

Bethesda, November 26, 1949

Dear Pop,

I must grab an opportunity to write to you. It is Saturday, and the boy is not at school this morning. But a snow fell during the night, and he (as well as all the small enthusiasts of the neighborhood) is delightedly playing in it.

I'm sorry you are ill, or were when you wrote. I forgive you each and every symptom, on the condition that you will have recovered in time to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner. I'm so very glad that you have an "Putty" a kind but firm nurse to hold you down, and I trust that if necessary she will use force.

The check for the boy's birthday will buy him both a bond and a new pair of shoes, which he badly, badly needs already so soon. I grant you shoes aren't exciting, but they're necessary for school or I wouldn't bother with them at all. I have already purchased him the scale model of a garbage truck which he covets for his birthday, and as I've often told you he is a boy of few but imperious wants. I honestly don't think he would care to have anything but that truck and whatever minor offerings Betsey and Coit may bring him on the occasion of his birthday dinner. He is too young for a party, as has been demonstrated on several occasions in the past, when he has walked nonchalantly home from birthday parties in the neighborhood as soon as he has finished his ice cream and cake. Embarrassing but true. I think a small, intimate supper will just about do it.

He was glad to hear you had received his "letter" about the dog and the bear, but was a bit annoyed that you planned to keep it. He has forgiven you, however, because I painted him a heart-rending picture of his old grandfather, in his sickbed in a foreign land, with nothing to console him but a thin letter from his stout young grandson. He has recently taken to singing the Venezuelan National Anthem (which he identifies as such, by the way) in dog language—that is, Bow-wow-wow-wow-wow-wow, wowowow, etc. He isn't too expert at carrying a tune, but it can be recognized. He hasn't been told about the bird, because he will only say that he already has money. He claims that he earns it at his "office" (school). On some occasions, however, he maintains that he doesn't earn money, but trucks. He is anxious for daddy to go to the office on Sundays so that he will earn us some more money, however. He has informed me of the discovery of a new member of the insect world: the Shootle Worm, a large tubular insect with pink body, which shoots off its own head when you squeeze it. It bears a striking resemblance to a pink plastic bottle of hair setting lotion I once owned, but according to its discoverer, it has no connection whatsoever with the plastic product. He has also announced a new development in Man's knowledge of the Doggle: it now appears that upon microscopic examination a pair of tiny eyes may be seen on the Doggle, but it still has no feet whatsoever, and must fly "Night and day, night and day" as always. "And anyway," adds Dr. Krieg, "The eyes are so very small you can only see them in a very strong microscope!" There can be no doubt that Dr. Krieg is a descendent of the famous Sam Weller. He has also done a little practicing in medicine lately. One night he came down with an ingeniously rigged nose-dropper, which he urged me to apply to William's nose four times an hour, saying "Your husband has a very bad cold, Mrs. Kwéég!"



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I was touched and rendered all sentimental by your magnificent response to my appeal anent William's trip. That was very, very kind and sweet of you. But the darned old Department has changed it's darned old mind again, and now insists that William be present at a conferece to be held in Havana in anuary! Wouldn't that make you mad! Of course I'm delighted that William's presence is thought necessary or at least advisabaa, but I could say all sorts of nasty things anyway. The plan as of November 26th is that William will leave shortly after the first of the year for this conferece and then continue on his way through Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador, his three countries. Naturally that will kill two birds with one airplane ticket and be cheaper, but it makes me mad nonetheless, ust when things were working out so beautifully for you to be here at about the time he left me to my own devices. However, once more I beg of you not to write and tell me how Brave I should be, because by George I'm BEING brave, as anyone can plainly see. See? Nonethe- less, since receiving your letter we have been giving considerabae thought to the matter fo where you might stay in Was:ngton. Natu- rally I'm sorry you can't stay here with us where we could keep an eye on you to see that you don't get into mischief, but if not, not. At first I couldn't imagine where you could go in the vicinity, but now I think we have a lead. There are no apartment houses with short rentals around here at all, everything is firmly residential and zoned specifically against apartment hotels. But last night we had ane Dawson and her parents over to supper, and learned that they have taken a couple of small apartments on Wisconsin Avenue, right on the Street car line from us (plus a bus ride) and about the best bet I can imagine. They are only planning to stay there until they find ane a house, so I don't imagine it will be for long. It is not an elegant spot, but perfectly comfortable and respectable, and I don't imagine it's too expensive. We will look into the matter. It must be three or four miles away, but I'm sure it's ust about the nearest thing. As for your car, William says he will be glad to help you in the matter of registering your car, but throws in the suggestion that it might be wise to buy it in some state such as New ersey, which has no sales tax, as Maryland and the District have. He knows of no reason why you shouldn't then register it as of 5208 Glenwood Road.

