

Chapter 1

Departure from Baghdad and Farewells

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April 10th

AND SO, we decided to travel to Europe. Our departure will be on Wednesday morning, the 13th of this month¹. We have already hired the riding animals and a mule litter² and have arranged everything. Nothing is left but to put Baghdad behind us. For the past three days until now, many visitors have come and are still coming to bid us goodbye, especially our family who are coming often to visit. We are traveling in the company of the Balioz³, Colonel Mockler⁴, who has decided to go to London. We shall take the land road to al-Dayr⁵, Damascus, and Beirut, and thence to Cairo, God willing.

April 11th

As today is the last Sunday for us in Baghdad we started to go around and bid our friends goodbye after hearing mass. We visited nearly 20 houses and a good number of people came to say goodbye and wish us a happy journey. At sunset we spent time with my paternal Aunt Eliza⁶ at the house of Kasperkhan⁷ and we returned at 3:00 Turkish time⁸ very pleased and happy. I also heard at sunset today by telegraph from Basrah to the House of Lynch⁹, that they had been informed of Iskander Wakil's death in Basrah due to tuberculosis. Yesterday at 10:00 Western time¹⁰ Major Fagan¹¹, the Consul in Basrah, came from Basrah to Baghdad with the new English Consul-General, Colonel Loch¹², and his wife and. Since we decided to

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page 003 travel with Colonel Mockler, who has for quite some time been awaiting Colonel Loch's arrival to leave Baghdad for his retirement in London, it is more certain now that our journey will be on Wednesday.

April 12th

A cloudy and rainy morning today with an East wind¹³. The clouds were thick and dark but the weather cleared after a few hours. I went to the office in the afternoon and asked Colonel Mockler for a certificate of my two years service at the Consulate¹⁴. He gave me his word to have it ready for me tomorrow. At sunset we went for one last visit to the home of my maternal Uncle Antone¹⁵ and they announced their intention to send their son Joury¹⁶ with us. He will attend school in Beirut. One hour before sunset I brought my harmonium¹⁷ from home to my Uncle's house to leave it in their care while we are away. Today too, many people, friends, and relatives came to bid us goodbye.

April 13th

An extremely miserable night, cloudy with unceasing thunder. A very heavy rain fell at midnight. It soaked all the streets and turned them into rivers. It broke and cleared in the morning it became a nice spring day with an exceedingly lovely sun. Today again many people came to bid us goodbye, but when I went to the office I heard that Colonel Mockler decided to leave on Thursday afternoon instead of Wednesday. Truthfully I was saddened by these changes, with something new every day. Thus we decided that we would hopefully travel on Thursday afternoon. The family of Uncle Henry¹⁸ came to visit us at sunset with Aunt Medula¹⁹, Johnny²⁰, and Artin²¹. They stayed with us until half past one but they did not bid us a final goodbye. I went in the afternoon to bid some friends farewell and afterwards I went to see the mule litter in which we are to travel.

April 14th

page 004 Today is a very happy day. The sun is shining with no clouds at all and the mud has mostly dried in the streets. After visiting some friends and family I came home and heard that Uncle Antone, feeling very anxious about his son, changed his mind and Joury will not travel with us. What a pity for Uncle Antone to miss an opportunity like this that may not present itself again. My paternal Aunt Emilia²¹ came to our

house before noon today. She accepted our breakfast invitation. After breakfast²³ my friend Jamil Abdul Karim came to see me and brought a letter with him that I put with my private papers. It is addressed to Razouk Dinha²⁴ who lives at Dayr al-Zawr. Catherine Yaghechi²⁵ came to bid us goodbye, and she was very sad about our parting.

April 15th

Today is the day of our journey. As we decided yesterday, we will cross to the other bank in the afternoon today. This morning was cloudy, windy, and very unpleasant. But the weather cleared two hours after sunrise and the day became nice and lovely. After I went to church and received Holy Communion, as today is Easter Thursday, I returned home at 8:30 Western time. I was there preparing my things and securing the closet doors at the kefeshkan²⁶ when some friends came to see me and I bid them goodbye for the last time. At noon we awaited the arrival of the mules to take the things and when it turned 1:00 in the afternoon all of our family began to arrive at our house for the last goodbye. Truthfully, I found it very difficult when I began to talk to them about parting. They were all very grieved. At last, when it turned 2:30 Western time, our mules arrived and they began to load the baggage. So all of our family, and I too, cried loudly. I did not think that the parting would be so difficult. After they tied on the loads, they left the house with a zaptiye whom we had taken on by means of an official decree, and we ordered them to cross to al-Kharr²⁷ and wait for us there where we would spend the night. When it was time to part and the hour neared all of our family, my paternal aunts Emilia, Eliza, and Medula and Aunt Emilia's daughter, Alice²⁸ with Uncle Henry's daughter Louise²⁹ and her mother, Aunt Eliza's daughters, Tarousa³⁰ and Regina³¹, and the wife of my maternal Uncle Antone with her daughters, Rosie³² and Ellen³³, all began to cry loudly in sorrow at our parting. For the first time in my life I found myself so unhappy to be saying goodbye that the tears did not cease for a moment. The affection that they showed on their part for me was very strong and I had not thought that they loved me so much. At last it turned 4:00 Western time and I went up for the last time to the kefeshkan. I put on the 'akkal and the kaffiyah³⁴ and came down from my dear kefeshkan for the last time bidding it farewell, saying "*Adieu*, who knows when I will see you again." As I joined our family wearing my full riding outfit they all burst into tears, at which my father arose and said, "We must leave

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you all." Thus, together with my mother and father, we kissed all our family, each in turn, with tears pouring down like rain. We came down to the inner court and they stood on the balcony waving to us. So I turned my eyes and said, "I commend you to God's protection. O, all my family, pray for me and wish me luck!" When I went out by the door they were all at the window waving at me. I turned for a final look and waved back to them with my kaffiyah for the last time while copious tears ran down my cheeks. Thus I bade our family and our house goodbye and turned my head toward the market. While walking down the road to the bridge³⁵, I met my friend Jamil Krekor³⁶ and he accompanied me along with Jamil Abdul Karim, Shukrullah Sayegh³⁷, and Yaqoub Tassy³⁸, the husband of my sister Medula³⁹, who were going with us. We walked across the bridge and then, because Uncle Henry was on board the Khalifa⁴⁰ steamship due to leave today, he came up onto the ship's deck and saluted us. Likewise we waved to him until we passed him and crossed over the bridge. We came to Alawi⁴¹ al-Hilla and there we found the riding animals ready to take us to al-Khirr. Thus, the time to bid farewell to the rest neared too, so we kissed each other and then turned towards al-Khirr. Dear Baghdad was left behind us. I turned back towards my homeland and said, "Farewell to thee, land of the beloved, land of the dear ones, when will we meet again?" The hour was 4:15 Western time and we mounted the animals and set out.

al-Khirr

At 4:45 we came to al-Khirr bridge and crossed over. We went a little further and we found the entire caravan ready, our tent pitched with the baggage around it. Colonel Mockler's tents and baggage had also arrived and the tents of Issa al-Zhair⁴² who will travel with us to Damascus with his little son Abdullah in order to take him to school there. We entered our tent and rested, but I was feeling very pained by the parting that for the first time struck me with grief. Then I summoned up patience and put my trust in God for sorrow is of no avail. After we arrived I was pleased to write to my dear Louise and tell her how grieved I was at parting with her. So I took the paper and pen out of my satchel and wrote a few lines. A half an hour before sunset I saw Colonel Mockler coming with the bicycle⁴³ and following him were Mrs. Mockler⁴⁴, Miss Tanner⁴⁵, and Uncle Antone. After they dismounted, Uncle Antone came to see us and we bade him stay for dinner and to spend the night. A few minutes after sunset Aunt Eliza's son Johnny came from town and I was truly quite happy to see him come from our family. He stayed with us overnight and we

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all dined together and went to bed but we absolutely could not sleep because we were still confused and unsettled. Johnny bedded down in the mule litter and Uncle Antone slept on the carpet covered with the woolen cloaks. This is the last day we are near Baghdad. The arrangement with Colonel Mockler was to wake up at 8:00 Western time tomorrow and go on to the first station.

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Chapter 2

***Departure from the Homeland and
the Journey from al-Kharr***

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April 16th

WE WERE UP at dawn today, all of us awoke because of this dreadful night. After we drank tea we heard that the Khalifa steamship will pass by our camp and we saw its smoke from a distance. We hurried off at once and went towards the river. We saw the steamship coming and just then we also caught sight of Aunt Eliza's son, Artin, who came from Baghdad to see us. When the steamship passed Uncle Henry was standing on deck waving to us and so did we until he was out of sight. At 8:00 Western time we packed the tents and they tied on the loads and prepared the caravan. They lifted our mule litter as we must sit in it now and they put up the wooden ladder at its door. Mother and I got in and sat inside. That was the first time in my life that I sat in a mule litter. The entire caravan was ready and we were prepared to set off. We put our trust in God. The mule litter set out with us in it, the caravan following behind and Uncle Antone, Johnny, and Artin accompanied us. After traveling a half hour's distance Uncle Antone approached and we stopped the mule litter. He dismounted and came to bid us goodbye as he had to return hastily to town. So we exchanged goodbyes and shed tears at our parting. Then we drove the mules on. Here, the entire desert is dry and much in need of rain. After we had gone some two and a half hours Baghdad still glittered at us in the distance, and the minarets of al-Khadhum¹ were still visible. Finally, I bade the city farewell from afar until we lost sight of any sign of Baghdad. At 11:00 Western time Johnny and Artin also bade us farewell. They were the last who had accompanied us this far. I gave Artin three letters, one to Louise, another to my dear friend Johnny Pahlawan², and the third to my friend Antoine Guilietti³. I expressed my great sorrow at parting with them. Thus we marched on unaccompanied, cutting across wastelands and

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rough terrain. At 12:30 we approached Akarkuf⁴ and passed it on our right. It remained in view until 2:30 when finally it seemed like a dot⁵ until it entirely disappeared. And so we urged on the riding animals. Sometimes I got out of the mule litter to ride in place of my father. Other times I walked and then returned to the mule litter again. Now and then we pass tents of Arabs, who are all al-Zoba⁶ in these lands. The countryside is very much in need of rain. Some of it is cultivated with rain-fed plantations and every two hours we pass low hills and some desert areas with greenery. At 2:00, at a distance on our left, we passed the small shrine of an imam with a nearby well. At 2:30 we crossed a small arched bridge. A narrow stream runs beneath it flowing from the Euphrates River. We stopped and drank a little from the stream and some people washed. Half an hour later we came to another shrine. It is larger than the first and called Imam Abu Dhaher al-H'mud⁷. We were near the first station, that is to say Abu Ghrayb⁸.

Abu Ghrayb

At the end we came to a land covered with stones. We were across from a station called the Sanniya⁹ depot. It has a few zaptiye to watch over the depot where the provisions of the Sanniya are kept. This place seemed good to us and so we stopped the caravan. They took down the loads and pitched the tents. It was then 3:45. This land is also called Abu Ghrayb. Our caravan has fifty riding animals and three mule litters. After we had dismounted and settled down here, I took up the pen to write the above. Then having finished writing, I lay down to rest a little. At sunset we heard on all sides the pleasant voice of the francolin. It appears that this bird is abundant here. I took the opportunity to write a short letter to our family telling them, among other things, about our health and my grief at our parting. I decided to send it with the sons of the Nawwab¹⁰ who traveled with us to go hawking at Falluja¹¹. We had an early dinner at sunset and slept through the night. We were tired from the caravan's march.

page 009 April 17th

Abu Ghrayb

We were up in the morning today. It was extremely pleasant with a cold westerly wind. The night had been very cold and almost like winter nights. It rained a little at midnight but the morning was nice with clear weather. While we were in our tent Tommy Dexter¹², who is with Colonel Mockler, came to tell us that the Colonel said

he cannot travel today because Mrs. Mockler is in poor health, and so he must halt the journey here. Truthfully, we regretted very much to hear this because today we had planned to travel to Falluja. In the end we had to consent. I asked Colonel Mockler to ride the bicycle for a while. I took it and tried to learn how to ride. Sometimes I fell off and at other times I went on riding. This was the first time in my life that I tried myself on a bicycle and I persisted for almost one hour. I found that I was very fast and I rode by myself without assistance about ten times. When I got off, afterwards I felt tired to the utmost degree and as if all my bones were broken. However, I think that I will learn to ride in time. We were obliged to spend the day here. So at 9:00 Western time we all went to the Sanniya depot across from our campsite and walked around. It has a big roof and some stores containing the provisions of the Sanniya. After breakfast Sheikh Dhaher al-H'mud came to visit and sat in our tent. He is the son of the imam whose shrine we passed yesterday afternoon at 3:00 Western time. The Sheikh, almost 80 years old, as he informed us, seems to be a wise and sensible man. We offered him Basrah dates and he ate some. Then he asked us for eye medicine for his son's sore eyes. We gave him a remedy¹³. Half an hour later he mounted and rode back to his people. The Sheikh had wanted to see Colonel Mockler but he had gone hunting and so the Sheikh left without seeing him. At 1:30 in the afternoon, Colonel Mockler who had been hawking for some five hours, returned from the hunt with twelve francolins. His servant came with two for us but they are very small and have thin meat because it is their nesting season now and they do not hunt this bird at this time. It was 3:00 when I awoke and had tea. Afterwards I went out and toured the desert a little and at sunset Colonel Mockler came to see us and returned to his tents half an hour later.

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April 18th

A nice and joyful morning with clear and cold weather. The night was colder than yesterday. As we planned yesterday, the caravan was prepared to travel to the second station after tea, at 7:45 Western time. Everything was ready and we set out. The queasiness I felt when I was in the mule litter became somewhat less today. We traveled through lands that were pleasant and flowery and nearly all had yellow flowers. Starting from Abu Ghrayb, all the land is full of large and small stones and the plains¹⁴ are even and flat. From there on the desert became a little higher and then lower. At 9:25 we passed a small hill on our left on which a tomb finished with white plaster is built.

Falluja

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Then at 12:15 we reached the village of Falluja, which came into view at a half-hour's distance. Built on the Euphrates River the village has some 400 to 500 souls, has three cafes, two inns, and a small house belonging to Kadhim Pasha¹⁵ who together with Kerop Agha¹⁶ had purchased most of the land here. We approached and crossed the village bridge. It is narrow and made of 25 tarred boats. This was the first time in my life that I saw the Euphrates River from such places. When the caravan arrived, Colonel Mockler said that it would be better to rest for about one hour here and have tiffin¹⁷. Then we will march on for a few more hours because, with the mule litters, the third station is about 10 or 12 hours away. So we agreed, and after taking a light meal, we left Falluja intending to go halfway to the third station. It was then 1:20 in the afternoon. Unlike the dry deserts in the morning the land here is very wet and mostly swamp. At 2:00 Western time we passed near some greenery with 24 date palms, four fig trees and one white berry tree. This place is called the Orchard of the Lady of Sparrows, Bustan Umm al-Asafir. From here on we crossed arched bridges every five minutes, some of which are high and others low. The deserts have turned green, the grass is plentiful, and the lands resemble those of the al-Mi'dan's¹⁸ next to Basrah.

Sin al-Thiban

At 3:50 we passed the date palms of al-Saklawiya¹⁹ on our right with small hills on our left, where one can see the rocks shimmering like far-off diamonds. At last 10 minutes later, we reached our stopping place and camped on the Euphrates River opposite the hills. This place is called the Fly's Tooth, Sin al-Thiban, because the first hill, Tel al-Awwal is located here, so far the very first beyond Baghdad. It was 5:00 in the afternoon and almost sunset when we put up the tents. Here the plains are pleasant. My health declined since morning and I have a severe cold. I got worse at sunset and we will see how I will feel by tomorrow. I went to bed immediately after dinner. The decision was made that tomorrow we will go directly to Ramadi²⁰, the third station.

April 19th

An extremely cold morning with a strong easterly wind. I spent the most miserable night with a fever from sunset until morning and it was extremely cold. I was in agony until daylight. At 7:30 the caravan was prepared to march but since the hill of the Fly's Tooth is nearby, I wanted very much to go and climb it. So at once I took

the horse and went riding towards the hill with the zaptiye. I reached it in a half an hour and wanted to climb it on horseback but the horse refused. I dismounted, left the horse with the zaptiye, and went on foot up the hill which is almost 30 meters high. Then I stayed on top to wait for the caravan. It came into view half an hour later with Colonel Mockler and the riflemen at the front. After coming down Colonel Mockler told me I had just narrowly escaped a grave fate. While I sat motionless on the hilltop wearing clothes the same color as the hill and only my head black, Colonel Mockler, waiting for me at a distance, mistook my head for a bird and took out guns and shells to shoot. But by the will of God, I moved to come downhill at the very moment he was about to shoot. Later when I reached the bottom, I thanked the Creator for averting this disaster. At 7:45 the caravan left yesterday's stopping place. I rode the mount for two hours but afterwards I preferred to ride in the mule litter. At 9:30 I met four people on their way to Baghdad. I immediately recognized one of them who is a realtor²¹ in Baghdad. I asked him to stop while I wrote a few lines to our family in Baghdad. I took out my portfolio at once and wrote as follows, "Our Dear Family, we are very well. Our pace is slow and we are between Falluja and Ramadi. Pray for us and wish us well. Your dutiful Alexander." I then gave him the letter and got in again. The land around here is all dry and not at all pleasant. On our left the chain of hills, near to which we have been continually traveling, never broke off. At 10:00, on our right, we passed some twelve widely-scattered tombs. Having come this far from Baghdad, here we passed under the telegraph²² wire for the first time and continued to travel in its vicinity for about three hours. At 11:00 we passed a large shrine set into the hill to our left. It has one room and some Arabs were inside. It is called Imam Sheikh Mas'oud²³.

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Ramadi

At last, after an exhausting march, we reached the village of Ramadi at 2:00 in the afternoon. We entered through the north gate and exited by the south gate a half an hour later. We marched between the houses all built with mud wattle except for a few built with stone. This village is far more extensive than Falluja, perhaps five times larger and with some 600 souls. Beyond the village we crossed a small river that is eight cubits²⁴ wide, called al-Aziziya, and we set up camp on the desert side of its riverbank. Today upon entering Ramadi all the village people came out of their houses to look at us and we became a quite a spectacle. I was in low spirits to such a degree that even my head felt like it would burst from pain and no sooner had they

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pitched our tent than I took tea and slept for some time. The weather was cloudy and dusty at sunset with a very high wind blowing. It was an utterly unpleasant evening. I did not like our stopping place at all. I went to sleep immediately after dinner. After sunset the Qa'imaqam²⁵ here sent us a few zaptiye to guard us overnight because this place is dangerous. We decided that tomorrow we will travel halfway to al-Hit²⁶, a station some four or five hours away.

April 20th

An extremely unpleasant morning with high winds from the west, blowing as hard as possible. The sand and dust blind us and the weather is overcast and troubled. After I drank tea I felt my health had improved since yesterday evening when I drank a bowl of nousha flower²⁷ tea. At 7:15 we saw a big caravan coming from Aleppo bound for Baghdad, one mule litter with three people inside, two boys, and a woman with dark skin was at the rear. I wanted to send a brief message to our family with this caravan. I asked our guide to find someone he knew to whom he could give the letter. Returning later he asked me to prepare the note, and so I sat down immediately and wrote the following on a visiting card, "Ramadi, Tuesday morning the 20th of April. Our Dear Family. We are all in good health, God permitting, you are as well. We will move on from here in one hour and go to al-Hit. Pray for us and wish us well. We kiss you all. Missing you all, Alexander." I put the letter in an envelope and sent it right away addressed to Uncle Antone, and to be sent on to the Svoboda (Z'boyde) house in Baghdad. At 8:00 we prepared to march but Colonel Mockler had gone to the village to take some photographs. It was 8:15 when we returned and we left Ramadi at once intending to go halfway to al-Hit. So we got the caravan moving at 8:30, and then at 9:30 we came to a place on our right with some 30 date palms. It is called the Orchard of Abu Ajhaysh²⁸. From there we began to march among hills, rugged lands, and ground completely covered with stones. The Arabs of these places are called al-Dulaym²⁹ Arabs. We then passed hills on our left which are called al-Tash. At 11:45 we journeyed down the middle of a very narrow valley. It is the first valley we have passed and it takes about 15 minutes to cross. It is the Valley of Ways al-Qarrani and called Akbah³⁰. When we emerged from the valley we passed the shrine of Imam Wais al-Qarrani³¹ on our right. Here an elderly Arab followed us around. We gave him some alms he begged of us to support the imam of the shrine. Then we began to march amid dry sands but,

thanks be to God, the wind quieted. It had killed us as we made our way so far this morning.

Shariat Abu Rayat

At 1:30 in the afternoon, we came to the banks of the Euphrates River and the place where we will camp until tomorrow. It is called Shariat Abu Rayat³². When we took down the loads and pitched the tents on the riverside, we found the place to be extremely nice and pleasant. It resembles the riversides at Gherara³³, but much better and more pleasant with the greenery and the k'roud³⁴ on the opposite bank. The wind became very cold with a stiff breeze blowing. This is the first time we have made a halt in such a good place. But at sunset many bugs bit us and the gnats were worse. It appears that this night will be as cursed as one could be.

April 21st

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A cold morning with a pleasant westerly wind. Last night was miserable because the insects and gnats tortured me all night long so that I was unable to sleep at all. I awoke in the morning after a sleepless night. After we had tea we prepared ourselves to march. When the caravan was ready, I rode the horse with the zaptiye and went half an hour ahead of all the others because the pace of the mule litter is very slow. At 7:45 we left our stopping place at Abu al-Rayat heading towards al-Hit. At 10:00 we reached a big valley situated between mountains that are all made of marble. We entered, going up and down. This was the first time that I had seen such a place. All the ground seemed like one piece of clean and shiny marble, polished and slippery.

al-Hit

After half an hour we reached the end of this frightening valley, where it is dangerous for the animals to walk and feared by all the muleteers. It is called Akbah al-Hit³⁵. From here on there were more hills and they became higher. We passed between them every five minutes. At 11:05 we crossed a small shallow river wading because there was no bridge. It is three cubits wide and called al-Muhammadi River³⁶. At 11:30 we reached the banks of the Euphrates River and kept following it for almost a half an hour, always amid rocky hills and over endless stones, from Abu Ghayb on. At 11:45 I saw an Arab quickly passing us by mounted on a camel accompanied by one zaptiye. It was the Damascus or the Turkish Post camel³⁷ that takes eight days to come from Damascus to Baghdad, traveling day and night. After a short march, at 12:20, the minaret of al-Hit came into view at a distance and we rode toward it. Starting from here the color of some hills changed to black, the

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black of flowing bitumen. We also passed some places with stagnant water. They said it is from the salt spring we will see at al-Hit. At last, after we had tired of marching, we came to al-Hit at 1:30 in the afternoon. What a stench hangs over the outskirts of the village and such a lot of dirt too! Built on a high mountain, from a distance, the village has a pleasant appearance that resembles European scenes. But let it be known that this is from a distance of a half an hour's march. Coming nearer, the village has a dirty look that distresses the heart and its houses cling to the heights like forts. While here we wished to go and see the springs of bitumen and salt.

Springs of Bitumen and Salt

After we had walked among the dirty hills filled with bitumen we came to the spring and I found it to be lovely, leaving one to wonder at the creations of God Almighty. One sees the gushing bitumen spouting from the earth and pouring out. Likewise, a bluish water flows at the salt spring. It is a sulfur water that hardens when exposed to the air and becomes natural salt. This is the main thing that amazed me. It is such a wonder! We returned immediately afterwards, because we have to spend the night outside the village. So we mounted again and after three quarters of an hour came to our stopping place. An extremely bad smell hangs over and around the village and bitumen here is as abundant as sand³⁸. They even use it to build the orchard fences instead of mud and plaster. Our stopping place for today is nice, facing hills and greenery. The village of al-Hit with its minaret came into view at a distance and they make an extremely fine sight. But the wind is blowing hard and the dust has been blinding us since noon. And of all things that happened to us the worst was the Persian ants³⁹ that, as abundant as sand, invaded our place at sunset and began to bite us like bugs, if not worse! We are afraid they will disturb us at night.

April 22nd

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A nice humid morning, and the night was fine and cool. I slept very well. The ants did not climb into our beds, thanks be to God. At 7:45 we left our stopping place and headed toward the next station. After we set out at 9:45 we passed a small, extremely nice island on our right, with a ruined house and a date palm orchard. The sight of it from the bank is quite lovely and here they call it al-Flaywi⁴⁰. Today our entire march stretched between hills and rugged places with climbs and descents. It is not an easy road and tires the riding animals.

al-Baghdadi

At last, at 2:30 in the afternoon, we reached our stopping place for the day. It is also situated on the Euphrates River and called al-Baghdadi⁴¹. We are continuously surrounded by hills and mountains, but in the past the hills have not been as high as they were today. Perhaps the higher we climb the higher the hills will become. Here I saw the water wheel⁴². It is used instead of the kroud and is like some sort of huge round lid with pots made of clay around it. The river current turns the wheel and empties out onto the land. It is a truly fine device, more useful than the jerd, and also quicker in pouring the water. There are several water wheels along these banks and the sound of their turning comes with the wind from afar. Today we passed more flowery lands than before.

April 23rd

Nice, clear weather today with a cold and windy morning and a cold night too, colder than yesterday. After tea it turned 7:45 and we loaded our things and rode to the next stopping place. We traveled close to the hills and, after half an hour, entered big valleys and rugged places that are extremely dangerous, especially for the mule litter. At 8:45 we passed, on the other bank to our right, a small orchard with about 100 or 200 date palms, called al-Ju'ana⁴³. Half an hour later we passed a place called Jubba⁴⁴ and then entered among valleys. Next there were rocky mountains on which the animals' legs slip quite easily. Thus, from al-Baghdadi until Haditha⁴⁵ we continually marched up and down between high mountains and valleys. This stage was the most difficult to accomplish so far. At last, at 4:30 in the afternoon, we came to Haditha.

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Haditha

It is a small village built long ago in the middle of the river, on an island surrounded by water. One hour before coming to our halting place a chain of islands in the river appeared all planted with date palms and mulberry trees. It makes a lovely view from the bank. So far this stage was the farthest we had traveled in a day. Today as I went up and down the mountains I caught sight of several kinds of birds including partridges, storks, and the magpie which resembles a small crow when it flies and has black and white wings and tail. There were several kinds of flowers such as anemones, another resembling a kind of nousha and stock flowers as well. In some of these areas are crops such as barley and the plains appear to be a carpet in their abundance. There are a number of other varieties that look and smell nice too. One

variety, with only leaves and no flowers, has a very strong smell similar to that of fragrant mint. Around here they call this wormwood. Like the camel thorn it is plentiful and the animals enjoy eating it. We were exhausted by today's march because the terrain and the climbs were extremely tiring and at some places we had to get out of the mule litter. The village of Haditha is extremely poor whereas Ramadi and al-Hit are far better off. A wooden barge⁴⁶ reserved for people to cross is available and departs every other hour. The current is very strong and the water wheels become more numerous so that one water wheel appears every fifty cubits. We encamped in an unpleasant area because all the lands here are cultivated and the crops are ripening. Truthfully I am very tired of this exhausting travel because it lacks comfort and settling down. We can rest only two or three hours a day.

page 019 April 24th

This morning is nice and cold with a westerly wind blowing and the night was cool. After we prepared to march I mounted the horse and, with the zaptiye called Abbas, rode ahead of the caravan at 7:30. For the first two hours we marched along the banks of the Euphrates River and afterwards we started to traverse the mountains. Our march in the mountains lasted for about two hours on a kind of white sand resembling lime. At 11:00, I dismounted and sat down at the foot of a mountain near some water. I waited for the caravan here and it arrived half an hour later. I got into the mule litter and we traveled on.

