

Tuesday, Aug. 29, 1949

Dear Mamma,

A very busy and on the whole productive week. We have now finally finished painting the front and back of the house, including the shutters and trim of the front. It looks really wonderful! All our neighbors have told us that it looks a hundred percent better, and we are happily in agreement. My French grey paint on the shutters is turning out exactly the way I wanted it to, and I consider it much smarter looking than the blue. Well, you'll see the next time you come. It took a long time to do it all, and we still haven't finished do the trim of the back or anything on the sides, but the front is the most important part. I don't think William will ever be able to do the sides, because of the sloping driveway which makes it practically impossible to set down the ladder.

We went to a party at Mario and Paz Prieto's house last Monday, which we enjoyed very much. They are at the Chilean Embassy, and far more conversational and cultured than the general run of Venezuelan Embassy people, for some reason. We met a man with the Grace Line there whose wife was a British war bride, and they invited us to come to dinner Thursday night of this week, which should be fun also. She is an Austen fan, and therefore in my good graces.

We had a big wind storm the night before last which scattered dead branches and leaves all over our yard. I suppose you got it also, for it was said to be the tail end of that Florida hurricane. I had to spend two and a half hours raking up the debris, although nothing really serious happened.

Coit Meloney has the chickenpox, and of course L. . was thoroughly and completely exposed, so it looks as if we should be getting them between the eight and the fifteenth of September, for the incubation period is two-three weeks. Betsey doesn't have them, however. As his school opens on the fifteenth, I'm afraid we are going to miss the first week or two of Lady Isabel's establishment, for which I am very sorry. In any case, I'm going over to Garfindel's Spring Valley store on Thursday to buy him a really good wardrobe for school this winter. I have already bought him a pair of arctics which he is able to take on and off, with time, patience, and encouragement, and a new pair of dashing brown buckle shoes. I hope if I take him along to pick out his clothes he will finally be willing to shed the tattered blue jeans he so dotes upon. Naturally I'll have to buy him nothing but long pants, for he weeps at the mere thought of shorts.

I was sent into an angry tizzy by a recent article in the Sat Eve Post (about Peurefoy) in which it quotes Rep. John Taber of the Appropriations Committee as saying that he hates the whole State Department because each and every one of the men from State is a lying, cheating bastard who doesn't know what he's talking about most of the time. In those very words. And nothing can be done about it. If Taber wants to call them lying bastards they have their choice of resigning, keeping quiet, or saying "Yes, sir!" Somewhere, sometime, I'd like to hear or read somebody who has a good word to say for a hard working branch of government that is as free of political pulling and hauling and patronage as it can possibly be, and what's more I'd like to have every critic of the Foreign Service be made to pass the Foreign Service Exams before being allowed to hurl mud and shout "Striped pants"! But it can't happen here. Boo! Love,