

20- I sent two 18's by mistake ...

GENERAL

Lagos, Nigeria
September 23, 1943

L-297

P 1/4

Dear Family,

Well, let me see. Saturday lunch was spent at Mr. Bremmer's house, where fortunately there was a curry. Mr. Bremmer is the acting Representative of the Barber Line, when Cap Roberts is away, and is not the man Cap Roberts is, although a good sort. There was a lady down from Takoradi (Gold Coast) on a visit, who spent most of her life in China, and talked very interestingly about it. Also an earnest Englishwoman with strong views concerning the Irish, who unfortunately was seated beside an American named MacMann with a teasing nature, who ~~insisted~~ insisted on discussing the wrongs of the Irish inflicted on them by the British. A merry time was had by all. The party lasted till four o'clock. WE always tell people ahead of time that we expect them to leave promptly after lunch, and not stay too long in any case. Which is all right by them, because people, at least sane people, always sleep long on Saturday afternoon. We left Mr. Bremmer's palatial Spanish Colonial pink stucco mansion at in a complete state of exhaustion.

Saturday Bill Bruns and Pat Thompson and the Krieg menage went over to Tarqua in a native fishing boat, accompanied by Little Willie (we think he loves to go to the Beach) and a large packing case of goodies. Mr. Lynch had spent the weekend there, so we met him over at Lighthouse Beach, where a fairly good surf was running, and there was a good hot sun for tanning. Both William and I are more or less brown as berries- William claims he's never had such a good tan before, not even when he was a lifeguard.

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Sunday was there, and had learned a new song in Yoruba- a hymn, of course. A new, and smaller son also turned up for the first time. The poor children all resemble Coffee a soupcon too much for beauty, but Sunday is as cute as a button nonetheless. Home after a most refreshing sleep, and to the movies.

I don't think I told you about my NEW DRESS! Mrs. Duncan made it quite well, and everyone says no, don't tell me you had that made here! which of course makes me purr.

Someone just came in with a letter to a Mr. Prigg, who, he isisted, worked here. Since it doesn't sound

L-297 p2/4

like Lynch or Bruns, we realized it was someone's idea of the spelling of "Krieg". William tells me that at various times it has been Greek, Creagh, Christ, and what have you?

Monday night to a reading of some new plays- oh, I forgot to tell you that at the last meeting they decided that the play we were giving was lo- -, well, that it wasn't very good, and not only that but that the political sarcasms re Russia were somewhat ill-timed. So we read some new ones, none of which are very much better, but at least we won't offend anyone. We are to decide on one next Monday.

Tuesday evening before dinner we went over to the Rasmussons for what was intended to be a badminton game. Only we are in the heart of the "small rains". We stayed for a knee-supper, and then the four of us and Mike Ried played Monopoly, which almost make Lille-mor cry, because she was on the point of winning when she lost everything, bang. Home at eleven. Last night we stayed at home and went to bed at a quarter to ten, so to-day seems quite bright and cheery even though it is raining crocodiles and elephants and wildebeest. We have a party on tonight for a BOAC Couple whom we Should Entertain.

Tuesday, Sept 28

But we had a good time just the same, and everyone was most congenial. Saturday a curry lunch, then a movie in the evening, and to bed at one like very good children indeed. We had seen "Pride and Prejudice" and both of us loved it. We tired to work up an appetite for a welsh rarebit, but it was too much for us even after the movie. The next day being Sunday we had planned to go to the Beach, but of course it rained. Boo. We had lunch at home with Tom Macmillan the PAA man and a District Officer named Shankland, who is the oyster type of Englishman, deathly scared of giving away some state secret or other. In any case, you have to ply him with questions and usually get only a monosyllabic answer. He improved under the influence of Josiah's curry, however.

I was so darned busy and rushed on Saturday (pouch-closing day) that I completely forgot to put my own letter to you in the pouch, which will account for the delay. So sorry!

You should see our house now. It's a dream of loveliness. Natural white Kano cloth slipcovers on all the chairs, etc. Green bindings, to match the green bindings on the lamp shades. Two bright red pillows and one bright yellow one. Ebony negro heads and little brass figures scattered here and there. A plain green carpet. We look simply schanzzy. We are going to put curtains up in the dining room portion, too. My!

Little Willie was arrested for riding his bicycle in the middle of the road the other day, went to court and got fined ten shillings (what we had to pay, and considered exorbitant for a first offense of such a minor caliber) and got his name in the paper. We asked him if he was pleased at getting his name in the paper, and he said no suh, which isn't odd considering he can't read. Poor little Willie, He and Sunday James, one of the unemploued boys who more or less live off of us gave us

L-297 p 3/4

their pictures, which of course we will guard with our lives. Little Willie is very much Posed.

Last night (Monday) we went to a cocktail party at Andy's, given in honor of two visiting French firemen. We all talked to them in French, gave it up when they didn't answer us other than in monosyllables, gave up talking to them almost entirely when we discovered that they didn't talk in any language. Most discouraging to a would-be pleasure giver.

