

4519 West Fifteenth Ave.,

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Dear ECF :

You must think that I am an ungrateful pig not even to have acknowledged your intriguing and provocative gift. Please believe that "The Road to Mecca" has been much enjoyed, though not necessarily approved in spots. The gentleman's attitude toward women, for instance. By the way, did you happen to read the review of it in a recent "Atlantic"? The reviewer (like yours truly) was put off by the rather lush sensuousness and yet (again like EJ) ended up by feeling that it was a great book. The flash-backs are a bit confusing but once one gets the thread not really so very difficult to follow. And the desert is there -- not even Gertrude Bell or Freya Stark managed to evoke it as he has done. I had read Dr Penfield's book not long before so was more or less in the vein. Evidently he too had been deeply affected by that strange country.

To pass from the sublime to the ridiculous, EJ's magnum opus goes forward to you with the fervent hope that you will deal with it gently. My own share of the history deals, as you will see, with the Victorian age and has been written by a totally unreconstructed mid-Victorian. I tried very hard to preserve at least a degree of objectivity concerning the part played by the Canadians -- Osler, Hampton and Robb -- and was comforted to find that so high an authority as the Dean of the Hopkins Medical School thought that I had succeeded. The book has had a modest success I'm glad to say and has sold unexpectedly well among Baltimoreans in general, outside of the medical and nursing fraternities. I nearly burst with pride when I heard that THE PRATT LIBRARY, than which there is no whicher, had actually exhibited it in their display window as the book of the week. "The Old Lady Shows her Medals", excuse it please. No more, no more.

It has been a queer mixed-up sort of a summer. More illness than I like among friends and contemporaries though at the moment situations are less acute in that respect. On the cheerful side -- literary earnings have encouraged me in horrid extravagance and I now rejoice in a new electric stove AND an oil heater that are superb.. Didn't enjoy getting them put in