Fahaymi

At 1:10 in the afternoon we came to our next stopping place, which is called al-Fahaymi, a nice riverbank along the Euphrates. Beyond it is an outpost where four zaptiye are posted to keep watch on the road. But, in the middle of the river and opposite our tents is a long and narrow island with low greenery and a fairly nice view. It lies some 25 cubits away from the riverbank. Here the current of the Euphrates River is slower than at previous places. When we arrived at al-Fahaymi⁴⁷, we caught sight of what seemed to be two low minarets on the high river bluffs. These were made by order of Midhat Pasha⁴⁸ as a landmark to guide travelers.

April 25th

A cold morning today, much colder than yesterday. Yesterday we decided to set out early today, and so at 7:00 sharp the caravan was ready and I mounted the horse and rode into the desert. An hour later I rode in the mule litter because as soon as we

reach 'Ana⁴⁹ I will ride out to see the village. Today our march went better than yesterday's and the march the day before. We climbed mountains only three or four times. At 10:00 we passed a small orchard called Haniya on the other bank to our right. At 10:30 while traveling on the mountain we saw riders on their way to Baghdad. We approached and suddenly noticed Mudhaffar Bey⁵⁰, the son of Nasret Pasha⁵¹, with his retinue. He had come from Aleppo for the inheritance of his father who had passed away five months ago in Baghdad.

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'Ana

At 11:30 the date palms of 'Ana came into view. We arrived at noon. The village is a pleasant sight and its houses look strange because their doors are no taller than one and a half cubits and all the houses are in a single row. Also, the village has just one street but the view of the village from the river is quite lovely because it lies among orchards, trees, and date palms that cheer the heart. This is the best of all the villages I have seen until now. One hour after nearing the end of it, we came to the center of the village and here we found ourselves a beautiful stopping place situated on the river among trees and date palms and facing a water wheel on the Euphrates. The caravan arrived at 1:30 in the afternoon and we set up camp here. Our halting place is truly very nice and pleasant. After our arrival I wrote a few letters to Baghdad and dispatched them with the zaptiye to the Qa'imaqam to be sent by post. The zaptiye returned and said the letters would be sent the day after tomorrow. When we entered 'Ana today all the village people were standing at their doors and on the street looking at us. I found their children very dutiful, with smiling faces. One hour before our arrival here, a major with 12 zaptiye came to meet us. They made a formal salute to Colonel Mockler because the Wali of Baghdad⁵² had instructed the local Qa'imaqam to observe the necessary courtesies. Afterwards when we set up the tents at sunset the Qa'imaqam Derwish Effendi⁵³ came to visit Colonel Mockler himself.

April 26th

A cold morning with the easterly wind now still. The night was very cold and damp. After tea we prepared ourselves to ride to the next station. So at 7:15 Western time, I mounted the horse and rode ahead. I kept riding for almost an hour and a quarter always on the only road along the riverside at 'Ana. Truthfully, I was very tired of riding in the village because it takes nearly two hours from beginning to end. At last I exited and came to a road that follows the base of the mountains. It was

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frightening because the mountain here is steep and split in two parts, one of them looming over the road. I rode for nearly two hours alongside the river. After this I came to a high mountain and rode on slippery footing among the rocks. Later at 11:00 I got into the mule litter. Thus we continued to march, sometimes among mountains and at other times on even and flat terrain. Truthfully, traversing the mountains is very difficult and tiring.

al-Nahiyya

At 2:00 in the afternoon we came to a place on the riverbank that is green with tamarisk and thickets. From here the military post of al-Nahiyya⁵⁴ came into view. The stifling heat worsened here with the burning sun. The wind from the East that had been still since morning tormented us so much that it became impossible to remain in the mule litter so we rode the animals. At 3:15 we came to al-Nahiyya, but before we arrived we caught sight of some tents and riding animals. Upon inquiring we learned that a major was coming from Aleppo on his way to Baghdad with his wife and two mule litters. And that another one, traveling alone, was on his way to Najaf. Upon our arrival here we chose a site that seemed good for camp and we dismounted to await the caravan. It arrived two hours later and we pitched the tents. Today's journey stage was thoroughly exhausting because the heat bothered everyone and our campsite here is not nice like previous sites. Our tents are twenty cubits away from the river because the ground is wet, salty, and soft. There is only a military post here, like the one at al-Fahaymi with a few zaptiye. For two days we observed that the riverbanks along the Euphrates are all cultivated with barley and wheat, and the grasses have grown very well this year. However the owners of the crops in this region are always frightened. They told us that the Bedouin attack when they harvest the crops and take all they have obtained from their toil.

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April 27th

A sultry morning with an easterly wind and some clouds. The night was hot and stuffy. Since yesterday we have hoped for rain to surely follow this stuffiness. At 6:00 in the morning the wind turned to the west and the day improved. At 7:15 we left al-Nahiyya heading to al-Qa'im⁵⁵. We traveled toward the riverside amid camel thorn and tamarisk. Afterwards we climbed mountains and then descended to the riverbank. Here the riverbank is very nice because it resembles the outskirts of Baghdad's deserts, all green with tamarisk and other vegetation. While walking by the river, I flushed some francolins. It has been ten days since I have seen or heard

francolins in these regions. The Turanian pigeons and sand grouse⁵⁶ are abundant here and the farther I go the more flocks of birds I see ahead of me. They are very tame. Truthfully I very much regretted that I had not brought fowling pieces with me. I would have been able to take a lot of game over the course of our journey. This is the first stopping place that I find so pleasant. At 3:00 in the afternoon we arrived at the military post of al-Qa'im.

al-Qa'im

The military post resembles the one at al-Nahiyya and it came into view an hour's march away. On arriving here we found a nice campsite on the river and we unloaded and pitched the tents. Our place is truly nice and it resembles the outskirts of Ctesiphon or the land above Gherara. In front of us on the other bank the krouds are running. We saw the last of the water wheels four hours before arriving here and we saw no more of them, since no one here makes their equal. After we settled in the west wind blew hard and hot. Thanks be to God, we are near al-Dayr and only three stages remain. There was a stifling wind at sunset and it became hot.

April 28th

A cold and serene morning with a nice westerly wind. But it was an extremely accursed night with a still wind until after midnight. The gnats killed me all night long. I did not sleep for a minute nor did I close an eye until morning and I got up very much in need of sleep. However, it became lovely at dawn and the morning was exceedingly fresh. So far I have not seen such a day. After tea I took the horse and rode with the zaptiye toward the next stopping place. It was 7:00 and I decided not to dismount until I reached the station. So on I went, sometimes along the riverbank and at other times far away from it, amid tamarisk and greenery, with the soul-cheering cry of the francolins and an extremely fresh wind blowing. We had never seen such a morning since the day we left Baghdad, nor had we seen such a nice and cool road. Until 8:30 I could still see the military post of al-Qa'im behind us. At 9:15 we passed a fairly low lying land where the authority of Baghdad ends and the jurisdiction of the governor of Aleppo begins. The borders of Baghdad only come to here. Along this bank of the river and in front of us on the other bank the hills give way to the beginning of a flat, even terrain, green with tamarisk and grass. Thus our entire journey for today was on level terrain with only a slight incline.

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Abu Kemal

At 11:00 we came to new buildings by the riverbank. They are very nicely built and we understood that a new village is under construction here to replace the village of Abu Kemal⁵⁷, which is our stopping place for today. At 11:45 we arrived at the military post of Abu Kemal. The village is extremely poor with nothing but a few mud-wattle houses and some shops and 350 souls. In three or four years it will be far better than Ramadi, al-Hit, or 'Ana because it is constructed in the manner of modern buildings. Today I saw lots of locusts in the thickets, as abundant as worms. They are all Najdi yellow like the kind they eat at Basrah. From a distance one could mistake them for bits of straw that have been strewn about! The caravan and the mule litter arrived one hour after I arrived here. We camped on dry ground far away from the river. I discovered a caravan that had come from Damascus bound for Baghdad. I sent a letter with it addressed to our family telling them about our health. The heat became stronger at noon and the wind changed bringing clouds. At sunset too the weather was unfortunate and dry.

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April 29th

An extremely cold morning, colder than any other day with thick clouds and an easterly wind blowing. The night was cursed with gnats until morning and the wind was still until sunrise. Again, I did not sleep at all from night until morning and am waiting to see how this coming night will be. We were up at 5:30, drank tea, and at 7:00 left Abu Kemal to move on to our next stopping place. We continued to march amid greenery, mulberry trees, and tamarisk, all high and tall until 10:30. Then I got out of the mule litter and rode the horse. I rode towards some Arab tents at the side of the road and asked them for some shinina⁵⁸. A woman brought me some in a sheepskin. I drank as much as I could and returned the rest, thanking her. The Arabs here are very friendly and amiable with strangers as well as generous with guests.

al-Salihyya

I returned from the Arabs' tents heading for the military post of al-Salihyya, our stopping place, and arrived there at 1:00 in the afternoon. Half an hour later the caravan arrived and we made camp on the bank of the Euphrates River in front of the military post, a very old building with few zaptiye. Today's site is nice but the ground is extremely dusty and sandy. From Abu Kemal to al-Salihyya we never went up a hill or a mountain nor did we travel on rocky ground. The entire road was very

nice amid the shade of the tamarisk and the ground was even and flat. This was the first time we traveled such a road which did not tire us at all. At five before (after)noon, my father and I went to a high mountain only half an hour from the camp. We wanted to see what seemed, from a distance, to be an old construction on the mountaintop⁵⁹. We came to the foot of the mountain and climbed up. The mountain was high, about 200 meters in height, and when we came to its summit we saw very old ruins and ancient buildings that, as some say, could be as old as 1500 years if not even older. Apparently, this place was the outer wall of a city that was built here and the buildings are buried in the sand. Fully round in shape, the circumference of all the ruins comes to nearly 50 thousand meters and the construction is that of powerful people. The rocks are very carefully laid one on top of the other without plaster or mud. Here we came across Colonel Mockler who had also come up to look at this old city. We returned at sunset impressed by the ancient site.

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April 30th

An extremely cold and clear morning with a fresh wind. The night was cold too. However, I slept under the mosquito netting for fear of the tiresome gnats. Thanks be to God, I slept delightfully until morning. At 7:00 Colonel Mockler said that he does not intend to make the whole journey stage today and that he will travel only for about 6 hours. He wanted to go once more to the mountaintop with the ruins we saw yesterday in order to tell his wife about them. And so we all mounted and we went directly to the mountain, but not by the usual road that goes to the left. The caravan with the mule litters went on to the stopping place. Approaching the foot of the mountain I climbed up on horseback, and together we toured around the ruins. I saw several more places than yesterday and I went into a place that looks like a military fort, passing between arches built of small rocks. I noticed, written on one arch, names of the tourists who visited these places. Of these I recall two. One is *V. Duvent 1890* and the other *Frédéric Korben 1887*. I wrote my name too with the date and we toured the whole place. Even the gate of the big wall is a nice thing. At 10:00 we left this place going out through the gate to catch up with the caravan.

al-Showayt

We continued to march among rugged places, rocks, and stones and then we came down into a big valley looking for the caravan. At last, we were able to catch sight of it at 1:30 in the afternoon. We rode to the stopping place of al-Showayt⁶⁰ together.

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Upon arriving we unloaded the baggage and pitched the tents at 2:00. A high cliff is across from us. The other bank is very far away and the current of the river is not fast here. From here to 'Ana, we had much trouble changing money. All the Arabs only take piasters⁶¹ and do not know about the majidi or the quarter-majidi⁶². Although they will accept the majidi as worth 72 piasters, it is impossible for anyone to buy anything without piasters. The name of the piaster is also unknown to them. At 'Ana they call it metlik⁶³, which is worth three Baghdadi piasters. Whereas between here and al-Qa'im, the metlik is called ashari⁶⁴ and is worth one piaster. In short, it is very exasperating to buy things here. The four piaster coin is not known as money here but as jewelry for their women to hang on the forehead. From here to al-Nahiyya the Arab women all spoil their looks by tattooing their lower lips and they consider it shameful if a woman has not done so, but it is truly very ugly and spoils their looks. The people of these places are very poor and strive desperately for money. They are as dirty as could be. Yesterday when we dismounted at al-Salhiyah, several Arab women came to us carrying sheepskins of shinina that they sell very cheap, that is to say, for one piaster each or at most two. From Baghdad to here, eggs are also cheap and we never bought less than eight or nine for one qamari⁶⁵ but vegetables are not available at all and the bread, which is black and thick in these areas, is extremely miserable.

May 1st

It was a cold morning, colder than any other day, and it seems that the higher we go the colder it becomes. The night was cold too, colder than yesterday. At 7:15 we left al-Showayt and we marched on an even flat land resembling Baghdad's lands, but always keeping the mountains on our left. Here the kroud grew more numerous on the banks of the Euphrates and there are also many wide sandbanks in the river. At *page 027* 12:15, we arrived at the village of al-Mayadin⁶⁶, which came into view one hour and a half's march away.

al-Mayadin

We saw the village mulberry trees first. I found it a big town, bigger than all the others we passed except al-'Ana. Some of the houses are built on high ground and are like those at al-Hit. Mostly they are well built with baked bricks, plaster, and large doors made in the usual manner. Everything is available here. Several kinds of food and clothing, white bread, meat, and other things. At 1:00 in the afternoon we found a place to stop. The caravan encamped on a high, dry bank facing an

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extremely wide, green riverbank. From here we have maybe just eight hours left until al-Dayr, where we will ride tomorrow morning, God permitting. The stifling heat grew worse in the afternoon, with black rain-filled clouds. We had only just arrived at 2:30 when a downpour hit us along with an extremely strong westerly wind, drenching us all. The rain came into the tent and soaked the beds. It continued for nearly 15 minutes with flashes of lightening and loud claps of thunder. It stopped raining half an hour later and the wind lessened but the desert became muddy and impossible to cross. This rain cloud did a lot of damage since we are in such a place with absolutely no shelter. The wind was still blowing as before but the weather has cleared a little and the sun came out. However, if the rain comes again, we will be totally lost and we are worried about the night. Passing by al-Mayadin we saw buildings on the mountaintop on our left that are extremely old and bigger than those we saw yesterday. I wanted to go and look if it were not for this damned weather that prevented me. Some say that these places built so long ago are called rahabah or rahabut⁶⁷ as is written in the Old Testament. They are about 2500 to 2800 years old and truly worth seeing. Colonel Mockler, who had been to see them this morning, said that on some of the walls there are Syriac⁶⁸ engravings, one depicts a lion with a human figure underneath and other things. I regret that I did not see these places.

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Chapter 3

Arrival at Dayr al-Zawr

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May 2

A COLD MORNING with a strong westerly wind blowing. The night was extremely cold and wet. We were up at 5:30 and after drinking tea we gathered the ropes, tents, and everything else and loaded them onto the animals. At 7:15 we rode toward Dayr al-Zawr leaving al-Mayadin behind us in a half hour. We marched on even, flat terrain, resembling the wilds around Baghdad, always keeping the chain of hills on our right. We found the ground wet after yesterday's rainfall but after two hours' march the desert appeared dry. The rain had only been in our vicinity. Thus we traveled on, sometimes through cultivated lands and sometimes over arid lands. At 9:30 we passed through the region of the Khabur River¹, but we could not see it in the distance. At last, at [...] in the afternoon, we came to a sandy region and here we were hit by a strong gust of wind mixed with sand and dust that nearly blinded us. We passed through it in just half an hour.

Dayr al-Zawr

At 2:00 in the afternoon the town of Dayr al-Zawr came into view in the distance. We continued to march between small hills behind which the town would sometimes vanish and then reappear. Truly, I was overcome by joy when we approached a half hour's distance because 17 days of travel through the desert, always among the nomads, and never seeing any of our own kind had saddened my heart. Then, when we were one quarter of an hour away, the town came into full view, resembling the entrance to Baghdad from Bab al-Mo'adhham². In this moment I remembered my homeland and everything there. Because Colonel Mockler was at the head of the caravan, he was received by the zaptiye battalion commandant³ and the chief of the municipality along with ten zaptiye⁴ who led us to the edge of town. A large crowd, a great number of men and boys, were at the town

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gate watching us. I was very pleased to find a few Christians among the boys I was able to speak to them in Arabic and asked about things in the town and other topics. Just then they told us that we would have to be inspected for the plague before entering and the military physician must examine us. We all stopped and they sent the men and boys away. The physician came and examined every one of us by feeling under the armpit. A woman came also to examine the women. A few minutes later we entered the town and people were still coming to look at us. Truthfully, the way they had examined us is quite ridiculous because it was done with some kind of mockery. Both physicians did nothing more than lay their hands on us and say, "Go, you have nothing." That is also some kind of Turkish business. In the end, as my eyes passed over the group of people looking from one person to the next, Razouk Dinha whom I know very well from his time in Baghdad and Basrah appeared right in front of me! I was so pleased as we greeted each other, remembering my time in Baghdad, I talked to him all the while I walked. I learned that Colonel Mockler decided to camp in the municipality orchard, at the invitation of the chief of the municipality. He was unable to decline. At last we entered through the market, roofed over like an orchard trellis. We arrived at a very long and wide road, nearly 20 cubits in width and paved in European order. It is a thousand times better than the roads of Baghdad. Here there is never any mud on the roads. Next to the wall is a marble irrigation canal which they use to sprinkle the long road and nearby few small mulberry trees are planted. It appears that this road will be extremely pleasant in due time. Coming to the orchard gate we saw that the road had been sprinkled with water and military people were waiting for us. The chief of the municipality received us very cordially. We entered a well-designed and furnished office. When the caravan arrived we put up the tents in a pleasant place in the orchard. The orchard has many pomegranate trees and other greenery, like bean plants and ...[illegible]⁵. Among the people here, I also recognized Thomas Ossany⁶ who came from Baghdad 11 months ago with Razouk Dinha. He asked me many things about Baghdad. After we settled in I wanted to go to church because they told me there are two of them here. It is also the month of Holy Devotions to Mary⁷ and I wanted to hear them. So I took mother and Razouk with me to the Armenian Catholic Church⁸. I found it very pleasing, decorated, and rather small, holding no more than 50 to 70 people. All the pictures and statues inside are lovely and I very much liked it. After hearing the prayers of the month of Holy Devotions to Mary we returned to the tents. After dinner at sunset Razouk came to spend the

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evening with us. He invited us for lunch at his house tomorrow and we promised to come. It became cold and damp at sunset.

May 3

Dayr al-Zawr

Today we got up as usual and drank tea. The night was stuffy and the morning likewise. At 8:30 I went with Colonel Mockler to visit the church I saw yesterday and we met the priest, named Father Narciss. We also met the Syriac Parson Yaqoub who heads the Syriac sect here. As we were leaving the priests expressed their desire to visit us. Colonel Mockler said he would be available in one hour. So we returned to the camp. Half an hour later, Razouk and Tommy Ossany came to visit us followed by the priests with Sa'id Effendi⁹, brother of Archbishop Ignatius¹⁰ in Baghdad. They received two letters about us. Half an hour later they left and went to visit Colonel Mockler. I wanted to bathe, shave, and get a haircut. I seized the opportunity, took my clothes, and went to the bath run by Antone, the son of Batti al-Baghdadi. I went to a barber for a haircut and a shave. I went to bathe afterwards and I found it pleasant, hot, and paved with marble. Returning to our place an hour later I found Touza, Jarjous's wife¹¹ and the sister of our friend Archbishop Basil¹², who was in Baghdad seven years ago. They came to visit us with the wife of the municipal physician. They are very nice people and speak softly with extreme politeness. It turned 12:30 and they were still with us. At last they left and we set out at once for Razouk's where we also found the Armenian priest who joined us for lunch. They served lamb and kubba mosul¹³. We returned at 2:30 when I took the opportunity to write these lines. Afterwards I went to see the town. On my way back I went to the place of Anton Baghdibaghdassar with whom I was able to strike up a friendship when I arrived here yesterday. He is a nice man from Damascus, about 27 years old. He owns a big shop where he sells everything. He offered me a sherbet and I bought some apricot jam from him. Later, I went with Colonel Mockler to tour the town and returned at sunset. I went to bed after dinner.

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May 4th

Dayr al-Zawr

Unlike before, this morning was moderately cold and it became somewhat hot. The night was not as cold as yesterday. We awoke and drank tea and decided to visit the guests who had called on us yesterday. I left the orchard with my mother and father

and we went to visit the Armenian Father Narciss. His sister-in-law, the wife of Jarjis Dikran, came also. After a long talk we left and went to visit Archbishop Basil's sister. She received us very nicely and offered us citron¹⁴ jam followed by coffee and sherbet. We stayed for one hour and then went to visit the wife of Monsieur Salim, the municipality physician. And again, welcoming us graciously they showed us to the guest area and offered us several kinds of jam and sweets followed by coffee. Then she brought in two dishes of sugared and plain nuts that she divided and placed in our pockets, as is the custom. Truthfully we found that only the notables of Dayr are urbane and receive guests with a cordial welcome. We left at 11:00 Western time and I went with Razouk Dinha to tour the markets and other places. I went to all the streets and also went to the palace¹⁵ where I saw all the rooms. I was astonished to see that Dayr is built like this. I returned one hour later. Several women of Dayr came to visit us after breakfast, as did the wife of Sa'id Effendi, Archbishop Ignatius's brother, with some of her relatives. The dress of some of Dayr's women is quite hideous. They put a thing like a golden bowl made over their heads with pieces of cloth the size of a hand covered with pearls which dangle over their ears. Most of them also wear a white veil. There are no more than 70 or 80 Christian households here. In the afternoon, the people of the municipality and the military officials wanted Colonel Mockler to show them his bicycle. He ordered Tom Dexter to ride it in the street. People came and gathered around to such an extent that no room was left for the bicycle to go. Then seeing the bicycle, they were all utterly astonished and amazed, having heard of it only few days before our arrival here, and all were shouting, "The iron horse, the iron horse!" At 3:00 in the afternoon I went to Razouk's place and while talking to Doctor Salim I learned that Parson Yaqoub has an organ at the church. I was so very pleased and I wanted to play, remembering my own organ and my days in Baghdad. So we left Razouk at 5:00 and went, Doctor Salim and I, to Parson Yaqoub's place. He received us very warmly and I found the organ. I played the tunes I knew and, at that moment, I remembered Baghdad and the times when I used to sit in our big room and play my organ. I left the Parson's at sunset and returned to the tents. After dinner and sunset at 8:30 Doctor Salim and his wife came to spend the evening with us, leaving three hours later.

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May 5

This morning is like yesterday's and so was the night. There are lots of flies here and our tent is filled with thousands of them. At 7:30, we made a visit to the family of Sa'id Effendi, Archbishop Ignatius' brother. They honored us as the others had done. Returning afterwards I went with my mother to visit Parson Yaqoub and see the Syriac Church. On our way we met Touza Jarjous and she went with us to visit the Parson. We found the church nice and small but not decorated like the Armenian Church. When we returned, we understood that Colonel Mockler decided to travel today. So we prepared our baggage for traveling to Damascus. We hired three camels to carry water for the Consul and for us because no fresh water is available on the road to Damascus. Then all the people we met here came to bid us goodbye and they were very sad at our parting. They showed us the true meaning of friendship and wished us the very best journey. At 2:00 in the afternoon we packed the tents and our things. Then we strapped the trunks shut. The mules came an hour later and as we loaded them I felt as though I were on my way out of Baghdad. At 3:30 the caravan was prepared to move. I draped my kaffiyah over my head, left the orchard, and said goodbye to everyone I know. The Mutasarrif¹⁶ of this place sent twelve fully armed zaptiye to escort Colonel Mockler.

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Chapter 4

***Departure from Dayr al-Zawr and
the Journey to Damascus***

I MOUNTED THE HORSE and the caravan went ahead with all the travelers, the Zhair family, and the Director of Palmyra. When I neared the end of town heading toward the barren desert¹ where we will surely spend some 12 to 15 days. Because this is the last moment I will be on the banks of the dear Euphrates, and especially as I will be gone for some time, I wanted very much to drink its water one last time. So I went to a house and asked them for some water. I drank a little, turned towards the Euphrates, and said, "I commend you to God's protection, O Euphrates. When will we meet again, will it be soon or later?" Since both Razouk Dinha and Tony Ossany had accompanied us, I bade them goodbye outside the town. We marched on, distancing ourselves little by little until Dayr was out of sight.

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al-Malhah

We decided to travel three hours today and go to a place called al-Malhah². Finally we arrived at 6:00, just before sunset. We unpacked the tents and set up camp in a barren desert. A spring with flowing water is next to us on the right but it is fouled by the animals coming to drink.

May 6

Today we were up at 4:00 in the morning because Colonel Mockler said yesterday that we would have to march in the early hours. But saying this is useless, because he likes to sleep in and does not wake up until sunrise. Finally at 6:15 we moved out of al-Malhah and headed toward a dry and barren land without a single green plant. We marched steadily with nothing to be seen but earth and sky. It is true what they say that "There is no land but the land of Damascus." Because if one travels without fresh water one will undoubtedly perish.

al-Qebaqeb

At last at 2:15 in the afternoon we came to the military post of al-Qebaqeb³, a small fort built in the middle of the desert with a well nearby that is six fathoms deep. But what water! First all the animals such as sheep, camels, and mules drink from it. Secondly it has a bitter and foul taste that is barely tolerable. So we camped opposite the fort. We greatly miss the sight of the Euphrates and the taste of its fresh water. Dismounting and settling in, we wanted to open one of the waterskins we brought on the camels but we found that the sheepskin was newly tanned and the water inside had become green and is wasted. Truthfully we very much regretted this incident and we are also afraid that the amount of water may not be sufficient for us because tomorrow's station⁴ is quite distant according to some, nearly 18 hours away. We are obliged to stay here until noon tomorrow and then we will travel in stages. The wind changed and clouds came.

page 035 *May 7*

A pleasant but cloudy morning. We woke at 6:15 and awaited our departure. After tea I used spare moments to write several letters to our family and friends in Baghdad which I would send at the first opportunity. Finally we woolgathered until 11:00, and then we ate breakfast hastily, and started to tie on the loads. At 12:00 noon we picked up and rode. We marched steadily for about two hours under a scorching sun but afterwards it grew cloudy with a westerly wind and became cool and chilly. After marching for four hours over gravelly ground in a dry and barren desert without a single bird to be seen, but always with distant hills to our right, the caravan in front halted and they said that signs of raiders were seen at a distance coming in our direction to plunder us. All the soldiers, the zaptiye, and the travelers, some 25 persons gathered and we sent out one armed man to gather information about those coming toward us. We arranged the entire caravan and the mule litters in a tight group and continued to march. Half an hour later the messenger returned and told us that nearly 50 bedouins⁵ were fleeing, thinking that we, being the larger group, were raiders coming in pursuit of them. Thus we put our trust in God and rode on until the sun had set and darkness spread.

Muhayfir

At 7:00 we passed Muhayfir⁶ which consists of a site where a well was dug without reaching water. The government of the Ottomans spent 400 pounds to this end. As no water was found, it was abandoned. We unloaded the baggage at 8:15. It was

intensely dark. Then we pitched our tent temporarily and after a hasty meal went to sleep fully dressed because we will rise early tomorrow.

