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American Consulate General  
Lagos, Nigeria  
December 7, 1943

Dear Family,

Saturday lunch was very nice, only Anita and Penry FORGOT to come, and the visiting FEA fireman from Dakar didn't arrive in time for lunch, so there were only four instead of the anticipated seven. I called Anita up after she should have been about an hour late, and twisted the dagger in her heart by asking her was she perhaps tied up at Gov't. House or what?? They had already had their lunch. So she sent 'round an agonized note of apology, and invited us for dinner tonight, Tuesday. To show our magnanimity and greatness of soul we forgave, and accepted. The fireman, Mr. MacChesney, arrived at Mr. Lynch's house at about four, and so we went out there at six to welcome him, and discovered that he was quite a good joe. Formerly head of the enforcement branch of the OPA, which he said he gave up for an easy job in the wilds of West Africa where all he has to do is conciliate the French and whatnot, he tells us that the OPA is the most unhappy and misunderstood and well-meaning organization in the world, but that he didn't envy anyone who had a job in it, because no matter what you do, nobody loves you. We said we could well understand. He was also in the Navy ("I gave up a nice easy desk job in the Navy to become a soldier on the OPA front") He used to teach Economics and Political Science at Harvard and California, also, and spent a year as consulting lawyer for a couple of Draft Boards. Told us all sorts of interesting stories about people high and low in Dakar. We had to go out to dinner with Mr. Nivin of the Information Office later, but we asked if we could bring Mr. MacChesney to the Club with the party afterwards, because it appears there is no dancing in Dakar by Order, and he is spoiling for some high life. The strange part of it is that in the other French West African colonies they don't think it's illegal to dance and kick around abit in public- quite the contrary, I'm told there are several fine (relatively speaking) European night clubs in Abidjan and Cotonou. M. Boisson put in the prohibition on dancing and no one has bothered to remove it since he left. By the way, Abidjan is in the Ivory Coast and Cotonou is in Dahomey, just so you won't have to look it up (if you were going to!)

Sunday Pat, Bill, and the two of us went to the beach, with little Major Neal following at 12:30 in the Waafflar. Quiet sort of a day, but as usual, enjoyable. I was tired after staying up late on Saturday, but then, I'm recognized by this time as a first class sissy. We saw a rather hopeless movie in the evening.

Monday for lunch and dinner we had Mr. McChesney. We had an early dinner and went to a USO Show at the camp. Absolutely foul show, but a funny juggler-cum-magician-cum-imitator as M. of G., just the same. This morning the three beautiful(?) blonde ex-night club girls bounced into the Consulate in the tow of, or towing, Lt. Sohl, who appeared wary of his tourist-guide morning. The ladies were very hot babes, in more ways than one.

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The M.C. was also in, and absolutely flabbergasted little Bennie (our messenger) with a now-you-see-it-now-you-don't trick with two sponges. You really should have seen Bennie's black face. His eyes were but literally popping out, and his mouth hung open. Speaking of the staff, tomorrow is the big Mohammaden festival (species of Christmas) of Ileya or E Id el Kabir, and Aliu Yaya and Adamu Katagu the watchman are getting the day off plus a large dash. It is a public holiday, and all the Government branches close down with a bang. We stay open, although we were considering turning Mohammaden during the festivities.

I am considering the idea of writing up another cast of characters, one trouble being that I don't have a copy of the other one, and might get some repeats. This time I'll make an extra copy to keep and refer to.

Dear Pop: So you're still trying to seduce a pure hearted girl into the ranks of the black hearted economic royalists, eh? Ah me, ah me. To change the subject slightly, did you read that wonderful one in the New Yorker about the FBI man who asked the freind of the man he was investigating if he had ever heard the subject become elated over Russian victories? I just loved that one, and especially the New Yorker's comment: "Send in the cute sayings of FBI men who come to investigate your friends!! You may win Big Cash Awards!! This weeks lucky winner sent in the following, etc., etc." "Peace, it's wonderful. The New Yorker's best stilletto touch exemplified therein. What illicited all this jabber on my part was the receipt today of pop's letter of November 136h, sent by pouch, in which he says that Gov't. employees just naturally don't put their little hearts and souls in their work the way other people do. As a Gov't. employee and the wife of one I take a very dim, sepulchral view of that remark! Likewise I beg to differ in no uncertain terms. I will grant you just this much: as long as salaries in Gov't services are generally lower than in private business, the tendency (I'll take not one step further than that) the tendency is to get a less ambitious class of men and women. Personally, I don't care what I'm working for, but I like the idea of working for the Gov't., if you don't mind, and I try to do my little best for it. In a Finer and Better World (tra la la la) where the government is all sort of civil service and better paid and more extensive, I still think you won't have to worry your distinguished grey head over whether or not everyone's going to go asleep at the switch.

