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Jan. 1, 1944

Dear Folger,

Happy New Year! So the "forties" are half over. By the end of the second half some one should have been able to think up an appropriate nick-name for this unfortunate decade.

Two or three days ago your letters of Dec. 10 and 18 arrived and were well received. How satisfactory that Grandma really has nothing seriously wrong with her. Things in Gardiner sound well indeed, and I guess Uncle Bob is in a good place, though it doesn't look as if he would reach 101.

So the skulls turned up. Good! You'll not be sorry to hear that there have been no recent additions to the collection, none in fact since *Urocyon cinereoargenteus Floridae* (gray fox). But you don't know how to tell it from a red fox, that is skullwise, but it's very easy, a matter of ridges.

T. Richards

Good for Nance, who, by the way, is "author" of my most recent letter - cheerful and interesting as usual. I agree that it's better to enjoy Christmas at home under most conditions. Terry must have been about the most interesting present. I'm anxious to see him.

Does Jack show any <sup>real</sup> interest in any particular sports yet? Of course he'll almost undoubtedly mature late like Ham and I, a disadvantage in school athletics, but perhaps he'll go after fives and baseball with some success. At any rate he seems to be doing well in other, probably more important, respects.

Things are rather cheerless in Europe, aren't they? It proves once again that over-confidence, especially on the part of the newspapers, is bad business. The other main theatre? Well, about all one can say is

T. Richards

that it has its cheerful aspects along  
with its cheerless.

Spare time continues to be interesting  
if you see from my rotten English what  
I mean. Just recently we've been enjoying  
the first swimming, for most of us, in  
several weeks. There are some pretty nice  
beaches, though also quite a coral problem.  
One has to watch to keep from getting  
cut by the chunks hidden just under the  
surface in what often has been reasonably  
deep water up until just then. There are  
fine shells to be found here and there,  
especially cowries, those finely-polished,  
toothed shells shaped something like a  
football squashed on one side, several  
pretty though small specimens <sup>of which</sup> are the  
nucleus of a small, but growing collection.

Birds again are interesting, though

T. Richards

Thought coromua predominates. I would not mind Sargent, etc. had worked out here and written up their results! Keeping fit though warm. Love Took

what they all are I may be a long time in finding out. Some like a blackbird. The commonest bird here, a crow, a swift. Two or three doves, one a gorgeous blue, a heron or two (one white job perhaps a phase of a blue) and a small bittern are easy to identify as to family, but there are a few others that are strange indeed. It is for one who fancied himself a naturalist quite an experience to hear and follow strange bird notes not knowing what to expect. Other oddities are a bright blue star fish and a little lizard (skink?) with black body, adorned with three orange stripes down the back, and with a bright blue tail. I forget to mention seeing the beautiful, all-white tern.

There seem to be many kinds of trees.

T. Richards