Through the months I have come to various conclusions: (to wit) There are three types of people in the world. One, the people who are good at talking parties, but not at dancing parties, i.e., the more frankly frivolous kind. Two, the people who are good at dancing parties and who flop when it comes to a conversational evening. Three, those worthy but perplexing people who are probably very nice and bright, but who are failures at both frivolous and serious parties., and sit in corners while ~~these~~ hostess or host tries valiantly but in vain to involve them in some kind of activity, mental or otherwise. On second thought there are a few select souls who do well at both types of social events, and would there were more of them. I have also come to the conclusion that there seem to be more Americans in the fourth and precious contingent than there are Britishers.

Sept. 29

Last night the Discussion Group, and my monumental speech on the U.S., which went down pretty well. As usual, the conversation turned to Africans and therefore the Negro problem in the U.S. We struggle and struggle, but we always come back to what is more or less our own back yard. The meeting was at Mr. Cook's house in Ebuta Metta, which is somewhat like Brooklyn when it comes to finding your way about, but we had a guide in the form of Mike Ried and several Africans on the way. Mr. Cook, not being on familiar ground, was much less controversial than usual, and we sort of missed his usual fiery -no, not fiery, but fire-provoking remarks. It's strange, considering the fact that we all agree to a remarkable extent, how much argument flies around in the New World Discussion Group. Fun! But what we really need are a couple of black-hearted capitalists (!don't scream!) to defend the other point of view and to provide someone whom we could all jump on.

We are going to Mike Reid's house with the Rasmusson's to play monopoly this evening, stopping off on our way to visit Pat Thompson, who is down with malaria. We have some letters from her love-lorn Bill Bruns to take to her, and they ought to cheer her up. Speaking of malaria reminds me that I meant to tell you about malaria. (lucky you!) We got a letter from a friend of ours who used to be stationed here when I first arrived. He has gone back to England, and is very obviously homesick for Lagos and the tropics in general. Anyway, about a week after he arrived home he came down with a case of the usual malaria, and was surprised and very much amused to find that he had no sooner announced that he felt a go of fever coming on than people began telephoning madly for doctors, demanding ambulances and the like, and he was rushed off to hospital one time. (One time in the African sense; that is, immediatley.) There his friends showered him with visits and presents, obviously thinking that poor old Dave was liable to kick the bucket before they even got the chance to say a proper farewell. All very nice, but it set him to laughing merrily once he felt better (the second day, in short). The doctors knew very little about malaria naturally, and he asked them please

L-297 p 4/4

would they take his word for it that the thing to do was to give him thirty grains of quinine the first two days and fifteen the next two days, and a shot of mephacrin on arrival in the hospital, plus sweat tablets the first and second days, and not worry one little bit, because he would be all better in five days. They said that was all right by them, and they guessed he was right. But his nurse insisted on putting a mosquito net over his bed at night! A surrealistic rendition of the old theory of locking the barn after the horse has departed! One poor pal of ours went back to New York and like a dope failed to continue taking his quinine daily for a couple of weeks, with the natural result that he came down with a fairly bad case of malaria in the wilds of New York, where they have the same attitude (according to our friend) as they do in London. The poor man was so sick the first day that he didn't pay attention to what they were doing with him, and he had to stay in hospital for two weeks, so his friends were quite justified in being afraid for him. They have the treatment of malaria down to such a fine science here in West Africa that people who are in bed with it for more than five or six days are very rare indeed. The only people who don't win are the smarty cats who think all this quinine business is just sissy. The only real danger in malaria is that it will turn into Blackwater fever, which is very fatal indeed. Blackwater results when the normal curative dose of quinine is administered to someone who hasn't been taking his daily prophylactic dose of five grains, or when the victim has been such a strong and virile character that he hasn't bothered to go to bed with a bottle of quinine and a sweat tablet, when he felt the fever coming on. William and I take atabrin, which is the American name for mephacrin, the artificial malaria killer. Atabrin turns you a lovely chartreuse shade all the time you take it, but doesn't make your ears buzz and needs to be taken only twice a week. Also it tastes better. Speaking of quinine reminds me that William once met a gnome at a party who claimed to be fond of chewing his quinine rather than gulping it. If you try just gulping a quinine tablet once you'll see what we mean when we say he was queer as they come. Not our idea of nectar and ambrosia.

There will probably be more gossip later on.

Yes! There is. We just got a pouch with a PACKAGE FOR ME IN IT. From Helen, containing a Birthday-cum-Christmas present of some very useful luncheon places. Many, many thanks indeed! These latter days I have been laboriously creating some of the same by the use of my own fair hands, just to show you how many luncheon sets are obtainable in the teeming marts of Lagos. I hope this arrival heralds the approaching arrival of those famous packages mother claimed she sent months ago.

Friday, October 1st.

Last night we had a bang-up party for one of the Lagos Old Guard who has recently returned to the steaming jungles of West Africa. Bob Mangold, a nephew of Commander Schartz of these parts. Handsome and sociable, not exactly the intellectual kind, recently married to what is said to be a most beautiful gal back home. Apparently one of those Additions To Every Party I spoke of above. I should venture a guess that he wouldn't be an addition to a conversational and discussion party, however.

Lack of paper forces me to close with love,