Yes, we are making quite a collection of Nigeriana. You will be delighted to learn that I have completely reversed my original stand on the matter of buying local curios even though they are dreadfully common wherever they come from. I am buying tableclothes, figures in woad, brass, and thorn, little leather objects, big leather objects, miscellaneous objects. I think I told you about how William and I are really exited over the work of a local African artist, whom we consider very good indeed, and full of the proper local color. Speaking of which, one of the USO babes went up to the ladies room and saw a picture on the wall, neatly framed in blotting paper. She said where did you get that dearie, I've been looking all over Africa for something like that. Modestly I scraped my foot on the floor and said, oh well, that's not so good-I did it myself! Triumph. That's the picture that Willie didn't like very much, because "that lady she look like pickin too much! Pickin being baby, in Pidgin English. I was heart-broken by Little Willie's cutting remark, and the ~~XXXXX~~ USO Bomshell's remark made up for everything.

I was so very sorry to learn about little Judy's diabetes. The poor little thing! Do tell Floramonde that she has all my sympathy. What a tragedy.

Yes father, I can thoroughly recommend Lagos as a spot to retire to, but maybe you'd like something else better. I was glad to hear that old Tom

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MacMillan had seen you, or rather spoken to you on the telephone. I think you will discover if he does come and have lunch with you later, that he is a really fine man, sweet and kind as well as a credit to PAA. One of those Never a Harsh Word About Anyone people.

William was a life guard (in answer to your question) when he was in College, during the summer season. He worked at a municipal swimming pool. His salary started at ten dollars a week and worked itself up to fifteen. Whee! The Great Krieg spent his high school summers at Scout camps, working up to Eagle Scout with palm. The Great Man is reticent about his scholastic career while in high school, which makes me suspect that he was a world-beater. He entered Dartmouth in 1931, quickly taking a leading place in scholastic and extra-curricular activities. He majored in History, and emerged four years later with a Phi Beta Kappa key and summa cum Laude, and received a scholarship for the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, in Cambridge, Mass. Here our hero probably did well too, but I haven't been able to worm anything much out of him. He got his M.A. there, and had passed the general examinations for Ph.D. when he entered the Foreign Service. The rest is History. Remarks: He is without a doubt one of the world's ten best men. No-- make that five. In reply to your remark about knowing William before you see him, don't be silly. No one who hasn't had the privilege of meeting and knowing him for long periods of time can have the faintest idea of the heights of his character. Also, he's handsome, with lovely green eyes that turn up at the corner, in case you had forgotten what I used to say to you three or four times a week. Kind to old ladies, children, animals, and missionaries. Any other questions, or are you already overwhelmed?

General Bruce announced (via Hammy Hamilton the ADC) that he was planning to descend on Mr. Lynch next weekend, for two days of his hectic merry-making. As we are not sure whether or not Mr. Lynch will be back within the next couple of days, we are making the arrangements. He is to stay at Mr. Lynch's in any case, but we might have the party here if the Host is not back. He also indicated that he would like to come to the beach with us on Sunday, so that's all arranged too. Good old Gen'l. In case you think perhaps he's a bit flighty, I believe you are wrong. I was talking to one of his sergeants the other day, who told me that he was admired and respected in his Division, or what ever it is a Major General is supposed to be in charge of, and that he (the sergeant) would do just about anything for the General. Sooo, we'll give him a good time.

Don't blame the censor for crossing out the name of the man who annoyed me so on his trip through here a couple of months ago. I did the massacring myself, for diplomacy's sake. But I still don't like him, so there. And that seems to be about all for today.

Friday, December 10th.

The news flash of the week is that I was cleaning the top of the big safe in William's office the other day and discovered a package addressed to Mrs. WL Krieg. It had been there since we were away in Jos in July, and contained two lovely big pictures of Philinda Duane. They are simply wonderful, and it broke my heart to realize that all that time I could have been looking at them, having them framed, etc. They are now (all three, with the old one) having frames made for them- very narrow, painted white. We will hang them conspicuously in the living room. Everyone admires them and comments on the beauty of my niece. Sad to say that seems to be about the extent of the packages. However, that was nice.

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Friday, Dec. 17

Well, now you really are going to think I don't love you. Once again I forgot to put my nice long letter carefully inscribed, in the pouch. Things seems to get so hectic of a Saturday morning, and now with Harriet making up the pouches I have less to do with them and therefore forget them more easily.

