

Thursday, April 7

Dear People,

Things seem to be ganging up on me again. Every time I think of all the things I should be doing instead of or in addition to what ever I happen to be doing at the time, it appals me. Right at this moment it's the garden that's haunting me with its overgrown, ghostly, weedy appearance. Spring cleaning looms nearer and nearer, more and more inevitable every day. Painting must be done over the whole house.

I remembered that I'd forgotten to tell you that we went to call on the new Peruvian Ambassador's wife a week or so ago- Mrs. Mills and the wife of the Peruvian desk officer, a Urugauyan girl (by the way). We were in our best bibs and tuckers and looked fantastically elegant, from our own point of view. So you can imagine the shock we got as we drove through the magnificent outer gates of the Residence grounds, triumphant ~~ix~~ in Francesca Mills elderly Chevrolet, and heard a couple of young girls on bicycles say to each other "They don't look as though they belonged at the Embassy, do they?" How Humiliating! The wife of the Peruvian Ambassador is an American, and anyway her name is Breckmier anyway, so there was no call for Spanish. The Residence is magnificent, complete with a real live butler and a real live footman, both in the traditional uniforms of that dying race of manservants. Sr. Fernando de Breckmier is a collector of old Spanish masters. Outside of the Metropolitan Museum ~~ix~~ I've rarely seen so much painting. We were stared down at by a Murillo on one side and a Velasquez on the other, while El Grecos peered in at us from doors opening elsewhere. I regret to say that it made me tongue-tied for a good quarter of an hour. We had tea and bread and butter and croissants, and since I had been on a diet, I appreciated them to the full. We left after half an hour, with a parting glance at all the old masters.

Now to go on. Last Saturday night we had the Rewinckels and Boies Hart to dinner. Boies' mother couldn't come because of a tooth-ache resulting from an extraction. We had a pleasant time, but Boies stayed till a quarter of three in the morning, so that it was three thirty before I was in bed. Mon dieu! He simply wouldn't go. They talked and talked and talked and talked. All very interesting- really fascinating, about the inner workings of the Secretariat at the Department, but deary me! And the next night we had to go out also. We went to the Mills for dinner, and enjoyed ourselves very much in a quiet way, being home by midnight. There was a Colonel and Mrs. ~~omet~~ ing who were on their way to Munich, and F.S.O. and Mrs. Adrian Colquit, who are going to Belgrade in a week. We just talked and joked, but had a good time at it. The Colquits and Shelly Mills were in New Delhi together.

On Monday night we were invited to dinner at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Wheelock. He is a Second Sec'y at the Canadian Embassy, and a very nice chap indeed, though hardly loquacious. His wife is just the opposite. Helen was born in the Dominican Republic and worked for the Ministerio de Fomento in Venezuela while we were down there, though we didn't happen to meet her. When she came to dinner at our house I was frightened for fear she would never stop talking. The two of them have just come back from a trip over the Caribbean area, including Venezuela. We enjoyed that party very much too. There was another Canadian Embassy man there, his Norwegian-born wife, and Mr. Wheelock's mother, who says she lives about a hundred and twenty miles north of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia. I enjoyed talking to those

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two highly intelligent ladies, Mrs. Wheelock and Mrs. La Vigne. I only wished that we had had our three dinner parties at separate times, rather than right in a row, because although I had slept till noon on Sunday, I was still sleepy. I still am, even after two good nights of sound sleep.

On the L.J. front, I've decided that it isn't worth the money to send him to Nursery school for just the month and a half that would be left before June fifteenth and after the easter holidays. I will see what can be done about assuring him a place in the school beginning in September. I want to save all the money I can, so we can pay for a new sink. The one we have is falling to bits and must sooner or later be replaced. My thought is that if we can make it sooner I can have the benefit of the new gadgets, rather than turning them over to the tenant or buyer when we leave. Here we are going to get the six hundred dollars or so needed to put the new sink in is quite a problem. I think it is worth the extra money to buy a dishwasher and a Disposall, though, because a plain ordinary sink would run to about two hundred or three hundred anyway, and the extra gadgets would enormously increase the sale or rental value of the house as well as being a boon to yours truly. We shall see.

Conversation at lunch: I was singing that old song "You're Driving me Crazy", and the boy as usual wanted to know what it was about. I explained "Oh, it's about a girl who thought a man was being rather horrid to her. You know, impolite, mean, and all that." "Well, why was he driving her crazy?" I answered that I really didn't know why he was doing it, but perhaps he was just ignorant, or perhaps he wasn't at all kind and well bred (my explanations are always a little on the desperate side, I'll admit) "Well then what kind of car did they have?" was the boy's next, and as it turned out final, enquiry. I was stumped. Yesterday evening we came back from the shoe store with a yellow balloon which he quite fancied. He took it up to his room with him and played with it quietly for at least ten minutes. Suddenly I heard the sound of genuine, as opposed to fake, anguish from above, and I dashed up, realizing at once that the worst had happened, and the balloon had burst. Now it so happens that a burst balloon meant a lot to me as a child and so I was willing to pour out a good deal of sympathy. I took the little fellow in my arms, kissed him, and said something like this: "Never mind darling, there will be more balloons. But mamma knows how you feel about this one, though, because did you know that when I was a little girl I used to break my balloons too, and then I'd cry and cry just the way you cry about it. So don't worry, dear. When I was a little girl I thought my heart would break when my balloons broke, but..."

Then the boy, in a restored tone of voice, in fact in the tone of voice of one who hastens to make some one else's long story short, said: "And eventually you became my mamma." So that ended that. He has two new phrases, at the very least, which he employs quite frequently: "Slowly but surely" and "Ho hum, lackaday!" He has not been lost for a week, but he has swum in the brook fully clothed twice, and ruined a pair of shoes with tar. Crikey!