

Monday, Jan. 9, 1949
Bethesda

Dear Mamma,

Thank you for your kind and solicitous thoughts, my dear, about going away for a while. I want you to know that I really appreciate your generous offer to take care of the family for me, and heaven knows the day may come when I will have to take you up on it for some reason or other, or no reason at all. It's nice to know I have an anchor to windward in you. But right now I don't much feel like going away. For one thing, we all have colds again! Laurence John started us off, and now all three of us have one. Fortunately these aren't half as virulent as the last bout was. L.J. has been good humored all along, and I have yet to get that "I'd-rather-be-dead" feeling. We've gone on with our normal life, more or less, only William and I have been getting as much sleep as possible.

If I went anywhere, it would have to be to Michigan, where Piet and her mamma invited me to come while Albert is down in Texas doing some work or other. I sort of half said I would while Piet was here, and then the thought of taking L.J. all by myself out there chilled me, much as I would enjoy being with my dear old Aunty Piet. Also, I spent the money I had planned to use to take the trip on that DRESS! And this being after Christmas and before income tax, we are in no position to galivant. If we had any extra pennies, I'd like to save them for sending L.J. to nursery school. I think we would both enjoy that- he and I. But the Krieg finances are just barely balanced as it is, and the extra money for Nursery School or trips would have to be taken from mamma, which isn't flowing very freely from heaven these days, as perhaps you've noticed.

However, since Christmas and New Years is over, things have quieted down, thank goodness, and we are pretty peaceful again. Good old L.J. put his finger on the matter the day I took the tree down; he remarked "Now the Revolution is all over, and the Christmas is all over too." I loved that! He certainly doesn't miss a trick when it comes to being up on what's going on. Well, anyway, I'm now a calmer and a better woman, only horrified to learn that I gained six pounds in one month over the holidays. You would think I'd been eating like a horse, just one sundae after another. So now I'll have to set about laboriously losing what I so gaily gained.

As for my "self-sacrifices", que va, as the Spanish say. I'm not doing one whit more than every young married woman in the United States does, so don't lead me into temptation by calling my normal duties self-sacrifices, or I might be led into thinking they were in a weak moment. I have an unusually easy time of it, actually, and the fact that I'm not used to housework and being tied down just goes to show how easy a time I've had of it in the past, and how overdue I was for a little healthy work. The unhealthy thing, as G.S. Lewsi points out in Screwtape, is to think your "time is your own" or "your soul is your own". For me to think myself ill-used, over-worked, misunderstood, put-upon, or self-sacrificial would be nothing short of silly, anyway, considering how lucky I am in so many, many ways. The only thing I really feel sorry for myself about is that I can eat like a bird and gain weight, while others can eat like a horse and stay slim. I am full of self pity about that, when I see the Wheaties going by.

-2-

It's been really very mild weather down here lately, up in the fifties and sixties every day, so Laurence John and I have been doing a lot of walking down town to the Giant for groceries. He just loves it of course, and I hope it takes some of my excess poundage off. We pass many a truck, and he dearly loves to look in at the fire house on our way down. I don't know exactly how far it is to the Giant, so I'll have to have William clock it some day in the car. About a mile or more, I should say. We go back home by bus, so he enjoys that also. I can hold the threat of depriving him of his ride over his head all morning, too, and that helps the discipline along tremendously.

One day we walked as far as Mrs. Rowse's library, and I got some books for him and another C.S. Lewis one for me. They didn't have "That Terrible Strength", so I applied to have it sent from Baltimore. Also "Love Among The Ruins" wasn't in, so they will tell me when it is. The walk to the library is quite a long one, but he enjoys sitting down in the children's section and looking at the books quietly, so we will undoubtedly do it again when there is good weather. I'm glad to know it's not impossible for me to get there.

I had a letter from Tebby today! She asked me to come up and meet her in New York and go see Ruthie Ray Gresham's latest one-man show of paintings. Needless to say, I thanked her and declined with regrets. I also had a letter from Uncle Ted Bishop, who told me all about his trip around the country in a bus and down to Mexico in trains, and back by boat. He hasn't lost any of his old joie de vivre, that's sure. He says he will stop in to see us next October, when he will be attending an insurance conference in New York.

We had Doctor Corrigan for dinner last Friday night (we invited him, I mean- we didn't eat him). He is or was in town for a few days, having just come back from Paris and the U.N. meeting there. He is now Special Adviser on Latin American Affairs for the American Delegation. The poor old Doctor still misses his wife very much, but he looks as chipper as ever. Shelly Mills and the Davis came to dinner also, so it was quite a gay affair. I had cheese souffle again, and it didn't fall too much. I was going to have beef paprika, until I remembered that the Doctor couldn't eat meat on Fridays. I'm going to have the Harts and the Cowles next Friday night though, and then I really will have beef paprika. It's easy and good, I think.

The boy is playing upstairs in his room, having bargained to do so before being taken on his walk downtown this afternoon. But it's now five thirty, and time to think about his supper. So aurevoir!

Love,