But I'm getting off the sub ect, which is how delighted and pleased and happy we are to think that you will be here ina mere matter of months. William says he misses you now and then. He is fond of you, and naturally I've said nothing to influence him at all, so it's completely spontaneous. We badly need a grand- father in the near neighborhood, but in additon to that we need as many ladies as possible as Dams of the Court, as it were. It seems to me that Putty and Mrs. Putnam would do exceptionally well as Ladies in Waiting in the entourage of His Ma esty Laurence ohn the First. As Chief Lady of the Bedchamber I have found that he treats me very liberally and graciously, but I often feel that he requires a larger circle of sub ecte in order to display to the full his magnanimity. I also will be very glad to see you all, very glad indeed. I'll never cease to regret the fact that we came back to the United States ust after you left. Well, we'll see what the Alban Towers Apartments have to say about vacancies in April and beyond. Try to keep me current as to your plans.



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We had a pleasant Thanksgiving dinner all by ourselves, since so many people wanted to take the entire period away from the office that William didn't want to go up to Flemington. I made a chicken rather than a turkey, and we demolished the entire bird in one sitting, with no leftovers worthy of the name.

Last night we had the Dodges and Jane Dawson over for supper, as I mentioned. Jane is much thinner after her ordeal, but remarkably cheerful and courageous about the future nonetheless. Her parents are doing everything they possibly can to make her shattered life easier. They arrived by boat a few days ago, and were met at New York as well as at Washington by men from the State Department, who they said helped them very much. The Dodges have bought her a car and I imagine are going to help her buy a house, also. She wants to stay and live here in Washington, although the Dodges live in California, because Allan's family was from Washington and his mother is still living here. His sister died of cancer a few days after Allan himself died, so the blow to Mrs. Dawson Sr. was a double one. She says little Teecee, as they call him, is simply "tremendo" and a baby tease. He was known on the boat coming up as "Senor Aqui" from his habit of shouting "Aqui, aqui!" whenever the waiter brought any food within his ken, and was also noted for knocking little girls twice his size over and sneering "Baby! Baby!" at them. He will soon be two years old. He sounds a lot like our little cousin Robert, doesn't he? The one who suffered most, perhaps, was poor little Billy Myers, Jane's son by her first marriage. He is ten years old, and was finally getting settled in his new life with Allan, whom he loved, as a second father. He had begun to love his new school in Santiago, and had been first in his class for two months. He's a sensitive boy. His grandparents are going to send him to the Sidwell Friend's School here, I'm happy to say, but he can't possibly understand about Allan's nervous breakdown and I think the whole family has been able to get over its grief and shock quicker because of the urgent need to shelter poor little Billy. Apparently Allan had been acting in an unusual manner for a month or two, but being unacquainted with the symptoms, Jane didn't know how seriously he was affected. By hindsight, she knows. A post mortem also showed acute anemia. He had not been eating much at home, and it later turned out that he had been skipping lunch all the time because he was so worried about all the money they spent getting down there. He refused to take any sleeping pills although he hadn't slept well in months, he stopped drinking and smoking, and wouldn't let anyone come in for drinks or dinner. All he would do was work, and worry about bankruptcy. He was a fine man, and we loved him. I can't help thinking that a week off, with someone forcibly feeding him food and sleeping pills, would have done it. More hindsight.

I've been reading Churchill's "The Finest Hour" (what prose style!) and have finally gotten around to Sir James Fraser's "The Golden Bough". The latter is remarkable, no doubt about it. It combines the research and the flowing classic style of Gibbon, so much so that I sometimes felt that Sir James might be a reincarnation of my old friend Gibbon. His material is equally interesting, too, especially as it points up the almost incredible unity of primitive thought everywhere and at all times.

Love,