

Avila Cal.

April 30, 1941

Dear Nannie -

It has been so long since I have written to you that I don't know where to begin - The last I heard from you were your cards from Florida which I was delighted to get, but which to you is now ancient history. I trust that all goes well - and I am sure briefly.

First I am going directly to the favors which, as usual, I have to ask. I am wondering if it is worth while for me to hang on to my Australian bonds even tho they are only 50% value of what I paid. Maybe its best to sell at \$500⁰⁰ each. Of course its impossible to get sound advice. I should think any firm in Wilmington would be biased against selling. I am still not sure from my bank account if recent coupons have been deposited, or if interest can be collected. Could you let me know, please. I think power of attorney is not necessary to sell these bonds. However if you prefer to send them at once to me to dispose of that is O.K.

Also I want to have here, at last, my two trunks. If they can be sent freight, ^{to San Luis Obispo} so much the better. If the tin box of books can be sent freight I would like to have that too. Please send the two trunks any way even at express rates if it can't be done freight. I would like to have here now my photographs and drawings and etchings. But I can't imagine how you would be able to assemble them so please send the trunks first and let the other problem simmer. There are things in that last shipment from China which I would like to have but could they be sorted and repacked? At present I don't see myself going East for some while. Its going to be a long time yet before the world settles down; in the meanwhile I'm best off on this homestead.

About bonds. Does Stan hear from Pacific Terminals? You know I have never dealt with them and am not sure of procedure. I wish he could give me the dope on status quo as far as he knows it. If there are still no dividends they too should be erased from the books.

Mrs Mathers of Honolulu is still howling for that Chinese red board in your attic. The furniture from my house has pleased her immensely

and made her the envy of everyone in Hawaii. Freight from Peking was \$550.00 but she says she could sell the red lacquer table alone to pay expenses on all. She still owes me 75 bucks. so don't get on the sideboard yet. Better if you could sell it to an amateur in Wilmington, and let Mrs. M. curse.

Her architect friend Claude Steichl at whose house I stayed in Honolulu has paid me two visits recently. With all the army coming in there his AI trade has gone to pot. so he has sold out everything including his beautiful house, and is going to establish himself in Hollywood. Other visitors recently have been Sheila Munsey who is as charming and odd as ever, and two days ago Emily Seymour on her way north. The rain was too much for her in Santa Barbara so she had skipped off for a month of the winter to Arizona. Guests can now be put up here - with a minimum of comfort - but they seem to like it. I think I wrote you that Merle was here, but as Puget Sound had California's winter climate this year she didn't mind going home.

Publicity on the new book "Sleeping Arrow" is about to be launched. I am waiting from day to day to hear if it is a Jr. Literary Guild selection. At this moment I am working on some illustrations for a short story by Lin Yutang about his childhood. That is one reason why I wish my China sketches and photos were at hand. It is for "The Rotarian" - not much of a magazine, but still I wouldn't miss a chance to work on a subject which I know more about than most Am. illustrators. I haven't yet been to San Francisco or L.A. and so as yet have no etching or litho press and so have done no prints. I have one pupil, a lady from Santa Maria - she was once "Miss Arizona" in a national beauty contest - since then she has been eating too well.

The garden continues to develop on such a scale that it has left me behind, Edmund taking entire charge of it. He has planted over 200 trees on the hillside. We now have about two dozen varieties of geraniums, a field of iris, clusters of bamboo cane, Australian flax, acanthus, the numerous

California ice plants etc etc. It doesn't look very impressive yet, but just give it a few years!

The rumors of a goat dry dock in Avila have so far proved to be only rumors, even the army on holiday has scarcely touched the town tho the streets of San Luis are crowded with soldiers. But I have already been offered \$1000 ~~or~~ more for the "estate" than what I paid. However I'm becoming land minded now. It seems to be the only thing safe to hold on to. You will see something of that sentiment in "Sleeping Crow" .

What about your holiday? The good reason is at last beginning and you must ~~see~~ this place. How is Stuffy? Our cat extraordinary died some time ago - presumably from poison. We recently had a dog for ten days - a pointer - setter mixture - but he showed no promise as a watch dog or a gilded chaser so we gave him away. We now have two kittens again.

By the way if you can find a copy of July-Aug Horn Book (1939) with my San Francisco speech in it I would like it sent on at once. I think most of the copies are in the tin box, but as the women of Arroyo Grande are having me give a talk there on May 9th on the same subject it would help to have a copy handy.

I just heard from Schuster that he had mislaid that negative before having had a print made! He was still hoping it would show up.

Write and tell me that all goes well

Love -

John

My Kinas card to the Bennetts came back. Which is the P.O.?