

Bethesda, Wed. Sept. 7, 1949

Dear Mamma,

Thank you for the sweet birthday card and letter. As a matter of fact I did have a most pleasant birthday, in a quiet sort of way. We had gone out the night before to the home of some people we met at a Chilean party, and had had a most pleasant but rather late evening, so I didn't feel like galivanting on the second. But Laura Rowse kindly took us over to Garkinkel's ~~Silver~~ Spring Valley store, where they sell Merry Mite clothes for small boys. I had seen them advertised and thought they looked and sounded handsome and well made. They do indeed, but the hitch is the price, sad to say. Nonetheless I bought him a pair of cocoa brown overalls with a real zipper in the fly, and a perfectly wonderful dashing red plaid shirt with long tails like a man's which you will simply love, I know. He looks out of this world in it- too manly for words! But I have had to buy his other clothes at Woodward and Lothrop, being cheaper. He looks intrepid as can be in his new yellow mackintosh and his matching yellow hat for stormy weather. While I was at Garfinckels.... yes, you guessed the rest! I saw a divine gown in heavy wool ersey by none other than Clair McCardell, fitted and bias cut and smart as a whip and sort of Camel hair color, see recent issue of Vogue. It cost sixty bucks, and I'm sorry to say that instead of spending daddy's birthday check on worthier causes I spent it on that dress. So now I feel like a mixture of a cad and a happy sinner.

We had a very quiet weekend of it indeed, come Labor Day, because Shelly Mills is on vacation, the Bolivian desk officer was sick (Spence King) and William was incharge all the time of the Bolivian revolution, with the result that he only took Sunday off and worked straight through the day on Saturday and Monday. On Sunday we painted the outside of the porch. Saturday I had painted the window of your room, the garage and kitchen doors, and the overhanging roof there by the kitchen door. We look very clean and neat now. On Sunday evening we were invited over to Mrs. Rowse's house for dinner. She had a large party of friends and relatives and overfed us all royally. I haven't eaten so much in ages. It was quite pleasant and interesting. Laura is going to Goucher Collage at the end of this month, on a scholarship. I was so glad when she finally got that scholarship, because she was going to Colby College, in Maine. Her mother didn't want her to feel she had to be close to home for her sake, although I know poor Mrs. Rowse is going to miss Laura terribly this year. But Goucher is quite near at hand, and now Mrs. Rowse will know that Laura is close enough to visit over weekends without too much expense, and that will be a comfort even if she feels she shouldn't do it very often. Mrs. Rowse has had two girl roomers all summer, and plans to have two all along now, to make ends meet and so the house won't seem so empty.

I've had quite a day so far. My usual refrigerator cleaning and furniture polishing, plus the Meleney children to lunch, and this afternoon I'm going with the Lobenstine children and their mamma to show them L. .'s school. Mrs. L., alack, doesn't think she will be able to manage the fifty dollars a month it would cost her to send her twin boys to Lady Isabel school, so I am going to have to join the taxi pool after all, at two dollars a week whether or not he goes. That's the way the school works, also, so that if

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William does go on that uncket to South America I suppose I'll have to stick it out here in Bethesda with Laurence John all the time instead of going up to see you for a week. The children are inevitably out of school quite often anyway, because the rules are that no child may come to school with a runny nose, it being a harbinger of just about all the children's diseases. So I wouldn't want to have him miss a week of school when he was healthy when we have to pay the school and the taxi all the time anyway. But no more has been said about the trip as yet, and they are always changing their plans there at the Dep't., so I suppose I might as well not count my birds of ill omen until they are hatched.

William bought me a silent butler of silver with a wooden handle for my birthday, as a result of a strong hint on my part, and it's to be baptised at our next party, on Saturday night. I like it very much. I wish you could come down right away soon and see the house and everything now that it's freshly painted and the leaves are still on the trees, but on the other hand I'd like also to "save up" on your available time down here in Bethesda for when and if William goes away. I am, in short, torn between prudence and impatience. I know you don't want to be away from Wimpy too much, either. But then suppose William never does go away, and we keep waiting for you to come down till his departure? It's something of a dilemma (thought that's not how you spell it, I know.) Maybe you'd better come right away on the chance that he won't go away till much later.

Ah well. We are due for the chicken pox unless were very lucky, beginning on the ninth. My only consolation is that Betsy will probably have them at the same time, and thus after their initial sickness is over they may be able to play together quietly. But I certainly hope we are lucky, because I'd hate to have him lose the first week of school, especially after all the build-up I've been giving him.

How about coming down for a week or even less if necessary? There are so many things about the house you haven't seen, and we haven't seen you for such a time now that the boy might as well not have a grandmother. Oh well, you make up your own mind about it and do what you think is best. After all, it wouldn't be much fun if you arrived in the midst of our chicken pox.

In any case, much love to you both,