

Bethesda, Md.
March 28, 1949

Dear Pop,

For some time I've forgotten to tell you that we went and called on Cousin Gertrude Hager and her husband. This happened at least three Sundays ago, and it was only by oversight that I neglected to tell you about it. They called one Saturday while we were out shopping, so that evening I made a date to go and see them the next afternoon. Naturally we had to bring the boy along with us, so our visit was circumscribed as to time and interrupted as to conversation, but we did manage to learn about Walter's projected trip to Germany and about Gertrude's reasonable desire to accompany him there, or at least get over the Atlantic somehow. I imagine she must have written to you about it by this time, for she wanted your address and seemed anxious to know what she should take in the way of equipment for the trip. Walter was as handsome and distinguished as ever, and if memory serves me, I should say Gertrude's looks have positively improved with the years. They have a very nice little house on the order of ours, and located quite near us. She has a job, so I wasn't able to have her out to lunch, as I had hoped to. If we can we must have them both to dinner some time. It's a question of getting the vicious circle of social debts whittled down to doughnut size- and also a question of thinking who might "go with them". If necessary, we will have to invite them out by themselves, for I shouldn't like to inflict other people with talk about who was whose daughter and who married whom in the Campbell family. It surprised me to re-learn that she is your first cousin.

Our regular Friday night party last week turned out to be on Thursday. Our guest of honor, as it were, was Tommy Thompson, who was Third Secretary in Caracas during our last year there. He is an F.S.O (one of the new ones who was taken in after the war) and previously served in Paris. About three weeks ago he was transferred to Germany to work on D.F. visas (a thankless, uninteresting, job with no responsibilities but lots of routine work.) He was told to pack up and get to Germany as soon as possible, and he managed it in less than two weeks by great effort. He passed through the Department, asked for five days leave to buy warm clothes and take a medical examination, and permission was refused by a delightful lady over in Personnel who also refused the pleas of William and the Visa Department, who said there wasn't all that hurry. He wanted to get a thorough exam to find out why he had lost twenty pounds in the last six months and is now down to a hundred and eight pounds. It sounds like amoebas, but he won't know till he's already over there because the delightful and humane lady put her thumbs down and packed him off on the first boat. It would have been an airplane except that he finally convinced her that he had upchucked steadily from La Guaira to New York on his last plane ride. Well, Tommy says he met you one morning in Caracas, and he thinks it was when he was hitching a ride with William to work back in Feb. '48. Since he is going to be stationed in Frankfurt, I gave him a little note to take to you by way of introduction. Anyway, because of his frantic haste, we had to have him over on Thursday night, and with him came our old Caracas friends the Skartvedts, who are transferred back to

-2-

Washington now. Mae is an energetic and effecient housewife, and ways she is pleased as punch. They were never very fond of Caracas, and I remember that they would never touch any lettuce down there, even in their own home. That sort of thing makes a big difference, in a small way.

L.J. is as self-willed and blythely disobediaent as ever. But each morning he gets up, puts on his slippers, and goes down with daddy to shave. Daddy has a new shaving brush (oh, by the way, he wanted me to tell you to call off the dogs on the matter of his badger shaving brush, because he has a lovely new nylon one he is happy with) so L.J. has inherited "illiam's old one. He has also taken possession of an ancient safety razor. He stands up on the john and looks over William's shoulder and shaves away happily. Afterwards, he washes his face off, and William applies shaving lotion and powder to it. At which point L.J. frequently rushes up to me and says "Feel my face NOW, mamma! it's as smothooth as a baby's, because I-JUST SHAVED!" He and little Betsey Meleney are bosom friends. Betsey is four, though, and feels maternal toward him, so whenever they go out together she feels she must hold his hand tightly and drag him along where she listeth. He doesn't object in the least, and holds on tightly in return, with the result that they drift down the street or up the path like twō clinging leaves blown by a summer breeze. They are a sight to see from the window. Of a size, though he is the sturdier looking, as well as the more babyish in the face. Little Betsey has the same trouble with R's that he does, and pronounces "boe-oad" in the same Germanic way. When she comes to the door (as she does every morning and every aft moon) to collect him, and peeks through the mail slot in lieu of ringing the doorbell, he is invariably over-joyed. "Deah Betsey! Today I am a BIG TWUCK, deah Betsey, and you shall be my TWAILER!" Once they are out of the door I have no control over them, and they do what they like and go where they will, both equally impervious to suggestion or command... He announced shyly this evening during his bath that he had made up a song: "The maid was hiding behind a chair; the maid was hiding behind a train; the maid was hiding behind a four-motored airplane; the maid was hiding behind a bed; she was hiding to escape from a cowboy!" L.J. has a complex about cowboys, the origin of which is in doubt. It might have been some bigger boy in a cowboy outfit, since his acquaintance with real cowboys is small if it exists at all.

We went over to the Dawsons on Saturday night. They are pretty definitely going to Santiago on July first, with the result that they are both happy and full of plans. She is not going to California after all, - there is too much work to be done. As ever, they expect to beroyally broke by the time they get there. Transfers break the bank invariably and rather inexplicably. Allan is in a mellow and happy mood, because he has gotton the post he wanted. He says he would be willing to stay there the rest of his career. I hope they stay at least four years, because maybe then we could get to go there with them. As it is, there is a post vacant down there which Allan would like to fill immediately, and of course we can't go anywhere until our three years are up. Ah well, man proposes, God disposes. But we do like the Dawsons so much, and William is so fond and so "admiring" of Allan, that I hope he will eventually get to work for him again, somewhere. Allan is a little chary of the Ambassador down there, Claude Bowers, whose reputation as a boss is rather bad. DEary me, no more twist. Love,