Saturday noon the General blew in like a cyclone, accompanied by a colonel whose name I've forgotten but who turned out to be very nice indeed, but, as everyone is, overshadowed by the General. We had had lunch all prepared for him but had forgotten to tell Hammy that they were invited! So they had made other plans. Everyone apologized all around, and they consented to come up for half an hour and have the traditional West African Saturday noon pink gin. Hammy appeared at that time, but dashed out again under orders, to go and get us some chutney and chocolate from the NAAFI (English equivalent of the PX in the American Army). We had invited Anita and Penry also, plus Mr. Lynch (who had just returned from Freetown) and Frank Barry, down from Takoradi. Well, we had an argumentative luncheon and everyone retired. At eight in the evening we went to Mr. Lynch's and found the party forgathered- Harriet, Hammy, the nameless colonel. Before dinner there was a great argument as to how to pronounce "ceramics" (Hammy's art in peacetime). He said the curator of ceramics at the British Museum calls it keramics. We looked it up in two dictionaries and found that it can only be ~~syndicated~~ pronounced Keramics if it's spelled with a k, and otherwise it has to be ceramics. Hammy lost, amid the jeers of the populace, but he still thinks he's right. There was a long consultation between me and Mr. Lynch over who was to sit where and why. It was a terrible problem, until we discovered that Peter had set ten places for eleven people. Finally we got everyone settled according to protocol, but after our curry we were't hungrey, naturally. After dinner we went to the dance, which was quite like the dances always are, only my feet got a little tired a little earlier, due to the fact that I was in the mood for dancing and danced with everyone. The General showed no signs of going, and continued to show no signs of going until two, when we delicately indicated that we were going, ready or not. So we did. Bill Bascom, who was with us, came home with us to get something from the safe, and we sang beautifully. He's very good at harmonizing, too.

The next morning we went to the beach in a boat all to ourselves, courtesy of the War Department, and went and changed in the Adeah Commandah's shack at Lighthouse, kindly lent by our General's successor. Had a good surf bathe, until one of the Military Lifeguards told us to get out, because at that hour the place isn't very safe, or is reputed not to be. So we all trooped out as ordered, returned to our place for lunch, and shower. A great time was had by all, and many hilarious stories were told. Real life spy stories, too. Every one had a spy story to contribute except Hammy and me, who have apparently led blameless and humdrum lives up to the present. The General told a story which he says the Army always tell on the Navy, and the Navy always tells on the Army. It appears a Naval officer (thks time) got out of bed one fine morning, looked in the bathroom mirror, and immediately rushed off to the nearest doctor, very worried indeed. "Doctor, what's wrong? The pinks of my eyes are all white!!" Everyone then dug into the curry with a will, Hammy taking three enormous helpings and apologizing humbly after each new helping, begging ~~xxx~~ not to be thought a pig. The General and Hammy had to go back (also the colonel) to Ibadan right after lunch.

Monday we Stayed At Home and Read! I finished Clochemerle, and a de-

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pective story by John Cannaday, O.E.W. (now F.E.A.) man down in Leopoldville. I thought it was rather well-written, and the much more fun since he's more or less one of the family. "The Smell of Money", by Michael Head, as this Cannaday calls himself in the literary world. John says Cannaday is a very nice fellow, so I imagine he is, John's taste being above reproach. (John Houser, I mean.) He says Cannaday is not in favor of the life lead by people in Leopoldville, which is supposed to be too corrupt for peacetime, let alone war time. You never can tell, can you. Cannaday is a professor of something or other in peace time.

Tuesday night we went to dinner at the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers Mess (commonly known as REME) with Major Neal, and sat out in their garden overlooking the lagoon (that's where they had the big dance a few months ago). We pleased the whole mess (there are only eight of them) by offering them four bottles of whiskey to supplement their ration of one bottle per man per month (or is it supplement?— no, it isn't.) The Supply Board of the Nigerian Government has issued a special ordinance no. 56, section II, paragraph 4, subsection 3, entitled "Christmas Spirit", which says that one extra bottle of gin and one extra bottle of whiskey will be released for the festivities. However, since this extra bottle per man was released and available on the first of December, there is not much left now, they say. So we were their little pets all evening. In spite of the beautiful view and a rising moon, we found ourselves in a group of Englishmen who were apparently of the opinion that unless there is something of real importance and lasting interest to talk about, there is no logical reason to say anything. That is, with the exception of little Major Neal, who is quite sociable, and a little doctor from Kenya, likewise the jolly and conversational type. The rest sat around in sober, thoughtful silence, with the result that we had to struggle madly to keep down oppressive silences. Home at a very reasonable hour.

Wednesday John Houser appeared from bush, bearing a sick Bill Bascom, who today went to hospital. Overwork and a touch of malaria, it is thought. John, very discouraged and still wanting to be come a private in the army and let someone else take over his problems, came to lunch with us. We went to the movies at night.

Today, by the way, is now Saturday. Mr. Lynch has gone off to the swearing-in ceremony of the new Governor, Sir Arthur Richards, formerly Governor of Jamaica. The Granthams are leaving pretty soon, she to go back home to California, he to go I'm not sure where. They have had a long hard tour here.

We have a curry lunch party on again, and are doing our duty by society by inviting some of our very dullest friends together all at one time, so they can all be dull together. I know I'm mean to say that, but the honest truth is that they are dull, terribly dull, and there's no getting around the fact. We have assembled a collection of the dullest people so our less dull friends won't have to be bored by them at a future party, and mean or not, that's the situation.

On that low and reprehensible note I shall leave you, my head bowed.

Love,

