

3/25/71

Derling Mum:- Thank you for the 3 lovely letters we have received since we got home, written the 13th, 14th & 20th of March -- for since I have been able to round them all up. The one of the 14th made me feel quite émotionné as I knew what a wrench it must have been for you. Plasse do not say that your River days are over. The River will continue to flow and we would love to have you up for a visit any time (which makes me sound like GP). You say you mentioned all this in another letter; that letter must have gone astray in the Guatemalan mails, for I never did see any other mention. We received a letter dated March 9 from Mr. McBean of Davi Peck. In it he says that you'd told him you'd continue to pay the taxes through Mergan Guaranty of NYC, but your letter says you will pay no taxes. Yesterday I received a cheque for \$1000 from Mergan's. Thank you, Mum, for this generosity. We have called Mr. Avenius about ~~EMERGINGXENE~~ continuing the insurance. Harold Herrick will attend to picking up the various policies as they expire. How can we resolve the discrepancy re taxes? Should I make another phone call to Mr. Avenius or one to Mr. McBean?

I'm so sorry to hear that Lude has been sick. I've never heard of dogs having typhoid fever. Thank heaven the vet says he will be all right! David Boyer has just left us after a two-day visit. Even before he heard that I'd offered Unk the big house on Whiskey for July he told us he intended going up & finish the little house in May. Yesterday morning he ~~WEN~~ insisted on telephoning Unk to assure him there'd be a viable second house on Whiskey in time for his hope-for visit. I got on the extension and listened. Unk sounded very doubtful. We'll talk everything over when he comes.

At the tail end of the conversation yesterday, I made a somewhat melodramatic statement about Shirley and Betty and their health. This I should not have done as it made it sound worse than it is. I finally got ahold of their doctor (a move I don't approve of but I simply had to get things straight). What happened is that dear Shirley had several epileptic seizures during the winter, because of fatigue and also drinking. Betty, whose drinking had also been heavy, developed liver trouble and great fatigue -- further precipitated by the disappearance of Mary, who has sent messages that she is sick; my opinion, founded on nothing except experience with these people, is that she wishes to retire and doesn't dare say so. Betty was so tired and depressed that she couldn't get organized enough to figure out meals and supplies. The result was malnutrition for both of them. That I know about, and its effects, after last summer when I had to have a tooth pulled up at the River, then ran a fever and got sloppy about eating properly and ran into difficulties with something called Low Blood Sugar -- very uncomfortable; you become hazy and forgetful and rather like an old person entering senility. Anyway both BSCs have had nothing to drink for a month and the doc says things are much better than they were 2 weeks ago. The children exhaust Betty and yet she frets when they are off on the Cape. I talked with both of them 2 days ago. Betty had trouble putting words and thoughts together; Shirley, on the other hand, acted as if all was quite dandy (you know the way he is) and spoke of taking Bet off to a motel for several days' rest in Cold Spring, N.Y. This burg is just a few miles north of here and not much of a deal with the current weather (snow, cold, etc.). Phil called them back and gave Shirley the name and telephone number of a motel on the Eastern shore of Maryland, which is only 4 hours' drive and where they might, with luck, hope for a respite from winter. The doctor was the one who recommended cancelling the cruise; he didn't give his reason for this and I didn't press him, as I felt I was being too nosy anyway. The doctor said the most important thing for Bet was to get household help. I don't know how much I can assist them from here but will try, with the possible aid of one of the other teachers at Bedford Art Center. This teacher, Amy Jones, expressed relief at getting a phone call from one of the family, as everyone in the village and particularly the school, had been worried about the Carters. She tells me a movement is afoot to transfer the administrative function of the Bed Art Center to another man, with Shirley coming back in as a teacher but unburdened with all these tiresome details and respons-

ibilities which have proved such a drag on both of them over the past few years. I'm sorry about having to tell you all this. I worried when you said something about the Carters' health in a letter I received in Guatemala. When I arrived back here I called their number several times but got no answer and decided they had gone on the cruise after all. It wasn't until Auntie De telephoned me that I realized things were not all well on Cherry Street. Amy says that Shirley welcome the thought of a changed status re the Bedford School. Amy also thinks they should not go to the Cape this summer but head towards somewhere in Europe with just Alan. I think that at the Cape there is a ^{1/2} of exhaustion and tension involved with the children, the redoubtable Anne, etc. I don't know what anyone can do about this and my quoting Amy on this score probably is without any value, but I wanted you to know the opinions of one who sees them daily and loves them both. Apparently Barbara sent Alan a Valentine card from the Cape, at the bottom of which she wrote "soon you will be one of us", meaning, I suppose "you too will escape to the Cape". This, according to Amy, was what made Betty collapse -- just the last straw.

Again I am sorry for telling you quite so much. But this sort of thing gets on the family grapevine and then you start hearing bits and pieces and you might as well know everything.

Jenny went back to college on Monday. Linda, Arch and Isabel were out here on Sunday for lunch. Our grand-daughter is beautiful! I still can't get used to the idea of her walking or standing without assistance. A week from Sunday we are due for a visit to the Conn. house which we have never seen.

I would love to get ahold of Sabette and meant to ask Linda if she'd seen her. I might be able to obtain their address from the Reader's Digest. Or have you an address? We're looking forward to Unk's visit.

Much much love to you.

The enclosed was sent to us by Ernest Silverman. He spotted it in the Wall Street Journal, as did other friends, so we have an extra copy. We thought you'd like to see it, which you probably have already. Good luck with the Lippman lunch! They always seems to be a success.