

Wed. Dec. 7, 1949

Bethesda

Dear Pop,

Although I solemnly warned you that I might not write again for some time due to all my Ladies Activities and the necessity for recovering from them afterwards, here I am again so soon! I have at least three good reasons for writing, if not four.

1) Mr. Barbour (Deputy Ass't. Sec'y. of State for Latin America) announces that while Shelley Mills is going to this Havana Conference in January, he doesn't want either William or Mr. Randall to be gone also, with the happy result (for me) that William's trip to South America is once more back where it originally was: sometime around the first of March! Now isn't that nice? I do so hope you will be able to be here at about that time, to make my heart glad. Laurence John was so anxious that you should hear about daddy's trip being postponed that he wrote to you himself on the subject (see enclosure). It is the longest single communication L.J. has ever made with his own hand, and at that he decided to cut out the word "is" because he says he doesn't like s's- they are too hard to make straight. So, as you see he just wrote "Daddy not going", signed it with his initials, and asked me to call for an airplane driver to take it over to Spain for him. When I told him, several weeks ago, that Abuelito might be coming home from Europe next spring he was interested, and made a pun in honor of the occasion. "We'll have to give them pancakes when they come." I asked him why we should give them pancakes, for heaven's sake. "Pancakes and Europe, pancakes and Europe, ha ha ha!" It was some-time before I understood what he was laughing about. His letter to you is a little difficult to decipher, because he is used to writing with chalk on the blackboard rather than with pencil on slippery paper. His renditions on the blackboard are neater and more easily understood, but since I pointed out to him that we couldn't send you ~~one~~ one and only blackboard, he was willing to write on airmail paper just this once.

2) I am probably the only daughter YOU ever had who has been lunching with Mrs. Dean Acheson and Mrs. Cordell Hull. Yes indeed. At yesterday's luncheon I picked my table number out of the box as usual, saw it was marked NO. One, and went about my business not dreaming what was in store for me. Had a glass of Sherry, talked to the ladies milling around, then when they began to sit down, found table number one and sat down unconcernedly. I was startled to find myself being introduced to Mrs. Acheson, but since she was across a large round table from me, I wasn't too worried. I began talking to a nice elderly lady sitting next to me whose name I hadn't caught. Well, we all had little cards with our names on them pinned onto our bosoms, so it wasn't long before I realized that the lady I had felt so at ease with was Mrs. Hull. EEEEE! By that time it was too late to withdraw and hide somewhere, so I just went bravely on talking. Mrs. Hull was very sweet indeed. I had on a fancy new hat that comes way over one ear and leaves the left ear exposed to the breezes, and since Mrs. Hull was on my right, I finally had to explain to her that

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being something of a slave to fashion, I couldn't hear very well on her side. We agreed that one of the best parts of luncheons and teas was all the interesting hats. Mrs. Hull remarked that some of them were quite lovely, and some quite interesting. I finally begged to be permitted to lift my hat up slightly over my right ear, and she said she was reminded of Mrs. Roosevelt, who is slightly deaf in one ear and has to turn her head the other way to hear people. I answered that I was honored to share my affliction with such a fine and wonderful woman as Mrs. Roosevelt. Mrs. Hull said that while she had spent a good many years as the wife of a senator and representative, she felt the Department and Foreign Service people were more interesting than the Congressmen and their wives. I thanked her and said it was most kind of her to say so, but it seemed to me there were a number of fascinating people in the Legislative branch, also. She laughed and said, yes there certainly were! She said she had done a bit of traveling with her husband, to conferences and so forth, but not enough to suit her. I admired, secretly, her grand manner with regard to geography, when she said they had taken such a nice trip through South America. They went, she said, over the Alps from Montevideo to Buenos Aires, or was it Chile?-- Yes, it was Chile because she remembered all the pretty lakes. She said they were delighted with their apartment at the Wardman Park Annex. Lovely view, near the tennis courts and pool, so the Secretary could go out and watch the games on pleasant days. She said they have a nice radio and television set. Her favorite program is the Quizz Kids. We discussed many other things, including Mrs. Acheson's hat and the hat of the lady sitting next to Mrs. Hull (Was she in mourning, or was that long black veil merely high fashion? She agreed with me that the latter was probably the case) and the decorations of the dining room we were in. "My eyes are not what they used to be, but it appears to me that those black dots over there look a good deal like beetles. Care they?" All in all, I thought Mrs. Hull was a delightful and most gracious lady. We concluded that it would be nice if the next F.S. luncheon were held at the White Tower Hamburger stand, because the Wardman Park was getting so expensive. "I'm fond of hamburgers, anyway" said Mrs. Hull. There you have the story of my lunch with Mrs. Hull. Now if I can survive the tea party on Thursday, I'll be safe for a while.

Father, dear father, I do look forward so much to your coming! I shall even look forward to William's departure if it heralds your arrival.

Merry Christmas to you both. I wish you could be here to watch Laurence John take down his stocking on the Great Morning.

Love,