May 8

A cold and a damp twilight. We awoke at 3:30 after midnight to get ready to march. It was an unfortunate night, with dark clouds and rain for about an hour at midnight. The desert became cold and the air was damp. We readied ourselves to march and then at 5:00 we mounted and left our camp traveling to al-Safna⁷ where water is potable. Our march was very nice and pleasant with a spring breeze that always cheers the heart. We journeyed for a long time through deserts like those we crossed yesterday. Then the weather cleared and the wind changed to the west. Because we brought camels with us to carry the water, I wanted to ride one. So I immediately made one camel kneel down and mounted its back. Tom Dexter did likewise, and then we went out amid the caravan with everybody laughing at us. I rode for about two hours and afterwards Mrs. Mockler, Mr. Mockler, and papa all rode it, each in turn. I found its gait pleasant but jerks the rider back when it gets to its feet.

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al-Sukhna

We continued to march. Sometimes I rode and at other times I went on foot until exactly 12:00 noon when we came to a small village called Sukhna which consists of no more than a few houses built of mud, resembling those at al-Kerrada⁸, with a nearby dwelling for the soldiers who protect the inhabitants. Before arriving here we passed mountains on our right, high and pleasant to view and white as if gypsum were flowing down from them. Here we also found, near to the village, small rain-fed fields. We set up camp opposite three orchards with pomegranate and willow trees but they were quite bare. We saw many springs around us too, some big and others small, but all are sulphur springs with drinkable water though some are warm and others are hot. The weather became hot with a strong sun.

May 9

A cold morning with a high, damp wind. We got up at 4:00 and changed our clothes. The night was good and not very cold but since midnight the wind blew hard. Though Colonel Mockler had said that today we would march at sunrise we moved out much later, and right at 6:00 we left al-Sukhna heading towards the next stopping place. So we rode with the caravan and marched steadily, sometimes over

even and flat lands and at other times through deserts with bad footing, full of stones and extremely difficult to walk on, with hills and mountains surrounding us. There is nothing worth mentioning along our way except for arid land like before. Then at 10:00 we came across a few Arabs on their way to al-Sukhna. It became *page 037* hotter and the sun burned harshly. However we marched steadily on although troubled by the torments of this road which is truly tiring and exasperating.

Riqa'

At 1:30 in the afternoon the station of Riqa'⁹, our stopping place, came into view in the distance. In the area we saw nearly 100 large tents made of felt belonging to the Shammar¹⁰ Arabs. Their camels, numerous as worms, are teeming in these dry lands where only gazelles, which never get thirsty, can live. These Arabs came here this morning and they intend to go on to other lands. Their Sheikh is Fahad ibn Adghaym ibn Haddal¹¹ whose home is beyond Palmyra, some 12 hours away from here. Approaching the Arabs we passed among them looking for somewhere to stop the caravan and dismount. We found a nice place, high on a hilltop overlooking all the lands below, with the zaptiye station next to us. There are many water springs here, far better than those at al-Sukhna where the water is nauseating like the water of the wells in Baghdad houses which I could never drink without torment. Thus we found the water better here, cleaner and more palatable. However it does not resemble the fine water of the Euphrates whose equal, I think, is found nowhere else in all the world and its freshness is unforgettable. What a pity it is to be far from the Euphrates. Here I saw a water spring flowing wondrously beneath the rocks in a cave deep inside a high mountain. Its water is extremely clear but with a taste of sulfurous gas. A very beautiful sight. At the Arabs' camp I saw the howdaj¹², which is a long seat placed on the camel's back and ridden in by their women. One hour before sunset I wanted to tour the area and the Arabs' camp. At first I went down to watch the harvesters reaping excellent barley. Then I saw a spring of clear water flowing from the depths of the mountain, an extremely beautiful sight. We went to observe the Arabs. Climbing up a mountain I caught sight of the mountain of Palmyra¹³ where we will go tomorrow. I returned at sunset and the weather became cold and damp. We decided to set off in the morning and travel to the famous city of Palmyra.

May 10

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A cold morning with a west wind blowing. The night was pleasant and damp. We were up at 4:00, packed the tents at 5:30, and rode toward Palmyra. We marched steadily, at first traveling for about one hour between hills and mountains and then on regular, level land where the desert was hard and dry. At 7:00 the town of Palmyra came into view in the distance. First we caught sight of glittering rock pillars whose story will come later. On the way we passed many Arabs from the Aniza¹⁴. They are going with their cattle to Riqqa' to make offerings and celebrate the Muslim Feast of Sacrifices¹⁵ with their Sheikhs.


Tadmur *Palmyra*

We marched on steadily always in view of Palmyra which took only until 11:30 Western time. We then reached these amazingly ancient and wondrous sites. The first thing we saw were the oddly shaped pillars and we passed between them looking for a place to halt and dismount. In the end we camped near a big arch with two smaller arches at the sides and about 20 pillars standing in a row to the left of the arch's entryway. Some say the construction of these ancient temples is as much as 3600 years old, while others say it is much older. The site of the temples and other structures is as large as Baghdad and is bound on the right by very high mountains, higher than all others we have seen. Four columns, about 30 or 40 cubits in height, each made of one block of fine porphyry, stand in front of the big arch. It boggles the mind how they could have cut this stone and made it stand upright. It is a thing impossible for anyone to explain without seeing it. In the afternoon I left to go around and look at one part of the ruins. First I went to the structures nearest us and came upon a temple that is rather small but amazingly built. The size of every dressed block of stone used in its construction is no less than five cubits long and two cubits wide and each stone is placed one on top of the other. Four big columns with small protruding ledges attached stand at the entrance of this place. On one of the ledges I was able to see an inscription in Greek and very difficult to read, like these letters that I copied literally from the stone. $\mu \alpha \lambda \eta \nu \tau \omicron \rho \alpha \delta \epsilon \chi \tau$

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A different inscription that Colonel Mockler said to be Palmyrene script is engraved at the right edge of the ledge and written like this. $\alpha \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu \nu$


Then we left and went to another place. We came to a big gate at least 30 or 40 cubits long and 20 or 25 wide and built like this, \square that is to say with only three blocks of marble stone. From top to bottom it is decorated and carved entirely in

the patterns of the ancients, a thing that one may not notice unless one sees it himself. Several columns like this,  stand to the sides of this wondrous gate, with blocks of stone set on top, each no less than seven or ten cubits long and only a single stone block is laid between every two columns. The columns' capitals are all carved in relief with flowers and other patterns, but these carvings will weather and be damaged with time. There are ever so many walls in this site, ruined and fallen to the ground with the stones covering the whole area. Also many columns had fallen and were left on the ground because no one could lift them due to their size. Speaking of the columns, most are 25 to 30 cubits high with shafts made of three blocks of stone placed one on top of the other and the circumference of each column, each no less than 7 or 8 cubits, can barely be encircled by four men. Here the ground is sandy littered with large and small rocks, ruined walls, and columns that have fallen to the ground. Opposite the ruins of Palmyra and to the right, lies a very high hill or mountain with a big and frightening castle¹⁶ built on top, so tall that it seems to tower into the sky. We decided to climb it tomorrow and see what we might find up there. We also agreed to stay here for two or three days in order to see everything. We returned at sunset and as I see it we have not yet finished with one percent. The wind blew stronger here with heavy rain falling until 10:00.

May 11

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A nice and a cold morning. We were up at 6:30 and we decided that after drinking tea, we would tour the rest of the ruins. Colonel Mockler is distracted with taking photographs and he is constantly going from one place to another taking pictures. At 7:30 we mounted the animals to tour these ancient buildings since it is not possible to tour them on foot. One would soon be exhausted. First we headed toward another small temple not as nice as the others but built with massive and imposing blocks of stone. Afterward we rode toward the high mountain with the huge castle on top. Coming to the foot of the mountain we began to climb it step by step amid small rocks, gravel, stones, and the like, on which one could slip. Up the mountain we went, traversing from right to left and left to right. 15 minutes later we reached to the top. Truly I have never climbed up such a high and difficult mountain and may it be known that I was on foot and not riding. Reaching the mountaintop we saw the castle built on its peak with a kind of moat around it, deep, broad and quite intimidating. I walked around the castle but I did not find an

entrance. Perhaps the ancients used to lower a drawbridge from the castle door to the mountain in order to enter or exit. In case an enemy came they would remove the bridge and the castle would remain secure and inaccessible. It also appeared that the castle had two doors, one at the head of the passageway and another, taller than the first, twenty cubits behind it. A well is in the ditch and so impossible for one to reach in order to look inside. It is quite an amazing thing. How were they able to dig this well and raise water out of it from such a depth? The mountain is no less than 400 meters high to the moat encircling the castle. And a final wonder is how they could have laid each stone on the castle at such a height (no less than 200 meters). In addition the entire castle is built with large blocks of stone although they are smaller than those on the columns. Truly this castle and the well leave one quite dumbfounded, an extremely wondrous thing that one could not believe without seeing it with his own eyes. The present Sheikh of Palmyra, Mohammed bin Abdullah¹⁷, who is no more than 32 years old, said that this castle was built by order of Ma'ana bin Za'ida after the destruction of Palmyra and the imprisonment of Zenobia¹⁸, the Sultana of these places. After being sufficiently astonished we descended the mountain and headed toward other places. So we continued to trek onward, always among boulders, until we approached a long, large chamber resembling a tower. (*Tour*) From a distance it appeared insignificant. Strangely enough, upon entering the chamber through the east door, we saw something of such wonderful artifice and stone construction that one would be stunned. Undoubtedly this chamber must have been the burial place of the ancients. It is perhaps 60 or 70 cubits in length and equally as tall. To the north and south the chamber is partitioned into 12 compartments, resembling places for graves or biers with a spiral stairway to the left in order to place them one on top of the other when the lower compartments are full. A marble slab is above the door and engraved with inscriptions in both Greek and Palmyrene. Using binoculars¹⁹ because of their height, I have copied them in my notebook. The outer construction of the chamber is nothing to make one suppose that such decoration will be found within. Inside and facing the door human figures are carved, each with an extremely curious script underneath. The ceiling is frescoed, engraved in color, and solidly constructed. Inside are four stories: one underground, one at ground level, a third above it, and a fourth only used as a mezzanine. This is a guess as to how it was: 

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I could see a number of visitors' names here and, by chance, in a corner on the left near to the door, written with a light pencil and very difficult to read, the name Napoleon Bonaparte written like this: *Napoleon Bonaparte 1792*. This date, that is 1792, is quite ancient and deserving of amazement. How in all this time, 105 years, did it neither wear off nor did the pencil writing fade? I also noticed the names of some people we know: Faust Lorion²⁰ and Coloman²¹ who was in Baghdad, Joseph Khoury²² who was engaged to Josephine²³ the daughter of Aunt Medula, and so on and so forth. I too wrote my name in many places. This inscription is found inside facing the door, done by a Frenchman who came two years ago to study the ruins of Palmyra and stayed for four months. He engraved this inscription on a stone in French:


page 042 *"Ici en 1895 la mission Bretonne accompagnée de Vizavir Mourain et Bei[...]nard, passé le printemps l'été emmurer à étudier les ruines de Palmyre."* and the names, F. Kinloche 1842, J. Ricot Juillet -1895 Inspecteur de la dette publique,

and many others that I failed to copy in my notebook. When we left this place I noticed that it was already 10:30. So I mounted the horse and rode back to the tents because the weather had become extremely hot with a burning sun. On my way back I passed a sulphur spring. At the upper end there was something like a hammam for washing and a number of women were bathing inside. Its water is very clear and hot but not drinkable. The water of Palmyra is not so good and it has a salty taste like well water. The heat became worse in the afternoon with a strong simoom blowing. Because all the land here is sandy, the weather always turns hot. I wished to bathe in the spring that is only a short distance from our place. So I took my clothes and went. I found the water moderately hot and the bathing place was warm and steamy. At sunset the wind blew much harder and it continued like this until nightfall.


May 12th

Tadmur *Palmyra*

A cold morning with a high wind blowing all night long. The night was also cold like yesterday. We decided to leave Palmyra today and continue our journey to Damascus. We will depart in the afternoon. However, since we have not yet seen the other parts of Palmyra, with its huge temples made with massive blocks of stone

larger than the others, after tea at 7:30 we went toward the city and its environs to see these buildings. We arrived next to a great wall. Its height towers to no more than 100 cubits and its foundation is 20 cubits in width. It is built entirely with stones that are much larger than any we had seen before. Next to the wall columns larger than the others are erected and as tall as the wall. Here, amid the ruins, the Arabs made themselves mud-wattle houses where they live. Finally we went towards a large gate that must probably have been the city gate. What a sight. A person standing beneath it seems to be the size of a sparrow. It is built like this. 

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Its height from the ground to the top is possibly 70 or 80 cubits and its width from one side to the other is no less than twenty cubits. It is entirely engraved and decorated with impressive designs. How could a person be capable of carving such things on a single block of stone? And the thing that amazed me more than anything else is the single stone, perhaps 25 or 30 cubits long, laid over the top of the gate, extending from one column to the other. How could they have lifted this stone to place it on top and so high? The construction of the walls is entirely of extremely massive stones. I stepped off one of them on foot and found it 35 paces long and 11 wide. Then we went into the heart of a temple, which they have now turned into a mosque for prayers, I mean only half of it. I found it magnificent. It is built like a church. At its center there is a large inner temple roofed over with one single square marble stone measuring no less than 30 steps on a side and completely engraved and carved. An indescribable thing. Built in this way, 

this place was probably used for praying. Here one part of the temple is roofed over with rock and has a stairway leading upwards. I climbed up and saw something that boggled my mind. The stones with which this temple was roofed were, each one, no less than 20 cubits in length and three in width. We continued wandering around these sites, regretting such a hasty departure because one can never get enough of the view of Palmyra and exploring its ruins. Then we returned after a thorough look around to our tents. The marketplaces are amid the ruins and one also finds here about 1000 houses. Among the people of the town all the women ruin their looks with tattoos which encircle their faces and on their chests. In Palmyra one also finds 10 or 12 orchards, most of them cultivating olive trees and to a lesser extent apricot and apple trees. There are only about 20 or 30 date palms. All the plantings are irrigated from the existing springs without which no one would have settled in these parts. Finally at 3:30 in the afternoon we prepared to set out. We mounted and left Palmyra heading toward Damascus. After traveling three hours, at 6:30, we stopped

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because Colonel Mockler did not wish to go any farther. Here the wind blew very hard and the weather became extremely cold. This was the first time in our journey that we found it so cold. We pitched the tent temporarily because we will be up tomorrow morning and finish today's journey stage. Today half an hour after leaving Palmyra four zaptiye came to meet us. They were sent from al-Qaryatayn²⁴, which lies 20 hours from here in search of Colonel Mockler. The Consul in Damascus²⁵ sent instructions to the Governor of al-Qaryatayn²⁶ that he should tell the zaptiye to go and welcome Colonel Mockler. So they have come here inquiring after us. From Palmyra to here there were never ending towering mountains on the right and left, higher than all the others we have passed. At sunset the cold worsened but the wind dropped somewhat and I slept in the mule litter since there was no use unloading the baggage.

May 13

al-Baydha

A bitterly cold morning, as cold as could ever be, like the coldest days of winter, with a strong wind blowing out of the west. We were up at 5:30, tied on the baggage, and then set out from our stopping place heading for the zaptiye post of al-Baydha²⁷. We marched steadily among even, flat lands without any rise or fall of the ground, but the cold weather that always killed us. I had even put on thick woolen cloaks over my coat and riding outfit, but I was still dying from the cold. I was thinking that in Baghdad now they must be suffering from the heat and sleeping on the rooftops. At 8:15 we came to the zaptiye post of al-Baydha and we dismounted briefly to breakfast and rest but without the tents. Then in the afternoon we will resume our ride because our stopping place is very far and we will likely have to march all night. al-Baydha is a barren desert with nothing around but a post that is the zaptiye's fort. No water is available here except for the water of a very deep well that is not potable except for the animals. At 1:15 in the afternoon we tied the baggage on again and prepared the caravan to travel until we are unable to continue because our journey stage is very long. Thus we rode on under a burning sun and severe heat crossing barren deserts and dry lands until 7:00, that is to say, at sunset. Colonel Mockler wanted to stop here and sleep for a few hours.

al-Iqsayr

Afterwards we would wake at midnight and continue this stage of the journey. So we halted the caravan temporarily and pitched the tents but we did not unload the

baggage. Here the weather was somewhat better than yesterday evening and not as bitterly cold. However the wind was always blowing and it was cloudy with a moon that seemed 14 days old. Afterwards we hurriedly ate everything to be found whether hot or cold and went to sleep at 9:00. This place is called al-Iqsayr²⁸.

May 14

We woke up early, that is, at 12:00 midnight and then having done everything in a hurry, we loaded the baggage onto the animals and set off at 1:15 to finish our journey. The morning was very cold and dry with a light westerly wind blowing. It was a spring night. Truthfully we are growing very weary of our travels. We have had no rest from yesterday morning until now. Moreover my health is much changed. I have a toothache that is very painful and it became worse with the cold.

al-Qaryatayn

We continued to march through the night sometimes going among tiny rocks and at other times over flat barren land until the town of al-Qaryatayn came into view some three hours away. Because of the low elevation it would vanish and then come into view again. At 9:30 we arrived and entered the town. At its outskirts there are many nice orchards, most of them planted with grapevines, pomegranate trees, and castor oil plants. Afterwards we came to lanes resembling the lanes of Basrah. We heard that the Sheikh of al-Qaryatayn, named Fayadh, had invited Colonel Mockler to stay with him at his house. Finally, approaching his house, Colonel Mockler asked us to stay with him. We entered through the door. The house looked lovely, built with stone and white plaster. We were ushered into the vestibule and we drank the sherbet they offered us. I found his house quite pleasant and well built. In such a small town one does not expect to find a house of this sort, with Vienna chairs²⁹, benches, and beds³⁰ that have mosquito netting, and a perfectly appointed salon. It also has 6 fine rooms and we settled into one of them. At noon they prepared a breakfast for us which we ate with Colonel Mockler. The town is not unpleasant. It has about 100 Christian houses. Their Syriac priest is coming to see us today to invite us to stay with him. Everything is available here, from food to drink, but as today is the continuation of the Muslims' feast all the shops are closed. After breakfast I napped for about two and a half hours as I was desperate for a rest. God willing, little more is left for us and we will be in Damascus the day after tomorrow. Thus we will be done with this accursed whirlwind that lacks the least comfort and confounds our lives. In the afternoon we heard that Colonel Mockler intends to

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take a different road to Damascus and not the common road which will prolong the journey by one or two days altogether. In order to travel less each day. Truthfully we were quite paralyzed by these upheavals and do not know when we will be done with this whirl. The Zhair family decided to travel early tomorrow by the road that goes directly to Damascus doubtless arriving the next day. In the afternoon we were pleased to visit the Syriac priest Ibrahim. We found his son at the house. He is a married man with three children. Here all the people of the town wear the 'akkal and the kaffiyah, even the Christians and the priest's son too, who looks like a Muslim. So we accompanied him to their home and walked through lanes that resemble the Pathways of the Buffalo in Baghdad. At last we arrived at the priest's house which looks like a stable. A room is in it resembling a drawing room furnished with seats and some pillows. Pistols³¹ and weapons hang on the walls with other quite laughable things. The priest, himself an old man, is very poor and he looks like an Arab with both hands covered in tattoos. Finally when we rose to leave we asked him to show us his church. He took us and we walked together from one house to the other until he came to a door like that of an old house. Then he opened the church door and we entered. We found that it resembles the Chaldean school in Baghdad. It is even the same size, with about six or seven pictures inside, some of which are torn, and a very crooked throne with four candles. But how strange. In all the church there was neither seat nor mat, nothing whatsoever to sit on. When we asked the priest, he replied saying that those who wanted to hear mass would stand and some would sit. However he is not to blame for this black poverty because the town is not even worth seeing, though it has nice orchards. I found lots of grapevines here, filling all the orchard fields, and poplar trees as well. After wandering the pitiful lanes we went back to the best house to be found here. Qaryatayn is small with about 2000 souls. At sunset today my molar hurt me badly and I suffered intensely.

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May 15

A spring morning and not very cold. This was the first night that we slept in a room built of stone. From Baghdad to here we have always slept in tents. We got up at 5:00 and waited for the Colonel's order to march. At last we tied on the baggage at 6:00, left Sheikh Fayadh's house, and left the village heading north, while the Zhair family took the direct route and went on to Damascus. We continued to march among hills and mountains, over rough and stony terrain. We came across many

Arabs from the 'Aniza tribe or Bedouins traveling from one place to another looking for pasture land. They are abundant as worms in these places. Sheikh Fayadh too rode with us to Damascus. Yesterday he wrote a letter to the government of Damascus³² informing them of Colonel Mockler's arrival and departure. We too took the opportunity and sent a letter with the messenger to our dear friend Archbishop Basil in Damascus, requesting him, if possible, to find a house for us near his where we might stay, as it would be better than going to a hotel. We continued to march on an unpleasant road. The mountains to our left were growing much higher and at a distance ahead of us we even caught sight of a mountaintop covered with snow. This is the Lebanon Mountain Range.

Maheen

At 10:15 we arrived at Maheen³³, a very small village. At the end of the village we met Colonel Mockler and his escort who had decided to take breakfast before moving on. So we continued to march not knowing where we were going. We took the road leading to Hajra³⁴, another small village like Maheen. Then half an hour later one of the zaptiyes who had accompanied us caught up with us and said that we should take the north road to go to Hafayyir³⁵ and then to Hajra. So we returned once more.

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Hafayyir

Having lost half an hour here we finally continued to march until 2:10, when we arrived at Hafayyir. We passed many orchards like those at Qaryatayn, full of grapevines more than anything else. We then set up camp near a small river that flows from a far-off spring, finding ourselves surrounded by high mountains. In the afternoon I want to go and see the streets and the church since all the people of this village are Jacobite Christians³⁶ with few Syriacs and no Muslims or Jews to be found. A priest named Salman oversees them. Hafayyir has only 1,000 inhabitants. Its alleys are like those of al-Qaryatayn but their women dress differently. From Palmyra to here the clothing changes entirely. They are dressed much like the Telkeyifi³⁷ and all the men wear the 'akkal.

May 16th

al-Nabk

A cold morning with a strong wind. At night we were hit by the powerful blast of an easterly wind so strong that it pulled up the pegs of our tent and it collapsed on us. The wind continued for two hours. This happened because we are between

mountains and the wind has no other way to go. Finally we got up at 5:00 and prepared ourselves to travel to the next station. After we tied on the baggage we rode west at 6:00. So on we marched amid hills and lands, over rough terrain full of stones and gravel. An hour and a half later we passed a very small, deserted village without one bird in it. This is Hajra. Its inhabitants, which number no more than 300 or 400 souls, had fled fearing the Bedouin.

Dayr Setam

page 049 We continued to march until at 9:15 we came to a village called Dayr Setam. It is larger than Hafayyir with many orchards planted with nut and almond trees as well as grapevines. Cutting through the village from one end to the other on horseback, I truthfully very much liked its appearance with the springs of pure water, limpid as egg-whites,³⁸ and sweet as sugar, flowing through its alleys with the poplar trees all green and casting a pleasant shade. Half an hour later we left Dayr Setam³⁹. Here too all its inhabitants are Jacobite and Syriac Christians.

4000 Souls in al-Nabk

The town of al-Nabk⁴⁰ to which we intend to travel, became visible from here with its orchards extending out to an hour's distance. Holding to our path, at 12:30 we came to the orchards of al-Nabk. Truly the prospect of it from afar is pleasant as though it were some European construct. Afterwards we set up camp 15 minutes from the village near a stream of spring water. The taste of the water here is quite fresh and sweet and much better than Baghdad's river water. In al-Nabk a quarter of the inhabitants are Jacobite and Syriac Christians and there are two Syriac priests in this place. One of them is the brother of Father Ibrahim, the priest at al-Qaryatayn. His name is Parson Butros. He is a tall man with a gloomy face. The other is Father Hanna, the nephew of Farida al-Nakasha in Baghdad. But what a priest! He makes one die from laughter. He looks like a Telkeyifi and is extremely humble. They both came to visit us in the evening. There is also an English Protestant priest named Mr. Stewart, *Irichman Mr. Stewart*. He has been in al-Nabk for two years and has opened a school where he teaches English. There is a location here for telegraphs to Baghdad, Aleppo, and other places. We noticed that the middle part of the road was leveled so that carriages coming from Damascus going to Aleppo and Baghdad could cross. We saw three or four of them coming and going. Extremely high mountains surround us here. At sunset we were hit by a high dusty wind that tormented us and the weather became cold.

May 17

An extremely cold morning, colder than all the previous mornings. The night was severely cold too. We were up at 5:00 and prepared ourselves to march. At 6:00 we rode toward the last stopping place of our journey. We will reach Damascus tomorrow afternoon, God willing, and we will be done with the road and journeys in the deserts. We marched steadily between mountains but on the carriageway especially built to level the road. At 8:15 we passed on our left a small village with about 500 or 600 souls and a few trees. It is called al-Qastal⁴¹. Here the mountains are much higher and more numerous. The land is very different from Iraq. At last we reached the village of Qatif⁴² at 1:45 in the afternoon after an extremely exhausting march.

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al-Qatifa

About 12 zaptiye came to meet us when we were one hour away. They were sent by the Wali of Damascus⁴³ to greet Colonel Mockler. We approached the town and entered an old khan⁴⁴ which is about 300 years old but still solid. We pitched the tents in the courtyard. A mineral bath is near our stopping place. I decided to bathe there in the evening. I also wanted to tour the orchards so I took one of the khan's people with me and wandered around. I found the orchards very nice and planted with all kinds of fruit trees: plum, fig, apricot, grape, peach, almond, and nut, but with only one olive tree. I returned at sunset. We inquired one more time about the bath near our place and they said that it is no more than ordinary water that is heated. So I did not go to bathe there.

May 18

A pleasant morning with absolutely no cold and the weather was warm. Like yesterday, we were up at 5:30 and we prepared to march to our last stopping place, which is Damascus. God be praised, we have finished with all the troubles of the road. We moved out with the caravan at 6:00, always traveling on the carriageway until we entered a large valley that took two hours to cross, called Boughaz⁴⁵. When we emerged from the Boughaz, Damascus and its extensive orchards came into view in the distance. What a pleasant sight! We continued to march always in view of Damascus, which grew nearer and nearer. At 9:30 we entered the first of its orchards four hours from the town.

