

August 23, 1971

Darling Mum:- We all feel as if we had been hit over the head -- happy things, terrible things, so-so² things, etc. I do hope you got the cable, composed for you with much sweating last night by the BRC's and Phil and myself, about the deaths of Aunt Polly Bodge and of John Mergan: in different places, Goose Island and Minneapolis, but the same sudden type of heart attack. Yesterday morning Betty Hazell telephoned me to tell about her mother's death the night before. To quote her "it was just the way Mama would have liked to go; no long lingering illness." On Saturday there had been a boat show which Aunt Pol attended and was much pleased that her son Clee and grandsons, Barton and Bedie, had done so well. All of her children except NANA Jean Rickett were present and they dined happily at Goose. Afterwards Aunt Pol felt strange; Dr. Pfeiffer was summoned, but by the time he came she was gone. I climbed into our little whaler and carried the news to the J/C. Whites, then to Copperas and David Meyer. When I got back here I called Uncle Tommy in Maine. Hardly had I hung up than Geedy Rhett was on the phone with the word on John M. He told Phil that on Saturday as John was driving his tractor (didn't know he had one) and suddenly had great pain in the chest. He was taken to the hospital and they operated, thinking something had gone wrong with that plastic aorta he's had for some years. In the end they found it was a plain ordinary heart attack. He died about 10 am yesterday. Geedy asked me to advise Watch Island. By then (noon or thereabouts) there was considerable confusion; we were all dug at Goose for a memorial service at 3 pm, our kitchen girls were leaving for good (to go back to college) at around the same time and a storm was coming up. David and Pauline and the two of us arrived at Goose a few minutes ahead of schedule, as is our habit. The J.C. Whites were 15 minutes late. There must have been some 80-odd people in that big room of the Dodes'. It wasn't until after the service that I inched my way over to the Whites and told them about J. Mergan. Phil and I sped home in driving rain and David and Pauline showed up later for a drink, after which they went on to Buck where they were spending their first night.

The BRCs' arrival was such a happy event. Phil met them in Watertown, the plane was on time, and the River calm and delicious-looking. Yesterday morning they got up at the crack of dawn and sneaked over for a look at their new property, arriving back here for breakfast at 8:30. Pauline had composed a long list of food and sundries and at about 10 Phil and ERIN took deposited her at Buck and went on to Clayton where BRC visited the Grand Union and other spots and picked up the Buck 4. Pauline took everything they'd brought to Buck, including Daddy's dark red Harvard sweater with the big H. I'd found it tucked away in the boat-house several years ago and Jenny had borrowed it, but I thought it was much nicer that Uak have it since both he and BSC were on the track team. They're so ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~ happy with Buck and have all sorts of plans for improving the kitchen and so forth. We're supposed to go there this evening to Prendre Un Verre and I hope the weather warms up a bit. The storm that was brewing yesterday turned into a full-fledged whopper, particularly around Syracuse and Rochester, and dropped the temperature here from the 70's into the low 50's. It's very blue and beautiful, though, and you'd probably like its nipiness. We haven't seen the BRCs yet this morning. Phil has gone off bravely in the big whaler to pick up Claire Carnegie who is going to help us out 2 days or so a week. She has a boat of her own but phoned around 9 a.m. to say they'd had an accident and she would not have the use of her craft until Wed.

Last week one day I had a surprise call from Anne Carter Bossi. She told me her father had spent 2 days at Mass General, had been given a different medication from the old familiar dilon¹, and seemed very well. The person she was worrying about was her mother. Both Phil and I had developed vague, unspecified worries -- about her in the spring: she seemed, to quote Jenny's words, "spaced out" and now we knew that she was drinking and taking tranquilizers, which combination

is quite dangerous. Anne hoped that I, as another problem drinker, would be able to give advice. That's a very natural and seemingly logical way of thinking. Trouble is it doesn't work; only the problem drinker can make a decision to do something about his or her situation. I steamed over to Watch and told Auntie Nan (Uncle J. was napping) the good news about BSC's improvement. Bet's drinking I ~~did~~ mentioned only briefly and GMM and I agreed that psychiatrists have so far been unable to help people with this problem. In a second phone call Anne had followed my advice and rung up Alcoholics Anonymous, she said it had been suggested that Betty go to a hospital for a week and "dry out", not a pretty word. What I did not know is that Betty also went to Boston with Shirley and saw the name neurologist, Dr. Postkanzer (what a name!) and he had made the same suggestion as the AA people.

On Saturday around noon Anne was again on the phone and said she very much wanted to speak with Uncle Jimmy. I went over and fetched him here. Uncle J. listened to Anne and made comments such as "we don't want her getting the D.T.'s on us" and other stuff. He gave what I thought was very good advice; that no woman would enter a hospital at the suggestion of her children and this should be arranged through Dr. Postkanzer in Boston or Dr. Rosten (?) in Yarmouth. Shirley had called Friday evening, obviously hoping that Unk would have arrived. He gave me the glad news that their maid Mary Smith was coming to the Cape, due there yesterday. I phoned the BSCs yesterday afternoon to tell them about Aunt Polly and John Morgan. Betty answered the phone and sounded amazingly like her old self. She said that a doctor had recommended her entering a hospital for a rest cure, which sounds as if the machinery had already been set in motion. Faith Perera is the only person on the Cape that Betty will talk to or listen to and it's a shame that she's gone off to Nova Scotia for a month.

Mum, your wonderful cheque makes so much difference in my peace of mind -- or rather ability to manoeuvre. I know you would like me to get a boat with a nice top to keep out the rain, but boats are rather like cars; even a second-hand boat would ~~cost~~ cost about \$2,000. As for washing-machines, a new model is well over \$300, as compared with \$60 second-hand. That plan of mine fell through -- on the washer. When the ~~XXXXXX~~ Maytag strike finally ended and Farrell's was at last able to deliver a new washer to the lady whose old one I wanted, it turned out her old one was in such terrible shape that it was hardly worth carting away. Mr. Turcotte, my contact at Farrell's (his first name is Don, locally pronounced "Dawn"), suggested I call Betty Haxall who bought a new washer a few weeks ago. I rang her up and got the unhappy news that she gave her old one to Bodie who took it apart to make a water pump (and it didn't work anyway). "Dawn" Turcotte promised he'd continue to keep an eye peeled. In the meanwhile our nice men, Bazinet & Pattison repaired the leaks in our current washer and it performs as well as it can. It doesn't remove lint from the wash so if I wear a dark blue shirt it looks as if I'd played cozy with a shedding dog.

We finally got a phone in the little house. I think we'll move in there (partly) sometime this week. After much discussion with many people we decided to fix up the bathroom with water-proof wall-paper. Last week Bill and Missy Wood and the 2nd of us went out there all armed for combat, but it turned out that the bathroom walls needed preliminary plastering or sizing or what-have-you. B&P performed this task last Friday evening and will do the rest (D.V.) tomorrow.

Forgive me all these full details (washers and stuff), but you did ask & I'm answering. Claire C. is now whisking rapidly around the house. Our young ladies were fine but I don't think either of them really knew what a clean room looked like or how to get it that way.

Much much love to you & Auntie Do,

**They've gone up terribly in price since the 30's.