

The PERMANENT address of EJ (DV) :

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Dear ECF :

Your good letter has gone too long unanswered but just as it arrived I was in the throes of moving into my house. More about that later. Let's take a look at the world situation first. Your mad whirl over the European continent left me breathless. As usual, however, you just took it in your stride and did not miss a single highlight. I think the Irish situation intrigued me most of all. I sent you a brain wave or two last night while I was attending the dinner tendered to the National Federation of University Women at the Vancouver Hotel. An extremely swish affair with some good talk and music. Dr Vibert Douglas was the principal speaker and gave a very interesting account of her recent four months or so in Europe. She fell very hard for the Dutch and was very severe on the Germans. I could not help being struck with the contrast between your attitude and hers. Of course, she admitted that her stay in Germany had been short and that her thinking might have been modified if she had remained longer. She is a broad-minded and charitable soul and tried hard to be fair but it was apparent that the Dutch had won her heart -- in fact the Scandinavian group too. Incidentally, Poland was not allowed to send delegates to the IUWC.

It is good of you to send on the Listener and I do appreciate them. Apropos, there have been some excellent BBC re-broadcasts here lately -- "a Window on France" and this weekn "A Window on Italy." They managed to recreate the whole atmosphere of Venice so well that I almost did a little nostalgic weep. Also apropos, I happened to listen to th broadcast on the Montreal Neurological Institute. Did you ever hear of the place? Like the curate's egg, it was good only in parts. Somehow, the gent. did not get the Genius Loci but perhaps that is too subtle to be caught.

Well, a word about my own adventures. I have felt for some time that I could not stand the racketing about which I have indulged in since I gave up the Journal. I needed what Virginia Wolfe? (an e? no, I don't think so) called a Room of One's Own. I was lucky enough to have a friend's apartment for the summer months and as soon as I arrived, I started the dreary round of hunting for an apartment. Heavens, what places I did look at and what prices they asked for noise, and gaudiness and jerry building. Then I made up my mind to take the plunge and one day was driven out to see this little place. I decided to buy it as I stepped over the threshold, and here I am, for good or ill. It is grey stucco with a red trim, three rooms and bath, plus what they call a utility room for storage purposes. The catch is that there is no basement which complicates the heating problem but there is an honest to goodness fireplace and I have put in an oil-burning cookstove which is also supposed to serve as a heating unit. We shall see what we shall see but, if the worst comes to the worst I have had the piping put in for an additional oil heater. Here's hoping I won't need it.

At the time I bought the place it had been raining and misting for a solid two weeks and I had thought that there was no view except of a rather pleasant though weedy back

garden but when I woke up in my own bed, the very first morning, I looked out of the bedroom window and there, against a blue north sky were the summits of the Hollyburn Ridge and the Sleeping Beauty range. I've never had a bigger thrill. Even if they only show up once in a blue moon, at least I know they are there and that they are mine free gratis and for nothing. My household gods, such as they are, are now somewhere en route from Toronto. At present, I am sitting amid a wilderness of unpacked trunks and am the prey of plumbers, heaters, odd-job men and so on.

Everyone has been very kind and I have been trotting about socially more than I really have time for. The Hopkins job is badly in arrears and I feel a bit paranoid about it. However, within the last few days, the odd idea has begun to seep into consciousness and having acquired a good typewriter table, I am hammering away at it like mad. I spent a very interesting afternoon out at the University and was surprised to find that the general outlines of the course have not changed so radically as I had supposed. Extensive developments are looming up, however. The coming of the Medical School will create new situations, of course.

(as compared with the West)

The difference in tempo both in daily life and in general thinking, strike me very forcibly. I can best illustrate it by a rather homely simile: on the way out, I noticed that as soon as the train began to descend toward the Western littoral, every blooming cow was lying down, placidly chewing its cud and not stravaging about like the energetic animals on the prairies. The local press seems to me to be pretty provincial in its outlook. You have to comb the back pages for foreign news while the dresses of local brides are described with resounding headlines to point them up. The correspondence columns are given over to debates between Seventh Day Adventists and Bible Fundamentalists rather too often. And yet I love the soft air and the soft water. The view from the Faculty Club is breath-taking. All up Howe sound. Blue water and snow peaks. I always thought it would be a good place to watch the sun set. And I think it is going to be.

Well, well, this is a humdinger of a letter and no mistake. Salute the "Creative Minority" for me and tell them I miss them. Incidentally, Toynbee was about the only book I had to read for a week or so after I moved in. I read him sitting up in bed and got more out of him than ever before. So you see you have done that good deed: introduced a good book to (ahem) a good mind.

As ever

R.T.