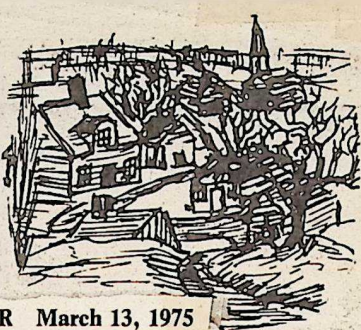


Village View by Andrea Leonard



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As some of you may know, and some may not, at one time in my checkered career I was a travel agent. In that capacity I did a lot of traveling. I saw a good deal of the world.

It was remarkable to see, in this day and age, women washing clothes in a clear-running stream, beating them with stones to get the dirt out of them, and then spreading them on the grass to dry.

It astonished me to realize I was gazing out across the city of Paris from the top of the Eiffel Tower, viewing Rome at near distance from the Spanish steps, aboard a Venetian gondola, wending my watery way through Amsterdam's canals and buying flowers at the stalls on the banks of the Zuider Zee.

It delighted me to wander through the Borghesi gardens, admire the size of the roses blooming in Queen Mary's garden in London, see palm trees growing in southern Ireland, and watch the sun set amongst the Grecian Isles.

It amazed me to examine the pictorial scenes in the Ajanta Caves of India, to mount a camel and have my picture taken before the great Sphinx of Egypt, to ride a horse nine miles into the miniature Grand Canyon, complete with multi-colored walls, of Petra in Jordan.

Watching a Thai child of six or seven do the "twist" in the nude produced indescribable emotions, as did viewing Hong Kong at night from the restaurant atop one of the world-renowned hotels of that city. To move from the quiet of Repulse Bay to Tokyo's subway and Ginza was too much of a contrast to experience and absorb in one week's time.

No longer am I a travel agent; no longer am I a world traveler. Nevertheless, I retain an image of the world, of other lands, other countries in our world, that will serve as a reservoir for thought as long as my mind is alive.

Today I look upon our nation, its problems, the suggested solutions to these I hear, and I ponder.

Where, I ask myself, may I find the peace and security I yearn for? This is a question we all ask ourselves. Where is the peace and security I seek?

How would you like to live in a country where the people are described as the toughest-minded, shrewdest, and wisest in the world? Where can people cope with assassination, war, civil riot, political scandal, and a frighteningly high crime rate without coming apart at the seams?

Where in the world can I go and find myself surrounded by people who have adequate food and other necessities of life? Is there a land where hunger has been assuaged, and I need not feel guilty when I eat a decent meal?

Where in the world is there a healthy population? Is there a country where typhoid, yellow fever, small pox, typhus, plague are not threats to longevity?

Is there a place where diphtheria, whooping cough, measles and polio are under control through mass vaccination?

Where, should I need it, could I be sure of getting proper medical care to replace worn-out body parts, where organ transplants are accepted as commonplace rather than miraculous?

In what countries, today, is life expectancy increasing? Is there a land where, born February, 1975, I could expect to live longer than my parents are expected to live? If I have a child, what are its chances?

Last year -- 1974 -- was an agricultural disaster in the United States. Farmers suffered the worst weather in a generation. Similar conditions were experienced, almost worldwide.

Which is the country that produced the fourth largest grain harvest in history? Which country's farmers sent more than twenty billion

pounds of beef to market in 1974? In which nation did the people consume a hundred pounds of beef -- each -- last year?

Hunger in America is not unknown. But there is a country where fifteen million of its people supplement their food budgets through government subsidy, and nine million school children receive either free or reduced-price lunches.

There's a country on our planet which shipped seventy million pounds of food abroad, every day of 1974, to help feed the hungry people of the world.

Politics in all nations is a dirty business. How would you like to live where people show vigorous concern for their political organizations? And members of the most oppressed minority groups are elected to serve in the highest seats of their democratic government -- where constitutional crisis is met with equanimity, where collapse of power and party results, not in anarchy or oligarchy, but a smooth transition to the next party of power?

How would you like to live where enormous material and attitudinal progress is made with each new generation? Would you like to be a citizen of a country that many others choose as a model when setting up their own -- emerging -- governments?

How would you like to live in a country where you can buy a complicated machine like a pocket calculator for one-third the price you'd have been forced to pay for it one year ago?

Would you like to be able to go down to the local shop and purchase a television set so thin and flat it could be hung on a wall, like a picture over the mantelpiece?

Would you haul stakes and move to a place where geologists are exploring possibilities of tapping geothermal energy of volcanoes, where a new subatomic particle has recently been discovered, where the technology American ecologists deplore is expected to solve the problems of oil-fouled seas and skies?

Would you leave home to live in a country where the government was working toward peace-keeping by discontinuing conscription, coming to agreement with "it's worst enemy" concerning offensive weapons, and negotiating with it's political opponents instead of fighting them?

Would you enjoy living where this year's grape harvest is more bountiful than any past year's, and the wine has been smiled upon by the Gods?

Would living in a country where craftsmen have increased tenfold in the past decade attract you? Would you be drawn to a place you could wander among second-hand, low-priced goods of all descriptions, pick and choose without pressure, and pay a price you bargained for, amongst a motley collection, some worthless, perhaps, but some priceless?

If metalworking, canning, weaving and bread-making were the sober and necessary pursuits of the common citizen, would you feel you belonged there, and would you feel your own family might be more solid in such a society?

Would you like all this, and in addition a place where most people have "enlightened views" about easing the despair of the aged, about recognizing the insane as sick rather than stupid, about accepting the crippled as "just like me" but physically unable to do what you easily do?

Would you like to live in a country where the durability of the people is it's greatest natural resource, and where the resilience of the people prevails?

Do you want to live and be a part of a confident people, believe that licking the problems of water and air pollution, limited oil and coal resources, scarce copper and threatening ozone contaminants are only challenges, like those that have been met and conquered before?

Do you want to call your own a country where belief in man is stronger than it's ever been, and is the greatest positive affirmation of the world?

Well, I've got just the place for you.

Stay where you're at.