

## LETTER FROM DENMARK

Hello from Denmark:

Our best wishes for a happy holiday season, for although we are far away we still think of our friends back home! And what better time than Christmas to bring you up to date on the traveling Rabinowitz's. It is good to be settled (somewhat) in a nice little home on the northern outskirts of Copenhagen, waiting for a white Xmas while we enjoy the quaint charm and relaxed friendly atmosphere of this lovely country and its wonderful people.

1957 has seen us move from Philadelphia to the heat and hullabaloo of Houston, Texas, and then to the quiet Nordic serenity of Copenhagen where we are enjoying our Fulbright year. It is almost like stepping into the past. Television comes on for one hour a day, and like most of our Danish friends, we have no set, so we rely on a chance correct turning of our radio dial to catch the news of the world in English from the U.S. Armed Forces station in Germany. Our Danish is not yet good enough to digest the daily headlines and we get the American papers late so it is a little like living on an island here. We are less worried about the state of the world this way, but find ourselves often wondering how Sgt. Bilko, Frank Sinatra, and L'il Abner are doing.

The people are charming, warm-natured, and anxious to help. Most speak at least a little English, and herein lie a lot of our funny experiences, for we think they understand us when they don't, and they are too nice to disappoint us by making us say it again. Joe's shirts came back from the laundry clean but unironed, while our baby Marty's diapers were returned in the same batch beautifully and stiffly starched and pressed. Josy ran out one Saturday to the Slagter (butcher and delicatessen store) for lunch makings (all stores in Denmark are required by law to close for the weekend by 2 P.M. Saturday, and it was either shop in the last minute or "starve" till Monday). Well, we almost starved till Monday, for the liver pate bought for our sandwiches (and which had been displayed on the same counter as the sausages and bologna spreads) turned out to be chocolate cream, and what looked like blood sausage was in reality a Danish specialty called "blodpølse" which can best be described as Christmas fruitcake in a sausage skin, to be served in slices fried with apples and jelly! But the Danish pastry makes up for everything. It is fresh and crisp and of many varieties. They call it "Wienerbrød", and none of its imitations we tasted in America have ever come close to it in freshness and flavor.

We now know a little bit about Danish schools, for Malva who is almost six, has at last been admitted to the first grade of the “Bernadotte” School, where classes are conducted in English, and which is ultra, ultra modernistic. On her first day there, “P” was on the program, which stands for Productive Work (namely Arts and Crafts). She came home with several paintings of her own, along with an umbrella she had made of sticks and plastic, and then told us how half the class had sat on the floor in the back of the room and made pancakes (real ones, they turned out to be) while the other half (all six year olds) had to eat the results with tomato jelly that had been produced at the previous lesson (by the same cooks, no doubt). The older children in the school do gymnastics to Rock and Roll music (Tommy Steel, Elvis Presley’s British counterpart is very popular among the Danish younger set)! The school’s student population is composed mainly of the children of the embassy and foreign fellowship personnel (everybody comes here to study, play, or what have you) so Malva has been coming home with words of Danish, French, German, etc. from time to time. She has learned a Dutch song from children of that country in her class, and also can say “Happy Birthday” in nine languages. Aside from that she is like any other American girl with two front teeth missing and loses no opportunity to remind her younger brother and sister how this proves her maturity.

Lois had her fourth birthday party here in Denmark, and since it came on Hallowe’en and this holiday is not celebrated in Denmark, we used his occasion to give the American kids we know a treat from home. Joe was able to get a huge pumpkin which he carved into a Jack O’Lantern, and the kids took turns ducking for apples, till one Danish visitor disrupted the party by breaking the rules of the game and using his hands to grab an apple, and then all the others followed suit. Lois goes to a Danish nursery where she sits at a table with four other American children and behaves like an angel, the teacher tells us. She makes up for it at home, though, and her latest trick has been to cut off almost all of her hair. Marty celebrated his second birthday the same week Lois had her fourth. He is growing at an unbelievable rate— is almost as tall as she is, wears a hat two sizes larger than hers, and has outgrown his shoes of six weeks. He is very good-natured; the girls get anything they want from him by pretending to cry and be unhappy if he won’t give it up. One day when he was obstinate about taking off his sweater, Malva told us, “Pretend to cry, Daddy and Mommy, and then he’ll do anything you say!” He is getting an awful lot out of Denmark in the food line, anyway— the Danes love to eat and make a production out of every meal, and Marty is no exception.

The kids decided to name our little Ford Anglia “Betsy the Third” (after her

namesakes in Philadelphia and Houston) and she has already taken us to some beautiful places through Denmark. On Sundays we usually pack a lunch and pile the children and Marianne (our Danish nurse) into the car and take off for the day for other parts of this island of Zealand. We have visited Hamlet's castle in Elsinore, which is interesting but not half as impressive as Shakespeare had led us to expect or, for that matter, as some of the other lesser known castles and fortresses and round towers are. There is Vordingberg, with the tower of the golden goose and the longest bridge in Europe (it connects Zealand with island of Falster), there is the fishing village of Roskilde on the beautiful fjord of the same name, there are Viking ruins up around Frederickssund, where we stopped for dinner in a kro (inn) and had a ten-course meal (smorrebrod— open faced sandwiches— and Carlsberg beer included) for twenty kroner (less than three American dollars) for three adults and three kids. We hope when the weather gets nicer next spring to visit the town of Odense where the home of Hans Christian Anderson still stands, and the museum which houses many of his papers and books.

We are looking forward to a happy new year, and wish you could come to visit us during this time in this wonderful place. We think of you very much, and you may be sure that during this holiday season we miss you even more. Merry Xmas and happy new year to you and all of yours.

The Rabinowitz's