

Bethesda, July 13, 1951

Dear Aunt Mary,

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Thanks for thinking of us and sending the note, which came yesterday. We are indeed very busy these days getting ready to go. William has gone to the office for the last time today, and from now on he will stay at home most of the time packing and winding up loose ends. This last month we have had to get the practical nurse back again in order to give me time to do all the buying, dentisting, doctoring, and so forth necessary before leaving the country. I went without the nurse for a month, and what a struggle it was! I had been pleased to lose so much weight after the babies arrived, but I was perfectly happy to stay at around 105, so when I found that I had lost another five pounds in a month I really knew I'd been working! It's been much more fun since the nurse came back, but also much more expensive. I had to sell a bond I'd been saving to buy a fur jacket, in order to pay for Miss Roddy's help. However, I don't know what I should have done without her, for there are no baby sitters around here capable of taking care of them while I go out in the daytime. Fortunately a Guatemalan lady here has recommended a nursemaid her family knows down there, and I wrote her asking if she would work for us as soon as we get there. She will, and that means we will have both a house and a nursemaid ready for us the day we arrive. It would have been very difficult to stay in a hotel with the two babies and Laurence until we found a house. And just to make everything perfect, I found a very nice little black fur evening jacket at a "Next-to-New" store down in Washington for only \$28! No one will know it's second hand in Guatemala!

The house we are going to rent has been rented since 1939 to the various American First Secretaries as they came and went, so I guess they all must have liked it. It is a great deal larger than the house we live in, and I was forced to look around for some extra furniture to fill it up, and we shall have to pay for it in installments. There is a great enormous hall, 16½ by 25½ with an L offit another 16 feet long, plus the usual living, dining room, and a library. I bought a couple of screens hoping to hide some of the empty corners that way, and I'll have to buy some of those big Ali Baba pottery jars to put large-leafed plants in- they ought to help fill the hall a little!

We are expecting William's daddy this Sunday for a two-days visit, and looking forward to it. He ought to love the twins- everyone else does who sees them! They are very cheerful little babies, always willing to smile and say "angooo". Laurence was so much more solemn and earnest when he was a baby! He didn't smile at all till he was about four months old, and even then very little. These girls started smiling at about ~~nin~~ seven weeks, I think. They don't look exactly identical, though at first glance people

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always think they are exactly alike. Laura is somewhat the fairer, and now has light grey-blue eyes, while Helen's hair is a trifle darker and her eyes are definitely turning dark brown. Laura's hair is obviously light reddish-brown, and Helen's has red lights but is browner. They are always delighted to lie where they can see each other. They smile and chuckle when they see the other baby, and make a lot of little talking noises at each other. If one of them yawns or coughs or sneezes, the other will laugh in delight at the spectacle. We could waste hours watching them "play" together, and I know we are going to enjoy seeing them grow up from month to month. It is a satisfaction to know that these girls will never be without a playmate, as so many Foreign Service children often are in small posts where there are few or no American children.

Laurence has been spending the summer with my mother on her little farm in New Jersey, along with two faithful dogs and a great many chickens, whom he feeds regularly. There he is the little monarch, whereas here we are so busy we wouldn't be able to give him much attention. He loves to be read to twice a day, and saves up his scientific questions to ask my brother, who lives nearby with Laurence's two little girl cousins. L.J. is very much interested in scientific matters, and in any form of transportation. He says he is going to be an engineer, and recently he has narrowed the field to rocket engineering under the influence of my brother, who is something of a physicist and the editor of a science fiction magazine. Laurence paid us a visit in May, and told us just how rocket fuel is replaced as it is used, by a system of tubes. We listened carefully, and when I wrote to my brother about it, he said Laurence had described the process perfectly. He's still a sober little citizen with a mind of his own, not given to childish nonsense, preferring his own thoughts to the company of other children most of the time. I imagine he is a great deal like William was, and we both fervently hope he will be able to carry out his plans of becoming an engineer. My father is an electrical engineer.

I'm so proud of William! He has done wonderfully well here in Washington, and earned an excellent reputation with his colleagues. Of course everyone likes him, but they also respect his abilities. The Ass't. Secretary of State for Latin America told me once that he hoped "my Bill" wouldn't ever leave his area, and that he'd do his best to keep him as long as possible. Since he is William's boss, I was simply delighted to hear Mr. Miller say that, as you can imagine. This new job in Guatemala, as First Secretary of Embassy, will be a good and interesting one. When the Ambassador is away, William will be charge d'affaires- which is always helpful to a man's career, as it brings him to the attention of the Department. As I said, I'm very proud of him.

I must close and get my old darlings supper!

Affectionately,