

June 3 1945

Dear Daddy,

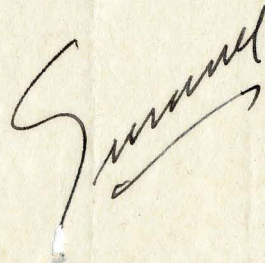
I am not enough of a sociologist or a psychologist to know the answer, and the phenomenon of the Father as the forgotten man of the modern world has always puzzled me; I fear that we live in a day and age in which the family and household life is dominated by the female of the species. Probably that is why "Life with Father" has been such a roaring success - it is so "untrue" to life! Everywhere you turn you see the famous Whistler "Study," every time you turn on the radio you hear about Mothers from MacCree to Sophie Tucker. What happens to the self assurance of the male, his dominating character, when he steps over the portal of his home? What has happened to the Fathers as a class? Now, of course, I have yet to enter the ranks of your group within the community; I think of woman in terms of something to be gained, to love, to live with, and in terms of my being the protagonist of the affair - it is not yet within my ken to picture myself in a subservient role, fathering a brood only to fall in line with it under the materfamilias. Though from the shape of our civilization I seemed to be destined for it! So all of this - which is an introduction more or less to my father's day greetings to you - may in fact be no more than an analysis of what I am quite willingly and in fact anxiously preparing myself to be led into!

How to explain this quirk in the makeup of man's vanity? For certainly, although I have used such words as subservience, the general attitude of our sex hardly suggests that they are unhappy under the present set-up. What happens to the masculine ego when he devotes himself to the bosom of his family? Alas, I cannot explain it - all I can do is look forward to the process when it is applied to me. And to tell the truth, Daddy, with you as a guide and a sort of preview, I am looking forward to it. And my most fervent hope is that I can inspire in my children as much love and respect and admiration for me as I have for you. Perhaps that affection and respect are the explanation for which I am looking. It is my hope to be able to attain that mature pride of the father of a family.

This is the family anniversary season with special days and holidays and birthdays coming in quick succession; looking at my calendar list just brings me a little closer to home. I hope it won't be too long before I will be there to hear the old cry of "Oh, you shouldn't have bought me these" after a campaign of weeks of hinting.

I won't wish you the happiest Fathers' Day ever because I am conceited enough to hope that our not being together will put a little crimp in the day's festivities, but we can look forward to being together before many more second Sundays in June roll around.

All my love to you and to Mother and to Helen Barbara -

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sumner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.