

Bethesda, Jan. 24, 1951

Dear Pop and Helen,

5-86
p 1/2

We received your letter of Jan. 19 yesterday, and were really pleased to hear about the new house deal. Although I know you may not have found the Sarasota area nor Florida in general perfect in all respects, still you have to bear in mind that the Garden of Eden was barred to mankind long ago, and meanwhile the prices of houses aren't going down any. Somehow I'd be happier if you had a pied-a-terre bought and more or less paid for, considering the nature of the times. A house is a house is a house, but money in the bank may or may not buy you what you want later on. If you didn't want to live in the place for any reason later on, you could sell it or rent it, n'est-ce pas? Anyway, William and I were glad to hear you were still planning to buy a house, for we had been worrying lest you put it off too long. The low prices of houses down there astonish me. As you know, \$12,000 to 14,000 would get you a good sized garage in the Washington area.

The bank has been just fine ever since you left. No more grass grew up in it, and William hasn't had to spend an hour on it. However, Bowling and Gardiner have finally started building in earnest next door and in the "woods" in general, with the result that their brick trucks, concrete mixers, etc., have been using that small grass plot of ours below the bank as a place to turn around on, dump sand, old road signs, etc. Also I hate to tell you this, but they dug up a small portion of our bank to get at that water main or whatever it is. Knowing how many hours you and William spent on even small portions of the bank, it pains me to see the scar. I called Bowling and Gardiner at the time the first brick truck cut the first swath, and railed at them pitilessly. The next time I had become more resigned to fate, and merely asked them to try to keep their truckers informed as to where the building ended and our property began. I suggested that since I was pretty hopeless about the situation, I thought it might be more realistic, however, to wait till next spring and then have Bowling and Gardiner re-sod that portion of the lawn. The man said all right, they would. But meanwhile William has written them a letter formally requesting that they re-sod the lawn and do what they can about the bank. The construction is going on apace, and while we are sorry to see the woods go, we are hopeful that the houses will be completed by the time we have to sell the house. It would be harder to sell if the woods were in the condition they now are, with bulldozers and power shovels all over the place, and the potential purchaser wouldn't miss the woods if he only saw a row of new houses. As usual, Bowling and Gardiner are trying to keep as many trees up as possible. It will be easier to get to Georgetown Road and the buses when Glenwood Road is cut through completely, just to look on the bright side.

Went to the doctor's office yesterday to see how my blood count had responded to the pills and shots. I'm happy to say it had gone up from 55 to 65 in the week since I began anemia treatment. I can see how this matter of deficient haemoglobin could get to be a gloomily competitive matter, like the size of the cockroaches in various tropical posts. I saw this because I found myself feeling positively smug when Mrs. Watkins exclaimed that her doctor had told her she was quite anemic and must retire to

-2-

bed with liver and tonics when her blood count was discovered to have gotten as low as 75! Dr. Norton tells me I'll probably begin feeling human again when mine reaches 75 or 80. I don't know whether the ten-count rise this week will continue at the same mad pace or slow down to a steady rise as I continue taking the pills. For some reason or other he doesn't favor any more shots, mumbling something about "quackery". Unfortunately, the pills give me acute indigestion for an hour or so three times a day, but of course nothing must stop me from taking them regularly anyway, especially with an operation in the offing. So nothing does stop me. But I'm back on the bicarbonate of soda circuit.

There is no news. My brief excursion into social life ended a couple of weeks after it began, but I can't say I miss it. I'd be so tired by the time I was dressed to go out that the game was definitely not worth the candle. Getting William's breakfast and dinner plus a few household chores is all I can manage right now, even with the kind help of Mrs. Watkins, who does most of the housework, shopping, etc. She is really most kind to me, staying late very often and refusing more money for the extra time spent. Now that Laurence isn't here, she has put an even higher lustre on the silver, more polish on the furniture, and done much more mending and darning, all of which she claims she enjoys doing.

It's time for me to stop and get some lunch.

Love,

5-86
p2/2