

December 21 - Tuesday

Dear Rob -

This is being written in bits and pieces in school - and I'm drowsy - so don't expect much.

I picked up an application form for substituting for you - and Mrs. Carroll also said they really could use you. Don't worry about the parts about Certification; it's the same form they use for regular teachers. I'll try to get forms for CHS #3, too. What about Keeford? Baldwin?

Much later -

I bought a book on the Canterbury Tales that looked good - Paperback, of course - and looking at the index found all the right names - Lewis, Sayers, Williams, and Tolkien. (Having started the book - but not penetrated far - I'll have to say it may be good, but it is a bit too scholarly for me to get as much out of it as I should.)

Our dear Board of Ed has decreed that, though the students have a half-day Thursday, leaving at 11:35, teachers must stay until 3:10, the usual time. Isn't that charming of them? Almost as intelligent as things the Army dreams up.

I am knitting a stocking cap of odds and ends - 3 shades of blue, white, and bright violet - for Jimmy. Oh - I bought him the whole Poydian series for Christmas. Do you approve? Mom and Dad are giving him the other book I bought. I don't know how it will measure up against yours not as wide, at any rate - but I am making it long enough to be a scarf at the same time.

Wednesday

Correction - we only have to stay until 3:05.

I feel as if I have bought rather dull presents this year - and very few - a robe for Mama (soft fleece - amethyst color, which is a lavender blue) and slacks

For Dad (dark brown to go with his new
goggles). And that's all for the AP's - I
haven't the brains, imagination, or time
to think of or buy anything else - though I
just had a possibly-intelligent idea: buy a
Springbok jigsaw puzzle. - Dad especially
seems to enjoy them and the stationery
store near Ford Fair has some nice ones.
Lucia will get her belt all embroidered,
but not blocked, backed, or attached to the
buckle. Mooney, Millbrook and Ashes
will get 2 loaves of bread (Cardamom and
harmback) and a bottled amaryllis
bulb (Amaryllis is a great, flaring
trumpet - usually a cluster - in clear red,
pink, white - sort of lily-like - on a
very sturdy stem. Dad has been
measuring, he thought - it grows $1'' - 1\frac{3}{4}''$
each day!) Lois may get a finished
knitted dress - or an unfinished
one. Thank goodness people understand.

I still haven't sent a single
Christmas card, though Mama trimmed
the white borders of the Nat. Gallery postcards to
fit the envelopes for me. Next year, I think
I'll do them during the summer.

I tried to buy another camera like the one I
sent you that fell victim to the typhoon -
It is no longer made. I tried to buy myself
a camera like Tom's (so did Mom + Dad, I
discovered) - the line (Kereve) is no longer
made. Help! It seems as if no one wants
to be known for making really good, reasonably
priced things - they stop.

Christmas Day

Christmas Eve was, as usual, a bit confused. -
I went out early to help Alice - but I didn't
feel like driving home alone, so we'll have to go
out Monday to pick up Little Foot. Bobby and
Linda had arrived Thursday - so they were already

there. David is almost 3 and cute - speaks quite a bit and almost distinguishably. I had been there only a few minutes when he tugged on Bobby's trousers leg and said "I like her." (Reason - I had talked to him a little and kept my distance.) Jon is fat and happy - he looks a bit like a Japanese wrestler in shape and amount of hair (like a very short crew cut) - but he chuckles, gurgles, and grins (thus making his eyes into rather 'Oriental slits').

While Alice and Tricia - Margaret, Jon, and David, too - took naps (Alice + Tricia had had heavy colds), I started some things for dinner - grapefruit for fruitcup, then onions to be creamed. After I had done about 3/4 of the onions, my eyes were streaming. Bobby took over (he also did much of lunch - toasted one special frankfurter in the fireplace for David and opening can after can of soup which he doctored with seasonings). Soon his were streaming so he couldn't see, and I took over again. However, neither of us had oniony-smelling hands. Mine smelled like grapefruit and Bobby's like engine grease, etc. However, mine now smell somewhat of onions.

Daddy had the same cold and had to stay home - a bit of a damper. One good thing - they couldn't leave to Jersey today as they were supposed to (rather too much for them after Centerport) - and Gephild was having roast goose, which made fun and led to shudders.

Tricia had rented a movie projector, and we watched 1933 movies of The Uncles and Ed out west and down South and of Alice's wedding. Have you ever seen them?

The Uncles gave Tricia a suede and knit beaver and gloves that were very cute - and I wished people would think of giving things like that to me - and they did. Hers is brown + beige; mine is dark green. My other prize gifts - in one way or another - were both selected by Aunt Dotty. She came down for a couple of days

To shop with Alice, who was in a weakened state with her dreadful cold. They said I have everything and am hard to shop for — so Dotly persuaded Alice to buy me a Flying Angel — a Christmas ornament consisting of a stuffed doll with huge eyes and fluffy yellow hair on the end of a very long spring (see margin) If you hung it from the top of a doorway, it would reach to about 2 or 3' bouncing feet from the floor. Dotly's present is also a Christmas ornament — but very different. It is now in state in the middle of the evergreens on the mantelpiece — a sterling silver snowflake about 3½" across — all wrought with designs — the first of an annual, dated series from the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Aunt Dotly is crazy.

I baked the hickory cake — and it was very good. I promised Hunny another around his birthday — when you come home. We made it a layer cake with Mama's good butter cream icing, but it would be even better plain (Hun has the first to say so, too). This morning Dad and I went to church. Nora was there with her husband (he seems quite quiet though pleasant) and her family. She was asking about you, of course, and seemed a bit concerned that she hadn't heard from you in a long time. Do you have an address for her? (Good grief, little brother, when are you going to learn a few social graces like sending some kind of reply to a wedding announcement?) She gave us two jars of homemade preserves — one for us and one for you.

I'll finish this off now. Be good.
Love,
Lars