

5208 Glenwood Road
Bethesda, Maryland
January 28, 1949

Dear Piet and Mrs. Terpenning et al.,

I'm afraid that a combination of guests, inertia, lack of funds, and viruses has kept me from seeing you, as I should so much like to have done. I had hopefully thought that after the holidays we might have peace in our time, but Things saw to it that we didn't, as Things so often do. Our guest room has been occupied more times in the past month than in the other three months combined, and I have been forced to think up three new party menus, a task that taxes all my resources, since I prefer to keep on serving the same old thing time and time again to save me from having to think. We have undoubtedly entertained 97.4% of Williams old friends from Fletcher School, 98.7% of those from Dartmouth, 96.9% of those from Stuttgart, 90.2 % of those from Milan, and 57% of those from Lagos. The ones from Caracas are leaving it in droves and heading for Washington, so I'll have to start figuring up the percentages there, too. All this makes for inertia the following morning, as well as giving the viruses a fair head-start, so that's why I haven't gone to Michigan.

William has been busy as a bee with the aftermath of his revolution, with Drew Pearson and the rest at his heels baying away. We have decided that Dear Drew has the best sort of intentions, the finest kind of liberal principles, and a most annoyingly insouciant attitude toward facts, a dignified disdain for what really happened. The Time man, on the other hand, practically always asks William what he thought happened, so we dearly love Time, for the moment at least.

L.J. is coming on apace. I got all steamed up these last few days because he suddenly decided he wanted to learn the letters of the alphabet, and within a week learned to recognize and name more than half of them, as well as learning to write, to a fairly recognizable degree, T, L, O, and H. I was so happily convinced that this was a sure sign of a prodigy that I took to boasting with other mammas, always a dangerous business, and soon found out just where we stand. It appears that one mother's angel child has been doing that since she was two, another took it up a few months before she was three, and that in general it's quite a common occurrence. In fact, from what I hear, L.J. is a trifle backward. Ah well, we still love him, and I must remember not to boast. Anyway, he finally got over his cold even if he is retarded.

It was so wonderful to see you, Piet, that I can't believe it won't happen again. If you can manage to pick better weather the next time, it should be easy for you to stop off on your way to and from New York. We can easily put up the children, and Laurence John, of course, would be simply delighted to have them around to play with. And sometime if my mother is willing I might park L.J. with her on the farm and spend a few days with you in the New York shops and theatres. Bliss! Well, it's a good thing to ponder, in anycase.

Affectionately,