

Bethesda, Fri. Jan. 26, 1951

Dear Mamma,

It's really too late in the day to start a letter, but since I'm having my late afternoon snack anyway I thought I might as well begin and finish whenever I am able.

It was certainly wonderful of you to offer to come down, but I think it's better this way, where I have just enough occupation to keep me from dying of boredom or ruining my eyes by reading too much. Since I sleep in the afternoon when I get up early, I do less reading, and it sort of divides the day, making it seem somehow shorter. The days are monotonous, but since I know that I wouldn't be able to go out or do much without getting tired, I don't mind particularly. Monotonous days seem to make for short weeks- while each day seem long, as I look back on the weeks they seem to have flown by in a dream, since Laurence went away. But I do hope I'll begin to feel good enough to have him back for a month or so before the baby comes. It would be too long a time not to see him and have him with us. Also, I'd like to take him to the doctor's for the shots he'll need before he goes abroad, and to the dentist. And it would be nice to let him have a little more school before we give up on school entirely. Remember that you are going to have him for quite a dizzying stretch afterwards, and you too may well want a little vacation from small boys! Even helpful small boys! After all, I have Mrs. Watkins, Marie, and school to take him off my hands now, so I really think that as soon as my blood count goes up to 75 or 80 I'd like to relieve you of him and give him a little stretch at home. We miss him, too.

William met the new Ambassador who is going down to Guatemala soon, a Mr. Schonfeld. William said he was scared as when he took the Foreign Service Oral Exams, for fear he would make a bad impression on Mr. Schonfeld, who he had been told was a career diplomat of the old school, strong on protocol and somewhat unapproachable. All turned out well, however, and while William confirms that Mr. Schonfeld is definitely a gentleman of the Old School of diplomacy, he thinks it will work out well. Mr. Schonfeld told him at the end that as far as he was concerned William could go on thinking about going to Guatemala as his second-in-command, and that he was sure they would work well together. The Ambassador relieved my mind considerably by enquiring solicitously as to my health, and saying of his own accord that he wanted William to feel free to wait until I was fully restored to health before coming down to the new post- adding that the Department has a habit of making people rush off as if to a fire when there is really no burning necessity to do so. That was a great relief, and William really thought he meant it. He asked where I had gone to college, and when William told him, he said he was very glad to hear it, he has a high regard for Swarthmore. He recently gave a series of lectures on life behind the Iron Curtain for the Swarthmore Alumni Club- he was our Ambassador to Romania. So apparently the Guatemala deal is as certain as anything is in the Foreign Service six months ahead, which isn't saying much. All this is still highly secret, of course.

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Tuesday, Jan. 30. 1951

William came home as I was writing page one, and since then I have been either too lazy or too busy to continue. Sometimes I just don't feel like getting up in the afternoon when I wake up from my nap, and just lie in bed reading till it's absolutely time for me to get up and make supper and get dressed. On those days I have no chance to write, since the mornings are always busy with light chores. Now that I sit down and rest between each chore, it means that the morning is over and Mrs. Watkins is here practically before I know it. Then again once in a while I have a bad day, for some reason or other, and feel weepy. I don't want to do anything then, especially not write. All in all it's remarkable how little I have accomplished in the last month. I have done a few things, however. Bought a few things at the white sales with an eye toward going abroad (sheets, garment bags, towels, and a few minor items) - all by telephone, of course. I also astonished myself by getting busy and ordering a tropical crib, or kiddie coop as they call them here (with screens) from Best's, which is the only place in town that sell the screened kind. Also a bathinette. A most expensive proposition- the crib and bathinette together came to more than seventy dollars. I got three dozen diapers only, with the idea in mind that while I'm in the United States I'll use one of the diaper services, since I'll be so terribly busy. But I haven't bought any tiny garments at all, always putting it off till such time as I'll feel more like it. I suppose I could buy little shirts by telephone easily enough, but there are several other things I'd like to see before I buy, and that involves going down to Woodie's. I don't believe I've been out of the house since you came down for Laurence, except to go to the doctors- up till last night. Last night for the first time I felt like going out to dinner, so William rushed home joyfully and took me out. Up till then I thought it was more trouble and more tiring to get dressed and go out than it was to make an easy meal at home in comfort and privacy. I certainly haven't felt anxious to get dressed at the end of the morning and rush down to Woodies with Mrs. Watkins, giving up my chance to crawl into bed after lunch in the process.

Wednesday, Jan. 31st. - I don't seem to be very successful at finishing this letter. Yesterday and today it has snowed off and on, but with no little boy here to profit by the fun to be had, it is just a nuisance, because that driveway of ours is awfully steep and slippery. I don't mind it myself, since I don't go out anyway, but I worry about William. This noon I called Butch's mamma, and she kindly sent him up to shovel the snow off and put sand on the driveway, so I think William will make it tonight in spite of everything. I hope that if it has snowed up your way also, Laurence has been able to go out and have fun in it.

I am supposed to go to the doctor on Friday the ninth of Feb., but I think I'll go earlier because I want to know how my blood count is coming along, with the thought in mind that if it is continuing to rise as nicely as it did the first week, or almost as nicely, (since that was such an incredible rise I can hardly duplicate it every week) I could have Laurence here again soon thereafter. Slow as the time seems to go to me, and long as the two months left appear to be, by that time there will be even less time left for me to have Laurence down here. And if I don't take him off your hands for a while it will mean a very long and tiring stretch for you afterwards. I know you're always kind and sweet about saying "We don't mind at all- we love to have him, etc."

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but just the same you need a holiday from him as badly as I do sometimes, if only so you can enjoy him more when he goes back to you. And I have a lot more time now than I'll have in May and June, when I'll really have to start mounting my horse and riding off in all four directions at once, plus tending the new baby. (Who just gave a kick as if to say yes indeedy, mamma, don't forget that I'm around!) So, as I said before, I'll go to the doctor around Monday or Tuesday of next week to check up on the blood count and everything else, and if it has risen sufficiently I'll call you up on the subject of bringing the boy down at your convenience, say somewhere around the middle of February. Would that be all right with you? I am going to see the surgeon around the fifteenth or twentieth of March, at which time Dr. Norton thinks Dr. McCune might be willing to set a date early in April. So that would give me a month with L.H. if all went well, and two weeks or so before the Date you could come and get him again. All this is, of course, subject to your approval and convenience, and all dates except The Date can be changed to suit your schedule. But if I am stronger in the hemoglobin come the middle of February- in two weeks or so, -I think it would be nice for all concerned if Laurence spent some time with mamma and daddy.

Mrs. Rowse kindly brought over the latest Angela Thirkell, County Chronicle, so I have been happily reading it ever since. Sad to say I've almost finished my Age of Faith, long as it is.

Time to get supper ready. Love to you, Jimmy, and the boy.