

P.S. Jim says cast iron has "inside strength"; but I'll ask Earle when he returns from Texas.

Wednesday

1949

Dear Murray:

How in the name of Heaven do you end a book? I've used a ream of paper, on both sides.

But, first and foremost, "The Columbia" is a wonderful book. I have bought two copies and am getting a third, for a canoe enthusiast, a doctor, in Port Angeles. I think, personally, that it is as absorbingly and expertly written as Ludwig's "Nihe" and "Mediterranean." I have a good neighbor, a brilliant Canadian woman of 69, whose husband was a buyer for Hudson's Bay out here, at Vancouver. I loaned the book to her and she regretted deeply that her husband and son were not alive, because they would have enjoyed it so keenly. She has ridden on the Minto many times and has taken the trouble to look up Dr. McLoughlin's burial place at Oregon City, as he was a favorite of her's. The drawings pleased me, and also surprised me. I had thought you said there were to be none. And I had many chuckles. It seems to me that you should have a great feeling of achievement. Congratulations to both you and Rosa. The research must have been tremendous. And what fun. Jim and I drove over to Pullman last week end, via Spokane, and back by Walla Walla; and I was very glad to have read a portion of the book before I left. It should do well in that country. Jim has decided to attend Washington State, a decision which pleases both Earle and me. Not only because the town and school are smaller, but because it seems to me to be more Midwestern in climate and philosophy and friendliness of personnell. Though you may remark as one of Jim's friends did, with raised eyebrows, "Is that good?" And, gee, I was happy to meet my old Kansas friends, the milkweed and the broad-leaved cottonwood and the sunflower. I even liked the heat, with reservations, though not the dust, Jim remarked that the wheat-covered hills looked exactly like a Grant Wood painting, and they do. I had never seen anything like that, and doubt that those hills were planted in the old horse-drawn days.

I am sending you a single chapter, the next to the last I think. I have written a final one, but want to simmer it. Have also voluntarily eliminated some. Then, what should I do? Sit down and start at the very first? I can't bear the thought because I know I will find it terrible.

Incidentally, on your corrections, which are very fine, I am making most of them now. On those that require considerable writing, I am making notes and filing your suggestions. They're all awfully good, and I am most grateful.

