

Bethesda, March 26, 1951

Dear Pop,

(5-93)  
P 1/2

Thanks for your telegram, which showed that you were suitably impressed by my feat. The first morning I heard about the two babies all I could think of was "Two college educations at once!" "Two pairs of children's shoes at \$8.50 or more at once!" and the thought appalled me. I had just purchased L.J. one pair of leather shoes and two pairs of sneakers at a total cost of \$18.00, and since if we manage to get by till fall on those we'll be lucky, you can see the impact which learning of twins had on me. However, by that evening I was beginning to go around making noises like cluck-cluck cluck-cadacket, as if I were a hen who'd laid a double-yolked egg. Why it should take me so by surprise that I might have twins, I don't know. There are certainly plenty of them in the family. None in William's, however. I had several times jokingly told Dr. Norton that I was so big it must be twins, and he had seriously looked for two heads and two heart beats, but each time emerged only more flummoxed. The last time he said, "It's got me beaten. I can feel more legs and arms kicking around every time you come in, but I can still only feel one head and hear one heartbeat." So we left it up to Dr. McCune, the specialist. Dr. McCune felt around hither and yon for about ten minutes, looking less and less sure of himself. Finally he said, "Well, the head appears to be down here, and the bottom up here." I said that was funny, because I'd never heard of a head that could tickle, and I kept being tickled right in the spot where he said the head was. "You do! Well, I'll feel again." and so on. After listening for heartbeats, he came up with a weary look and said "You know, I can hear heartbeats everywhere I put the stethoscope. They sound just alike, so maybe it's all the same heart, but I give up. You'd better have an x-ray." Although I don't know, I think all the confusion arose from the fact that one baby is more or less in front of the other. One little head is forever popping around, one little shoulder is always wiggling and squirming in full sight of the public, as it were. I can see how truly dangerous it is to bump one's tummy while pregnant, because there is only a very thin layer of skin between that little head and the outside world. But the confusing part of it is that directly opposite that head-like bump is another, less mobile bump about the same size, always lying on the other side of my tummy. I conjecture quite on my own that the other bump, which moves infrequently, must be the other infant's little bottom. Whose legs are whose I can't imagine, nor whose arms whose, but I do know that neither baby has heard of the Marquis of Queensberry's rules. Dr. McCune said that if it was just one baby, he wanted to do the operation on March 30th, but if two, we had better wait a week to allow them to put on a little more weight. Well, you know the result. I am willing to wait an extra week for an extra baby, horrid as the prospect is.

And if anyone thinks it isn't horrid, anyone is wrong. The morning headaches now last all day and are more intense. Occasionally they let up, after five or six aspirins. Sometimes, more often they don't. Dr. Norton finally prescribed ten codeine tablets, last week. I have so far taken one. The resulting dazed and dopey feeling is better than the headache, but that's about as far as it goes. The dear old insomnia is likewise getting worse, which has the happy result of making me nervous as a cat. The stuffed-up nose is still with me after two and a half months of industriously making breathing a difficult process whenever I lie down. I am not exactly light

(5-93 P-2-12)

on my feet, and get a good old fashioned backache when I have to stand up or sit on the kitchen stool for more than half an hour. I've now gained about forty-five pounds, but it's all gone to my tummy, and my legs and arms have become positively scrawny. Oh, I'm a gorgeous sight! However, in twelve days these two young parasites on the body maternal should be out on their own, and I devoutly hope they will both be fairly plump and healthy, while at the same time mamma's headaches, stuffed-up nose, insomnia, backaches, and the rest will disappear. I haven't had a blood count for the past two or three weeks, but the last tally was 78, and I'm fairly sure it's gone up since then, because William has been giving me injections twice a week and I've kept on with the pills as ever.

I have bust out of all my maternity clothes already! There is just one jacket that is voluminous enough to fit around the twins, the slacks are held precariously together by means of large safety pins now that we have passed the last buttons, and in order to be able to appear in the world I had to cut my maternity skirt an inch or so wider. This never happened with Laurence, big as he was, and full-term too. The manufacturers of maternity clothes have apparently never heard of twins.

Wed. March 28, '51

Too d-----d much headache to finish. That thing is ruining all my hopes to get things done. I have to crowd everything in while it is more or less quiescent... Laurence left with grandmamma about ten days ago. He had been so good and sweet since being with us it was sad to see him go. I must tell you his comments on modern music, as told me by William. Laurence likes to sit by the radio and listen to it of a Saturday or Sunday morning, pretending to play the piano from time to time. One day the announcer said they were going to play next an opus of Bartok, or some such ultra-disonant composer. After listening to it a few minutes, L.J. called to his daddy, "The men are trying to play this music, but it's hard." He listened some more, and then reported back, "They twied hard, but they couldn't play it." Could this be another instance of the Emperor's new clothes? I have sent your correspondence to him on to Flemington. I called them recently, and Laurence allowed as how he was pleased to hear about the twins, and was it a boy twin or a girl twin? He really knows what twins are, though, because he has played with Mrs. Watkins twin grandsons. I think he merely wanted to find out what sex they were.

The inds have been rushing forward with offers of extra baby equipment, etc. I now have two "baskets"- one is a real basket on folding legs, the other a canvas and plywood folding job in which young Virginia Lynn Hoover traveled up to the U.S. from Uruguay last September. I trust they will last us until we get to Guatemala in August or so. I had one crib, and am buying TeeCee Dawson's also, but would prefer not to have to set them up till absolutely necessary. We will have to buy extra baby clothes sooner or later, but Mrs. Watkins suggests later. I thought \$40 was a lot for the bare essentials without diapers. Now it's twice \$40. Woodward and Lothrop does not duplicate the layette free for twins, darn them...When my head permits, I've been reading Sir Osbert Sitwell's delightful sort-of autobiography, in several volumes. I boldly say I know you will enjoy his excellent style and the fantastic account of his eccentric father. Thanks, also, for Caesar and Christ. Farewell, and much love.