Journal of a Journey

Chapter 5

Arrival at Damascus

Damascus *Damas*

THIS PLACE IS CALLED al-Qusayr¹, it is a lovely sight resembling a long covered walkway with green poplar trees but mostly with large olive trees on both sides shading one from the sun. There are several hamlets here and the grass is extremely verdant and better than anything we have seen before. We continued to march for about two hours and then arrived at a shaded path they call Duma². The people of the town, farmers and workers, are continuously bustling about and carriages came and went every few minutes. Truthfully I loved the entrance to Damascus very much because it is very joyful and cheers the heart. In the end we continued to travel until 1:30 in the afternoon when we caught sight of the first building in Damascus, the military hospital. But oh, what a pleasant and joyful place! The Military Barracks³ building is constructed in the European style. This is the first time I have seen such style and workmanship. We then arrived at the town gate called Touma⁴ and to a garden called Dar al-Darb. The people of Damascus come here with their women, their daughters, and others to enjoy themselves and to eat and drink. I liked the orchard very much. Afterwards they said that Colonel Mockler decided to camp here. We dismounted and entered the orchard to rest. Afterward we would take a carriage and go into town to find a place to stay. From here we sent news of our arrival to Archbishop Basil and continued to wait in the garden which is full of flowers especially large, fresh roses of all kinds. There are many benches to rest on in the garden so we took a bench and continued to await the arrival of our caravan. In no time a messenger priest named Salman Tabouni came from his Grace Archbishop Basil, together with the Archbishop's guard and carriage, requesting us to come to his home. We got into the carriage and it carried us along the passages and the roads of Damascus. I was truly astonished to find the town built and

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arranged as such. Fifteen minutes later we came to the door of the Patriarchate and entered a large, spacious house with fountains and marble structures. Archbishop Basil, whom we had not seen for seven years, came to greet us and he seemed truly pleased to see us. It was clear that his heart was full of happiness when we entered the diwan of his house. First we asked if he knew of a place where we could stay. He replied saying: "This is impossible! You are invited to stay at my house and the baggage will be brought here." We vigorously protested but he refused. In the end we were obliged to stay there. Then he took us upstairs and showed us a room already prepared for us. As he had not yet had breakfast we went downstairs and ate with him. He did us a great honor and was very generous. Later, we were very pleased to learn that he had a number of letters for us from Baghdad. We longed for news from there. He also gave us a telegram he received nine days earlier from our family reassuring us of their health. We opened the letters from Baghdad and read them with tears in our eyes. They had received our letters from Falluja and al-Ramadi, as well as the telegram from al-Ramadi. My heart was filled with joy for the sorrow they expressed, at our parting. I also received letters from Louisa, Artin, Jamil Abdul-Karim, Antoine Guilietti, and others. I was extremely delighted to hear news from Baghdad. At once we prepared a telegram to Baghdad saying: "Arrived Tuesday noontime. All in good health. Missing you. Staying at Mr. Basil's house." We dispatched it without delay to the telegraph office since our family must, without doubt, be very worried about us and the telegram will make them happy. Later we went down to the Syriac church attached to this Patriarchate. We found it perfect. It is a very fine church, adorned with wonderful images and abundant decorations. We listened to the prayers of the Holy Devotion to Mary. A large number of people from Damascus, both men and women, were also attending and they all welcomed us strangers. At sunset we returned to our place through the door that leads to the house. Our room is very fine. Across from it the Roman Church⁵ with its dome and bell are visible. They say this church is nice. Without doubt we must go and see it. We dined at 8:00 and slept comfortably afterwards being done with the hardships of traveling.

May 19

I was up in the morning at 6:00 and thanks be to God, not preparing to set out with the caravan and therefore extremely relaxed. After dressing I sent for a barber who arrived and cut my hair. I changed one more time into the clothes I call formal

dress. I wrote a postcard to my dear friend Antoine Hubert in Beirut informing him of my arrival here and my desire to see him which would be on Monday or the day after. I then sent it with the Patriarchate guard to the post office hoping it would be dispatched after sunset today by the railway. It runs regularly, twice every day, to Beirut and takes eight to nine hours to arrive. That is a lumbering pace but the roadbed is still not prepared for a swift run. Afterwards at 9:30 I took a person from here, I befriended, and went to tour the streets and the shops of Damascus. I took a carriage and rode in the direction of a street called al-Hamidiyya⁶, built in the European style, with perfect shops. I went to some photographers' shops to see if they have photographs of Palmyra and Damascus. I found that they were well prepared and have all kinds of such things. In the end I bought myself a cane and returned to our place at 11:00. At 1:00 in the afternoon, after breaking our fast, we went to visit the Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop Basil ordered his guard to escort us every time we go out to the streets. They opened the church door for us and I found it magnificent with decorations engraved in porphyry. I was astonished by such a fine church. A wide mezzanine is above, as wide as 10 cubits, and it surrounds the entire church. The church door is made entirely of bronze. I paced it and found that the church came to 80 steps in length and 44 steps in width. We finally left in a hired carriage to tour around. So we rode around Damascus and passed hotels, gardens. Near the end of town we saw the best hotel called *Hotel Basraoni*⁷. It is perfect and a very pleasant sight. Later we went to the *Station de chemin de fer*. It was time for its arrival from Beirut so we waited to see it arrive at the station. At 4:00 we caught sight of it coming. This was the first time in my life that I had seen it and I found it very lovely. We then returned to the Hamidiyya market and went to a house in the Jewish quarter with a perfect salon. It is called the Sham'aya house⁸. Entering the house we paid the fee of three quarters of a majidi and they opened the salon for us. We looked inside and found it the most magnificent thing ever, outshining the Roman Church building. The salon is entirely fashioned from porphyry and it has a ceiling that one would find astonishing. The owner of this place, Sham'aya, spent 10,000 liras, ten thousand for this room alone, and I would say it is worth much more than that. We left the house impressed by its perfect construction and returned to our lodgings. Yesterday afternoon the military physician, Doctor Majid came to visit us. We know him well and he was pleased to see us. Today I saw Ali al-Kurdi al-Baghdadi at the market. He arrived 7 months ago. It became dark with thick clouds and we feared that it would rain. At 6:00 and

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near sunset, we left in the company of Khowaja Mikha'il Qarawani, his wife, and daughter, and went out of the town past gardens that cheer the heart. We went to the loveliest of all the gardens in this place, called al-Soufaniya⁹. Goodness. What an orchard! Inside we found it teeming with people, women too, all seated beneath the trees with two streams running to the right and to the left. The women stay here until 10:00 or 11:00 in the evening. I truly loved this orchard very much because it cheers the soul. There is a lot of freedom in Damascus. Oh, how pitiful life is in Baghdad and the lack of freedom there. At last we returned after a one hour walk and after sunset we made an evening of it at the home of Khowaja Mikha'il Qarawani. They received us with all possible kindness. He is a pleasant person as is his wife and the rest of their household. We returned to our place at 11:00 and went to sleep.

May 20

page 055

A cloudy and rainy morning. After hearing mass Khowaja Qarawani's family accompanied us on another tour of the town. We took a carriage and rode through the quarter and among the markets. Afterwards we came to a neighborhood called al-Midan¹⁰. At the end of it there is another railway station and it is worth seeing. It is ornamented as in Europe. We also went to a workshop where parts for the trains are made. We were astonished to see such works. We then returned to al-Hamidiyya market to buy ourselves a few things and we entered a shop called *Christopher* which truly warrants amazement. Inside one finds everything that one could ask for. I bought myself a pair of yellow shoes, a shirt, and a straw hat, all for 5 majidis. We got out of the carriage and continued on foot to have a better look at the shops. We went around from one place to the next never ceasing to be amazed. In one shop I saw a Monsieur ...[illegible] who is married to Bao's daughter. He recognized me and asked me much about Baghdad. We also saw Abdullah al-Zalqa who knows us quite well. He knows Habib al-Ghanounji¹¹. He had been in Basrah and said he intended to go to Baghdad in 30 days time. He asked me about Baghdad and Basrah. We passed through several markets from the jewelers' to the tailors'. At the tailors' market we entered a bath worth seeing called al-Ashani¹². Inside we found an indescribable vase and the bath floor is made entirely of marble as are the walls and ceilings. After tiring of walking we returned to our place and there, before our breakfast, Monsieur Elia arrived, the interpreter for the Austrian Consul. He returned our papers and passport. Yesterday my father had been to see the Austrian

Consul, *Monsieur Rontopoulos*. He is the brother of Madam Kuwaydan, wife of our friend, who is the commissioner of the quarantine in Baghdad. In the afternoon the wife of Khowaja Mikha'il came to see us and she took me and my mother to her brother-in-law's house. We sat with them and then went to see a very pleasant house called the House of Lady Rosa the Damascene¹³. We arrived, rang the bell, and they opened the door for us. We entered one small house and went from there to another. What we saw next was stunning. All the fascinating decoration and *Mosaïque* work inside and ceilings are wondrous and amazing. It is said that this house had cost 20,000 liras. We left the house and went to visit the Church of the Lazarites¹⁴. It was very fine church with porphyry and indescribably refined workmanship. We left and went back to our house. At sunset the Austrian Consul returned our visit and after dinner we spent the evening at the house of one of the Damascene notables, known as the House of Abu Ahmed. About 20 European¹⁵ ladies and young girls were there too, but some of them were Jews. Then it rained for nearly 4 to 5 hours so we had to return in the rain. The weather has been unsettled and gloomy from the day we arrived until this moment.

May 21

I was up at 7:00 because I was awake all last night. A sultry morning and the clouds are still dark. After I changed my clothes we went with his Grace the Archbishop to visit some families. We visited the house of the priest of the Patriarchate, Parson Boutros¹⁶, and then the house of Khowaja Mikha'il's brother. We also went to a place where they do mother-of-pearl work on chairs and other objects, an extremely fine thing, and there were girls working too. After that we went to Doctor Majid's house but we did not find him so we left our card. Next we went to a house that contains a site, now a church, which they say is the place Saint Ananias¹⁷ to whom our Lord Jesus sent Saint Paul to be healed when his eyes were hurting. Saint Paul went into his place and was cured. We went into the house and then into a kind of cellar which is now like a small chapel and we saw Saint Ananias's place. After that we left and went to the Monastery of the Latins¹⁸ and entered their church. I honestly found this church the finest of all with large pillars and built in the style of the churches in Europe. It also has an *Orgue* on the mezzanine which is as big as an average room. It is said that it cost 1000 liras, but it is perfect. Later we visited the head of the friars¹⁹. All of them are Capuchins²⁰ and they have a school here. In the

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church I saw a marble slab on the wall inscribed with the following: "this is the shrine of the relics of Father Toma²¹ whom the Jews killed in Damascus." I had read a lot about him. Together with the remains of the Father are the remains of the boy named Abd al-Nour²² who they killed at the same time in 1840 to use their blood for the unleavened bread. After this tour we went to see another house they described to us as the most beautiful in Damascus. We went to the house with Khowaja Mikha'il Qarawani. It is called the House of Khowaja Mikha'il Sabagh. Entering the house we were truly amazed by the construction, the decorations, the fountains, and the gardens. Both Khowaja Mikha'il Sabagh²³ and his wife came and sat with us and treated us affectionately. Afterwards we left and returned to our house. Here in Damascus every house has one or two fountains with flowing water. Every floor is paved with polished marble and one never finds bricks. According to custom even the poorest of poor houses should have flowers. For that reason all the houses are filled with different kinds of blossoms. When I returned to the house I received a postcard from my friend Antoine Jule in Beirut replying to my note. He said he was very happy to get my letter and would be very pleased to see me. He will also send Razouk Bahoshi²⁴ to meet me at the station on Monday. After breakfast we hired a carriage and intended to visit Colonel Mockler, fearing that we might leave without seeing him. We rode to the *Grand Hotel d'Orient*²⁵ because we understood he was staying there. We asked if he was to be found and they said that he was invited to the home of the English priest²⁶ and that he had not yet returned. We decided to go to a place called al-Salhiya²⁷, an extremely beautiful area. We rode past lovely green trees continuously climbing little by little. Then we arrived at al-Salhiya on the mountainside. From here we could see the entire town of Damascus with the hotels and buildings. A very pleasant sight. Afterwards we turned toward a place called Dumar²⁸ on a long, straight wooded road. We then returned again to the place where Colonel Mockler is staying but we did not find him this time either. So we left our cards and went back. By then it was 6:00. At sunset his Grace the Archbishop fell ill and was in distress. He remains in bed.

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May 22

The morning is pleasant and sunny. I was up at 7:00. We asked after the Archbishop and they said that he is better and that they had sent for the physician. So we went to see him. Afterward Francis Shiha²⁹ visited, he is the brother of Khowaja Habib

Shiha³⁰ in Baghdad. Khowaja Francis had been in Beirut just a few days ago. We gave him a letter of recommendation from his brother and he stood by us in everything. An hour later my father and I went to a bathhouse for a wash. We arrived at a bathhouse called al-Misk³¹ at 9:00. It was a small, pleasant bathhouse. Around here all the bathhouses are very elegant and there are 57 of them in Damascus but they have the awful custom of paving all the bathhouse floors with shiny marble on which a person would surely slip. Even my father slipped and fell when he entered, a fall that could have killed him, and blood gushed from him. I slipped too but managed to stay on my feet. Then we both washed and returned to our house an hour later. A *Collectionneur de Timbres-poste*³² who is very keen on collecting stamps³³ came to see me and find whether I had any stamps to trade. I brought him some and we continued talking. He said that he would return in the afternoon and take me to his house to talk some more. At that moment they informed us that both Mrs. Mockler and Mrs. Tanner, together with Consul Mockler, will visit us. Five minutes later they arrived and were pleased to see us. It was as if we were on our overland journey. Afterwards they went in to visit the Syriac Church next to the Patriarchate. As they were leaving they invited us for breakfast the next morning and we promised to come. After breakfast, that is at 1:00, the stamp collector came to see me and took me with him to his house. We traded some stamps and I returned at 3:00. I wrote a postcard to my friend Antoine Jule in Beirut and put it in the post. I told him that I will set out from here not on Monday but on Tuesday and that he should by all means send Razouk Bahoshi to the station so that I might see him. I likewise asked him to tell me if he had any letters addressed to me. I sent the postcard to Baghdad by post as I did all the letters I had prepared. I also wrote letters to our family, Johnny, Jamil Abdul-Karim, a short letter to my brothers in Basrah, and others, and postcards to Antoine Guilietti, and Tal'at Nassouri³⁴. I paid 10 standard piasters³⁵ for them. Today we stayed indoors all afternoon and did not go out. His Grace the Archbishop is feeling much better than yesterday.

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May 23

A very nice morning with clear weather and a fresh wind. I got up at 6:30 and dressed. As today is Sunday we went down at 7:30 and heard mass at the church. Afterwards we returned. Monsieur Francis Shiha came to visit us because an hour ago we had gone to him and had not found him at home. So now he has come and

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asked us to go with him but there is little time left since we have to go for breakfast with Colonel Mockler. At 11:30 we took a carriage and drove to the Grand Hotel d'Orient, Colonel Mockler's lodgings, but they were not there. However half an hour later they returned from the Protestant Church. We ate breakfast and returned at 2:00 in the afternoon after bidding them farewell since we might not see them again. Mrs. Tanner asked us to come see her in London and Colonel Mockler did the same. We promised that we would come and see them and felt truly sad to be parting after such a long time together. We returned and afterwards went to visit Monsieur Francis Shiha where we saw a number of handicrafts such as antiques, carpets, and other things. He is very keen on old objects. We returned an hour and a half later and heard that Archbishop Basil's brother, Archbishop Antoine³⁶, will honor Damascus with a visit tomorrow. So today they were preparing a room for him. Truly we felt embarrassed at staying here and having meals at his place. At 5:00 we went with Khowaja Mikha'il Qarawani and his family for a stroll. So we went out through the East Gate and we passed through the gardens of al-Safaniya and al-Hadi Ashariyya³⁷ and others. The people here were as numerous as worms. Thousands of men, women, and children, bustle about enjoying themselves. And all of them are Christians or most of them are Christians. It was so congested that there was not even room left for the carriages to pass. We finally entered a garden called al-Baghdadi³⁸ and stayed there for about an hour. Each of us paid two piasters. We returned at sunset and the number of people in the crowd was as many as grains of sand, all coming and going. After dinner we spent the evening in Parson Boutros's room.

May 24

A very pleasant morning with clear, bright weather. We were up at 6:30 and after dressing we went to Mikha'il's place. From there we went to a few other houses where there were all kinds of flowers and other things. Because today is our last in Damascus we must prepare our things for travel. After we returned at 10:00 we found his Grace the Archbishop in a muddle making arrangements and preparations for his brother Archbishop Antoine who will honor us by his presence here this afternoon. Today we did not leave or go anywhere. In the afternoon I sent a postcard to my friend, Antoine in Beirut, telling him that our travel plans had changed and that we will arrive in Beirut on Wednesday afternoon because we want to visit Ba'albek³⁹ which is famous for its ancient buildings and that we will set out

tomorrow morning. Also we received a telegram from Shukrullah 'Aboud⁴⁰ in Beirut, saying, "Awaiting your arrival at the station." We wrote him a letter two days ago asking him to let us know of a suitable hotel where we could stay. So we wired him right away saying, "We will be with you on Wednesday evening. Thank you." *page 060*
We also sent a letter telling him about our travel to Ba'albek and Beirut. At 4:30 in the afternoon Archbishop Basil went to greet his brother with the priests. A few minutes later they returned and ushered him in with a great procession accompanied by many people. Archbishop Antoine is an old man, seventy years old possibly. After church, that is at 6:30, Khowaja Mikha'il Qarawani took me to al-Hadi Ashariyya garden which lies between two rivers and boasts a pleasant view. At sunset we returned. This was the last time I would walk in Damascus because we will take the train to Zahla tomorrow morning. Truly it is a pity to leave Damascus. We loved it very much.

Journal of a Journey

Chapter 6

The Journey from Damascus to Beirut

May 25

WE GOT UP EARLY and began to prepare. We packed our things to travel on the *Train* leaving in an hour and a half. We changed our clothes and removed everything in our room. We were ready to leave Damascus, which I had truly loved very much. Oh, if only one lived here. Since the day of our arrival until now all the people have been pleasant with smiling faces. After hearing mass for the last time I left and we brought our things down from the room and put them into a carriage. All of the priests were present, the two Archbishops, and also Khowaja Mikha'il Qarawani and his wife. We bade them all farewell and felt quite sad at parting with them because they had all become like family to us. After we thanked them for their kindness the carriage drove us to the railway station at al-Baramika¹. We arrived at the station at 7:30 and bought a second-class *Billet* to Zahla² only. We also paid our fare, that is no more than 7 and a quarter majidis total for three people. From Zahla we would take a carriage to Ba'albek. Then at five minutes to eight the train gave a whistle and we immediately boarded. We were accompanied by our servants Mansour and the water carrier Mohammad who had come with us from Baghdad. We bade them farewell here. Truly we found it very difficult because they were the last who had been with us from our hometown Baghdad. All of us were in tears and poor Mansour was crying like a little boy. In the end we said goodbye and the train set off from al-Baramika.

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Traveling From Damascus

We traveled continuously at maximum speed. This is the first time I ever traveled in a train. We passed through orchards, trees, and springs that make a truly pleasant view. I believe their like is not to be found in Europe. Sometimes we ascended and at other times descended because we must climb the mountains of the Lebanon.

The mountains here are very high and the snow lies on them and the clouds rise like white steam over them. The time from morning until now was quite miserable with thick clouds and damp like the worst and darkest days of winter. The *Train* left al-Baramika at 7:55 and we passed the following stations on the way:


Baramika 7:55 / Dumar 8:10 / Hama 8:20, departing at 8:25 / Jadayda 8:33, departing at 8:35 / Ayn Fija³ 8:45, departing at 8:57 / Dayr Qanun⁴ 9:05 / Souk Wadi Barada⁵ 9:20, departing at 9:22 / un-named 9:30, departing at 9:35 / Zabdani⁶ 9:55, departing at 10:03 / Sergayah⁷ 10:25, departing at 10:28 / Yahfufah⁸ 10:43, departing at 10:47 / Riyaq⁹ 11:07, departing at 11:12.


We arrived at Zahla at 11:30. It is also called Mu'allaqah¹⁰. Since we arrived close to noon we thought it preferable if we have lunch here because the *Buffet de Gare* is just opposite. The people from the *Buffet* met us and took our things to the eating place.. We ate hastily and then hired a carriage to Ba'albek and back for one Ottoman pound. We entered and at 12:05 drove in the direction of Ba'albek. However the weather was extremely unfortunate. The rain never ceased to worsen, the clouds were heavy, and it was quite damp with a westerly wind. Here as we understood it, in all seasons of the year the weather is like this. It is because the mountains of the Lebanon surround it on all sides. The carriage continued on and we passed very pleasant scenery in the distance, such as a few hamlets at the foot of the mountain amidst greenery and meadows. An extremely happy and blissful life. The climate here one finds nowhere else and I suppose that no one ever falls ill. When we were having lunch at the station a *Train* from Beirut arrived, departing at noon for Damascus. We saw it from the carriage in the distance swiftly passing like wind. What a lovely sight. Sitting in a train is extremely comfortable and one does not feel either shaking or annoyances but sometimes, because of the speed of travel, one's vision is blurred and so cannot see the land. However the carriage we rode in is very annoying because the road is made of small stones. We came to a place they call Ablaha¹¹ at 1:00, then to Bayt Shima¹² at 2:05. Finally we arrived in Ba'albek at 4:30.

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Ba'albek

The ancient temples became visible from a distance resembling the pictures we have in Baghdad. First there were the eight pillars that the Arabs had made some years ago and the massive stone which the ancients did not bring to the site. It is quite a huge thing, possibly 15 meters long. Hotel owners met us at the town gate and each

claimed, "My hotel is the best." In the end we chose one across from the ruins named *Hotel Victoria*¹³. We left our bags and drank a bowl of tea because we were very cold from the road and shivering. Then we took a man from the hotel with us and left to tour Ba'albek, the ancient ruins that resemble Palmyra. We paid the 3 majidis admission fee and entered. Then we saw something we had never seen before. One's mind is amazed by what the hands of the ancients have wrought. As for the building, it is made of great, huge blocks of stone. I saw a wall constructed in three segments, each one possibly 20 meters long and the pillars, also amazing, are each possibly 50 meters high and are all just in three segments of stone. I mean, like this: .

I measured the circumference of one and it came to 13 feet. I mean, like this: . page 063
Oh my, what a huge thing, such that a person's mind cannot grasp it. And there are other amazing things. Near the door there is a stairway leading upwards. I climbed it and counted 22 steps made from just one rock. Here I saw neither hundreds, nor thousands, but millions of the names of people who had visited Ba'albek. Some of these are of the nobility and some had come bringing with them tools to inscribe their names. One sees all the walls strewn with names. We entered *Temple de Jupiter* first and *Temple du Soleil* second. In truth Ba'albek is worth remembering for the refinement of its construction, its loftiness, and vastness. I was truly amazed by what I saw in this place. It certainly is far superior to Palmyra or any other place. I wish to see more of it but tomorrow morning we intend to return to Zahla and then by train to Beirut. The hotel where we are staying is quiet and small. It is also across from the ruins of Ba'albek. We decided that tomorrow morning we will return by carriage to Zahla in order to take the train back to Beirut. A dark and rainy sunset.

May 26

I got up in the morning at 6:00. It was very cold. It had rained all night long with hail and wind but then it cleared at dawn. After we had tea we asked the hotel owner to present the bill and he said, "Ten francs." So we paid him and left. We boarded a carriage heading toward Zahla. We traveled continuously amid mountains. The weather was severely cold and the mountains of the Lebanon which surrounded us were draped in snow, an extremely pleasant sight as were the greenery and houses among the valleys. Here the climate is very good. Finally at 9:45 we arrived at a small house called Bayt Shima. We stopped there, went to the house, and saw them

page 064 working with silkworms. We also saw that they have about 500 huge round trays filled with worms. Afterwards we got back in the carriage and arrived at a place called Karak¹⁴ an hour later. They say that it is Noah's place, that is to say, his tomb. We finally arrived at Zahla at 11:00 and found that the train had not yet arrived from Damascus. So we went to have breakfast at the *Buffet*. Afterwards we would get coach tickets. At 11:30 the Damascus train arrived. How wonderful! Colonel Mockler, his wife, and Mrs. Tanner, came out of the train. What a marvelous coincidence. So they too ate with us and as it was 11:45 we bade them goodbye and rushed to board the train. Colonel Mockler said that he would be going from here to Ba'albek and would be in Beirut tomorrow. At 12:00 sharp the train moved off rapidly.

At 12:15 we arrived at Sayed Nayel¹⁵, then came to Jaditha¹⁶, Ashtora¹⁷ at 12:30, departing at 12:33, to Rijat¹⁸ at 12:52, departing at 12:55.

At 1:25 the train entered a hole in the mountain, that is to say, the mountain which is pierced through at its foot. We went in and it was as dark as a pitch-black night. We stayed in the *Tunnel* for about three minutes. At 1:32 we stopped and they put the *Locomotive* at the rear because it would be all downhill. From Zahla to here we were always climbing until we reached a height of 1500 meters and all the houses and trees appeared to be growing smaller. We were seeing the orchards that looked like bouquets of flowers and the people like flies. Likewise the clouds were far below us. Here the clouds cover us as if we were in a sea. What a beautiful view there is from here high up in the mountains of Lebanon. I do not think there is anywhere in the entire world with a view so pleasant. At 1:35 it departed going backwards down the track. In truth when I realized it was going to descend from such a height my head was spinning.

1:56 Ayn Safr, departing at 2:03 / 2:15 Bahamdun¹⁹, departing 2:17 /

2:37 Alay²⁰, departing at 2:45 / 3:00 Araya²¹, departing at 3:07 /

3:22 Jumhur²², departing at 3:27 / 3:40 Babade²³, departing at 3:45

page 065 From here the town of Beirut became visible in the distance and the sea too, but it was quite far away. 3:57 Hadath²⁴, departing at 4:00. This is the last station before

Beirut. So I kept looking out the window until the train whistled and at 4:15 and pulled into the Beirut railway station.

Beirut

Then what a joyful sight it was when I saw behind the railing my dear friends Antoine Jule and Razouk Bahoshi, with Bahjat Nassoury between them. They called out to me and I responded to them with greetings. No sooner had the train stopped than I got off, went to the railing, and embraced them. I was truly very happy to see them and I remembered when I was in Baghdad among my dear ones. Then we immediately got in a carriage. We also saw Khowaja Shukrullah 'Aboud here at the station awaiting our arrival. So both my mother and my father got into a carriage with him and I with my friends. We all rode together toward a hotel where we would spend our days in Beirut. We came upon a hotel called *Hotel D'Amérique*. We took two rooms for a few days, one for me and the other for my parents. This hotel is across from my friends' place so I was very happy with this good luck. We rented the rooms for 18 francs a day for the three of us. After I brought my friends to my room we talked at length about Baghdad. Antoine gave me three letters that arrived from Baghdad, one from Antoine Guilietti, one from Johnny Kasperkhan, and the last from Jamil Abdulkarim. I opened and read them and was pleased to hear news from our homeland. My letters from al-'Ana had all reached them and there was no recent news. At 6:00 they left my place and promised me that after dinner they would come and spend the evening with me. I was quite astonished by Beirut and by its layout, which is many times more beautiful than Damascus, with its buildings like Europe. The carriages are as abundant as worms. It is said that there are 1500 and in Damascus there are no more than 250. The streets are wide, paved, and clean. Here for the first time, I saw the sea and what a pleasant sight. There were a few ships in the harbor, one of them a French warship which is always anchored here on guard. After dinner my friends came to see me and I spent some hours with them. Our hotel is lovely and the view from it is quite pleasant opening out onto a large open square. This place is called Sahat al-Burj (Tower Square). Nonetheless, I have not yet seen anything of Beirut and for that one would need lots of time.

