

72- Constance Street.
Toronto, Ont.
Jan. 9th, 1953.

Dear Dr. Pierce:

I am pleased that the little sketch was acceptable. When I get that 'lone lorne feeling' I like to mess about with colors. It helps; it brings to mind memories of places and people I love. It has no other value.

Yes, we finally found an old house in Parkdale large enough to enable us to rent a little suite to some nice young girls. It seems a pleasant way to augment our pension, and I try to believe that NOW at last I shall be left in peace to gather my wits and possibly find the courage to tackle another mss.

At the moment I am so tired from cleaning the dirtiest house it was ever my misfortune to inhabit that the mere thought seems a monstrous joke. But then I am stubborn and like my foolish ancestors believe one may as well die in battle as in bed.

For example: in the midst of the domestic cyclone I was struck by a wild notion that the simplest way to cut immortal Rock was to remove Eric's Saga from the text. I need hardly say the thought really upset me. The legend is very dear to me. Then, possibly the soothing sound of soap suds, induced a better mood and I said to myself: Why not turn Eric's strange quest into a LITTLE BOOK. Well, why not? With a roof over my head more or less secure I should be able to do it!

What do you think of the idea? The trouble is I should have to work with the second copy. I cannot ask my poor husband to do the whole thing over. Would anyone read such an effort? I think I could manage to make the changes fairly quickly; and while I am at the slaughter I could, if you wish, rob Father Benedict of some copy. I am quite aware that the wages of a troubled mind and everlasting upheaval is a rambling style. I am sure that no one quite sane would have gone on trying to write at all facing the problems I have had to face for many years. It must be madness! But there it is and what can I do about it? For some obscure reason I hate to lower the old flag and take my ease at the dish-pan.

Enough of this. Your note had a delightful touch of Christmas. I could see the little man sounding out his three cheers. Good for him!

This year must mark some invisible cross roads. We too had our Christmas dinner without the son and heir, and made do with a charming young couple, their baby and my cat. But it was pleasant after all the hard work just to sit still for a bit and let the baby and the cat do the entertaining. The proud mother was in my writing class in Calgary and her husband is working for his doctorate in music. It was lovely to have them.

Later we also attended a party. George and Sandra were doing the honors in their new little house in North York. Radio folk are friendly but they speak a new language and subscribe to an ethic a little too slick for my Norse conception of reality. But by saying nothing nicely one gets by. After all it would be a tiresome world if the generations made no changes.

The only bitter change is the loss of dear friends. And this Christmas I missed, for the first time in twenty years, a letter from Mr. Cranston. Yesterday his son sent me the Midland paper with the announcement of his death. It was a real shock. Mr. Cranston published my first story, and I came to know him and his wife as the most loyal and sincere friends. More than that I found in Mr. Cranston an integrity which never bowed to debased values. A rare thing in those days of debunking when so many popular magazines battered on the brave new ideology which made such cheerful end of the ancient virtues which alone give dignity and meaning to human existence.

I feel the loss deeply. I had planned to visit Midland so soon as we had got our heads above water. How dreadful it is to let the mean cares of the day deprive us of the real treasures of life.

Please give my regards to Mrs. Pierce. I do hope the coming year will be kind to her. And I shall look forward to that tea some sunny day.

Sincerely Yours

Laura G. Johnston