

#616 The Roger Williams, 28 East 31st Street,
New York City.

Dear Dr. And Mrs. Riza:

Your lovely Damascus box came a few days ago, a whole month behind your letter, so that I imagined it had been lost and was feeling most regretful at the thought of not beholding what your hands had so kindly and affectionately prepared to give me pleasure. What a darling gift! The box itself so pretty, with delicate fine workmanship and beautiful colors. And the head kerchief, the handkerchiefs, the serviettes de table, the card with the ^{he} Bethlehem flowers, the snapshots and photographs-- everything, how charmingly thought of and arranged with the personal touches that endear a gift! I cannot say that the things arrived in the sedate condition in which you despatched them to me; for the Customs authorities had taken everything out of the box looking for -- what? Do you think it could have been rare tobacco or other contraband? But nothing was damaged, and I felt just as happy.

I must crave your indulgence for writing on a machine. It is most rude and inconsiderate, I know. Yet I find it so fatiguing to hold a pen that I should probably be long in acknowledging your kind letter and your gifts if I did not resort to the mechanical mode of writing. Oh, many months it is since I promised you a letter, and I have never been able to write it.

I was most charmed ~~by~~ the picture of Dr. Riza looking like a muzhik. But his hair and beard are far too well kept! All of you look so astonishingly healthy and happy in that care-free life by the sea! Why regret anything in the old days?

It delighted me very much to hear that the long gossipy article on Near Eastern cooking is in preparation. I do not know anybody who could do it better, and I hope that when it is done and properly illustrated with pictures of dishes and foods and table service in Eastern style, it will be very nice indeed. I had also hoped that Mr. Kiachif and Mme. Kiachif would write something, but they have never done so and I think do not enjoy writing so much as a professional writer like yourself.

It disturbed me to learn from your letter that ASIA had stopped coming. So I sent my personal check at once and told the office to send it to you, please, with my compliments. I thought that subscription had been attended to before that, and I am sorry. You will notice some changes in style. The art editor is ill and has been away in a sanitarium since last summer. The man who is acting as art director is very "modern" in his ideas, and he has made a good many changes in the appearance of the pictures in the magazine. I wonder if you like the old or the new style better.

Also Miss Emerson has left us. She went to India and married an Indian scientist whose specialty is biological physics-- particularly the effect of ~~xxx~~ electrical charges on plant protoplasm. They are living in India in a lovely spot up near the Himalaya mountains. Their plan was to spend six months of the year in Calcutta and six months in the Himalaya, but, having gone to the mountains for a honeymoon, they could not bear this first year to go back to the noisy, misery-laden city.

The substitute for Miss Emerson is an old friend of mine, with whom I have worked before, but the arrangement is not so satisfying, and between that and the terrible business conditions and my lack of physical strength my affairs are not in a very happy condition. I have, indeed, no certainty of the power to continue my work much longer. And for me, when the stopping time comes, there is no government pension! My busy, busy days and my weary nights are a good deal perturbed with this problem. In the East, whatever the position of women in the past, they had sanctuary at least when they were middle-aged. I feel a little sorry for the Turkish women and the Persians and the Indians who are so eager to be free and modern. That may mean to be homeless also, and I see great possibilities for suffering ahead of them.

I met the other day a very interesting woman journalist-- an Italian, whose first name was Irene. Her surname I cannot remember, but she came from somewhere near Piedmont, and her father had had some kind of international commission appointment at Saloniki. She spoke Turkish and had many views about Turkey. A decidedly interesting woman and very well educated, but not beautiful nor well dressed nor outwardly attractive in any way. My description of her minus

her name is of course worthless. But I thought of her again when speaking about women and their freedom. She had evidently been traveling about Turkey without any feeling of restraint and had been especially interested in observing the rapprochement between Turkey and Russia. She had also studied tables of commercial statistics, to see what goods Turkey was getting from Russia, and she seemed to think that, when the Ghazi was eliminated from the scene, Turkey might be Sovietized. Perhaps so, if it is really normal for that kind of experiment to work satisfactorily in an agricultural country. The Marxian hypothesis (was it not?) was supposedly applicable to a highly industrialized country, but events seem not to have worked out that way.

My friends here are highly amused at the offer of France to give up Syria for a price. They think the price is so huge as to be the equivalent of saying "We will never give it up." The Amir Abdullah's project to sell land to the Jews also evokes much comment, though no one perhaps knows the why and wherefore of such an idea on the part of an Arab prince. The Japanese mandate is a further cause for speculation. Hence it is not by any means Communism exclusively or how China is going to pull out of its troubles that people gossip about when they approach the topic of Eastern politics.

Sunday morning.

If this page makes no sense, my dear friends, you must forgive me on the ground that I was asleep when writing it and suddenly perceived that my fingers were hitting the keys without much conscious direction-- as if-- in the midst of sound slumber, somebody should ask me, "What is your favorite poem?" and, without any thinking at all, I should begin to recite:

"When to the sessions of sweet silent thought

I summon up remembrance of things past"

and then should suddenly wake up and not be able to remember the rest of that perfect sonnet. I surmise that even my jumbled comments on politics might have fallen into some pattern in my sleepy mind that typed unknowing, but, as soon as I said, "Time to go to bed," ideas vanished.

It is a most lovely day, I think, from the glimpse I catch of the sun in my tiny dark room. I expect a poor unhappy friend, whose family were luxury-

loving, talented, very gay and worldly people in France, Italy and Russia to come to lunch with me. Now she is a woman growing old, with a poor little position, a tiny salary, and a wretched little rented room with people she does not like or approve. I have stood sometimes in front of the portrait of her grand mother and gasped at the splendor of her presence. My poor friend is not beautiful, but she has lovely hands and feet and other marks of the aristocrat and she speaks a beautiful French. How can I help her when I cannot help myself? It is not clear to me. I think at least that endless self-discipline does not assure one of anything.

Something tells me that you and Mme. Riza are truly wise. Your decision to be content with what you have, to find joy in nature and in books, to eschew all bitterness of spirit as a poisoning influence that will wear out the body and the mind-- all of this is admirable. I shall remind myself of it each day, in order that I may learn of you.

I love your dear gifts and thank you both again and again for your unfailing remembrance.

Very sincerely yours,