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May 27

Beirut, *Beyrouta*

I got up in the morning and saw that the weather was very good, spring-like with lovely clear skies. After I changed my clothes I went to mass with my mother at the nearby Church of the Lazarists²⁵ because today is Ascension Day. I found the church very nice and full of people, that is, with only about 10 percent men and the rest women and girls. It was so full of people that there was no place to sit. The women sat on the ground floor and the men above in the balcony, and the youth had come to take their first Holy Communion. They were about 200 boys and girls who came to take communion. The mass was administered by the Vicar Apostolic, who was present there. His name was *Monseigneur Duval*, the one who a few years ago was the head priest at Mosul. The crew on shore-leave from the French warship were also hearing mass. An hour and a half later we left and returned to the hotel. Khowaja Shukrullah 'Aboud came and took us to tour the markets since my father wanted to buy a few things for himself. I was truly amazed by the markets, far better than those I saw in Damascus. They are all enclosed in crystal glass and are clean and in good order. We bought a few things and returned close to noon. At 1:00 my friends came and took me to their place. Amid the chatting we decided to go to a photographer and have pictures taken of the four of us in European dress and hats, and send them to Baghdad. So we went immediately to an excellent photographer and followed through with our plan but I was disappointed when the photographer said that they would not be ready before next week. Next week I have to be in Cairo. So he said that he would send them to me there and I agreed to this. We left the photographer's and together returned to our hotel. We sat and talked for about two hours. Afterwards my friends went for a walk. At 5:30 Khowaja Shukrullah came and took us in a carriage to see the *Port*, the ship anchorage on the sea, meaning the harbor. So we went there and what a beautiful sight! Hundreds of women and men going to and fro and the ships at anchor. There was the French warship, the *Frigate* named the *Forbin*²⁶, on which they were playing music and all the people were bustling about. Truly this place is pleasant from end to end and a beautiful promenade. Here we saw someone from the Sursuq family riding in a carriage pulled by a horse, the like of which I have never seen. Its color was half milk-white and the other half blue! And they call this a horse! When it moves one is terrified by its power and gait. We kept touring around Beirut taking pleasure from

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gazing at beautiful buildings along the shore. After sunset we returned to the hotel. My friends came over and spent the evening with me after dinner.

May 28

The morning is pleasant and the wind from the west. I got up in the morning at 6:30 and after we changed we went to Khowaja Shukrullah's store. We took him with us to the markets to buy some necessities. Afterwards we went with my father to a photographer's shop to buy some pictures, but this fellow asked a very high price, so we decided to go to someone else. We returned to our place at 11:00 and I went to my friends' house after breakfast. I got Antoine and Razouk and we went in a carriage touring Beirut. We passed several places I had not seen before and returned at 4:00. At 5:00 we all left and picked up Khowaja Shukrullah. We hired a carriage to take us to a place called al-Harash for a walk. It has truly beautiful scenery and abundant pine trees casting shade over all the ground. Then we sat in a small garden called Janaynat al-Lubnan (The Garden of Lebanon). We returned to our place at sunset. My friends came again to see me and as we chatted they said that there is a place here where they listen to violin playing or the *Orchestra*. Then they said that it would be best to go and listen to the music. So we went at 9:00 and joined a gathering full of Europeans and other sorts. We listened to the music which was very melodious. The players were five men and some eight girls, 18 to 20 years old and all skillful musicians. We stayed for about three hours and then returned to our place. Today in the morning Khowaja Nicholas Mosulli, Razouk Angourly's partner in Basrah, visited us and invited us to breakfast on Sunday.

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May 29

Beirut

The morning is sultry and cloudy and the wind is unpleasant. After we changed we left, my father and I, and went to a photographer's shop to buy pictures of Ba'albek and Palmyra. We bought about 12 or more and by chance as we were sitting at the photographer's, Colonel Mockler appeared at the shop door. We were truly surprised at these amazing chance encounters with him everywhere we go. He arrived yesterday having stayed two days in Ba'albek, and he will be traveling tomorrow to Port Said on board of one of the *Lloyed* ships. After we left the shop we went to the shop of the *Messageries Maritimes* to buy ourselves tickets for the trip from here on their ship that will depart at sunset after tomorrow. However they told

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us that it would not be possible now but would be tomorrow. So we returned to the hotel and found Colonel Mockler at our place sitting with mother. A quarter hour later he left. He bade us farewell at the end and said, "I believe this is really the last time." I took it upon myself to hurry and write my letters for Baghdad because the post will go out today in the afternoon, that is, on Saturday. So I wrote to Louisa, to Jamil Abdulkarim, to Nassoury Bahoshi, to Antoine Guilietti, and to M'nashi and Nassim. I sent them by post in care of Razouk Bahoshi. My friends had promised me that they would come after breakfast get us and go to visit the College of Mar Yousif, or *Université St. Joseph*, which is located here and is quite excellent. At 2:00 we all went with my parents to the college and received the headmaster's permission to enter. The Headmaster himself came and greeted us and then sent a priest to show us the whole place. The priest came and took us around. What an amazing school. There are three floors and I counted 120 steps to the third level. Here we saw everything: the section for those students who are boarding, their sleeping and changing rooms, where they dress and sleep, their uniforms and likewise the school, the place where they study. We went down to the printing house and the bookstore. I was truly amazed by the printing house because of the crafts therein. There are about 100 persons working each at one thing. The entire printing house runs on fire, steam, and electricity. They showed us everything and then we went into the bookstore. I was astonished by the books I saw, possibly ...[illegible] of all kinds in stacks. Afterwards we saw their church which has three floors, each level with a number of thrones for mass—the final quite elegant thing. I learned from the students that tomorrow afternoon there would be a substantial play performed here to celebrate the Monastery Headmaster's Day. So I asked Father Shikho whom we know very well and who was in Baghdad sometime ago, to ask permission for me to attend the *Tragédie* and he promised to do so. We left at 6:00 having spent all this time going around looking at this very large college. Around sunset Father Yousif, who had been in Mosul, arrived, as did Khowaja Shukrullah and my friends. After dinner we went to the *Orchestra*.

May 30

Beirut

The morning was pleasant with a westerly wind. Since it is Sunday we had arranged to hear mass at the Vicarage with Khowaja Shukrullah at the chapel there. At 7:15 we hired a carriage and went to the Vicarage to hear mass. Then we went inside with

Khowaja Shukrullah to visit the Vicar Apostolic. Since he was engaged he sent one of the priests who had been in Mosul for some 12 years. Later on the Vicar Apostolic, *Monseigneur Duval* came and seemed pleased by our visit. However he is a very dull person and has no sense of humor so we said goodbye and left to visit the home of Khowaja Habib Sakazan in return for his coming to us the day before yesterday with his wife. They were at church but returned afterwards. Many guests were visiting them. At 11:15 we went to the home of Khowaja Nicholas Mosulli for breakfast there because he had invited us the day before yesterday. His house was large with two floors. After breakfast I returned immediately to the hotel to find out if the admission ticket had come to me so that I might attend the Jesuits' play and I came across the *Carte d' entrée* all ready, brought to me by Razouk Bahoshi. So I rushed off to the *Université*. I presented the card, entered, and found about 1000 persons attending, together with the French Consul, Monsieur *Soubart*, and the Captain of the frigate *Forbin*. At 3:00 sharp the curtain was raised and the play began. It was entitled *La guerre de cent ans*. However I found that they performed with an extreme religiosity so I listened for two acts, then it turned 4:00 and I returned to the hotel because I had promised to come back so that we might go in a carriage with Khowaja Shukrullah and his family to the gardens outside Beirut. At 5:30 Khowaja Shukrullah came with his family and we went by carriage toward al-Harash and then turned left to an excellent garden on a small river. Its name is Janaynat al-Pasha (Pasha's Gardens) but it is extremely pleasant. Inside in the center, the Lebanese soldiers were playing music with quite lovely melodies and the orchard was full of women and men, all dressed in European fashion. There were many people from among the wealthy, that is, like the Sursuq family and other people numbering about 30 or 40 persons all of whom possess millions. By chance just when we entered the garden we saw Monsieur Monastersky who was commissioner at the Regie three years ago in Baghdad. He told us that he was going to Istanbul. I saw that he was greatly changed and thin. After sunset we returned to our place.

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May 31

Leaving Beirut

The morning is pleasant with scattered clouds. Today is the day we travel from here to Port Said. After we prepared our baggage people came to visit, such as the brother of Khowaja Habib Shiha, Khowaja Ibrahim whom we had known very well when he was in Baghdad four years ago, and also the Chaldean priest, Yousif

Taweel. We learned from him that here in the Convent of the Lazarists one could find a nun, the girl Theresa Maria, who is our relative from the Sayegh family. Then mother wished very much to see her so the priest took her to where she was living and I stayed by myself in the hotel. On her return my mother said that she had seen the nun who is named *Sœur Angélique*²⁷ and she had showed her all around her place. She was astonished by the handicrafts of the orphans. In the afternoon my friends came to visit me. They stayed for a long time. Sœur Angélique came to visit us and brought along a number of photographs and pictures to show us and we too did the same. I went with my friends to the photographer who had taken our picture but found that he had not finished anything at all yet. So I gave him my address in Marseilles so he could send them there. At 5:30 we ate our dinner here and paid hotel charges of 92 francs. Half an hour later we left with Khowaja Shukrullah 'Aboud, Antoine, Razouk, and Bahjat to customs so that we could board the ship from there. They inspected our trunks, looked at the passport, and gave us permission to leave. In short dealing with the Ottomans is all torment and lacks any civility. So I had to say goodbye to my friends here. Truly I found this parting quite difficult because for all this time in Beirut we were like brothers and of one heart. So my eyes were filled tears at our separation. Then we boarded the boat and crossed to the ship. I did not stop waving goodbye to them with my hat. Before we boarded the ship they asked for our passport again and did not allow Shukrullah to come up with us fearing that he might flee the country. They are not allowing the people of Syria to travel to America nowadays because all the villages are deserted. So before boarding the ship we bade Shukrullah goodbye and went up into the ship. And what a huge ship it is, like a mountain. Its name is the *Orénoque*²⁸ and the Captain's name is *Sellier*²⁹. The stewards greeted us and escorted us to a cabin because we had taken first class and paid 175,50 francs, meals included. I too had a cabin for myself, all at this price. After we placed our things in the cabins we came up on deck, that is, to third-class and I was amazed by this marvelous ship. It has three sails and a salon containing 25 dining tables. At each table 12 persons can dine and there is a large piano in the front. The deck is 70 paces long and I very much loved it.

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Chapter 7

The Journey from Beirut to Cairo, Egypt

AT 8:00 SHARP the ship *Orénoque* departed from the port of Beirut and headed for the open sea. The town still glittered at us. As we left, slowly distancing ourselves, the ship began to rock a little and I was afraid I might become seasick. I managed to get myself up on deck until 9:00 and then noticed that my stomach was turning. The rocking of this ship is inevitable because it is empty and not carrying much cargo. I went below and thought it best to sleep so I went to my cabin and slept.

June 1st

Jaffa

An ordinary morning with little wind. I got up at 6:30 and had slept very well all night long. The ship had sailed through the night until morning. At 7:05 the town of Jaffa came into view. Then half an hour out boats came out from the shore to the ship to take on some more passengers. Likewise, lighters came to get the cargo and we heard that we would have to stay here all day. The town of Jaffa lies by the sea and has elegant buildings like the houses of Beirut but it is an abominable anchorage because the sea here is rough and our boat is flopping about like a fish. We were never able to keep ourselves from throwing up and so too all the passengers. Our heads were all spinning and our stomachs were quite upset. The coast of Jaffa is well-known around here for its rough seas. Many vendors came from the city with goods such as rings and rosaries and other curios made in Jerusalem and Jaffa. We bought some things as mementos. At 11:00 they rang the breakfast bell and we went to eat at a private table in the salon. The ship never ceased rocking and we were much troubled. My morale was low and I grew weak. It came to mind how much better it is traveling by land than by sea. The ship is quite large but light and has only a little cargo in it, yet it holds 3600 tons. It is very long and narrow with about 100

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cabins that are very nicely appointed. In them are electric lights and bells, also electric, as well as other things. Here I made friends with a man of American citizenship originally from Beirut but he had emigrated from Beirut long ago. His name is *George Saba* and he lives in New York. He is a very pleasant man. He was staying with us at the hotel but neither of us dared speak to the other until now. We were quite distressed by the rocking of the ship. Finally at 6:00 it whistled and set off from Jaffa, this accursed place. However we encountered high winds and the ship rolled even more. At 7:00 the dinner bell rang. I immediately went and ate hastily with an upset stomach and then rushed off to sleep.

page 074 June 2nd

Port Said

A nice morning with a westerly wind. I got up at 5:00 but I did not sleep all night because I was indisposed on account of the sea. I heard the ship slow down and knew immediately that we were arriving at Port Said. I put my head out the window and saw the seaport, which came into view a half an hour out. The ships there were as abundant as worms. I hurried to change my clothes and went up on deck. Then the ship entered the harbor. It was 5:20. I saw a number of big ships in a line. Then after the ship stopped moving, we hired a boat, one of the *Cook*¹ boats. We stowed our things and then went ashore to the customs office. Here they searched us in case we had with us the slightest prohibited thing and they found nothing. We had decided that we would visit our friend Monsieur Joseph Khoury who, 10 years ago, was the interpreter for the French Consul in Baghdad. He was engaged to Josephine, Aunt Medula's daughter, who passed away before her marriage. So we asked about his house and they showed us where it was. We sent up our card fearing that this might be a different Khoury. They then showed us up and none other than Joseph's mother herself came. Then he arrived and received us with much joy and kissed us. We were truly amazed at how fate had allowed us to see him after so long. Our idea was that we would go from here directly to Cairo, that is, on the train that departs at 9:00. But Monsieur Khoury very much wanted us to stay here for the day so we agreed to this. I left to tour Port Said and found it a very beautiful and clean town. Its markets and buildings are entirely like Europe. That is to say, all the buildings are four or five stories high and there is a large building, 9 stories high, made of iron. It is across from the house of Monsieur Khoury. I can honestly say that the arrangement of Port Said is better than Beirut although it is small and

extremely expensive. A person cannot live there on less than 15 francs a day. All the shops and department stores are in the French style and nearly all the inhabitants of the town dress in the French manner. The Egyptian police patrol every street, dressed very neatly and were on the lookout for anyone who plays rough. My health up until now has been quite disrupted. My head is spinning and I am incapable of doing anything. In the afternoon we had breakfast at Monsieur Khoury's and asked him to show us some of the hotels so we could find a place to spend the night. He took us to a hotel where we rented two rooms. They asked 15 francs of us for dinner and bed. The bicycle is abundant here and there are many, both men and women, who ride it in the streets. After dinner Monsieur Khoury came to visit us and stayed for about two hours.

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June 3rd

Today the morning is a little hot with a westerly wind. The weather here is much different than in Damascus and Beirut. It is like days in Baghdad during this month. That is to say, dry and hot. We drank tea at 7:30, got our things together, and went to Monsieur Khoury's house to say goodbye and go to the railway to board the train to Cairo. So we stayed just until 8:30. Then we bade his mother goodbye and he generously offered to accompany us to the station. We went and got ourselves seats. We saw that this train was much nicer than the one that goes from Damascus to Beirut. And by chance we came upon an empty *Wagon* for us only and we were very pleased. At 9:00 sharp the whistle blew and the bell rang for the departure. So we exchanged goodbyes with Monsieur Yousif Khoury and the train left Port Said taking the shore of the *Canal de Suez*, always traveling along its banks. At 9:35 it halted. It was 14 kilometers from Port Said to here. At 9:45 a ship in the canal, named Abdul Qader², passed us with pilgrims on board, one that had certainly come from Basrah going to the Hajj.

At 10:00 the train stopped and started again 3 minutes later. 10:50 al-Qantara Station, we departed at 11:00 / 11:45, al-Ferdan, we departed at 11:47.

Suez Canal, al-Isma'iliyya

We arrived in al-Isma'iliyya at 12:15 and got off the train. We had to wait for the train coming from al-Suez to take us to Cairo. At 1:10 it arrived and we transferred. We took another *Wagon* but not the same kind as the first and older. Isma'iliyya is a

page 076 small and rebuilt town. At 1:23 we set out returning to al-Suez so that the train can take the Cairo track. This one was going fast, much swifter than the one we came on,

to al-Isma'ilyah. 1:55, Mahassana, we departed at 1:58 / 2:08, Qassasin, we departed at 2:10 / 2:25, Tel al-Kabir, we departed at 2:30 / 2:45, Abu Hamad, we departed at 2:48 / 3:00, Abu Ahdhar, we departed at 3:01.

Here there is a large and well-designed cemetery³ with the graves of English and Egyptian soldiers who were killed in the battle between England and Egypt⁴ and its allies. 3:10, Zaqaziq. This town is quite large and resembles Baghdad in size. Here many passengers came and 7 of them even entered the reserved *Wagon*. They were quite lacking in manners and made jokes amongst themselves thinking we were Westerners. The lands here are very fertile and there are many date palms and crops such as barley, wheat, cotton, rice and other things. For the first time since Baghdad I saw water buffalos in this place. But the entire area from Port Said to here is very sandy with dust clouds and the train is full of dust. The railway was swift and we traveled quite well. I counted 15 telegraph poles passing in a single minute. We departed from Zaqaziq at 3:25, with a large number of passengers from there.

Zinkaloon, 3:35, we departed at 3:36 / Joudida, 3:48, we departed at 3:50 / Minat al-Qamh, 3:55 we departed at 4:00 / Mayt Yazid, 4:05, we departed at 4:07.

At 4:15 the train stopped and they said we must move to another one because the track here is being leveled and the railway cannot pass directly. So we had to carry our things and race to the second railway, jostled left and right by the passengers. At last we reached the other train but with great difficulty and settled into a compartment that holds 8 persons. We were obliged to wait for the transfer of the cargo from one to the other. Finally at 5:10 the train departed.

We arrived in Shablana at 5:20 and departed at 5:28 / 5:45, Benha, we departed at 6:00.

page 077 The train was extremely swift, traveling this speedily with us for the first time. It was making a full 21 poles per minute. After a 15 minute run Cairo came into view. So it reduced its speed and began to travel slower.

Chapter 8

Arrival in Cairo, Egypt

AT 6:35 WE ARRIVED at the Cairo station and caught sight of the towering buildings and lovely edifices that eclipse both Beirut and Damascus. Here hotel owners gathered about us abundant as worms and we sought out the best one, that is, the *Hotel Metropole*. We hired a carriage and rode through pleasant markets and beautiful streets that cheer the heart. As we continued on our way people swarmed in the streets and the carriages teemed like fish. The policemen in the streets are as neatly dressed as the English soldiers. We do not have time just now to look at everything. So we came to the hotel entrance and bargained with them to pay one English pound¹ each day for the three of us. We entered and took two rooms. Everything is unbearably expensive. In Port Said it is much worse. There a porter will not carry anything a distance of only three minutes without one franc and everyone else is the same. At the hotel we met Madame Fara, that is, Regina, the daughter of Khowaja Habib Shiha and her son Victor. She was very pleased to see us when we reached her room. She could not believe that we had really come and was quite astonished to see me. She asked about Baghdad, about sister Takohi among other things. We dined at 8:00 and then went up to sleep in our rooms because we were truly devastated by exhaustion and the journey.

June 4th

I got up at 6:30 in the morning. It was hot all night long and the windows were open in the room. I slept very well this night because I was so tired. After we drank tea I went with my father to tour the markets. But what markets they are, like palaces! All the stores are made bright with gilded signs and glass on the main doors, and with passages like beautifully designed brides. First we went to Messrs. *Thos. Cook & Son* to purchase tickets from one of them right then to Brindisi and Napoli, as well as

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railway tickets from here to Alexandria. So we came to the office which looked as if it was a city gate. The architecture was amazing and the building seemed like a castle. We entered and inquired about the tickets. He immediately showed us the plan of the ship that will sail from Alexandria on the 11th of this month to Brindisi. It is called *Sutleg*. It holds nearly 5000 tons and is an extremely large ship. He issued three second-class tickets for us to *Brindisi* for 16 and a quarter English pounds and railway tickets from *Brindisi* to *Napoli* for about 6 pounds, and also tickets from here to Alexandria for one and a half pounds for all, that is, all three of us. He said that if we returned in an hour the tickets would be ready. So we left and went to the bank, that is, the *Banque Impl. Ottomane*, to collect a total of 60 pounds. This bank is also large with admirable architecture and a fair number of clerks. They handed us the money and we left returning to *Cook's* and found all the tickets ready. We took them and went to the Austrian Consulate to ask if there were any letters from Baghdad addressed to us. We gave them our cards and they looked but found nothing. Then it was necessary for us to return to the hotel because it had turned 11:30. In Regina's room I ran across Monsieur Auguste Tonietti, whom I had quite forgotten. When he left Baghdad I was about 9 years old. He did not recognize me either. We were very pleased to find someone who could help us here and so we arranged to meet him in the afternoon, that is, at 4:00, and tour the town together. In the course of conversation he told us that Effie², my late Uncle Alexander's daughter is here but is out of town and that her husband has an *Optician's* shop in the city. I prepared a few letters to Baghdad and Basrah after breakfast. Then Monsieur Auguste came at 4:00 and took us with him to see Monsieur *Boucherot*, Effie's husband. He had no news of this whatsoever and when my father surprised him the poor man was so amazed that he cried out in a loud voice and hugged him as if in disbelief and appeared very happy to see us. He is a pleasant man and he has a store where he sells binoculars, engineering tools, and other things.

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Azbakiyah, Cairo *Cairo el Izbakieh*

After a half an hour we left his place. He said that Effie would return tomorrow and that he would bring her to our hotel. He also invited us to spend the day with him outside the city on Sunday. From there we went into a wooded garden called al-Azbakiyah³ in the center of the district. What a pleasant and agreeable garden it is, with every kind of tree in the world purchased for exorbitant sums in order to bring them here. Beneath the trees there are plenty of seats and benches and people are going to and fro. In the middle there is a very large pond, I mean 200 meters long,

with geese, but a different kind of goose we had never seen before. It has a long neck and a beak with a black appendage and is quite large. There is a raised circle next to the pool where they play music, pleasant Western songs. In short this place is the best of all the wooded gardens we have seen. In front of this garden, in the passage, there is a large statue of Ibrahim Pasha riding his horse, made entirely of bronze. We stayed until 7:30 and then returned. The streets swarmed with people, Westerners with their women, as abundant as worms. It was a thousand times more crowded than in the morning because everyone had just now finished work. The streets are lit by electric lights, natural gas, and petrol. Streetcars go to and fro and so too the bicycles. Here for the first time we saw the *Tramway*. It runs on electricity and they call it the *Automobile*. This thing is truly astonishing. It moves by itself without being pulled by horses or having fire in it. Returning to the hotel we said goodbye to Auguste and agreed that tomorrow he would come to us so that we could go and see other places.

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June 5th

al-Muqattam Mosque, Cairo

I got up in the morning and the weather was very hot. The night had been very stuffy. After I had washed and changed Monsieur Auguste arrived and we decided to visit a mosque well known for its architecture. They call it al-Muqattam Mosque. So we set out from the hotel and boarded the *Tramway Electric* to journey to the outskirts of the city in order to go up and see this mosque which is built tall and on top of a mountain. We arrived and there were many barhama (acacia) trees in the streets. Then we climbed up little by little and went all around this very large mosque. The building is like the work of a mighty people. From here we see the whole town below us and so too the pyramids become visible to us from here. Afterwards we wanted to enter the mosque, that is to say, the prayer hall, so we were obliged to wear their slippers. We wore them and entered into the prayer hall. We were astonished by its size and by what there was inside of refined marble-work. Its width is 80 steps and its length is many times that. It also has four domes on top, each one higher than the other, and all have encircling balconies. A chandelier hangs in the middle, because of its size suspended on a boat chain, the kind they use to pull up anchors. They can light 1000 lamps on this chandelier and its circumference is possibly 10 meters. Then we exited and gave them a few piasters as a tip. We then came to a very deep hole called the Well of Joseph⁴, that is to say, where Joseph the

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Beautiful was thrown into the well. Here too we gave them a few piasters and they opened the door for us. We went down into it so they brought us candles. I went down half-way with Auguste and we saw a tomb in the wall and something like wheels for drawing water. We were at a depth of 200 meters and it was but another 100 meters to the water. But we came back up because we were dying from exhaustion and the heat that had killed us all day long. The sun was blazing hot like the days of the summer in Baghdad. So we left this place quite amazed by its workmanship and went back on the tramway to the hotel. It was 12:00 and we were expecting Effie, daughter of the late Uncle Alexander, because her husband had told us that she would come to our place at noon. Just when we sat down at the table for breakfast they told us that guests had arrived to see us and we knew that it was Effie. She came right in and continuously embraced us most affectionately. She was surprised at how she had encountered us and was extremely happy to see us. So we had her sit down at the table with us and ordered a meal for her. Afterwards we went up with her to our room and remained talking at length about Baghdad. She said that it has been 37 years since she left Baghdad. Yet she recalled everything up to this very moment, even the old songs. But the poor thing is very old and the hair on her head is growing white. She was much taken by my mother and I showed her many photographs of Baghdad and especially photographs of our family. She was overcome by wonder when she saw such changes as had happened in the family. At 4:00 we took her with us and went to the market to buy a few things. Then we went to her husband's shop and found her youngest son there. He is named Paul and is 10 years old. Her elder daughter is married and has a boy. We kept walking after leaving the store until we came to the railway station. Then we said our goodbyes and she insisted that tomorrow we come and spend the day at their house, in a place called al-Matariyah⁵, outside of town at a distance of a half hour's walk and 10 minutes by railway. We returned to the hotel at sunset.

page 082 June 6th

A stuffy and hot morning. I got up at 6:30 and changed my clothes. Because today is Sunday we had arranged yesterday with Monsieur Auguste that he would come to us at 8:00 and take us with him to church to hear mass. From there we would go to the station and to Effie's house. Auguste came right at the set time. We took him and went to a small church. We saw that all the masses had finished and that another one would be held at 10:00. But that was very late and the weather was getting hot.

So we decided that it would be better to go to the railway and get ourselves tickets to al-Matariyah. We hired a carriage and went to the station. It was 9:15 and we got return tickets for 12 standard piasters for the four of us. At 9:30 we boarded the train and it set out. We journeyed along, stopping every 10 minutes at a station, until we arrived at 10:00 in al-Matariyah . We got off and went to Effie's place. The weather was getting hotter and hotter and the ground was boiling hot because it is dry sand. We entered and they were happy to welcome us. Auguste had gone to be with some of his friends. We went into a room and shut all the doors and windows because the blazing heat was extremely powerful. At noon it got to 112° Fahrenheit and I can say that in Baghdad there is no heat like this. So an hour after noon we sat down to breakfast at which time Effie's son Alphonse came, the one who works at the railway. He is a youth of 21 years. The poor fellow was sick from the heat. Finally at 4:15 we said our goodbyes and left to catch the train that leaves at 4:30. The sun here was very hot and the weather was dry, saam-like, and scorching. They used to say that Africa is hot and yet we did not believe it. At 4:30 the train came and we boarded it. There was not a single person on board because of the intensity of the heat. Auguste came as well.

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Cairo

We arrived in Cairo at 5:00 and decided to visit Yousif Serpos who arrived today from Alexandria. When we were in Port Said we wrote him a letter informing him of our arrival here and they sent the letter there for him. Yesterday at sunset a telegram came from him telling us that tomorrow he would be in Cairo. So we went with Auguste to his residence and entered and went up to the third floor where we saw him. He was happy to see us and his wife came too, who is quite young, perhaps 22 years old. He has two little boys aged two years and under. We left their place after an hour. He invited us for dinner at his place tomorrow and we accepted. We had intended to go and view the best place in Cairo which is al-Gizeh, a large district on the other side of the Nile River.

