

194 Oxford Street,
Rochester, New York.

April 29, 1935.

Professor Harold L. Scott,
Robert College,
Istanbul, Turkey.

Dear Scott,

Your last letter was of course received some time ago, and as always with your letters we were particularly glad to have it.

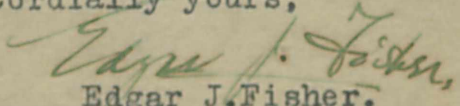
The months have been coming and going, and I have had a number of lines out for a position, and have linked up with certain placement agencies, but nothing has appeared as yet, that has materialized, or even gotten very "warm". One of my chief difficulties in trying to land a position is that when I was forced out of Robert College, the Administration of Robert College did nothing to try to secure my reinstatement, and did not come out in any way in my behalf. It is difficult for people here, to whom I apply for regular academic employment, to understand why, after such a long period of work out there, my disappearance from the scene at Robert College was acquiesced in so genially. If only I could get ~~my~~ start in the picture here, I think I could make good in the academic picture.

During Dr. Monroe's brief stay in this country, I saw him in New York. He was very gloomy about the situation, but no more so than most people here, who have sought to follow what has been going on in connection with American educational work in Turkey, and have tried to find a reasoned explanation for the way things have taken place at both of the Colleges in Istanbul. The financial troubles have of course in themselves been severe enough; the attitude of the Turks has too frequently been curiously shortsighted; but, in the opinion of many here, to those difficulties have been added calamitous policies of administration. Here I have been surprized at the general wonderment that it should be expected that the Colleges will have any justifiable influence under present conditions.

It is assuredly an unhappy state, and it cuts to the quick. I can imagine how very difficult it all is out there. The other day I was talking with Dr. Robert E. Speer here in Rochester, and I was astonished at his bluntness about it all, including Dr. Coffin's visit. Perhaps his is an unknowing attitude, but Speer is a man of experience and judgment.

On this letter I am putting one of the Connecticut Tercentenary stamps, just issued. I thought David would be glad to have it, for I suppose he collects stamps. This goes to you and your household with our very affectionate greetings.

Cordially yours,


Edgar J. Fisher.

20 Woodbine Ave.,
Rechester, New York.

September 12, 1934.

Professor Harold L. Scott,
Robert College,
Istanbul, Turkey.

Dear Scott,

Your very welcome and very interesting letter of July 26th written on board the "Caldea" was received in due season and we were very glad to hear from you. I am glad that you and David had such a fine time on board that small, but "noble" ship.

We have not yet connected with any position for this year, and I expect to secure what lecturing appointments I can, although this is a most uncertain means of existence. Our difficulties have been so considerable during the last months, that it was refreshing to have a friend in Syracuse offer a good-sized and fine cellar for the storage of our effects, until such time as we may be able to settle somewhere. How financially wrecking the experience continues to be is seen from the fact that the bill that I have just received of freight from New York to Syracuse, cartage in New York from warehouse to freight depot, customs entry and "services" came to \$171.94. This of course does not include cartage from railroad to depot in Syracuse.

As you know I thought that I had the position of Director of International House for next year. If the English language has any meaning, that offer was made and accepted by me, and Dr. Menree believed this after a telephone conversation with the Chairman of the Committee. Due to circumstances which no one seems to understand the Committee decision was changed, weeks later, and after I had negatived another offer, and had discontinued other leads. It was only last week that I received what appears to be a final decision in the matter, but so far as I know a new Director has not yet been appointed. It seems incredible that men of wide affairs could handle a situation as this one has been conducted. From various parts of the globe I have received congratulatory messages concerning the International House appointment. The news went forth from other sources than myself, for I was asked not to say anything until the Committee was ready for a formal announcement. I have not even told my brothers to now.

Your letter raised many serious questions concerning the work at Robert College and the present situation. I have had some other letters, and I have been surprized at the situation that has been presented to me by persons this summer. During the summer I have had long talks upon occasion with Dr. Menree, Mr. Staub, and at least one of the Trustees. Where the general public knows about the College, I have been surprized that there has been such complete pessimism, that there is such definite belief that American education in Turkey has lived its usefulness and outworn any welcome that it may have had.

Although it is perhaps not proper for me to write of the influence of my ejection upon this feeling, it has come to me on every hand, and this has been exceedingly unfortunate for the College. When the difficulty arose last year, I called the attention of Dr. Menree to the unhappy effect of an easy assent to the dismissal without hearing of any kind, or active definite protest, prompt and earnest, of a permanent member of the American Staff, who had been an

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administrative official for such a long time. How unfortunate the effect has been upon the prestige and influence of the College, I had not suspected until recently. Last fall confidential news from the State Department got out that my case had been decided to the satisfaction of the Robert College administration. Whether it is true or not, I cannot say, but I have had it strongly intimated to me that the easy acquiescence in my departure from Robert College fitted into the economy program that has been so important naturally in recent months. Just where or what the exact truth is, I am not sure; but from much information that has come to me quite unsolicited, I have somewhat of a theory. But discounting my own feelings in the matter to a considerable degree, it is being increasingly brought home to me, how regrettable has been the effect not only upon my own interests ~~upon~~ but upon those of the College as well.

