

Bethesda, January 15, thank goodness, and I wish it were February 15 at that.

Dear Pop,

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Aunty Piet always starts her infrequent letters with explanations (interspersed with moans and groans) as to why she hasn't written for six months or a year. I wish she wouldn't, because she wastes a lot of valuable letter-writing time that way. With that in mind, I won't explain to you why I haven't written, how I spend all my time either doing a minimum of chores, eating, sleeping, waking up and taking my bath, putting the boy in his bath, finding it's way past time to start supper, starting supper, eating same, and retiring exhausted to the armchairs after the dishes are done, wondering how soon I can legitimately tear poor Willieam away from his music and up to Mr. Gibbon, and the comfort of bed. Having explained in detail how I won't take time to explain my failure to write, I can now tell you that the reason I'm finally writing is that Laurence left with Grandmamma for Flemington yesterday, thus eliminating one of the major hurdles between me and my tyewriter.

It's this way, doctor, as Helen always says. I now have a wonderful reason for feeling so low, lazy, do-nothing, and generally no good. It turns out I have become quite, quite anemic, - about thirty of their unintelligible measurements beneath the lowest measurement normal for pregnant women, who it appears always become slightly more anemic than usual. And all this time I've been thinking it was just laziness! You can imagine my triumph - there is something so consoling about knowing you have a physical reason for feeling like not doing any more work of any nature. I have just returned from the doctor's, so as yet I haven't filled the prescription for buckyouopp which I am to take from now on, and which is guaranteed to make a superwoman of me in practically no time at all. The anemia might be the cause of the sporadic periods of depression I've been enduring, who knows? I didn't worry about my laziness and quick fatigue, but I did worry about the depressions. I am to take benzedrine for them, which he says is admittedly no cure at all, but will at least lessen the intensity of the sporadic seizures. As you know, I am with reason terrified of that mental state which I can intellectually classify as baseless morbidity, but the hitch is that my intellect has nothing to do with it - other than warning me in advance that there is danger ahead. For the past month or so I have spent a good half of my waking hours clinging to what I know is the thin edge of the sane viewpoint, - a precarious and unpleasant position. The other half of the time has been spent perfectly normally, even if I was lazy. The fact that I can't tell when I'll start feeling the indescribable terror, nor whether it will pass away the next time, makes even the normal periods less enjoyable than they should be. Well, as I said before, it may well be that this fairly high degree of anemia is at the bottom of it all, so I am feeling quite hopeful. Perhaps I had become quite anemic in Lagos - many people do in the tropics. In any case, Dr. Norton says he will take up his commission in the Navy if I get any more ideas about babies, but in a more conciliatory mood he added that if I feel I must have more he personally will write a letter to the Florence Crittenton Home for Unwed Mothers representing me as terribly maternal and the ideal person upon whom to bestow a baby bound for adoption.

All this time the little sibling goes on growing and getting

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friskier every day, just as if mamma never felt better in her life. The little character is just that to me- already a definite character with its own little ideas and enthusiasms, living a separate even though parasitic life. He or she is quite different from Laurence, who was a fairly sober little pre-natal citizen who slept peacefully a good deal of the time and had fairly definite hours for waking up and taking exercise. Not so the little sibling! It wakes up whenever I do and starts the morning off with strenuous games, never quite sleeps as long as there is any excitement at all, and ends the day with even more active kicks and punches and twists and turns. If I wake up in the middle of the night, the little character is as pleased as punch, thinking a new day has already begun, and begins its usual round of football, only to subside in disappointment half an hour later if I don't get up. With such an active little person around constantly, constantly reminding me of his or her presence, it's hard for me to remember that to other people he or she is nothing but a fat tummy.

I have fortunately been provided, kindness of William, with Will Durant's "The Age of Faith", so that the literature problem is solved for quite some time, especially since I don't get much time to read it.

You will be overjoyed to hear that there is a very definite possibility of our going to Guatemala this summer. As soon as I heard about it I thought of you, Helen, and Ruth Havey. I trust by the time we get there and are settled you will be settled enough to come and visit us. I say all this although you know almost as well as I that these tentative assignments and rumors of assignments are as fragile as gossamer and that we may yet end up in Iceland or Bolivia. The present second-in-command in Guatemala is due for a transfer right now, but wrote up pleading to be allowed to stay until the end of the school year. Personnel said all right, he could stay till June. June is when William is ~~xxxx~~ supposed to be transferred. They are getting a new ambassador down there, and one who is unfamiliar with Latin America, therefore they want a second-in-command who is very familiar with Latin America- Eddie Miller put it, "we need a strong man while the Ambassador is new", and added that William was the Strong Man he had in mind. In addition, they will probably be wanting to replace William with Maury Bernbaum, who is now at the War College and won't get out until June. William says it all works out so well that he doesn't see why there should be any hitches foreseeable. Plus the fact that "they" like William in ARA, and William would like to go to Guatemala. "They" are likely to be willing to cater to his wishes, especially since this scheme would really work out very well for all concerned. I could only add that I hope William will be able to put them off till July. Maury would like that, too, so maybe they can get together on it. William is now officially Officer in charge of the Office of North and West Coast Affairs- exactly the same job that Shelly Mills had except that there is now a head of South American Affairs between William and Eddie Miller. Needless to say, the promotion entails no more money but a whole lot more work.

I hope the rest from Laurence, the capsules of anemia-ridden, and the situation in general will improve enough so I can write more often. Meanwhile please tell me about your new house- you left out all the details of the interior. Love,