition is not quite so high and I find I have at least some commercial value if not very much. I have managed to start again from the very bottom and have succeeded in making considerable progress in a brand new walk of life. I am rather proud of that. It is not easy at 73. Even in India they are apt to look sideways at 73. My one ambition now is to last long enough to give my little Peter and John as good a send off in life as their brother Dicky had. It is rather like racing against time when one dare not feel tired or ask for a rest. Dicky is very happy. He has lately married his second wife and has retired to a wonderful old house and sugar estate in Jamaica. He has two sons at school at Stowe and now a brand new daughter of whom he is inordinately proud. The first girl born in the family for 60 years - all boys. I have not seen any of my grandchildren nor are the chances

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of doing so exactly bright. Nancy's three daughters are now all grown up and so are Rosamund's three sons. Dick Barlow was killed in an air crash, so Rosamund's eldest son is now the Baronet. I hear that Rosamund is going to marry again. From what I hear of Nancy's daughter's attractions, it seems likely that I shall be a great-grandfather before long. I confess that I should like to see them all again and one more glimpse of the land of my fathers and the scenes of earlier days before I sample the joys or otherwise of the life to come. But, since my only means of transport is a B.E.S.T. 65 seater limousine which cannot be induced to run to Piccadilly, the prospects are not bright. Again I am handicapped by the unforgivable lack of courage on the part of my bank in refusing to finance an expedition in one of our modern globe-hoppers which enable one to breakfast in Bombay, dine in London, kiss the Pope's toe, be refused an audience by Stalin and back in Bombay inside a week, having gathered enough knowledge to lecture the world for at least five years at considerable profit to oneself if not to the world.

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If you feel like enquiring further into Mr R.T. John's proposition, let me know and I will hand you over to his tender mercies. It would certainly be throwing the clock back a bit if you and I were again associated in a film venture. Throwing the clock back is about all I can hope to do with clocks; throwing them forward is likely to land me over the edge into the beyond. Remember me very kindly to your husband -

Best of luck

Ever ever

D.D.