

Bethesda, March 26, 1950

Dear Mamma,

Spring is here! A week or so ago we had our first snow of the year (to speak of) and now at last it has decided to be spring, for a day at least. As soon as Laurence wakes up from his nap we are going out to put grass seed on the lawn. Father and I jointly applied Turf Builder and Agrico to the lawn and the bank on Friday, so now comes the seed. A perfect day for that sort of thing. The birds are all seemingly anxious for everyone to know their opinion of the weather, and it is obviously highly favorable, for they are voluble as can be.

The news event of the past week comes from Laurence: On Friday he announced that he had a wiggley tooth, and last night he shouted down to me, in muffled tones, that he wanted me to know someting. It had come out! Alas, we couldn't find it anywhere, but luckily Suzy and Coit and Jimmy Allen had all told us what to do in case that happened, and we were prepared to take action. Laurence wrote a note to the Fairy, put it under the pillow in Grandmamma's room, and sure enough, when we all woke up this morning, there was a shiny dime left by the fairy, who had taken away the note to keep in the files! Laurence wrote the note himself, saying: "Dear Fairy, I lost a tooth. Laurence" The children had told us that the fairies are perfectly willing to accept notes instead of the teeth themselves in case the latter should be lost before being put under a pillow. What luck that we knew that fact!.... On Friday I called Dr. Freitag the dentist to ask him if it was normal for four-year-olds to lose teeth, and he said while it was hardly normal, it was perfectly all right if the child had an early teething pattern (as L.J. had- four months, I think he was when he got his first teeth) and if the loose tooth had not been made so by a fall or a blow. I'm pretty sure it wasn't either of those. He didn't fall or get knocked at home, and he said he hadn't at school, and if it had been a hard enough blow to dislodge a tooth it would have showed up on his mouth, or lips. He was as proud as punch, and explained himself by saying that since all the other children were losing their teeth he felt it was time he did, also.

We had dinner at Nancy Mann's on Tuesday night- wild rice with creamed chicken! A pleasant time, as usual. We went out to dinner at a sea food place with pop on Thursday night, and I had a delicious swordfish steak. Laura Rowse was home for Spring Vacation, and sat for us that night. On Saturday night we took Laurence over to Abuelito Campbell's house and went on to a Reception at the Colombian Embassy which we enjoyed very much, then came home. Laurence stayed all night at Abuelito's, along with Brownie and Whitey, of course. At the reception I met all the usual Latin Americans, plus Senator Chavez of New Mexico, and a nice old chap. We had lunch the next day, that is Sunday, at Abuelito's, took a walk with Laurence (of course William went to the office) and came back when it got cooler. Laurence made Abuelito read the Tailor of Gloucester for the third time that afternoon, but of course Abuelito did it with great pleasure under Laurence's compelling blandishments. The boy is beginning to gain back the weight he lost while he was ill, and seems to be more able to express himself clearly each day. His sentences are involved, and his stories long and understandable.

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At the Mann's we heard a funny story from Tom who said it was perfectly true and had happened while he was in Caracas: One night at about midnight the telephone rang beside Tom's bed. It was the guard at the Embassy, who wanted to know what to do about a rather bedraggled woman who rushed in and claimed she would be assassinated if the Am. Embassy didn't give her asylum. Tom told the guard to tell her that the American Embassy didn't give asylum, and to try somewhere else. Half an hour later the same guard called back and said the woman was still there, claiming she couldn't speak Spanish and refusing to depart because she was sure to be murdered as soon as she stepped out of the Embassy door. "She says she knows the British will take her in, though. Shall I call up the British Embassy, Mr. Mann?" Tom told him that she had better call the British Embassy herself if she felt like it. Another half hour passed, and just as Tom had finally settled down to a deep sleep the telephone rang once more. "I'm sorry, Mr. Mann, but this woman won't go away and she made me call the British Ambassador." Tom was amazed, and asked what the British Ambassador had said to him. "Well, Mr. Mann, I told him it was the guard at the American Embassy and all about this woman who was here on my neck. He asked me why in hell I hadn't called our Ambassador, but I told him of course I couldn't possibly call Mr. Donnelly because he was asleep. So the British Ambassador said well so was I, and hung up, just like that!" I can imagine that Tom probably said something along the same lines himself. But I still think the guard wasn't as dumb as he sounded, because after all, the British Ambassador couldn't fire him, whereas our Ambassador could and would probably have felt like doing so if the guard had called him up at two in the morning about a zany character of that order!

William is taking a course of lectures in press relations at the department every Monday evening, so he won't be back till after my bedtime tonight. Laurence is much amused that his daddy has to go to "school" also on Mondays- and so is Brownie, of course. It's a bit of a bore for me, but coming on Mondays, it could be worse. I get a chance to go to bed good and early, and not have to prepare supper for him on a busy day. I go shopping with Gail Monday morning, and that somehow throws the whole day off schedule. The darned things go on for eight weeks, however, which is exaggerated, in my unsolicited opinion.

I had better stop now and begin calling people up for our party next Friday night. We are going to have the Manns and the O'Niels, if they can all come.

Love,