



THE FOREIGN SERVICE  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Bethesda, Md.  
Jan. 25, 1949

Dear Family,

Things are getting so out of hand in the correspondence department that I thought I'd better revert to the old Caraqueno fashion and write a family letter, so as to get all the news to all of you.

We have been catching up on our entertainment lately, which is one of the reasons I am behind on 1) sleep and 2) correspondence. We had the Gowles and the Harts over Friday before last, the Parkes over last Friday, the Dawsons over on Sunday night, and last night William's old friend Grant Meade turned up, so we had him for dinner and overnight. I'm badly in need of a good night's sleep. We played monopoly when the Parkes came, for the first time in more than a year, but Bob Parke, though a most excellent fellow, is apt to get started on his pet peeve, progressive education as practiced by the Montgomery County, Maryland school system, and when he does there is absolutely no stopping him. So we played monopoly, and William finally won a little after midnight. On Sunday we were invited out for what I thought was the afternoon to William's old pals from the Fletcher school, the Fishburns. In my ignorance of the invitation, I asked the Dawsons to come out and have dinner with us. It later turned out that William had accepted the Fishburn's invitation to supper as well, so we had to eat their supper, and then dash back and eat our own with the Dawsons. Fortunately we had Laurence John with us at the Fishburns, and were able to dash away early on that account. Laurence John loves to go over there because they have a little adopted daughter just three days younger than our boy, and he dearly loves a playmate. She is a cute little thing, almost as big as he is and equally towheaded, smart as a whip and just as well able to express herself as our wonderchild is. Her mamma is very nice also, so I shall have to ask them all over some afternoon in the same way. Laurence John was annoyed when he heard that an old friend of Daddy's was coming last night. "I want Lynn Fishburn to come instead!" He is apparently really starved for companionship, so that I wish we had the cash on hand to send him to nursery school.

We always enjoy talking to the Dawsons, and I was honestly glad that they stayed so late on Sunday night- if only to make up for the number of times we have stayed too late at their house. We get to talking male and female Foreign Service shop talk till you can hardly get a word in edgewise, and nothing shuts us up till our eyes finally begin to close. Allan is just about as much a man of good will as you can find in a month of Sundays. We will certainly miss them when they are sent to the field, as they should be when he "graduates" from the War College in June.

Having stayed up so late on Sunday, I was in no mood for having company on Monday night, but Grant Meade was in town only for the one day, so I sleepily made another supper for him: more beef paprika, because I simply wasn't able to think of another party dish. William



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must be more than a little tired of beef paprika by now. But he was glad to see his old friend Grant, whom he knew at Dartmouth and the Fletcher School as well, and with whom he corresponded for years. Grant was over occupying Korea for some time with the Navy, then returned and professed Political Science at Haverford but gave it up recently to rejoin the Navy, having been offered a job as Public Relations Officer and Lt. Commander with the something-or-otherth Fleet stationed at Norfolk Virginia mostly. Grant was almost greeted effusively by L.J., who is always willing to see a new face- until the boy saw Grant's little overnight bag, and then he started to crawl into the safety of his daddy's arms. Considering that he had just run to the door shouting "HELLO, my dear daddy! Hello, Mr. Meade, dahling!" I was a little surprised to see him dry up so suddenly. When I realized that he had seen the Bag. "Is he going to hurt me, daddy?" He thought Grant was a doctor in disguise.

I have a Great Stride to report: sometime last week L.J. decided all by himself that it was time he learned to recognize the letters of the alphabet. So using our blackboard in the kitchen to practice on (it has an alphabet written out in white letters on top) he has been going hard at it all week, and can now recognize the following letters when he sees them on signs, etc. (capitals only, however) A, B, C, D, E, G, H, I, L, M, O, P, S, T, U. He doesn't always say "A", "Bee", etc. though, when he sees them. He says "elephant" for E, Bear for B, Cat for C, Unicorn for U, and "curly S", and "H ladder". Also he has so far refused to recognize the fact that they make up into words. From the resolute way in which he denies that anything beginning with C can spell anything save cat, I think he feels he is not up to learning it all at once, and is determined to stop me from trying to teach him, as yet. He is more anxious to learn to write them, and becomes spittingly angry with himself when he finds he can't. He is only able to make recognizable Ls, Ts, and Os, and once or twice I have had to stop him from trying with the others because it makes him so unhappy not to be able to write As, Bs, etc. He drives himself into a temper tantrum. We have also recently discovered that he has learned many nursery rhymes by heart, but he will only say two of them except early in the morning while he's still in bed, to himself and Brownie alone because he apparently knows he doesn't have them memorized quite well enough. With the two he feels he does know well enough, it's a problem to keep him from reciting them to all and sundry everywhere. I'm running short of paper, but I must tell you about him and his friend and sitter Lauwa Wowse: she said that one evening when we had gone out and left her to give him his supper he appeared rather unwilling to eat. "You must finish everything before I'll read to you, Laurence John!" said Lauwa. Deep silence. She kept on reading in the armchair. In a short time the boy sidled up to her chair with a sweet smile on his angelic face, "I love you, deah Lauwa. Let me give you a big kiss." "Well, all right, but you must go back and finish your supper." But in a moment he was back again, murmuring more love words and offering still more tender kisses. Wiles! Dodges! Jesuitical procedure!