

Monday, June 11, 1951

Dear Mamma,

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All is calm again on the home front, and whereas at first I used to think I was busy even when Miss Roddy was here, I now know how busy I can be, and the contrast between then and now is wonderful. She is to come every day except Sundays and Wednesdays, barring special events on those days. That gives me plenty of time, comparatively speaking, in which to do my preparations. For example, last Saturday William and I went to the Five and Ten and made a stab at anticipating all the things we were likely to want from now on for several years- quite a task, but we spent seventy five dollars there, so you see we really tried to think things out. The manager of the place followed us around with an incredulous smile. Apparently no one had ever done such a thing before. But as we told him, the five and ten items are just the ones that are so outrageously expensive, comparatively speaking, and even so hard to find, abroad. When ever Americans living abroad dream of home, their first thoughts often turn to fresh, crisp lettuce and the Five and Ten. Since we left there, we have thought of several things we forgot to get a good supply of- one is thumb tacks!

Cousin Gertrude Hager and Walter called on us last Sunday, and kindly offered to sit for us whenever we asked and they could. So sure enough, they came on Thursday evening and sat while we went to a reception for the new Colombian Ambassador. Gertrude seemed to love the babies, and claimed to enjoy being able to play around with them. I hope she really means it, because it certainly saves us both worry and money. The babies obligingly smiled and gurgled at the company, so we were quite pleased with their behavior.

We sent a check to John for fifteen dollars to pay the Tepper bill, as you told me. I read his story "the Moon is Hell" and thought it was fine and absorbing. The other one didn't seem as good to me by a long shot- not so much his type, not the sort of thing he is really expert at. However, the first story was one of his very best, I thought.

Piet and Albert were going to come and visit us last weekend, but at the last minute their sitter failed, so now Piet is planning to come down the weekend of the twenty-fourth. It will be so nice to see her before we leave, and I've arranged for Miss Roddy to be here that Sunday, especially as Rolly Atwood and his wife have asked us to be guests of honor at a party that afternoon, after Piet will have had to go home- by plane. She told me on the telephone, with a quiver of firm determination in her voice, that she is going to have a daughter in January, and this trip will be in the nature of a final fling for her. Piet has always planned to have a little girl named Melinda Light after a pioneer grand-mamma of hers, and Micheal was going to be Melinda. This time poor Piet is apparently not going to give an inch in the matter of having a little girl. I certainly hope her determination wins.

I sent a package to you on Saturday, but failed to include the bathrobe, Whitey, and Shoemaker. Perhaps I should make up another package. How silly of me! Poor little Shoemaker and Whitey are still in their "hammock". Love to all,