



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

5208 Glenwood Road  
Bethesda, Maryland  
October 4, I think...

Dear Nancy,

We were so very, very sorry to hear that you haven't been well. God bless you, and I hope you are better by this time. May Skardtvedt told me she thought you might be coming up to Texas this winter, which sounds like an extremely worthy plan indeed. Every once in a short while I think about you, and how good you were to us before we left, and I wish there were some way I could show you how much we appreciated it.

Heavenly days, here I am An American Housewife, just like I was always so frightened of becoming. You will be amazed to hear that I still haven't succumbed, nor sunk under, nor given up. In fact there is one positive good which has emerged from the whole trying business: I no longer have to diet, children! Due to the fact that I tear around madly from seven in the morning till nine in the evening (with short time off for lunch, accompanied by the junior Whirling Dervish) I find I can now eat as I always yearned to- like a horse, and still stay under 110 pounds. It's an indescribable relief. I have the household under control most of the time, although there are occasions on which it runs me more than I run it. I am keeping up a running battle with the Hecht Co., too, trying to get them to deliver the things we bought on time (that's another battle- financial!). I now have everything for the house except one part of one lamp. They delivered the base once, and a week or two afterwards, after sufficient complaining to Adjustments, they delivered the shade, but not the reflector which holds the shade up. So I called up Hecht's Adjustments again, and they delivered the reflector bowl ten days later- only it was the wrong reflector bowl, so I now must call them again. Little things like that make me feel at home, in familiar surroundings- it's just like Venezuela! But my magnificent new Laundromat machine doesn't look at all like Venezuela. It gleams, white and shiny and thoughtful, in the kitchen, where it is handy at all times, and ready to be fed with laundry, soap, Clorox, and Washing Soda. All I do is put the stuff in, and it grinds away mysteriously for half an hour or so, then stops. I've never seen anything like it. The first couple of times I washed with it (or rather, it washed for me) I stood in front of it practically all the time just to see what it was going to do next. But if it didn't give me such an inferiority complex with its smug efficiency I would love it more, I think. I also have fun with our new vacuum cleaner and its many interesting attachments. William and I are both so fond of using those attachments that we wage weekly struggles to see who gets to use them when we clean on Saturday morning. "Oh, you can use the attachments, dear." "Oh no, I'll empty the garbage this time, you let me use them last week..." - All hypocritical, of course, because each of us hopes the other will let him use the attachments, but dares not say so. We have found a very nice high school girl across the street to sit for us (though Laurence J hn objects strenuously to our leaving nonetheless, and is always suspiciously and exaggeratedly polite to poor little Carol) We are having SMALL parties about once a week- small because I can't

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cope with anything more than four extra people for dinner. I trust as my experience widens, I'll work up to six. We go out about once a week on the average, which suits me, for there is little enough time to rest as it is. Weekends our hours are chockablock with the put-off labors of the rest of the week, and poor old William is striving manfully to be carpenter, mason, handyman, gardener, shopper, nursemaid, and Safeway addict. Someday we will get around to unpacking the last suitcase, and putting away the last trunk- whereupon the dear old Department will issue one clear call for volunteers to go to Omsk, Tomsk, Minsk, Pinsk or Addis Ababa as Counselor of Mission and Cultural Attache in charge of Effete Living, and William will volunteer like a flash, me behind pushing if necessary. We will then sell our house with a loss of only five or six thousand dollars, and repack the suitcases.

In spite of all the unaccustomed and menial labor it imposes on me, I'm very fond of our new home. It's brick painted white, and I have dark grey walls all down stairs, with the usual flat white woodwork. The John W. Campbell Memorial Love Seats still look good, but we had to put flowered slip covers on the John Page Hoover Wing Chair and the Pregnancy Chair. A few extra tables and a new dining room outfit completed the job of putting us perpetually in debt to the Hecht Co., a Company I am beginning to hate in spite of great patience and forbearance, all on my part. I had high hopes of being able to afford some sort of servant, but it piled down to a lady of color known as Leola once a week, and great care with the food bill. It takes me two weeks to finish a medium sized novel, and I can't seem to find time to do all the visiting I should like to have done. Nancy, how have the mighty fallen! But goodness, it's just wonderful for my character. A few more years of soft living would have made me not only a butterball, but also just as lazy as can be for the rest of my life- wouldn't that have been delightful?

I am afraid that sitting down to this letter is starting me once more on the lazy path. I'd better start getting dinner before Laurence John wakes up from his nap. He can't bear to see me sitting down- I think he feels that I'm neglecting my duties when I do. How right. Well, give my love to Martha Bush, and ask her point blank why she doesn't write to me. Try to be good and healthy yourself, and remember that we think of you very fondly.

Affectionately,