Giza Guizeh

So we hired a carriage for 3 francs and rode with Auguste over leveled roads bordered by plantings of barhama, where people in carriages and on horseback and bicycles were abundant as worms, swarming. Then we came upon the Nile River Bridge which is made of iron and stands about 50 meters above the river. At its entrance there are two bridgeheads with two lions, sculpted in steel, very large, and a truly terrifying sight. We then crossed the bridge over the Nile and came to al-

Gizeh, an extremely pleasant place. It resembles a covered passage with barhama trees on both sides which shade the center and carriages in abundance on two lanes, one lane going out and the other coming back. And between them there are police on the lookout for anything the least bit inappropriate. Here there is the best hotel to be found in Cairo. It is called the *Gazereh Palace Hotel*⁶ and it is truly a sight to see. People who have seen it say that its like is not to be found in Europe because it is as large as the largest palace. In it are more than 300 rooms, an electricity generating facility, and huge theatres. In front the ground is planted with all kinds of flowers. Every 10 cubits there are statues and electric lights fill it inside and out. In short it is very elegant. Then we returned from this place which is also used in the winter for betting on the horses at 7:30.

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June 7th

I awoke at 6:30 in the morning. The weather was still stuffy. It seems that these are the hottest days here. After drinking tea Monsieur Auguste came to take us and we hired a carriage and went to see the sisters of Yousif Serpos⁷, that is, Mariam and Touza, whose residence is a half an hour from here. On our way we went into the place of a dressmaker who is sewing a coat for my mother. Here I saw something worth mentioning, something wondrous and rare. This dressmaker has a son some 35 years old. I saw with my own eyes that he was blind, since the age of twenty, and yet he has learned to play the piano. This poor fellow was inspired by Allah and so long as he has been blind he has been giving piano lessons to many people. Beyond that he composes music and writes the notes down in notebooks and teaches them to students despite being blind to the ultimate degree. This is something that amazed me and will never happen again. We arrived at the house of the Serpos daughters and went up to their place. They greeted us dressed in black for both their sister and Touza's husband, Iskander Nassour. Parson Boutros Abed came here too, the one who was the director of the Chaldean school in Baghdad six years ago. The poor fellow has lost much weight and is now in charge of the church that was sponsored by Antony's wife who lives at the same building with Yousif Serpos but on the floor below. Then after leaving Mariam and Touza's home, Parson Boutros

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went with us to have a look at the church that belongs to Antoine Abdul-Mesih's wife. We entered and found it pleasant. It was not very large and as yet unfinished. They are still painting but the interior is lovely and holds only about 500 people. Up to now she has spent 7000 pounds on it. We returned to the hotel at 12:00 and had

breakfast. Afterwards at 5:00 Auguste came and took us to visit Antony's wife Helene. She received us in the diwan. She is old and deaf, about 65 years of age. Since we had decided that we would dine at Yousif's place we said our goodbyes and went up to the floor above. There we were seated in the diwan and Yousif and his wife entered later. Yousif entertained us to the best of his ability. Then we decided that after dinner we would go and take the air in the surroundings of Cairo. Yousif's wife is young, 20 years old, and she plays the piano quite well. She played a number of pieces for us, especially some melodies that I used to hear in Baghdad. Then I thought of the homeland and wished I were there. We sat down to dine at 9:30 and the table was quite lovely. We finished at 11:00 and then took two carriages to the bridge district that they call *kepri*⁸. But how pleasant the view is there on the roads with trees on both sides and electric and gas lights on both lanes. There is something especially beautiful at the bridgehead where the rays of light cast a charming and even glow. We returned at 12:00 to the hotel and said farewell to Yousif and his wife. We arranged with them that tomorrow we would go to the Palace of Antiquities⁹, that is to say, the *Musée*. Today I sent a number of letters to Baghdad, that is, to Johnny Kasperkhan, Nassoury, Jamil, and to Rapha'il. I also sent Johnny the regulations I obtained from the president of the university in Beirut

June 8th

The Palace of the Antiquities, *Le Musée*

I got up in the morning and changed my clothes. The weather was still very stuffy. After we drank tea at 8:00 the Khowajas, Auguste, and Yousif, came to take us to the exhibit of Egyptian antiquities. So at 8:30 we hired a carriage and rode toward the bridge. We crossed and took a street called al-Giza. It is completely shaded by barhama trees on both sides, which cast a shadow over the middle. Here the breeze was blowing pleasantly and the zephyr was cheering to the heart. Half an hour later we arrived at the Palace of Antiquities in Giza, which they call *Le Musée de Gizeh*. It consists of a huge orchard with a very large saray in the middle which was previously the residence of the former khedive Isma'il Pasha. Now it has been made into an exhibit which houses all the Egyptian finds discovered in these lands. Because today is Tuesday admission is free to all visitors. Then we reached the gate and the palace came into view. It is a most excellent thing for its sublime architecture and decorative workmanship. We entered and they asked us for the canes and umbrellas because they feared that something inside might be broken. We

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entered the first room and saw the embalmed bodies that are the *Momies d'Egypte*. They are desiccated but in the state in which they died, except for being desiccated and black. All their jewelry and clothes are here as are the shrouds. They are very ancient, no less than 3000 years old. Finally we went into room after room in this huge, pleasant palace, all decorated and dazzling and far better than the finest houses of Damascus, which astonished us. So here we saw all that they had discovered of this ancient people. Their clothes, idols, rings and gold work, coffins, furniture, tools, mirrors, books, jewelry, articles of war, beads and their inscriptions on linen or tree leaves, and so on, and other artifacts that bewilder the mind and confound one's wits. This palace contains nearly 90 rooms all filled with such artifacts which are a sight to see and which open one's eyes to ancient things. Here all these objects are stored in covered boxes of glass and crystal to prevent their being touched. We also saw their ships, boats, oars, and so on. Actually we kept on touring until 11:00 and had still not finished. We were extremely tired from being on our feet and so we went downstairs after we had looked at everything, got into the carriage, and returned to our place quite thoughtful and impressed by this pleasant visit. In the afternoon Khowaja Yousif and his wife came to visit us. At sunset we went to enjoy the fresh air in the Azbakiyah Garden.

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June 9th

The Pyramids *Pyramides*

Today I woke up in the morning, that is to say, at 5:00 because we had decided to go and see the extraordinary pyramids. The morning was pleasant and not too hot. Monsieur Auguste came to us and at 10 minutes past 6 we got into a carriage and rode toward the bridge in order to take the road which will lead us to the pyramids. So we crossed and went between the barhama trees on both sides and among long, straight roadways. The sun was casting shadows and a very nice morning breeze blew. At last we arrived at 7:45 at the pyramids which are truly one of the wonders of the world. A hotel called *Mena House*¹⁰ is nearby which is extremely pleasant and well-decorated. But before we arrived at the pyramids a crowd of people wanting to act as our guides gathered around us. They were rushing toward the carriage and quarreling amongst themselves. We rebuffed them and did not want any of them but they did not make way and were truly quite annoying. We told them that we wanted none of them at all yet they did not give up but, this time, went and brought their camels and riding animals. So we left them behind, like dogs, and went toward

the first of the pyramids which from afar appeared a small thing to us. These pyramids are built of great blocks of marble laid one on top of the other and are a sight to see. The height of these pyramids is 470 feet. They suppose that the kings of the ancients when they ascended to the throne had deep tombs made for them at a depth of 400 feet. Above them they constructed these huge mountains, that are the pyramids, because they believed that their souls after death would return on the Day of the Last Judgment to take on their bodies and live deathless for all eternity. Before dying one must direct that after he dies they lay up his body in the tightest possible place so that it receive no breath of wind or air and for that reason too they embalmed them. This could possibly be true. After viewing the first pyramid we went toward the *Sphinx*, which here they call Abul-Hawl. We were amazed by its size and massive workmanship. We observed as much as our strength allowed because the heat was very strong and the ground was not easy to walk on because it was sandy, hot, and rose and fell. So we descended and took to the carriage. It was 9:30 and we went back to where we had come from. Thus we arrived at the hotel at 10:50 and paid the carriage fare of 35 standard piasters. After breakfast Effie and her son, Alphonse, arrived and stayed until 6:00. Then they left the hotel giving us their word that they would return tomorrow afternoon to say our goodbyes. At sunset we took Auguste and went to al-Azbakiyah to listen to the music for an hour. Then we returned to our place.

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June 10th

I got up at 7:00. The morning was like yesterday. After we drank tea we went all together to the bath which is 10 minutes from here in order to bathe. We paid 6 standard piasters each. Truly this bath was very pleasing. It is made in the European style and women and men can go there because it is entirely divided into rooms and pools in the European style. We returned after an hour. This is our last day here in Cairo and tomorrow we will take the train to Alexandria. So today we have nothing to do. We breakfasted and asked the hotel owner to present us with the bill. I really loved Cairo very much and am sad to leave it. I will certainly see no better. In the afternoon Monsieur Auguste visited. We took him and went about bidding farewell to Egypt. When we returned at sunset we found Effie's daughter *Eveline* at our place with her husband and son. Her husband's name is *Georges Kabil* and truly both of them are young, the girl probably 18 years old and the husband possibly only 20. We were quite happy to see them and they us. They left after a half an hour and we said

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our goodbyes. They told us that Effie directed them to give us her greetings since she did not have time to come into town.

Chapter 9

***The Journey from Cairo to Rome via
Brindisi and Napoli***

June 11th

I GOT UP IN THE morning at 6:00 because we have to prepare our things to travel by the train that leaves at 9:30. So after drinking tea we arranged all our things. At 8:00 Auguste arrived and Regina Madame Fara came down from upstairs. A half an hour later we hired two carriages and bade goodbye to Regina. We paid the hotel charges, which amounted to nearly 8 English pounds, boarded the carriages, and rode to the railway station. As soon as we arrived we got our tickets and took a place in second class. They charge for the trunks here also. When, like this, we came from Port Said they took 10 francs for the two trunks. Then Yousif Serpos, his wife and children, and Parson Boutros came to bid us goodbye. At 9:30 the train whistled and we bade everyone goodbye, and especially Auguste was very upset by our parting, as were we. He was our companion in Egypt, with us the whole time, and he never stinted in doing anything for us.

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Alexandria

So we left Egypt behind. The train pulled out of the *Station* heading toward Alexandria. I was truly quite sad to leave Cairo for it is a city worth remembering and seeing and it is superior to all the places that we have seen before.

We departed at 9:30/at 10:10 Benha, departed at 10:15/at 10:52 Tanta, departed at 11:05 /at 11:15 Kafr el-Zayyat, departed at 11:16 / at 11:55 Damanhour, departed at 12:00 / at 12:40 Sidi-Gaber, departed at 12:45. At 1:00 in the afternoon we arrived in Alexandria.

Since I have a friend here with whom I have kept up a correspondence for three years on the subject of stamps, I had written him a letter from Cairo some days ago.

I told him that I had arrived here and would see him soon. He replied saying that he was quite pleased and would wait for me at the station on the day of my arrival. When the train arrived at the station here I met my friend. His name is *S. E. Couddésu* and he was very happy to see me. So immediately we hired a carriage and loaded our trunks. We made up our minds before anything else to go and take the cabin on the ship *Sutlej*¹, which is one of the *T. & C* ships. Then we rode through the streets of Alexandria and I was impressed by this construction which is far superior to Cairo. We boarded the ship and took the cabin. *Couddésu* was with us. After we left our trunks we returned by carriage to have a better look at the town. So we toured its markets and locales. I saw that it resembles Cairo to some extent. Although there are neither trees by the roads nor big gardens its streets are paved with marble. Then we went to the post office to inquire if there are letters for us from Baghdad. We did not find a thing and wondered how it is that our family has not written anything to us by now. The last letter we received was in Beirut. It has been a long time and we have had no news at all from them. We returned to the ship at 3:00 because it will sail at 4:00. Then I gave my friend the stamps, a few foreign stamps and others numbering about 50. He bade me goodbye and left. I also gave him a letter Antoine Guilietti wrote to his Aunt here as a kind of recommendation and I begged of him to tell Messieurs *Bavastro et Sakakini* that I deeply regretted not having seen them in person. At 4:00 sharp the ship sailed from the *Port* where there are about 100 ships, among them the ship *Turkistan* that came from Basrah and will also sail immediately to Marseille. Truly the port of Alexandria is excellent, pleasant and very large. So we left the port and are now at sea. Our ship is extremely large and can transport nearly 5000 tons. Thank God it has a cargo and does not rock like the one we came on from Beirut to Port Said. It travels quite pleasantly and does not upset us in the slightest. Here we made friends with a French man named Monsieur Chartraine and his wife. He works at the railroad in Cairo and is a good person. There are only 30 passengers with us, in both first and second class. After supper which was at sunset 6:30, I went up onto the deck of the ship. The moon was in its tenth day and cast a lovely light onto this vast and violent sea. The weather was very cold here and there was a great difference between here and Cairo. The clouds resembled winter days.

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[*bottom marginal note*: Alexander crossed out, "One thing is not good here and that is the food. It is quite insufficient. They serve no more than two simple dishes." In the bottom margin is

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written, "That was only at sunset but in the daytime they serve food about 4 times, but only a simple meal at sunset."]

June 12

This morning the sea is fearsome and upsetting but not so much and there are signs of its getting worse. I am quite afraid of it because it pains me. The ship is very big and there is not much cargo. We approached the shores of Greece just after noon. Here the wind blew hard and the ship tossed and turned more. I began to toss and turn inside also and my health changed. In the afternoon we passed islands, the *Ionian Islands*, in the distance. The ship never ceased rocking more and more, and I likewise, until sunset when I came to sit at the table. My stomach turned and I went down to the cabin without eating a morsel. I was feeling much worse and my insides turned all the more. I threw myself on the bed and began to vomit unceasingly. *page 092*

June 13th

That night turned out to be the hardest night of my entire life. Until now I had never suffered such agony which I continue to suffer to this very moment. Left like a fish on the bed, from the tossing of the accursed ship, I threw up nearly 15 times during the night and have been throwing up like that until now. The sea is quite agitated and I feel my head is being uprooted. They advised me that I should go up on deck but it was even more miserable and until sunset I suffered the torments of martyrs. This is the first time I have felt anything of this sort. May God help anyone in whose head such a thing happens. I was in the same state until night, growing extremely weak and without enough power in me to walk. I feared that this night would be like the previous one so we sent for the physician and he gave me a sleeping draught. However, God be praised, the sea became less agitated.

June 14th

remember / this / on the / Euphrates / the 24/4/97 / noon (*top margin note on page 93*)

Tonight I slept well though reeling from fatigue and lack of food. From the day before yesterday until now I have eaten nothing at all. Since we will arrive today in Brindisi I had to prepare my things for leaving the ship and the accursed sea which I had begun to hate like the devil. I longed for travel by land which is a thousand times better. After I drank a little tea I changed my clothes and arranged my things. *page 093*
I was devastated by utter weakness and did not have the strength to take a step. At

7:00 the accursed ship began to toss and turn again and the sea grew more agitated. There is no power and no strength save in God the Sublime and Mighty! Then I, in all my weakness, started to get sick again. Truly if it were not that Brindisi is two hours from here I would inevitably have died! Then I sat down at table and the ship tossed and turned and finally went back and forth. This was because we had neared the shores of Italy, that is to say, Brindisi.

Brindisi

At 8:30 the ship entered the port and settled somewhat. Then at 9:10 it proceeded to the shore or the *Quai*. They lowered the gangway and we disembarked from the ship. I am happy at being separated from the sea but distressed because of my utterly low spirits. What good health I had gathered along the way I lost in a single day and night. Brindisi resembles Port Said a bit but all its people are Italians. The town is not large but arranged like in Europe. We had hoped that after our arrival we would leave here immediately but when we asked about the train that goes to Naples they said that it had left 5 minutes ago. There is another to *Foggia*, or half way to Naples, which is due to leave at 1:10 in the afternoon. So we had to wait until then. At 1:00 the train appeared so we took our things and went to reserve a place in second class. Here in Italy there is a charge by weight for travelers' trunks. They took 17 francs for our two trunks as the fee direct to Naples. At 1:15 we traveled from Brindisi by rail, then to stay overnight at a small town called *Foggia* because the direct road to Naples from here is very long and takes more than 15 hours.

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Thus we arrived at

1,33, S.Vito D'Otranto, left 1,35 = Carovigno 2,5 left 2,8 =

Ostouni 2,27 left 2,40 = Cisternino 2,55 left 3= Fazano 3,15

left 3,25 = Monopoli 3,42 left 3,50 = Polignano 4,7 left 4,10 =

Mola 4,30 left 4,33 = Noicattaro 4,45 left 4,57 = Bori 5,15

left 5,30 these three latter stations are very larg & Their

towns are also big. New station 5,50 left 6,5 = Molfetta 6,11

left 6,15 = Bicsglia 6,30 left 6,33 = Trani 6,42 left 7,28 =

Barletta 7,20 left 7,28 = Ofantino 7,44 left 7,46 = from

Brindisi to here we were going alongside the sea but

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now took the desert. Cirignola 8,15 left 8,20 = Ortonova

8,45 left 8,47 = arrived @ 9,10 Foggia

We arrived here after sunset, darkness had set in but there is electric and gas light in the streets. We got off the train, took a carriage, and went with someone to a place where we could sleep. So we arrived there and the place did not look good. Yet we took a room and ordered food. I have not stopped being weak and am not feeling well. After we had dinner we went to bed. This place is called *Albergo di Villa di Napoli*.

June 15th

Foggia

We got up in the morning at 5:00 because the train leaves for Naples at 6:15. We rushed to prepare ourselves and paid the 7 francs that we owed. After we drank some milk we went to the station and boarded the train that goes directly to Naples without all the stops. Its name is *Espresso*.

From Foggia at 6,15 = 6:52. Bovino left 7,2 =

Savignano 7,37 left 7,40 = Pianerottola 7,50 L 7,57 =

passed a long tunnel for 6 minutes, Ariano 8, 0 L 8,3 =

Montegalvo 8,20 left 8,23 = Apice-Argengelo 8,40 l 8,42

Ponte-Valentino 8,49 l 8,50 = Benevento 8,55, l 9, 5 =

Casalduni Ponte 9,23 l 9,25 = Solopaga 9,35 l 9,37 =

Terese Cereto 9,42 l 9,45 = Frasso-Dugenta 9,56 l 9,58 =

here we passed under a bridge of 3 stages.

Madoloni 10,13 l 10,15 = Caserta 10,25 l 10,35 =

Aversa 10,52 l 10,55 = Fratemalegroma 11,0 l 11,3

Afragola 11,8 l 11,10 = Arrived Napoli 11,15

Naples Napoli

Thus, we neared the famous Naples little by little. From *Foggia* to here we were traveling through pleasant green mountains with extremely beautiful scenery. After

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we arrived at the station we hired a carriage, took our belongings, and went to rent ourselves a room in a hotel called the *Pension Suisse*. But it is small and dirty and we bargained to pay 18 francs a day. Because I have a friend here with whom I correspond on the subject of stamps, I wrote a letter to him from Brindisi so that he would come to the station and meet me. But upon my arrival I did not see him and I suppose my letter did not reach him. After we finished breakfast we went to look at the town which is as pleasant as ever could be. It has buildings and parks such as we have not seen before and likewise its palaces and theatres. It is on the sea and its location is lovely. There are many people here, some 600,000 souls. Especially these

page 096 days when Sultan *Humberto* and his son and his daughter-in-law are in residence, the whole town, the markets, and palaces are adorned with flowers and other things. It is true that Naples is a paradise. After we toured the city I wanted to go and look for my friend because we are here by ourselves and do not know anybody. So we tried and with great difficulty found his place in a long street called *Via Chiaja*, number 20. I went up to his room and rang the bell. A woman came out and told me that he was not at home but at his office, and would return at 8:00, after sunset. So I wrote him a note telling him that I had arrived in Naples and wished to see him. I also gave him my address and begged him to come to my place as soon as possible. Then the woman immediately brought me a note that my friend Monsieur *D'Ovidio* wrote saying that he did not know when I would honor Naples and that only my letter from Cairo had reached him. In his note he also asked me to give him my address. I was truly pleased by this and forgave him for not coming to the station because my letter did not reach him from Brindisi. So we returned from the street to our hotel to await Monsieur *D'Ovidio's* arrival. We had not been there an hour when someone knocked at the door of the room. I opened it and there was *D'Ovidio* himself. I greeted him and he me and I introduced him to my parents. He was very happy that we had come and apologized for being late, saying that his wife had just now sent him both my note and letter which I sent from Brindisi that arrived with us on the same train. After a long talk he presented himself to us as a true friend and said that he was ready to be of service to us in everything we desire here and that he would go eat dinner and afterwards return to take us for an evening tour of the enjoyable sites in Naples. We dined and afterwards Monsieur *D'Ovidio* came and we left to

page 097 wander about in the superb sights of Naples. The people swarmed like worms and the carriages were coming and going. We passed whatever there was to look at. First we went first to the *Teatro St. Carlo* and then to the *Galleria* and the *Palais Royal*. Then

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we went to the seaside across from Mt. *Vesuve* which was erupting and we could see fire covering the mountain. I really do not know what to say about Naples and all its entertainments. Two hours later we returned to the hotel

June 16th

Napoli

The morning is pleasant and the weather here is good. The weather is not at all hot. Yesterday we arranged with Monsieur D'Ovidio that he would come and get us at 10:00 and we would go to tour Naples in a coach. At 9:00 he sent me a letter by one of his clerks expressing his regret but that he is extremely busy and it is impossible for him to accompany us now but he sent his clerk and his carriage. So we entered the carriage and went to the vicinity of famous and great places. We began to climb, little by little, up into the mountains where the entire city came into view. What a beautiful sight it was, on the sea and Mt. Vesuvius among other things, and those palaces hanging in the middle of the green mountains. We toured around the town and then descended and went to my friend's office. It was then 1:30 and he promised to meet there so he could take us to the *Port*, board a jolly boat and go to sea. He was not ready when we arrived but after 10 minutes he came and apologized for being unable to accompany us in the morning. Then we went to the seashore, boarded a boat and went out to sea. How pleasant was the view of the town from the sea. Then the sea grew rough and the jolly boat began to toss and turn. I remembered my time on the ship and my stomach grew upset. I asked him to take us back to shore because the wind at sea pains me. We went back after an hour. Here in the harbor there are two *Ports*, one for the navy and the other for trade, and it has a *Phare* that is a lighthouse on the sea. Anchored in the naval harbor were two Italian warships. One of them, named the *Sardaigna*, has 7 funnels and is extremely large. At sunset we returned to our place having decided that we would go after dinner to the *Theatre*, that is, to the *Opera* called *San Carlo*. We bought the tickets for two francs each. Before we returned to the hotel my friend took us to walk by the sea. On one side is a big garden and the sea is on the other. The most pleasant of all places in Naples are here. The carriages and people were passing like the sands of the sea and they say that in the entire world one will not find as pleasant a sight as this place. Finally we returned and so too did Monsieur D'Ovidio return home. It was decided that we would wait for him at the theater door, that is, at 9:00. We returned at 8:30 to the theater. We waited for him until he arrived. We entered and

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took our seats. I was fascinated by this entryway and such a beautiful scene. The performance began and there were about 1000 persons in the audience. They were performing the drama according to the ordering of the *Orchestra*. The music was playing and accompanied their singing. The scene was truly quite humbling. They performed a ballet afterward, which captured the gaze of all those present, and they applauded them as a sort of expression of gratitude. The drama did not end until an hour past midnight. Then we left the theater and exchanged goodbyes with my friend. He said that tomorrow he would come to say goodbye before my departure. The train leaves at 8:15 in the morning.

page 099 *June 17th*

We got up in the morning and the weather was fine with a westerly wind. We drank tea hastily and afterwards arranged our things and paid the hotel bill. We then hired a carriage, went to the station, and took our seats. I was sad having not seen Monsieur D'Ovidio again. It is possible he had forgotten to come. The train set out from Naples at 8:20, heading toward Rome. I am sorry to be parted from this utterly lovely town.

Cancello 8,44 l 8,45 = Caserta 8,59 l 9, 1 =
S. Maria 9,8 l 9,9 = Capua 9,15 l 9,17 =
Saparamise 9,34 l 9,35 = Teano 9,49 l 9,51
Canianolla 10,3 l 10,5 = Cassino 10,40 l 10,43 =
Roccasecca 11,4 l 11,5 = Ceprano 11,16 l 11,21 =
Ceccano 11,42 l 11,43 = Frosinone 11,53 l 11,57 =
Segni 12,29 l 12,34 = Ciompino 1,15 l 1,16. =

Chapter 10

Arrival in Rome

FROM HERE the famous Rome appeared to us at a distance. The first thing that came into view was the precious dome of Saint Peter's Cathedral. We arrived at the station at 1:30 and after we hired a carriage and loaded our belongings we rode through the markets and streets to find a hotel. Today is a major holy day, Corpus Christi Day, and all the shops are closed and one finds only a few open. The people are also very scarce in the streets. Finally we looked at two hotels and found one that is small and nice but for lodging only, for 7 francs a day. It is called the *Hotel d'Orient* and is in the *Piazza Pole*, number 8. The hotel overlooks a large square and a square to one side, called *Piazza Colona*. After we took two rooms and left our things we went out to eat at a *Restaurant*. After eating we returned to our lodgings. In the afternoon we went to the residence of the head of the Carmelite Fathers to ask if he had a letter addressed to us from Baghdad. He said he had nothing and if any letter comes he will send it to us. He is a very pleasant man and placed himself at our disposal for anything we might need here. So we asked him only if he might send a guide with us when we visit the Vatican. He said that tomorrow he would send a priest from his parish church to accompany us there. Then we thanked him for his kindness and left. Since I have a letter of recommendation from Boutros, the son of Ossany in Baghdad, to his brother here, Gabriel in the Propaganda¹, I wished to see him. So we went to the *Propoganda* and saw some Chaldean and Syriac priests at the door. Then by chance as the scholars were leaving for the break I saw Mikha'il, the son of Nazo a resident of Baghdad, and greeted him. I was quite pleased to see a son of our homeland. Speaking of Gabriel Ossany, they told me that he is busy at the moment but he will have time tomorrow afternoon. So I gave the letter to Mikha'il for delivery. We returned at sunset to the hotel and afterwards went to dine at the *Restaurant* in the *Piazza Colona*. Here we listened to the Italian military band

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play music. There was a huge crowd of people coming and going in this square which is as large as two thousand cubits in length and width. At 9:30 we returned to our lodgings.

page 101 *June 19th*


S. Sebastian No. 10 (*top margin note on page 102*)

Basilique St. Pietro, Roma

I got up in the morning and the weather was cloudy and a bit rainy. After we drank tea we changed our clothes and I went with my father to the Dominican Fathers because we have letters of recommendation to them from His Grace the Papal Legate in Mosul. We finally found their residence which was in the *Piazza Tretone*. We entered and presented our card to a door-keeper priest and he returned and said that the Father General is engaged and is not accepting anyone. We were truly annoyed very much by this and understood that there had been a mistake. So we said to him, here is a letter to him from the Papal Legate, give it to him. And here is another to the Père *Procureur*, give that to him too with our greetings. He then said, "You had best wait until I return for an answer." He came back 10 minutes later and said, "If you please," took us and we went to the great monastery to the Père *Procureur* whose name is Père *Cronier*. He received us with a hearty welcome for he had received news of our coming. Then after a long talk he said, "It is possible that I can go with you to the Superior," because we came to ask the Superior for a letter of recommendation to Vienna. So we went to the Superior General, whose name is Père *Bodin*². He came and received us appearing to be very much a man of fine character. He apologized for having been busy and we had a long talk with him about Turkey. Afterwards we begged a letter of recommendation from him to Vienna and he immediately wrote one and gave it to us. Likewise he wrote another to the Head of the Vatican asking him to show us around all the places of the *Vatican*. We had decided that tomorrow we would go in the morning because it will be open from 8:00 to 1:00 in the afternoon. Then we thanked him for his kindness

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and we returned to our residence. A few minutes later, there came to us a Carmelite priest sent by the head priest at whose place we had been yesterday and we arranged with him that he would come tomorrow at 8:00 and take us to the Vatican and show us around everything. But after breakfast we went to see Saint Peter's Basilica, famed in all the world and the like of which is not found in all the inhabited lands. So we hired a carriage. We came to its square at 1:00 in the afternoon. We were

stunned when we saw the courtyard outside the Basilica which is larger than the *Piazza Colona* by 5 times. It is also encircled by pillars in 4 rows, like this. 

