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AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL

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Dear Family,

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Last Saturday we decided to have a quiet night at home for a change, but Ham Ramsay the Governob's ADC called up during our curry (to be pronounced in a soft, respectful, and loving tone- curry is too wonderful for any ordinary tone of voice) and asked us to come over to Government House for dinner, It turned out fortunately that it was a family affair, Mr. and Mrs. Grantham weren't there. So Ham Ramsay and Ham Hamilton the General's ADC, and still another ADC, and the two of us ate dinner off a relatively small table in the middle of the enormous state dining room, about twenty-five by 80 feet or so. The outer perimeter was in shadows, and there were six boys or so to wait on us - all rather stifling, but we told shaggy dog stories and managed to amuse ourselves fairly well. Afterwards we all piled out in the GH car to the movies, where we saw Abbott and Costello in a tenuous little number vaguely about the Wild West. However, there was a perfectly fascinating chase by savage Indians, during one phase of which Abbott and Costello hid under a river. Costello was so hot he took a cup, filled it with water, drank some and doused himself with the rest- all while they were six feet under the surface. All very pixy. Home and to bed before one o'clock struck on the Secretariat clock.

The next morning we got up at the hour we wanted, packed a curry in thermos bottles and went out with the Rasmussen's to their shack at the beach. Theirs is in quite another section of beach entirely, from ours at Tarqua. Theirs is out beyond Victoria Beach, where we sometimes go of an evening to watch the wild waves roar and the sun set on the sea. We had to drive the car over a very sandy and rather tricky road deep in the heart of bush, but we finally arrived at a most picturesque native fishing village on the banks of one of the creeks that abound around here. Surrounded by palm trees, of course, and abounding in pigs and children of all sizes.

The Rasmussen place is very primitive, with no tables and no modern shower such as we have at Tarqua (where you stand in an improvised shower room and someone pours water over you from a "petrol tin". But

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As soon as we arrived we dived into the sea, which was fine and frothy. The advantage of their place is that you can get to the water in sixty seconds, whereas you have to walk an awful distance from ours. We had our curry sitting more or less on the floor. A perfectly wonderful time was had by all. My back was brick red when we came home. In the evening we went out to the movies at Apapa.

Monday morning a man named Dr. Jack Harris who was here last year on a hush hush job turned up in town in transit to Capetown. William invited him and the navy men to dinner that night, so I hastily fixed up some pea soup and cupcakes to make a party of it. I had to leave even before the guests arrived to get to a rehearsal of my play. I'd learned some of my lines, but of course forgot half of them when the time came. Nevertheless, we read the whole play through and found it amusing. I think I told you it's called "Roundabout" and Priestley wrote it. I didn't get back to the party till nine, when we had dinner. Then afterwards the clans gathered round for a bull session, in the course of which we pretty much fixed things up for the post war world, I'm glad to say. Jack left the next morning, so we won't see him again for a year or two.

Yesterday William and I went to the Rasmussen's for Badminton, William, of course, sitting all the games out with perfect contentment. I had a fun hot game or two, especially one in which nothing but women played, Oh, we were ruthless on that one. Smash here, smash there, most of them landing this side of the net, or outside. But we dashed around like fiends, emerging with our back hair down. Home after some ice-cold drinks, dinner, a short time spent on learning more of my part while poor old William tried to keep awake over Foreign Affairs/ magazine, and to bed before eleven.

It seems to me you ought to know about honest old Alix Yaya's latest Sally (is that how you spell it?). Anyway, I bought some celery and cucumber seeds for the garden, and gave them to him this morning. He took them reluctantly, but with the usual polite grin over his goat beard. "Madam getum more chop?" "Yes, Aliu." "No more flower?" No. "Oh. Madam no like flower, madam like chop. I like flower." He obviously has the soul of a poet and an aesthete. You'd love him.

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stairs

* I have
the feel-
ing that
tha's not
how you
spell it.

The usual day at the office, then up/at five thirty to learn some more of my part while sitting on that famous long chair that William had his picture taken on last year. At a quarter to six people began calling up in droves, shouting have you heard the nnnnews! We had, and we liked it. Mr. Lynch came along for the seven o'clock BBC news and a little celebration. We went out to dinner at the BOAC mess with Bill Bruns, and as we left the house William told old Adamu Katagu the night watchman, that dat place dey callum Italy done put hand up, dey people no makum wah for now. We had learned how to say it by listening to the news in pidgen English. Old Adamu jumped up and down with his hausa robes*gigling*and said "Dat be fine, I be happy too much!". Old Adamu is an ex-serviteman himself, having served in the East African or some such sampaign during the last war. He has a medal from it.

Of course as everywhere, speculation and arm-chair strategy was rampant. William, Mr. Lynch and I, had the whole thing pretty well doped out after an hour or so of arguments pro and con. All very fine, was the consensus.

Friday, Sept. 10

A most interesting excursion on a Spanish ship in port recently. The Harbor police needed Spanish interpreters for the usual inspection, so I went along with some others. More of this later, but at present the thing is wrapped in somewhat of a veil of silence.

To a movie at Apapa last night. Irene Dunn and Robert Montgomery in a thing about marriage, or something. ~~MARRIAGE~~ Marriage, I mean. It was rather amusing, but we had to watch it from the car for a while during a short rain. Just like one of those drive-in movies.

I'd better stop this right now before I make any more typographical or spelling errors.

Much love,

L P R