

5208 Glenwood Road
Bethesda, Maryland
Tue. March 22, 1949

Dear Pop,

We were beginning to worry about you after nearly a month without a letter, so when it finally came we were delighted. I was glad to hear the definite news about your plans, too. I'm frankly torn between an altruistic desire for you to enjoy yourself over there with interesting work and fascinating travel, and the conflicting low, selfish desire to see you again, as soon as possible. But what a grand, bang-up, stupid shame about the difficulties at your office! Only that sort of thing was lacking to make the whole picture of the situation in post-war Germany completely chaotic in my mind.

Not much news on the home front. Lots of rumors. Reorganization of the Political Sections at the Department is going on apace. It appears that this year even more Foreign Service Officers will either have to resign or go over to the cultural program because of the Budget Bureau's cut in appropriations. Last year 100 F.S.Os had to go over to Culture and Information, but no one quite knows where they could be put this year, when about a hundred more will have no salaries as F.S.Os. I'm afraid I'm being a wee bit biased in thinking that this is no time to cut-down on Foreign Service Officers. They are also, naturally, only taking in a dribble of ten or twenty new officers a year (or perhaps its even less, on second reckoning) so that in twenty years or so they will have to search frantically for people qualified to be heads of missions abroad. Ah well. Under the new system perhaps they will be able to give rapid training to all interested in that sort of work, and thus make of the many Armchair Ambassadors real, live, experienced diplomats and general consular officers in the course of three months.

We had the Dawsons and the Robert Woodwards over last Friday night, and had a good time at it. I'll certainly miss the Dawsons when they go, as they should be doing some time this summer. Allan has pretty fair hopes of getting his dream post-Counsellor of Embassy in Santiago. I do so hope he does. He's hard-working, brilliant, has almost unequalled knowledge of South American politics, and anyway, he's as nice as he can be. But we are going to miss our fortnightly get-togethers and talk fests when they go. Jane is going to put their house on the market next month, and go to California with her parents until time to leave the United States. Allan will live in the Bachelor Officers' quarters of the War College until June, when his course is finished. As for the Woodwards, they are very nice people too. Bob Woodward is Mr. Paul Daniel's Assistant Chief of American Republics Affairs. We met them briefly in 1944, and now he has been very kind to William in the office.

The other news is that we are over our colds. During the long drawn out course of mine I gained five pounds, which seems to me a gross miscarriage of justice. In any case I am now eating enough to keep a small canary in fairly good health, and slowly, infinitely slowly, losing what I have to lose. Bah!

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Mother happened to notice in a recent issue of Collier's (March 19, or thereabouts) a long, and to me fascinating, article about Jimmy Jones! I was delighted to read it and find out how he has been doing. It appears that he founded a new and strange kind of tourist bureau in Paris, which he called "SHAEF", and which will not only get your reservations, etc, but also do about anything else that's legal and honest. But it would take too long to record, and you will have to read the article itself some time. In any case, his business is prospering, it sounds most interesting, and what's more he is now married and is expecting a baby very soon. I can't tell you how glad I was to hear about that. Oh, and I forgot to say that during the war he earned the Medal of Freedom for his work with the Army, and went home to Jacksonville a year or so ago to have it presented to him. Well, As I say, I was very, very happy to hear it. Among the many attacks of belated conscience I've been having lately, Jimmy's side has not been left out of the attacking forces. I am thoroughly aware that not only did I treat you with cool thoughtlessness, but everyone else whom I loved I served equally poorly. So it eased the burden on my conscience to know that Jimmy is now happy and prosperous.

Laurence John is both coming on and getting behind. It is practically impossible these days to make him obey. We are having a perfectly dreadful time keeping him safe, let alone obedient. However, viewed dispassionately, he's as cute as a button. I simply must get myself a notebook in which I can enter scraps of his amazing conversation as they occur, because they leave me soon after they are uttered. He's currently interested in counting and in the days of the week, in the subject of death, and in having some one to play with. He has, fortunately, become very friendly with some little children down the street so now it's just a matter of getting to see them as often and continuously as possible. On the subject of death: I've done as the books say, and made it as matter of fact as possible. "When people are old they are tired, and want to rest by dying. God tells people to die when they should die. When people are young, they should be careful, so as not to die before God wants them to die." That has been the burden of my explanations. As a result one day he asked me if I was going to die. I answered that everyone dies sooner or later. His little lower lip began to tremble, and he answered "Don't die, mamma, because then who would cook for me?" I took it as something of a compliment, but not much!

I've been reading detective stories, "The Vicar of Wakefield", and Sir Osbert Sitwell's "Laughter in the Next Room". The latter is most amusing on the subject of Sitwell's father, who as William put it, must have been as nutty as a fruit cake. Well, I'd better attend to the young man, who is currently incarcerated in his room with the door closed due to an indiscretion of the morning. Before you leave Germany, find out how they get their children to be so good. Also, seriously, I'd appreciate it a great deal if you could look around, passively, for a pepper grinder fancy enough to put on a formal kind of buffet table. My current dining room furniture is a good deal more formal than that which we had in Caracas, and in any case we never have had a pepper grinder, fancy or otherwise, so I suppose actually any kind would be better than none. Love,