

Germentown

November 19, 1949

Dear John,

I am sitting propped up in Mother's bed like all sick little girls. I have been reading a book about the crusades which I read on another such occasion about fifteen years ago. When I remembered this yesterday, I thought that perhaps, as you say, things do not change much; then I remembered that on that day I really wanted to go to school; it was one of the rare occasions when I didn't welcome disease or a slight symptom on which I could enlarge. Yesterday morning when my throat and ears hurt and the thermometer showed a fever of one degree, I gave up, telephoned the school, and came home. Of course, I immediately felt much better and a little ashamed - but not enough to feel real regret.

This morning a Special Delivery letter came from Miss

Miss Mitchell urging me not to come back to school next week unless I really felt well. I will return on Monday, a little pale, but quite well and no one will know that I didn't work to the point of collapse but simply stopped quite a bit short of it.

I know that I would hate a prolonged invalidism. My spirit would disintegrate quite fast if my body could not move, but it is very pleasant for a while. Peter, whose weekend, with me, has again been postponed, has been very kind. He has brought me Natural History Magazines and scolded me when he saw me wandering about the cold house.

Papa pumps in Penicillin, swabs my throat and then rushes off to see sick people. Mother would like to feed and electric-blanket me to health. Ken Marsh plies me with whisky, brings my tray, and says, "Sit up, Docky". Soch diversified

affection and nourishment.

Please let me know where you will spend Thanksgiving. I suppose that your family needs you very much and that you should go home. But I need you too though I don't understand the manner or extent of my need.

I have been reading a translation of Goethe's "Faust." What a worried man. Was the medieval Faust so worried ~~and~~ ^{and} is this only the Faust of our anxious age? He reminds me very much of you and a little of me.

In one of your letters you said that you liked the serenity of what I said. I am glad you find it. I believe myself to be less anxious than I was a year ago.

yet in my doubting moments I wonder how much of this acceptance of the slow progress to tranquillity and completeness is due to the circumstance of living a life relatively free of the demands of other people. My teaching involves people but they are to be handled according to a pattern and system. Sometimes I wish for a test and trial of my conviction.

Now it is time for me to go to bed. The Messiah will tell me to sleep.

Goodnight,

Margaret