

SUNDAY..

Dear Dad and Mother:

I know you'll be dismayed at the flock of confetti in this letter but both the Muscle Shoals article (from the N.Y. Post) and the one from the Herald Trib. magazine on Walter Williams will interest you, I believe. Seems that I recall Wather having mentioned knowing Williams at the press conventions. His success encourages me to hope that I might get a job as a professor of journalism somewhere. It ought to be interesting work, more so than routine newspaper work.

We were glad to have Mother's letter telling us about Atwood. Then yesterday we had a letter from Elizabeth Hill, enclosing a card that Atwood wrote me the day before she died. Obviously she didn't know she was dying for she said that Willis had told her of receiving a note from me. ~~xxx~~ She wanted to know why I didn't write to her direct and said she hoped to see me when she returned to Baltimore very soon. I suppose that, everything considered, she got away rather easily; it was much better that she didn't realize her desperate condition.

I don't know how to ~~xxxx~~ construe the fact that Dad was not asked to be a pall-bearer but I imagine it was because we are not old friends of Atwood's. If it were true that all of the pall-bearers were from South Limestone and Decatur this would substantiate my view of the matter. However, I don't think it makes a great ~~xx~~ deal of difference inasmuch as Atwood is gone and she was the only one we ever had much contact with. Elizabeth indicated in her letter that she regarded us as real friends of Atwood--due, of course, to the fact that we saw her rather frequently in New York--and that was as much as I expected of Elizabeth. To my knowledge, I never even met her; Edmund I have not seen for years. I don't imagine it will be natural or necessary hereafter to have much to do with the others of the family although from a single impression I liked Willis and Jim Hill very much.

~~selves~~ Generally speaking, I believe that the Hills, like our own ~~xxxxxxx~~, are rather queer ducks and perhaps arrogate to themselves a good many of the privileges we assume without apology or explanation. This, however, didn't mitigate my sympathy for Atwood whom I admired, not for her intelligence, but for her raw courage. In this connection, there is an impressive legend ~~x~~ that I clipped from the Golden Book several years ago. The gist of it is that an ancient emperor in his youth assigned his wise men to write a history of the human race. They labored for a decade and came back with many volumes. Too long, he said. I should be dead before I had finished reading it. This was repeated several times. Finally, on his death bed, he commanded his historians to come to him with their latest and briefest version of the

story of humanity. It was this: "They were born, they suffered, they died". Well done, the emperor declared, and passed on ~~happy~~ satisfied with his history at last.

Somehow or other, it seems to me that this just about covers and, to some extent epitomizes, Atwood's misfortunes. I liked the legend so much that I saved it and have it stuffed away ~~xxxxxx~~ somewhere in my "confetti" filing system. I hoped to write something about it some day, or use it as a title.

Back to the living, I suspect Clint Glaze mixes business and gambling successfully to be able to afford a car like he owns. Smart boy and if he isn't shot or killed in an auto wreck he'll probably be wealthy some day. I've always liked Clint a great deal, especially as he grew out from his mother's chrysalis wrappings.

I suppose you were surprised when Shelby got home this week-end. The poor boy had a tough time of it here. CONFIDENTIALLY, he had not had any work for about six weeks or more. The Texas Corp. let him out with about 200 others, junior employees, and then he worked for a few weeks at Abraham & Straus, a Jewish department store, in the lamp section. Then he was sick, some irritation of the kidneys, and had to have about \$40 worth of work done on his teeth. Ever since he came back here in January he has lived frugally, had little recreation and saved religiously to pay back some \$100 or so of debt. The poor kid was simply running deeper back into debt when he left here. He tried every means to get a job and I pulled all the wires I could but it didn't avail. Mamie and I thought that, in view of the difficult situation here and his run-down condition, he'd be better off at home for a time. Don't repeat any of this as I believe Shelby intends to tell only his father of his poor luck. The boy tries hard enough and is a clever workman but he gets no breaks.

By the way, while up here Shelby had a few dates with a Hall girl, daughter of the owner of the paper at Dothan and, I believe, a niece or something of Grover Hall. They were quite congenial.

I can well understand the preacher's captivation by your coffee. It seems to me that good coffee becomes increasingly difficult to find. We have a new drip percolator and use an A. & P. brand of coffee that turns out very well. I finished off the her-ring today and am anxious that you get me the address of a dealer. I want to order a keg or find out where I can buy it at retail here. The wannuts will go into fudge soon.

River Goes With Heaven ~~xxxx~~ was about as I expected---rankly biographical, literary exhibitionism in a mild form. & Very salty in spots too; perhaps people talk like the old man in the book but it's always been my good fortune to miss such conversation. I genuinely doubt if river people even think the way Vines had them talking. How the poor author can ever return to his native heath is quite beyond me; another thing that I marvel at is his fresh point of view of sex at the apparent age of about 27. I didn't know that anyone was so naive any more. He impresses the reader as a gink who suddenly looked up over a pile of books after he passed 25 and realized that girls have legs. Ask Ned if such a thing is possible? I enjoyed the nature theme of his book very much but I think he wrote it with one eye on the text

of Knut Hamsun's GROWTH OF THE SOIL, which I've never read.

I wish I could make myself feel swell by Siskittying all my friends as Mother says she can, but I can't. Some sort of Russian streak in my disposition prevents it. Mamie, Helen, Ike and I went to see Chekov's Comedy "Uncle Vanya". Friday night on passes. Lillian Gish is the star and in this comedy there are only five broken hearts, one attempt at suicide and one at murder. In the end nobody is happy, so it's all very ludicrous. I hate to think what Chekov could have done with a set of truly tragic circumstances.

Well, enough of this dopey chatter. I want to include a business note to Dad. With love to each of you,

Devotedly,

Wm