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Dear Family,

This is a frank statement, but there you are. My feet are very tired this morning. The great party for the Army came off last night in Mr. Lynch's garden, under the spreading mango trees. We had gotten possession of some portable dance floor sections, a pick-up and some very nice recorded radio programs by the very best orchestras, plenty of fine food and drink, quite a few ladies, plenty of red white and blue bunting, lots and lots of paper decorations with a Christmasy touch to them, and last but certainly not least the wherewithall to set up a very home-like Christmas tree. Bill Bruns cut down a small casuarina tree from Victoria Beach, we got some balls and such like ornaments from Cap Robert's, then put cotton under and around it, adding a dusting of talcum powder. Most lifelike. We strung dozens of colored lights all over the lawn and among the trees, and placed searchlights so they would shine up into the trees and make them look beautifully green. Each American civilian put up the not inconsiderable sum of four pounds in cash. It was a great party, and I think the boys liked it a whole lot. But, as I said before, my feet are most unromantically sore!

Last Saturday we had to go to dinner with Mr. and Mrs. King, the Commissioner of Police - Penry's boss. All very well-meaning, but not exiting. We went to a good movie, and then quietly home. No dance at the club, which was a good idea too. Sunday to the beach, where Mr.

Lynch had stayed for the weekend with Don Huse and Maureen MacCauley. We went and saw "Watch on the Rhine" that evening at the Army camp. My goodness, everyone in it down to the smallest child made the most interminable speeches I've ever been bored by! I thought it was perfectly ridiculous, in a word. You remember that song I used to sing with such wealth of spirit when I was home last year, called "There's a Star Spangled Banner waving Somewhere"? Pure, 100% undiluted Corn? Well, in my opinion "Watch on the Rhine" was about the same class of corn, only this time the language wasn't quite so rustic, and the speeches were supposed to be taken seriously. A galaxy of really fine actors had to struggle with it, poor dears. Home, disgusted.

Monday evening was delightfully spent at home, reading. William was doing the necessary reading for a talk on American Foreign policy, for the Discussion club, which met at our house Tuesday. William made only notes, and ad libbed the rest - doing beautifully, naturally. He knows his history down to the last date. I thought it was very interesting and instructive not only for the British, but also little Philinda, who could stand knowing a little more on that subject. Before the meeting, however, we had a most interesting visitor: Mr. Tudor, the British Vice Consul at Santa Isabel, Fernando Po. That island is so close to us really, and yet

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we know practically nothing about it, and this is the first time we've met someone who has been there. It sounds sort of interesting, in all sorts of ways. Mr. Tudor knows the Captain of, and has dined on, that Spanish ship I was on ~~time~~ here, and what with that and our many questions about life and customs, we whiled away a most delightful two hours. We had some special business with him also, and found him very helpful in that regard. His perfectly natural, and probably well-founded belief is, that H.M. Government does a better job in their colonies than our little Spanish friends do in theirs. I am very sure myself that the Spanish don't treat the natives one quarter so well. William and I would give just about anything to visit Fernando Po for a while. For your information and guidance, Fernando Po is just off the coast of the French Cameroons, near the Nigerian border, and probably one of the least-visited places in Africa. My my, how I'd like to go there. But we never will.

All day yesterday I was busy with preparations (feverish) for the great Army party. I had to leave the job of decorating to some of the boys at about four thirty, and get dressed for a tea party at Mrs. Grantham's house, the Lodge. She has moved back to her own lovely house on the Marina, now that the New Governor and his wife have arrived and taken over Government House. Every time I go into the Lodge I think it is more beautifully decorated than the last time. The tea was a most formal affair, to introduce the ladies of Lagos to Lady Richards, the Gov.'s wife. We all sat around decorously and sipped tea and munched chocolate and coconut layer cake (Mrs. G. is, or was, American, as I've told you- Nebraska) while polite conversation was made. All rather politely dull, I regret to report. However, Mrs. Grantham was as nice as ever, and Lady Richards strove valiantly to talk to everyone and sundry about nothing in particular. She seems to be a very nice lady indeed, but she wouldn't go and she wouldn't go, and none of us felt we could leave till she did. Finally Mrs. Grantham came around and spread the word that it would be all right to leave before she did, so after a discreet few minutes, we all trooped off. There was an old lady at the party, aged 86, who has been out in Nigeria since 1898- the only person around to be able to claim such a feat. Her husband and she came out to start a mission college for the locals, and when he died a few years ago she felt no connections with England, and hopes to die here. It is even rarer to see old people out here (Europeans, I mean) than it is to see white children, so this old lady is made much of and treated with a degree of respect and kindness which she might not receive at home in England. She deserves it, if only for her daring in coming out here in 1898, when things were just about as primitive and unsafe as you can imagine. The old Pioneer Stock.

Bill Bascom came out of hospital yesterday and returned to Accra. He had made a quick recovery as soon as he had a telegram from his wife saying that she has high hopes of coming over here around February. His wife, you remember, is the snake-catching girl. Perhaps she will be catching Black Mambas around West Africa, because she did it once before the war, and can certainly qualify for such a job, if anyone has it to offer here. I should very much like to see her out, because Bill Bascom is a fine, kind, folksy sort of person, and misses her a lot.

That's all for today.

howe LPK