On the right and left there are two fountains than which there is none more magnificent. We approached the door of the church and entered into the middle of the Basilica. We were amazed by what we saw of refined marble work and by the size of the church, which is 500 paces in length and 200 in width. It also has a dome which exceeds 500 feet in height. In truth they are right when they say that this basilica has no peer in all the world. This is the truth and it is impossible to elucidate in writing what is in it. This is the best of all the sights we have seen from Baghdad to here. Inside the church there are about 25 thrones and the graves of all the Popes and statues of human figures. It is something that astounds one. It also has 6 very large doors and is constructed entirely of porphyry, excellent and polished. In short, whatever I say will be too little said about this Basilica that has become famous in all the lands of the earth. After we looked around for about two hours and a half, we returned to our place wondering at the works of mankind. I wrote a number of letters to Baghdad, that is to Nassoury, Jamil, Johnny Pahlawan, Father Philips, Mr. Demello and Rozario, our servant Mansour, and Albert Asfar. I also wrote a postcard to my friend Hanna Tabouni in Marseilles informing him that I will be with him in only a few days and then sent them all by post.

June 20:

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Gotti X / Corso Di[...]/V Porta Laterana (*top margin note*)

The Vatican Vatican

The morning is cloudy. Last night I was out of sorts and a little feverish. This was possibly from total fatigue. At 8:00 the priest came who it had been decided would accompany us on the visit to the Vatican. But first we took him and went to see Cardinal Jerome³ who 5 years ago was Head of the Carmelite Priests⁴. His residence is not far from our hotel. So we arrived there and the Father went in to get us permission to see him. Then we entered the house which was large and ascended to the room of the Cardinal's private secretary. They told us that Cardinal Jerome was busy at the moment and that 10 minutes later he would greet us. After he finished we went in to him. He received us cheerfully and we sat in the diwan. He is a person with very good manners. After the conversation we arose and left his place. The Cardinal's private secretary named ...[unreadable] asked us about Father Anastas

Marini⁵ and sent him his regards. Then we left the Cardinal's residence and took the *Omnibus* to the Vatican square. We arrived there at 9:15 and my health continued to decline. Thus we arrived at the gate of the Vatican where there are some of the Papal Guards who protect the Pope without wages. Then we went up about 100 wide steps and here got tickets to visit the whole Vatican. As for the Vatican they say that it is the largest of all the palaces in the whole world. It was founded by the Popes *Tiberius and Symmachus*⁶ in 1473 and has 22 courtyards and 11,000 huge rooms decorated with refined gilding and paintings, famous for color and unique in all the world for their perfection because they were done by the brush of *Raphaël Angelo*, the premier painter of all the ages who spent his entire life working on the Vatican. The first place we saw was the *Sixtine* (Sistine Chapel) where the Pope celebrates mass on holidays. It is 40 meters long and contains very famous paintings, among them a unique picture which is behind the throne and is as large as the entire wall. It is of the Last Judgment and the finest thing that ever was. And all the walls and ceilings have pictures on them of all kinds. After leaving the chapel there was the room of *Rapl Angelo*⁷ and then we came to the Galleries of Paintings which was founded in the time of Pope Pius VII. In it are some paintings which are priceless forever and incomparable. As for the Galleries of Paintings⁸, in it are some 50 rooms filled with the finest brush paintings to be found on earth. In one room I saw a large picture, nearly 30 meters long, a gift of the Sultan of Austria⁹ to the Pope. It depicts the Siege of Vienna by the Turks and is, in short, a most excellent thing. After we finished with this place we went up to the Gallery of Antiquities, or the *Meseum*, which is unique in the world for the ancient Roman antiques it contains, like idols, animals and other things that astound a person. There are some 100 rooms full of these sorts of things. Here I saw the Pope's Confessor and the Pope's Private Secretary passing by on the loggia. On all the loggias there are guards dressed in official uniforms stationed to keep watch. It was 11:30 and, thus far, we have not seen but half of the Vatican quarter. I am feeling quite poorly and became extremely tired from walking without ever stopping. Finally we came up to the top floor. From here Rome is visible to him, with all its churches and houses. This place is the private residence of the Pope so we obtained permission and visited his diwan and the place where he sits at times when the Sultans and Princes come to visit him. It is a most excellent diwan and a sight to be seen. There are two things left that we have not yet seen and these are the Gallery of Books and the Gallery of Treasures. For that purpose special permission was necessary from the Director General. As for the

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Gallery of Books, it contains more than 100,000 volumes in all tongues on earth and the Gallery of Treasures contains all the tiaras in addition to the Stone of ...[illegible]¹⁰. Then we went down from the Vatican and it was 12:00, the time when they close the doors. So we took the *Omnibus*, went directly to the *Restaurant*, and had breakfast. I am quite feverish and so we returned to the hotel where I was seized by a raging fever which continued to rise until nighttime. page 105

June 21

Today is Sunday and a pleasant morning with sun. This night I was suffering quite a bit from the high fever that was with me until morning when it dropped somewhat. However I had grown very weak and could not get out of bed. Only at sunset did I change my clothes and go to eat in the *Restaurant*.

June 22

Collosseum, Roma

I got up in the morning and the weather was fine. We decided to visit the *Collosseum* or the very ancient *Amphiteatre* that the Romans were using as a theatre. In it they released wild beasts to attack people while the populace looked on. So at 8:30 we hired a carriage and went toward these ancient constructions outside the city. They were built in 72 A.D. during the time of *Vespasian*. The Collosseum consists of 3 stories of arches and every story has 80 arches in it, each story with a different style. The first is *Doric*, the second *Jonic* (Ionic), and the third *Corinthian*. In this *Collosseum* over a period of 100 years 500 wild animals were killed. It is 157 feet high, 278 feet long, and 177 feet wide, and in it could be seated more than 100,000 people. Truly this place is a wondrous thing and one of the most ancient constructions. We left the *Collosseum* and came to other ancient remains. This is called the *Arch of Constantine*, a great arch of stone inscribed from top to bottom and adorned with ancient images. They also call it the *Arch of Triumph* and it is one of the finest remains of Rome. It was built in 315 A.D. and many more ancient remains are next to it, the creations of the earliest Romans. To this very moment they have been left as they were and are well looked after. We returned two hours later to the hotel. At 1:00 in the afternoon I wished to go once more to the Propaganda to see Mikhail Nazo and especially Gabriel Ossany and whom I had not yet seen. So we all went there and asked for him. They came right away and were very pleased to meet with people from their homeland. Then they promised us to get permission from the page 106

Principal so they could come with us tomorrow to visit the famous Basilica of Saint Paul, the same as the Basilica of Saint Peter. They also told us that it is now the Feast of Saint *Ignatius* and that there is a church here dedicated to him. Today it is decorated and we must see it. So we left their place and I promised them I would return in two hours to see if they had gotten the permission. Otherwise we would travel to Marseille tomorrow. After we returned to the hotel, we went to visit the Church of Saint *Ignatius* and saw that it was full crowded of people. The *Orgue* was playing, the people were glorifying God, there was a great tumult, and it was quite lovely. It is half as large as the Basilica of Saint Peter and contained some 3000 souls and yet there was much space. After we toured everything we left and wanted to visit the *Panthéon* which is the mausoleum of King *Victor Emmanuel*, the Sultan of Italy, but we found the door closed and admissions closed. However from the outside the place appeared very large and lofty. At 4:30 I went to Mikhail and Gabriel. They told me that the Principal gave them permission and they will meet us at the hotel tomorrow at 10:00.

page 107 *June 22*¹¹

Basilique St. Paul

This morning is pleasant with a westerly wind. Today my health is much improved. At 9:30 after we had changed our clothes, Mikhail and Gabriel came to our place. We talked at length about Baghdad. I showed them photographs of some people and they gave us theirs and other things. An hour later they left promising to come at 4:30 in the afternoon to accompany us to the Basilica of St. Paul. So at 4:30 they kept their word and came to us. They brought Father Samuel Jamil, the Chaldean who has been here for some time and knows Father Yousif Taweel who is in Beirut. Then we left together and we went by the *Tramway* to the Basilica of St. Paul. We arrived there half an hour later and went in. We were truly quite amazed by its size, the varieties of marble inside, and the *Mosaïque* images, something bewildering. This craft appears to be quite well known here in Rome because they make with it large, masterful and very pleasant images. So inside this famous basilica which is second only to the Basilica of St. Peter there are countless marble works. But what kind of marble is this that is comparable to gold? To the right of the entrance is a pulpit made of green marble and they told me that this is the equivalent of yellow gold. On the left hand many pillars extend to the interior or to the doorway, that is to say, about 180 pillars of excellent porphyry, tall and shining from a single block.

Likewise on the side walls and surrounding all parts above the pillars, one finds pictures of all those who had become Popes wholly done in *Mosaïque* work. In the middle of the basilica one finds the Tomb of Saint Paul, but his body only, because they claim that his head when it was cut off was buried elsewhere. For that reason there is another church that bears the name of Saint Paul, but much smaller than this one. The Basilica of St. Paul is considered one of the most perfect basilicas in the world and second only to the Basilica of St. Peter which has no peer in all the world. This basilica, the Basilica of St. Paul, had been greatly damaged by a fire¹² 27 years ago. The entire roof collapsed and most of the fine images were destroyed. From that time to this the basilica has been undergoing rebuilding and also some of the buildings outside it are still in renovations. We finished looking around, and went outside with the other people there. On one side there is an area for refreshing oneself. They sell wine and other things so we sat there for about a half an hour and afterwards took the *Tramway* and returned to town. The basilica is outside the town two miles away. It is ...[blank] feet in length and its width is likewise ...[blank] feet. On our way to the hotel we entered another church, which is called The Church of *Jésus*. It is also very pleasantly decorated. It contains a wondrous picture and the Tomb of Saint Ignatius. Then we returned to the hotel at sunset and exchanged goodbyes with Mikhail, Gabriel, and Father Jamil. We must leave tomorrow. I am truly very grateful for all the kindness they have shown me.

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Chapter 11

***Departure from Rome and
the Journey to Marseille***

June 23

I WAS UP at 6:00. It is a pleasant morning with a little of chill. After I dressed and drank tea I arranged my things and bound them up in preparation for the journey. At 7:30 we left the Hotel d'Orient and paid their bill of 42 francs. We hired a carriage, stowed our things, and drove to the train station. After we arrived we freighted our two trunks directly to Marseille and paid the bill of 28 francs. We boarded the *Express* train that goes swiftly and without delay. So at 8:00 sharp, we left the Rome station.

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9,25 Civitavecchia, left 9,30 = Corveto 9,46 l 9,47 =
10,40 Orbettelo, l 10,55 = 11,25 Grosseto l 11,32 =
12,25 Campiglia l 12,30 = 1,5 Cecena l 1,16 =
1,52 Colle salvetti l 1,55 = 2,15 Pisa a big town
left 2,30 = 2,44 Viareggio l 2,47 = 3,5 Pietrasanta l 3,7 =
3,20 Massa l 3,21 = 3,26 Spetzia l 3,28 =
3,40 Sarzana l 3,45 = 3,53 Vezzano l 3,55 =
4,40 Levanto, 4,43 here we passed several
tunnels for 2 hours we were going each 1 second
under a long tunnel of 5 & 10 minutes I counted about 50 & always alongside the sea.
4,58 Sestri Levanto l 5,0 = 5,25 Chiavari left 5,30.

Genoa, Gênes

At 6:37 we arrived at the Genoa station and went into the town. We saw some 20 of the hotels' private carriages awaiting the passengers and so we took the carriage of the *Hotel de Genève* and rode to the hotel. We arrived and took two rooms. I was feeling very weak from exhaustion. Before sunset we went to a church across from the hotel, named *Annunziata*¹, that is, the Church of the Annunciation. I was truly amazed by the work inside the church. The ceilings all had pictures and gilding with frames matching the style of the building, astonishing. The church is also large and quite nice. Then we returned to the hotel and ate dinner. Afterwards we slept.

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June 24

We arose at 7:00 and after washing and drinking tea came down and paid the hotel bill, that is, 12 francs. The meal they had served yesterday was not good at all and very costly. Genoa is quite a large town, as large as Naples. It is pleasant and organized like Rome. It has electric carriages and other things. After we finished at the hotel we took the carriage and went to the station to travel to *Nice*. We arrived at the station at 8:30. The train does not depart until 9:20 so we sat and waited in the station. At 9:00 we boarded the train and at 9:20 it pulled out of the station leaving Genoa at 9:30

9,30 *Sanpiero* l 9,32 = 9,44 *Cornigliano* 9,45 =
9,59 *Pegli* l 10, 1 = 10, 9 *Voltri* l 10,10 =
10,27 *Arenzano* l 10,30 = 10,40 *Cogoleto* l 10,41 =
10,59 *Gella* l 11, 0 = 11, 6 *Albisola* l 11, 7 =
11,15 *Savona* l 11,25 = 11,38 *Berjeggil* l 11,39 =
11,50 *Noli* l 11,51 = 11,59 *Varigotti* l 12, 0 =
12, 5 *Finalmarina* l 12,10 = 12,14 *Borgo* l 12,15 =
12,20 *Pietrigure* l 12,21 = 12,27 *Lòmo* l 12,30 =
12,45 *Albenga* l 12,47 = 1, 0 *Alassio* l 1, 3 =
1,16 *Andora* l 1,17 = 1,28 *Cervo* l 1,29 =
1,37 *Oneglia* 1,39 = 1,50 *Porto Morizo* 1,53 =

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2, 2 *San Lorenzo* 2, 3 = 2,20 *Taggia* l 2,30 =

2,32 *San Remo* 2,35 = 2,55 *Bordighera* 2,59 =

Then at 3:10 we arrived at *Vintmiglia* (Ventimiglia). We got off the train here because *page 111*
this is where Italy ends and the French borders begin. There are customs here too.
So we took our things and went through customs. After the inspection we took
them and went to a French railway car that goes directly to Paris, passing through
Marseille. We found it more suitable that we go from here directly to Marseille and
not stop in Nice. So we decided to do this and boarded the train. Here the time is
different and one hour less than in Italy. So we set back our watches to an hour less
and the train departed with us from *Vintmiglia* at 3:05 French time.

3,17 *Mentone* left 3,19. Here I have two people with whom I correspond.

3,58 *Mont Carlo* -.- 4,2 = 4,6 *Monaco* left 4,7

4,23 *Beaulieu* -.- 4,25 = 4,29 *Villefranche* 4,30

4,34 *Nice Niqueur* -.- 4,35 = 4,37 *Nice*

Since there is an eating place here we stopped for a long time and we bought dinner
to eat in the carriage.

At 5:03 the train left.

5,25 *Antibes* left 5,28 = 5,45 *Cannes*, left 5,50

This extremely beautiful area is well known all over the world. It lays on the seaside
surrounded by many trees and houses. Even kings come here to enjoy the fresh air,
and especially to Nice because of its very fine weather.

6,33 *St. Raphael* 6,37 = 6,42 *Fréjus* left 6,44 =

7,12 *Les Arcs* l 7,38 = 8,55 *Hyres* -.- 8,57

@ 9,7 *Toulon* l 9,22 = 11,49 *Marseille*

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Chapter 12

Arrival in Marseille

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Coming and Going: *Marseille*

OUR ARRIVAL BY TRAIN at this pleasant town was at 11:47 after sunset. We got off the train and hired a carriage straight away. Then we rode among streets lined with excellent buildings. All the going and coming in the markets had somewhat lessened as midnight neared. Then we came to the hotel where we had written to have our friend here, Nassoury Sayegh to make arrangements for us. We knocked at the door and the hotel owner opened it and admitted us. He immediately gave us rooms. The name of this hotel is *Rubi* at *No.103 Rue Paradis*. After we entered and put things in order we went to sleep. It was 12:00.

June 25

I got up in the morning and the weather was fine but getting hot with a westerly wind. After we dressed, at 9:30 I went with my father to look for Monsieur Nassoury Sayegh. We went to *29 rue St. Jacques* for we knew from earlier that he is there. Then we knocked and they told us that he is at the office and that this place is only where he lives, but he works at *27 rue des Princes*. So we went there and found him. We were pleased to see him and he us. I had not met him before. He gave us several letters addressed to me from Baghdad and the homeland. From the Baghdad letters I learned of the death of Monsieur Vasilaki, thanks to Yaqoub Shamani and of other things beside, but we have not heard anything from our family since Beirut. We left Nassoury's office at 10:00. He promised to come visit us in the afternoon. Today I looked for my friend Hanna Tabouni here but I did not know the way to his place on *23 Boulevard des Dames*. In the afternoon Nassoury came to see us and near sunset we spent some time touring around with him. Nassoury is alone in town because his wife and son have gone out of town for a change of air to a place half

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an hour away. I found out from Nassoury how to go and see Hanna Tabouni at his place. I learned that I would take the tram so I took the tram on which was written *Castillan* and *Joliette* right away, paying 10 centimes for it. After 15 minutes I arrived at the street. I got off and looked for the number. I found it and went up to his place and knocked at the door. An elderly woman came and told me that he was not there and had gone out. So I wrote him a card and told him that we arrived yesterday evening, that I would love to see him, and he should come after dinner to such and such hotel in such and such street and number. Then I took the tram back to *rue St. Jacques*. I arrived at the hotel. I waited for Hanna until he returned at 7:30. I was quite pleased when I saw him and remembered our friends, family, and Baghdad. I stayed with him for about an hour and then we went out together at 9:00 and toured the streets. We went to the *Cannebière*, an area very distinguished and pleasant. People were bustling about as abundant as worms. I said goodbye to him here and told him to come to me tomorrow morning. He is employed at a commercial shipping company for 100 francs a month. I returned to the hotel by myself on the tram at 10:30

June 26

Marseille

page 114 Stuffy weather. After I woke up, the weather is quite warm, my friend Hanna Tabouni came to see me. He stayed until just about 7:30 and promised us that he would return tomorrow so we could go and hear mass at church. Tomorrow is Sunday. At 9:30 we went to Khowaja Nassoury's place. I settled an account I had with him and took the remaining money, 242 francs. We returned to our residence and afterwards, the three of us went to the bath which is not far from us and is called *Bains Paradis*¹. We bathed and paid 3 francs. Yesterday Hanna told me that Razouk Rafi, our friend in Baghdad, had come to Marseille on the ship *Turkistan*² 4 days ago and he promised to send him to see me in the afternoon. At the hotel we found the trunk that we had shipped from Baghdad before coming here. It contains some provisions like dates and arak and other things. After breakfast we opened it and I found my book of stamps too, that is to say, the album I shipped here. Then in the afternoon Razouk Rafi arrived and I was extremely happy to see him. He had recently arrived from Basrah on the ship *Turkistan*, which docked 5 days ago and will continue on to London. So I took Razouk Rafi and we walked the passages and environs of the lovely Marseille. Marseille truly delighted me very much. It is the

most recent town I have found so pleasant and it has a very highly regarded port. At sunset we returned and I found Monsieur Sayegh at our hotel. He proposed that tomorrow, Sunday, we will go and have breakfast at his place. He is not in town having gone to spend the summer in the country, that is in *Montredon*. He gave us the address of his house. After dinner we went out to the area around *Cannebière*³. We were astonished to see so many people and such liveliness in the street. This is the best of all the streets one finds in these districts. We returned an hour later to our hotel.

June 27

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Notre Dame de la Garde

I got up early in the morning in order to wait for Hanna Tabouni and Razouk so we could go hear mass in an excellent church on the mountain. Its name is *Notre Dame de la Garde*⁴. The weather is quite sultry and about to become hot and there is no wind. Then at 7:15 they arrived and a half hour later we went to a place where we could go up the mountain. There is an *Assenseur* here in which they go up. We all took seats and paid 40 centimes for each person. We ascended in this fine machine which consists of a car moving along the wall to the top of the mountain. When we reached the top the car drew level with the walkway and we got out. The weather was very hot. First we came to a spot below the church where there was a place with some pictures and holy relics. On the left there was a statue of Jesus dying. Afterwards we climbed up to the church. The mass was just beginning and so we listened. The church is not very big but it is lofty and has a very large statue on top of the dome. They say that in the crown people enter and the eyes of the statue are binoculars that look from a distance on the ships coming in and those in danger because the church is on the sea. All Marseille is visible below and the view is extremely beautiful. There were many people on top, about 400 or 500. Some of them brought their breakfast with them to eat it there. After we looked at everything we went down on the pathway and not by the descending car. We were truly quite tired because the descent is difficult from such a height. We reached the bottom and walked back to the hotel amid lovely trees. This was on the *Boulevard N. Dame*. We returned to our lodgings at 10:30 and waited a half an hour. Then we went to the *Rue de Rome* to take the *Omnibus* to Nassoury's place. We took the bus to *Montredon* *page 116* where Nassoury is. We arrived after half an hour and paid 35 centimes each. Nassoury greeted us at the door of his house and we entered his small but pleasantly

situated house by the sea with a very fresh breeze. We also saw his wife and son and at noon broke our fast. At 3:00 we returned by the omnibus to the hotel. Nassoury's wife is very quiet and sensible and about 35 years old. At the door of the hotel we saw Hanna and Razouk waiting for us in order to go to the animal garden, or the *Jardin Zoologique*⁵. So we went to the *Rue Cannebière* and took the *Tramway* to *Longchamps*. We arrived and found this road was very pleasant with trees on both sides. We reached the zoological garden and before everything else went into the picture gallery which is also nice. We then climbed to a high place among flowers and greenery before we went down to the garden which was full of people. Music was playing in the middle and because today is Sunday all those who enter do so for free. We looked around at the different animals. We saw various kinds of birds, ducks, geese, and camels, and different kinds of mountain sheep, and white, black and grizzly bears, and zebras, elephants, lions and monkeys and other things that are certainly worth seeing. We continued to wander around for about two hours and at sunset took a carriage and returned to our place.

June 28

Marseille

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The morning is pleasant with a westerly wind. After we finished getting dressed, that is at 9:00, Monsieur *Tiers* arrived. He is Nassoury's broker, who works at his office, a man of about 40 years. He had agreed to take us around the shops to buy a number of things. So we went with him to the largest shops and bought some clothes and other necessities. We returned in the afternoon to our place. At 3:30 I went to Nassoury's and wrote him a bill of exchange from my mother to Baghdad in the amount of 1,000 francs. He said that in half an hour he would come and bring it with him. Then I went out to look around the shops for silk yarn for knitting to send to Rosa my maternal uncle's daughter. I found in one shop and bought a large quantity, some 200 grams. They made it into two parcels for me to send by post and I took them to the *Central* post office, or the main post office. All the clerks are young 18 to 20 year old girls. I asked of them to post the parcels for me but they refused saying the parcels were too large. They said it would better if I made them into three parcels. So I was obliged to return to the shop to ask them to divide the two parcels into three for me and this they did. I returned to our residence and found that Nassoury had come and taken my parents to tour around. I tried to follow but did not find them. I passed one of the booksellers and bought two

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books, one about teaching dancing and the other poetry. I had them made into one parcel in order to send them by post tomorrow, one to Johnny Pahlawan and the other to Nassoury Bahoshy. I returned at sunset to our residence.

June 29

I got up in the morning and the weather was somewhat hot. At 9:00 Monsieur *Tiers* came again to get us. We went to someone who prints visiting cards and asked for some hundreds. Then we continued to a large department store called the *Magasin Général*. Here they sell everything that a person desires of clothes, accessories and other things that boggle the mind. We bought many things and returned to our lodgings before noon. We then began to arrange the items to send to Baghdad. At 2:30 Hanna Tabouni came to see me and we left to tour the markets. We came to a place where they show moving pictures. They call this the *Cinématographe* (Cinematograph) and admission is 50 centimes. It is truly a wondrous and amazing thing that a person can see people walking and talking as if completely natural. Half an hour later we left and I returned to our lodging. I found Nassoury at our place and after he left we took mother and went out a second time and likewise bought few things. We returned at sunset. Nassoury invited us to break our fast at his place at noon tomorrow and very much insisted that we come. So we accepted.

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June 30

The morning is unpleasant. The weather is extremely stuffy with clouds and it is very hot. After we awoke we put our things in the trunks and arranged everything because we will have to travel the day after tomorrow. We stayed here a long time. At 11:00 Nassoury brought letters from Baghdad. I mean from my paternal uncle Henry and Johnny and from my maternal uncle Antone. We were very pleased for news from our homeland. They wrote that they are all in good health. The heat where they are is very strong. The Syriac Archbishop⁶ had traveled to Mosul where he would oversee his mission. Likewise Father Yousif Jarji had gone too and other things beside. After we read the letters we went with Nassoury to the train station to go to *Montredon*, where Nassoury stays. The weather was extremely unsettling with a strong, dry wind, and the sand blinded us until we arrived. His wife greeted us with a hearty welcome and after breakfast his mother-in-law arrived too. At 3:00 we said our goodbyes and returned to town. When we returned to our lodgings we found

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that our work was not yet finished. So we will leave the day after tomorrow. After dinner we went to the *Cannebière* district and returned after an hour.

July 1st

The morning is stuffy and cloudy, also very hot and humid. I got up at 7:00 and waited for Hanna Tabouni, but he did not come. We put all our things in order and prepared to travel the day after tomorrow rather than tomorrow as we had planned. At 9:00 we went to *Cook's* and bought tickets from them to Lourdes and Paris, and from Paris to Vienna. We paid nearly 700 francs for the three of us. We returned at breakfast time and after lunch Razouk Rafi came to see me. I left with him to tour around. We went toward the *Port* and saw ships thick like a thicket. I returned in the afternoon. Khowaja Nassoury came and showed us some of the things he wants to send to Baghdad. Then we left and went to the man about the visiting cards. He said they would be finished tomorrow. So we returned at sunset.

July 2nd

I got up early in the morning. There is a still wind today with dark clouds and the heat is worse than yesterday. At 9:00 we went to visit Nassoury at his office and commission him on some business matters. I received letters in the post from Yousif Fahmi in Paris. In response to my letter he informed me that he is in Paris and would be happy to see me. I also received a letter from Razouk Majij in London saying much the same thing. After we left Nassoury's place we walked to the *Cannebière* district. Then we went to the *Port* and from there to the famous large church in Marseille which they call the *Cathedral*. It is truly worth seeing because it is of the most sublime construction, very long and very large. For 35 years they have been working on it and it has not been finished yet. There is nothing inside and no icons except, about 30 ...[illegible] altars. I can say that it is as big as Saint Paul's Cathedral in Rome and even more spacious but the construction and decorations are different. Yet it is a very large and grand church. We returned to our place at noon. The heat was fierce and we grew increasingly tired. In the afternoon my friends Hanna and Razouk came to see me. We went out and bought few little things. Then we sent a parcel of dates to Effie, Uncle Alexander's daughter in Cairo, on one of the Messagerie ships. We paid charges of two and a quarter francs. At 5:00 we returned and I found Nassoury who had come to bid us farewell. So we exchanged goodbyes and he left. Then, we also exchanged goodbyes with Hanna

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and Razouk and I escorted them to the top of the *Cannebière* . But in Razouk's case I might see him in Paris. He also decided to travel in four days to Paris. So we finally decided on leaving early tomorrow morning by train to *Toulouse*. We paid the hotel bill and exchanged goodbyes with them.