I am sorry that your last year was so difficult, and how often I longed to be on the job to help. Surely it is our earnest hope that this present academic year will be a better and a happier one. Certain of the suggestions that you made in your letter to me have been passed on as discreetly and frankly as possible, along with others that seemed proper for me to make. Upon various occasions my advice or suggestion upon the conditions has been asked, although this at times may seem to put me in a difficult position, when it comes to responding. I can only tell folks that if they wish they can discount my opinions, on the ground of possible feelings due to the treatment that I received at Istanbul. It is interesting that when I am enthusiastic or laudatory on either the College or the Turkish situation, they are inclined to think that I am "just talking", or trying to gloss things over.

there. The fact is, friend Scott, and it might just as well be faced, that ~~is~~ no sentiment here that the Turks are interested in having us out there, or want us out there, or will tolerate foreign educational or other institutions under conditions that make their continuance sufficiently or reasonably worthwhile, or as the American is inclined to put it, justifiably worthwhile under conditions of self-respect. And when one searches the heart and mind for honest and unqualified arguments to the effect that the Turks do want these foreign institutions, under justifiable conditions, really convincing arguments are hard to muster. I would be glad if you would send me bolstering arguments for use, based upon the situation as you see it now. You of course know that it is very hard to get funds for anything now. Certainly new funds can hardly be raised for a situation where it looks to people here as if only the money was wanted, and that quite divorced from the spirit and ideals in support of which the money was raised. And there is real question concerning the use of funds already raised. Perhaps we have been remiss on the field in not facing up to the situation earlier, or not realizing where we were going. It is so easy to go on looking at the same lovely landscape, and not realize when the beauty has faded out of the picture. Years ago we probably should have listed "These Things May Be" and "These Things May Not Be", and then checked them off as things developed. If we check now, perhaps the surrenders have already been too many, and there might be a disposition to try cooperatively to reclaim some of the lost beauty. Here I think there is a feeling that the remaining institutions in Turkey should survey the situation to know just where and how they expect to go. That would seem to be a wise and satisfactory thing to do. Having charted the "where and the how", there should then be some means of knowing whether it represents anything that is realizable with a reasonable degree of permanence. These sentences may not be very satisfactory, but I do think they represent much current thought and feeling on the problem.

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the force of your several suggestions, I see clearly the need of a visiting professor and particularly the one and respect from intellectual and personality of standing, who could "conclude if just the type of man whom you points of view." However at this time, or rather is on the way. I hope have in mind is quite changes at the College will prove advantageous. the new administration

Perhaps you will feel that this letter is not very encouraging. You are of course free to use the discount pencil as much as you desire. So far as I can judge from the much that has been told me written to me, Robert College must get back much of its warm, humanistic and personal spirit, that has perhaps filtered out during the most recent years. We were perhaps so occupied with the details, that we lost sight of much of the ensemble. Looking at it from afar in distance and still near in point of time, it seems to me that any institution like Robert College must have the highest and soundest academic standards, but it must also leave its peculiar mark upon the characters of the students, so that this mark is actually evident and not merely talked about, if it is to justify its existence.

Our affectionate greetings to you and your family. It is always so good to hear from you, and I will look forward to another letter. Your load must have been great last year, and I hope that it will not be so difficult in this academic year.

Cordially yours,


Edgar J. Fisher.

194 Oxford Street,
Rochester, New York.

December 9, 1934.

Professor Harold L. Scott,
Robert College,
Istanbul, Turkey.

Dear Professor Scott,

Your letter of last October was read with much interest and appreciation, and as always we were very glad to hear from you. From the letters that I have received, I have the feeling that there is no one else back at Robert College, who has such an exact conception of what the Robert College situation has meant to me personally as you.

The news that you wrote about the opening of College and the various changes interested me greatly. I hope that you have all been having a really worthwhile year in the work. There is a strange mixture of feeling about it all, for in many ways it seems so near in point of time and interest since we were at Hissar, and then again it appears to be a more or less confused and peculiar picture. The latter feeling I think comes from the fact largely that after I put in the years there, fourteen of which practically were as Dean, I should have been pushed out as a sort of a thief in the night, with no formal expression on the part of the Faculty, or the Trustees, or any group, that betokened confidence in the work and attitudes that we had shown during the years at Robert College. The more I hear and understand, the clearer it seems that the responsibility is as largely American as it is Turkish, in my departure from Robert College.

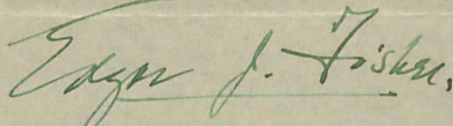
In the absence of a regular position still, I have been turning to lecturing, and in late September sent out a number of lecture announcements. Considering how late it was for getting into the field of lecturing this season, - most important programs are made up in the late spring, - I have been getting a fair number of lecture dates here and there. It is rather financially uncertain and precarious, however, and my desire is to put my efforts into a definite piece of work. The idea of an itinerant lecturer has no great appeal to me, although some people do feel that it must be a grand kind of life.

Edgar, Jr. has been having an interesting time at Arthur Washburn's little Solebury School at New Hope, Pennsylvania. Lecture engagements have taken me to Philadelphia in November, and I had two brief visits with Edgar, Jr. Our plans were so uncertain for this year, and Arthur Washburn made us such a very good offer for the son for the year, that we found it advantageous in every way to send him to Solebury School. With him away we can shrink into very small quarters, and now have a two-room apartment on Oxford Street in this city.

December 9, 1934.

As the Christmas season approaches we very naturally think of the many Christmases that we spent at Hissar, and we hope that the Christmas season is a truly happy one for you all. This goes to you and your household particularly with our affectionate greetings, and our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edgar J. Fisher". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Edgar J. Fisher.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi

Kişisel Arşivlerde İstanbul'da Bilim, Kültür ve Eğitim Tanıtı

Scott Ailesi Koleksiyonu



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