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Chapter 13

Journey from Marseilles

July 3rd

Départ de Marseille

I AWOKED in the morning at 4:00. The weather is extremely unsettled. It rained heavily all night long with thunder and lightning, like on winter days, and it continues to rain to this moment. After fastening our trunks and having tea we hired a carriage to the station. We all went together and arrived at 5:30. We took a place on the train and at 6:15 the train pulled out of the Marseille station. I was sad to leave Marseille because it is a pleasant town and I liked it very much.

We arrived in

6,45 Pas des Lanciers 6,48 left 7,0 Rognac 7, 3 &

7,10 Berre 7,13 -.- = 7,27 St. Chamas 7,30

7,27 Mirama 7,45 l = 7,51 Entressen 7,53 l

8,6 St. Martin de Crau 8,10 = 8,16 Raptale 8,17

8,25 Arles here we changed trains & left at 8,35.

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after 2 minutes, we passed over the bridge

on the river Rhone 9,3 St. Gilles 9,5 left

9,15 Franquevaux 9,16 = 9,25 Callicion 9,27 -.-

9,40 Aimargues 9,43 = 9,55 Lunerve 10,3 -.-

10,32 St. Anvires 10,34 = 10,50 Montpellier 10,55 -.-

11,16 Vic Mireval 11,18 = 11,30 Frontegnan 11,33 -.-

11,40 Cette. This is a large town on the sea & has nice pretty buildings & houses on the mountain we started from here

@ 12,00 after changing again trains.

12,25 Agde 12,27 = 12,49 Beziers 12,53

1,18 Narbonne 1,24 = 1,50 Lizignan 1,53

2,7 Moux 2,8 = 2,21 Capendu 2,23

2,40 Carcasson 2,54 = 3,10 Alzonne 3,11

4,15 Avignonet 4,16 here we had hard rain

4,21 Villefranche de Lauragais left 4,23

4,34 Villenouvelle 4,35 = 4,45 Montlaur 4,45

@ 5,8 Toulouse

Toulouse

So we arrived at last. Without delay we immediately hired a carriage and went to a hotel called *Hotel de France* on *Lafayette* street¹. Afterwards we went out to the street to look for Father Exupierre² at the abbey. They said that he is no longer in Toulouse and that he left some time ago because the French had expelled all the Capuchin and Carmelite fathers³ from Toulouse for some reason. Finally we returned to the *Restaurant*, ate dinner, and went back to the hotel. Toulouse is a very pleasant and delightful town. Across from our hotel is the municipal garden or *Jardin Publique* and it is very nice too. It resembles the Azbakiyah garden in Egypt. Its streets and markets are exactly like Marseille, but there are not as many people and it is not as big as Marseille. The weather is extremely miserable with lots of rain. We heard that most of the lands of western France were damaged by the rain of the past 3 days, that is, since the beginning of July. Many rivers flooded⁴ inundating the land, and many a lightning bolt had killed people or so the newspapers reported. The weather here is wet and cold, just like winter, and there is a big difference between here and Marseille.

July 4th

I got up early, that is at 6:30 in the morning. The weather is still rainy with black clouds and very wet. At 8:30 we hired a carriage with our things and went to the train station after paying the hotel bill of 7 francs a night. We arrived at the station and waited until 9:00. Then we boarded the train and it set out at 9:30.

9,45 *Portet St. Simon* 9,46 *l = 10,10 Carbonne, 10,13 l =*
10,26 *Casere* 10,27 *l = 10,33 Boussens* 10,38 *l =*
11,5 *St. Godens* 11,8 *l = 11,23 Mount Jean* 11,43 *=*
12,17 *Capvern* 12,20 *l = 12,32 Tournay, 12,35 -.-*
1,5 *Tarbes*

We had to get off the train here and into a horse-drawn carriage to go to the next station which was a half an hour away because in all of the places we passed the rivers had flooded and destroyed the planted fields. However since yesterday the floods have started to diminish. Here in *Tarbes* the train passes over a large bridge. It had broken and collapsed the day before yesterday and that happened just one minute after a train had crossed over. So for that reason we came to a station at the entrance to the next town and again took the train directly to *Lourdes*.

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Lourdes

We set out from *Tarbes* at 1:30 and arrived at the *Lourdes* station at 2:00 and did not stop at all. By chance while on board we ran into a man named *J. Soubiroux*, a resident of *Lourdes* and the owner of the largest hotel to be found in *Lourdes*, although there are 40 hotels there. This hotel which has 230 rooms is next to the *Grotte*, so we bargained with him for 9 francs each per day with food and drink. Immediately after leaving we took a carriage and rode to this hotel, the like of which we had never seen, it being so large and extraordinarily well laid out. It was a palace like the palaces of the kings. We entered and took two rooms on the street. The hotel is called *de la Chapelle*⁵. The streets here are full of shops selling holy relics like crèches, rosaries, icons, and the like as well as other things. *Lourdes* winds about and surrounding it are the *Pyrenné* mountains which separate Spain from France. Because of this the weather is so cold as if they were wet winter days. From *Toulouse* up to here all the lands were lovely and the mountains were very green and cheered the heart. So we arrived at the hotel, ordered breakfast, and ate. Afterwards we went to our journey's destination, the *Grotte*, where the Virgin Mary appeared. It is a 15 minute walk from here. Thus we came to the church which they

page 124 call the Basilica. Then we went down into the *Grotte*⁶, the place where the Virgin Mary appeared. The place is truly humble. On the mountain where the Virgin stood, I saw that there were many walking sticks of those who were cured miraculously of their illness and there were benches to sit on as well. Before we came we bought three candles and we gave them to someone to light inside the mountain where there were hundreds of burning candles and wreaths as well. We had also brought with us two tins each large enough to hold two bottles. I filled them and drank of the flowing water, that is, of the Spring of Miracles⁷. After we all had prayed before the Virgin Mary we returned to the hotel. The *Grotte* is only a short distance from here and many of the pilgrims swarm in the streets. Most of them are Spaniards. The hotel is very good but extremely expensive. The meals are very tasty and well served.

July 5th

Lourdes

page 125 I got up at 7:00 after having slept very well because of exhaustion and lack of rest. The weather is somewhat better than before and the air is clear. After we drank tea and changed clothes we went again to the *Grotte* and prayed to Mary, Our Lady of Lourdes, to keep us safe on this journey of ours. Here, across from the site of the Apparition, there is a river as large as the Diyalah river called the *Gave*. Two days ago it rose a lot and flooded the pilgrimage site. Today they are cleaning up the water and dirt that had been carried down. The inhabitants of these environs say that they do not remember seeing such a rise in the river. Upon returning to our hotel we bought a number of things like icons and crèches and other trinkets from the hotel shop, which had about 5,000 pounds worth of holy mementos. We asked them to wrap the things and send them to Marseille addressed to Nassoury who would send them to Basrah with our trunk. Then I bought several pictures as souvenirs of Lourdes and sent about 30 by post, each a photograph of Lourdes and other things, to all of the family and friends in Baghdad. I made them into a large packet and sent them in care of Nassoury Bahoshy who would distribute them. We decided that we would travel from here tomorrow morning by train to Paris via Bordeaux. Lourdes is a very pleasant town and I loved it so much because it lies among the green mountains and is delightful and not very large. In the afternoon we stayed at the hotel because there was nowhere else to go except the *Grotte*. After we dined we went for the third time to the grotto to say goodbye to the Virgin Mary.

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This would be our final pilgrimage to her here. So we arrived at the site and saw a great throng of people with candles in their hands. They were climbing the hill singing hymns of praise in a procession and then returning by the other side. They were more than a thousand singing praises in full voice. It was truly very pious, especially at night. Then they all knelt facing the church and prayed to the Virgin Mary to save them from the flood and keep France safe. I can honestly say that I shuddered with fervor when I saw such a scene of devotion. We remained there for an hour and then returned to the hotel and bade farewell to this place which it is a pity to leave.

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Chapter 14

Travel from Lourdes to Paris

July 6th

I GOT UP in the morning and found the weather very clear but there was a bit of a chill. After we drank tea and changed, we paid the hotel bill which amounted to 58 francs for just two days. This is truly the most expensive hotel we have seen. Then we got in the carriage and rode to the station to take the train to Bordeaux. At 8:00 *page 126* the train moved off with us and we left Lourdes. The church and the Grotto were still visible at a distance.

8,13 Saint Pé 8,15 l = 8,20 Montaut-Bétharam 8,22 l

8,25 Dufau 8,26 l = 8,40 Bodrex 8,42 =

8,47 Assat 8,40 l = 8,55 Pau 9,5

We continuously followed the banks of the River *Gave* amid pleasant green places.

9,23 Danguin 9,25 = 9,40 Lacq 9,43 l

9,58 Orthez 10,0 = 10,28 Puyoo

Here we were obliged to get off the train and change after half an hour sitting in the station to another one. We moved off at 11:15. The train we are in is very long with no less than 45 *Wagons* of which 30 are loaded with goods.

11,38 Misson Habase 11,40 l = 11,52 Mimbaste 11,55 =

12,10 Dax 12,25. Here we also got off and changed to another train.

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12,45 Luluque 12,46 = 1,11 Morseux 1,22 l =

1,40 Solferino 1,42 = 2,2 Ychoux 2:05 -.-

2,17 Lugos 2,19 l = 2,45 Lamothe, 2,55 l =

3,30 Bessac, 3,32 left = 3,47 Bordeaux

Bordeaux

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Finally we arrived at Bordeaux. We immediately hired a carriage and went to look for a hotel. We found one that is agreeable and small. They gave us two rooms with dinner and tea for 16.50 francs. It is called the *Hotel des Indes et de la Marine* and is located in the *rue* ...[blank] After we washed and changed our clothes, because the railroad is very dirty and soils everything, we went out to tour Bordeaux. I found it a truly large town, much bigger than Marseille but not as pleasant. Afterwards we went to visit the famous church here called the *Basilique de St. André*¹. The church is worth seeing on account of its size and beauty. Its interior is very spacious. There are 12 thrones² circling it and facing a main space. Each one is as big as our Latin Church in Baghdad! The middle throne is large and I counted 1,300 seats in front of it. Other than this, there were *Orgue*, two of them, in it, one for the big throne measuring more than 40 cubits in height and the second for the smaller thrones. We left to look for *Mamère Exupérie* head of the Sisters of Compassion. Finally we met with her at *4 Rue Montegant* and she greeted us with complete hospitality. She offered us Bordeaux wine and poured it for us. Then she mentioned *mère Thérèse* and Sister Adele in Baghdad and asked after them. She then told us the way to Father Pierre's cousin, *Madame De Calvindu*. She said that she is here in Bordeaux and living at *13 rue Hugury*. So we said our goodbyes to her and left and went to look for Father Pierre's cousin. Finally we found the street and came to number 13. They told us that there was no one by that name here and so we returned to the hotel without seeing her. We decided to travel tomorrow directly to Paris.

July 7th

I got up at 7:00 and the weather was slightly cold. We prepared our belongings for the journey, paid the hotel bill, hired a carriage, and went to the *gare* or the station. We arrived there and took places on the train and then at 8:05 we set out from Bordeaux.

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8,37 *Libourne* 8,39 = 8,56 *Contras* 8,58 =
9,16 *Laroche Challet* 9,18 = 9,30 *Chalais* 9,33 =
9,50 *Montmorau*, 9,52 = 10,22 *Angoulain* 10,45 =
11,13 *Luxé* 11,15 left = 11,30 *Ruffec* 11,33 =
12,7 *Couhé Vérace* 12,8 -,- = 12,32 *Poitiers* 12,39 =
1,6 *Chatelerant* 1,8 -,- = 2,1 *St. Pierre des corps* 2,3 =
2,54 *Blois* 2,58 -,- = 3,42 *Aubrais* 4,10
train going fastest than every time 30 poles in 1 minute
5,8 *Etamps* 5,10 -,- = 5,35 *Britigny* 5,37 =
6,7 *arrived after all to the gare D'Orléans*
of Paris

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Chapter 15

Arrival at Paris

SO AT 6:07 WE ARRIVED in Paris, which may be unique in all the world. We left the station and hired a carriage after getting our trunks from the *Gare de Lyon*. We rode through wide avenues with green trees on both sides, people abundant as sand, and shops adorned as if they were brides. Finally after much touring we found a place in *4 Impasse Mazagran* Avenue, next to *Boulevard Bonnenouvelle*, in a small hotel called the *Family Hotel*, and we took two rooms for 8 francs per day without meals. After we had washed and changed it was almost 8:00 so we went out to eat in a *Restaurant* close to our place. We then arranged to take our meals with them daily for 4 and three quarters francs each. After we finished dinner we went to tour these streets which are like paradise on earth. We were amazed at seeing new things which our eyes had never before beheld. We returned after an hour struck by wonderment at this city.

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July 8th

Paris

I was unable to rouse myself from sleep until 7:30 because of extreme tiredness. After we changed I wrote a letter to my friend Yousif Fahmi who is here. I informed him of my arrival here and my sincere wish to see him and gave him my address. Then I went to get a haircut at the place of a person who has a big shop with nearly 20 people waiting to serve. Then I left and came back to the hotel. At 10:00 we all went out, hired a carriage, and went to look for our friend Ibrahim Hajo. We knew that he lived at *59 rue des St. Pères*. So we went to the door and asked for him and he came because he was living here. We were very pleased to see him especially since we are strangers here. After we chatted with him at length he said that we must come and stay with him at the hotel where he lives. He showed us two

rooms, and the place was much better than the one [we are] in. So we decided that we would go with him and after breakfast bring our things to this new hotel. Its name is *Hôtel du Pas de Calais* at 59 rue des St. Pères . In the afternoon we went bringing all of our belongings and paid 10.50 francs for our lodging. After we came to our new place and settled in we went out with Ibrahim to see a place called *Les Invalides*¹, a church where Napoleon the First is buried. The *Tour Eiffel* was visible wherever we went. Thus we arrived after a lot of walking to this lovely place and saw all the canons that Napoleon captured in front of the door. The dome of the church is all of real gold. We went in through the entryway and I saw this amazing site. In the middle is a sunken circle with Napoleon buried in the center. Over him is a huge stone, the like of which is not ever to be found, and around it are all the banners he acquired in battle. Afterwards we saw many graves such as those of his brothers and the generals who were with him in the wars. In front of the grave there is a tall cross between four marble pillars which are unique in all the world. Then we left this place and went to the *Magasin de bon Marché*², a department store where they sell everything a person craves or desires. Oh, what a place. When we entered it seemed we were in a city because it is all one passage in which there are nearly 10,000 souls swarming as abundant as worms and its size is indescribable. There are altogether 6,000 people selling and 100 taking money. It is made up of ten floors and truly one could easily go astray inside and become lost. After we bought some things we left and hired a carriage and went out to a place for a promenade called the *Bois de Boulogne*³. Here is the true paradise. It surpasses all cities. So I do not know what to say about this place which is an earthly paradise. People in carriages are coming and going among these trees, thick and green, which cheer the hearts of the sorrowful. After we had toured around for nearly two hours we returned to the hotel and left a second time to have dinner. We all went to eat in a *Restaurant* and afterwards we left to tour and walk about in this heaven for Paris is unique in East and West and has no peer ever. We went towards the place, unique in Paris, that is the Opéra square and saw this unique *Théâtre*⁴ and what the hands of man had wrought. This is the Opera famous the world over. Then we went into a coffee house and listened to guitar playing. We returned to our place at 11:00 and slept.

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July 9th

The morning is clear with a pleasant western wind. At 7:00 we drank tea. At 9:00 we left with Khowaja Ibrahim and went to a department store named the *Magasin du*

*Petit St. Thomas*⁵. Here there are all sorts of silk goods and fabrics. Workers are demolishing the large store so the goods are selling cheap. We bought many silk fabrics and things for 287 francs. Because of the size of the place we were not able to return to the hotel before noon. After breakfast we left and went to this department store again and asked them to package the things and send them to our place. Then we went back to the hotel and they brought us the things we had bought. After we rested for a while we returned again to tour around and went to a department store which is larger than any found either in Paris or anywhere else. Its name is the *Grand Magasin du Louvre*⁶ and it surpasses the *Bon Marché* store. First, it is higher and wider and here one finds all the products of the world. Because of the abundance of people the crowding and especially the costliness, we could not buy anything. After an hour of walking we left and went to the environs of the *Louvre* palace, which amazes one with its architecture and large size. Then we went to the area of the *Palais Royal*. This distinguished place is filled all along its length and breadth with shops in which are jewelry, gold crafts and diamonds. There are about 100 shops and other things, and in short, one becomes confused about what to desire and what to buy. Then, the weather here turned bad, the clouds grew thick, and it started to rain more and more. We rushed to get back to the hotel. After dinner we left and sat in a coffee house. Then we went touring in a carriage and returned to our place. All the streets and markets of Paris are being decorated because Republic Day is on the 14th. It will be a very big celebration. page 131

July 10th

The morning is pleasant with an easterly wind. After we got up from sleeping we changed and at 9:00 we went out with Monsieur Ibrahim and went to someone who sells books. We instructed him to purchase for us a number of books that we need and then we returned to wander around in other places. We went to shops and bought different kinds of things. Afterwards we entered a *Restaurant* and ate. We went a second time to tour the markets and shops and then returned to our first hotel. We asked if letters had come for us because when we left we had instructed the landlady that if anything came for us she should send it to our new place. She told us that three letters had arrived for us and she had sent them to our place. So at sunset we ate dinner at the *Restaurant Gazal*, which is quite fine. It cost 1 and a half francs for lunch and two francs for dinner. The food there is very good and better than all the others and is located across from the *Louvre*. After dinner we rushed off page 132

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and went to a theatre named the *Chatelet*⁷. We paid 8 francs admission fee and it was truly quite pleasant. There were about 1,000 in attendance. The story, entitled *Michel Strogoff*⁸, was partly comical and the rest done by the *Orchestre*. At 12:00 we exited and came back to our residence and found our letters waiting. Several letters from Baghdad had arrived for me. Everyone is doing well except they informed us of the death of Aunt Susanne Sayegh among other things.

July 11th

I got up late, that is at 8:00, and the weather was good and clear. Since today is Sunday we went with Ibrahim to hear mass in the large church found in Paris which they named *Notre Dame*. We arrived there half an hour later and saw that it was truly a large and spacious church and well worth seeing. We heard high mass and then left and went to see the Baghdad Commandant's sons who came here a month ago. We found them at home and then left and went to have breakfast somewhere. We found the *Restaurent Duval* in which only girls work as waiters, but it is very expensive. After breakfast we went to the River *Seine* and took one of the boats which are on the river and went down to the site of the Eiffel Tower. We paid 3 piasters each, then disembarked and walked over the bridge across from the tower. What a view it is, this soaring tower dominating the sky, which appears from afar as if it were a small minaret. Then we took the *Asenseur* and paid fifty centimes per person. We went up to the first level and were amazed by this pleasant view. Here on top there is a theater, shops selling the souvenirs of the tower, and a place to eat, among other things. After we stayed on top for about an hour we returned and came down by the stairs. I counted 285 stairs to the bottom from the first level. Here we met a Jew who is a resident of Baghdad and Basrah. His name is Haroun Baer. He calls himself Henri and he has been in Paris for 12 years. He is about 22 years old and is the brother in law of Farha, the wife of Yaqoub Levi. After we came down Ibrahim and I went to his brother Henri's school. We arrived there and got him and brought him with us because today is Sunday and they do not have any classes. Thus we came to a vast site in which is the *Trocadero* Palace, or the Exhibition of 1889⁹. In it are every kind and shape of pavilions on earth. After it turned 6:00 we went back to the eating place and after that returned to our place in the hotel.

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July 12th

The morning is pleasant and cheery. The weather is like spring. After we drank tea and changed we went out with Ibrahim and went to buy flower seeds and other things. We returned to the hotel close to noon. Afterwards at 1:00 Razouk Rafi, whom I had left in Marseille, came in the door of the room. He arrived here yesterday and I was truly happy when I saw him. At 1:30 I went with Ibrahim, mother, and Razouk to Razouk's brother Henri's school because the students were putting on a play for the headmaster's celebration. So we showed up there. There were many people, some 5,000. It finished at 5:00 and we returned to our residence. After dinner, we decided to go to the *Opéra* and hear the performance of Samson and Delilah. We went at 8:30 and only with great difficulty were we able to find seats because the people were many and the whole theater was packed with about 8,000 persons or more. Finally we were able to find ourselves seats for twenty francs. Truly the acting was quite fine, especially when Samson lost his strength, when the hair on his head was sheared and he grasped the pillars and pulled them down inside the temple and all the soldiers and people were killed by the temple's fall. Honestly I have never seen such a fine drama in my life. We stayed until 12:00, and when it finished we returned to our lodgings. We were impressed by such a marvelous thing and then we slept the night until morning.

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July 13th

I got up in the morning and the weather was pleasant with sunshine. At 9:00 Gregor's brother came to visit us, the one who works on the SS Majidieh with the paddle wheel¹⁰. His name is Gabriel and he has been here for 5 years studying medicine. He says that after two months he is going to Baghdad with certification that he is a physician. At 10:00 we all went to *Le Bon Marché* department store and afterwards went to another store and bought a number of things. At noon we went to have breakfast at *Restaurant Gazal*, next to the Louvre. It is very expensive, 2 francs per person. After breakfast we entered the famous *Louvre* and visited each part. We saw several antiquities from Babylon, Niniveh, and other places. This gallery is truly worth seeing. We also viewed the gallery of brush paintings and they are exquisite things. At 4:00 we all left with Ibrahim and his brother Andreus and returned to our lodgings. At 6:00 we returned again by omnibus to the dining place and ate. After dinner my parents returned to the lodgings, and I, with Ibrahim and Andreus, went to a place called *Musée Grévin*¹¹ and paid 7 francs to see beeswax

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representations of people. I saw things that astonished me. One can see a full-sized Tsar of Russia and all kinds of people, soldiers, and sultans made of wax and dressed in purple outfits, seeming as if they were alive. One cannot tell for sure that they are artificial things. In addition there are others, like ministers and crowds, an amazing thing, indescribable except if one sees it with his own eyes. Then we saw *Cinématograph* in color, I mean, pictures that move and speak and make everything as if it were real life. At 12:00 we returned to our lodgings. I had been stunned by this spectacle. There were 12 girls from Vienna playing the guitar and it was a fine thing.

July 14th

I stayed up late last night and got up at 8:30. The weather was pleasant and cool. Today is Republic Day¹² or *Fête de la République* and the streets of Paris, and its palaces as well as all the shops, are decorated like brides with flags, electric lights and flowers as if it were paradise. We went out in the morning and bought trunks to pack all of the things purchased here. Then we packed everything and they were ready for us to send on to Marseille to be forwarded to Basrah on the Asfar's ships. At 12:00 we went to have breakfast at Gazal's and afterwards went to a shop where people make things out of hair. We saw some things made of human hair like chains, pictures, flowers, and trees which are amazing. How can human beings be capable of making this? We had some hair with us and gave it to them to make into a chain. Then we hired a carriage and went to the *Arc de Triomphe* to see the Republic Day *Revue*¹³. Here we saw people standing, many as the sands of the sea, and the streets and everywhere were packed with heads. We heard the sound of music and saw the private military of Monsieur Faure coming from downtown, almost 300 wearing uniforms. But what uniforms! They seemed to be shining like gold and were riding such fine horses. In the middle of this troop we saw the carriage of Monsieur Faure. He was sitting in it with the Grand General and behind his carriage were all of the ministers and notables of the country like the marshal and army officers. Finally they passed in front of us. Monsieur Faure, with his hat in his hand, was waving to the people with a smile and a happy face. When they passed and had to go to the end of the *Bois de Boulogne* where the *Revue* would take place. We followed the crowd and came to the *Champs Élysés* to which all the army would return and Monsieur Faure and his entourage, following the ...[illegible]¹⁴. Here we found troop upon troop of people. Some were standing and others sitting on chairs and there were police officers every five feet to prevent any mishap. After much touring

around we found a place and rented four seats for 5 francs. Then we sat awaiting the return of the *Revue*. It was so crowded with people and carriages that there was no room left for anyone to enter this magnificent city of Paris. At 4:00 we caught sight of the General charging up on his horse, parting the carriages and people, and giving orders to the police. So all of the carriages pulled back and they were millions and thousands. Then we heard the sound of music coming and Monsieur Faure appeared in the carriage with all his entourage behind. All the soldiers and columns passed in front of me, from cavalry and lancers, infantry and artillery, to others. When everything came to an end we got on the omnibus and went to the *Gare St. Lazare*. We bought 3 tickets for us to go to London the day after tomorrow via *New Haven*. We paid 53 francs each for a round trip. After that we walked on and went into a place to eat on the *Boulevard Haussman*. After dinner we toured around and saw the activities they are preparing for tonight's big celebration. Then it was 9:00 and we finally found a place on a bridge called the *Pont de Change*¹⁵. It looked out over the whole city and all the fireworks and everything else would lie before us. Then they began to light up the city with electric lights. How lovely is this delightful view when one sees the palaces, houses, buildings, and statues all adorned with stars. At 10:00 they began the fireworks. That was very enjoyable and I saw things I had never before seen. After 11:00 we made our way through the crowds who had spread out on the bridge and left to return to our lodgings. However it was impossible for anyone to pass through them and we were obliged to walk in a line, one after the other. I cannot describe in writing the people who were out in the streets. The passages were full to the utmost with women and girls, boys and men. In every nook they were playing music and in the streets they were dancing. On this night Paris was the definition of heaven on earth and a paradise. In short we arrived excited at the hotel much impressed by these things so worthy of recalling.

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July 15th

The morning is sunny and pleasant and the weather is temperate. We went with Ibrahim and his brother in a carriage to see the woman who had done our hair. We got it from her and she had done it well. We paid her 16 francs and afterwards drove to an amazing Paris cemetery where we arrived an hour later. It is called *Père la chaise* and it is truly very fine. In it there are thousands of graves made of excellent porphyry interspersed with statues and flowers and worth seeing. After an hour we returned by omnibus to the eating place. After noon we returned to the hotel, got

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the two trunks, and went to ship them to Marseille to Nassoury Sayegh. From there we went on foot to the *Palais de Luxemburg*. The palace was locked but the orchard was open. How joyous and heart cheering a place this is. It is extremely large and contains flowers, birds, and sparrows of all kinds. After sunset we went back to the hotel.

July 16th

The morning is clear. We got up at 6:00 because today we will travel to London. We tied up the things and took only one trunk and two suitcases with us. The rest remained with Ibrahim. We hired a carriage and, after paying the hotel bill which came to 102 francs we went directly with Ibrahim to the *Gare St. Lazare*. We sent a telegraph to Razouk Gergis in London and said, "We will be with you this evening in London Tower Station." Then we took a place on the train. Many passengers going to London, most of them English, were with us. At 10:00 the train set out for *Dieppe*. It stopped at 12:00 for 5 minutes at *Rouen*. At 1:15 we arrived in the *Dieppe* station which is on the sea. The boat was ready to take us across to England. So we transferred into it. It was called the *Seine*. Here we presented our tickets from Paris to here. At 1:45 it set off.