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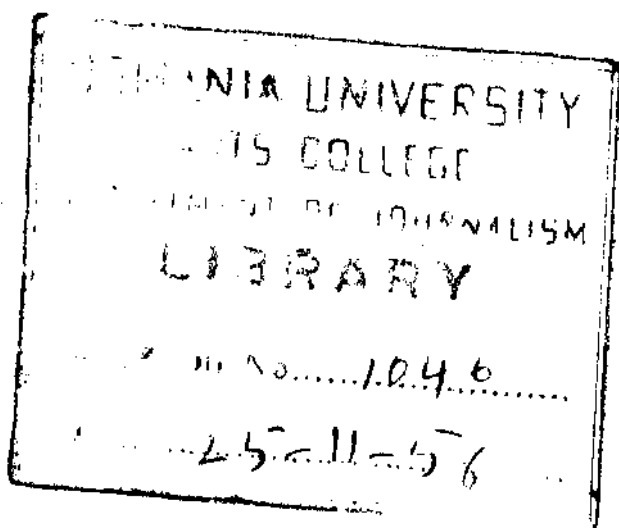
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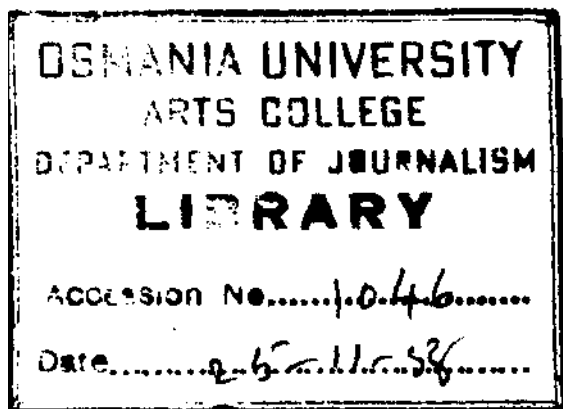
Cairo to Riyadh Diary

GEORGE BILAINKIN

WILLIAMS AND NORGATE LTD,
36 Great Russell Street, London, W.C. 1

DEDICATION

For my many good friends in magnetic Saudi Arabia; for Egyptians who realise that international history includes white patches as well as dark; for Britons who have an open mind about Egyptians, and for Jews and Arabs who, overcoming momentary hatred, steadfastly look ahead.



PREFACE

Little that has happened in the Middle East since I left Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Palestine in 1947, alters the significance of the material that I gathered for publication in the pages that follow. The emotions have been deeply stirred in the three countries, and passions remain turbulent. Here I have attempted to provide the reader with material that is not generally available. In most cases I asked the people to offer their version of vital events in which they have taken part, of which they have special knowledge. Doubtless for excellent reasons a few people declined an invitation to offer testimony, two in Egypt and one in Saudi Arabia.

In Egypt I sought the views of men in power about their hopes, plans, and disappointments. I was impressed with the progress being made by the government, following pressure from King Farouk. Whether the king has sufficiently experienced advisers in his immediate entourage, men with courage to point to the need for revolutionary reforms, and the ability to suggest the methods of speedy achievement, I do not profess to be able to decide. But I am certain that, on the British side, a new approach and a new diplomacy are essential if we are to save any crusts from the eventual Anglo-Egyptian divorce.

In Saudi Arabia, which is struggling to take advantage of riches newly won from the oil wells, the reigning family is improving education, road-making, irrigation, and water supplies. But, I came to the sad conclusion that the absence of dozens of able and enthusiastic British experts from the scene is a mild commentary on the lack of foresight, intelligently directed energy and youthful vigour in modern Whitehall. The Kremlin's criticisms against Yugoslavia notwithstanding, Whitehall has in recent years forgotten to be "nation-conscious", leaves it to the British Council bravely to cry that Britons still exist and have their contribution to offer to the world.

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Among the Saudi Arabians there remains, nevertheless, a great fund of respect, affection and trust for British

technicians. Yet we appear to have surrendered all our advantages to others. To restore our position in this vitally important, backward state, there is time, yet, if we adopt an alert diplomatic policy, directed by young people with faith and boldness, and provide generous encouragement of our trade envoys among five million people.

In Palestine I noted the lamentable results of the quarrels between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office. The former appeared to crawl alternately behind the switchback railway frivolities of friends in the United States Department of State and those of the White House. The Colonial Office, blessed with more experience and seeking stability as the foundation of policy, suffered sadly in an uneven battle described here graphically by the able Sir Alan Cunningham.

Unless and until the people of Great Britain realize that they must supervise with ruthless vigilance the quality of men in Whitehall who prepare and carry out decisions beyond the seas, it may be safely said that the responsibilities of the British Commonwealth will continue speedily to decrease until they can be safely managed by two junior officials, two young secretaries and a map-conscious office boy.

Historians writing to-morrow about the disappearance of the British Commonwealth will doubtless consider the precise share due to the sense of casualness in the centre, and the simultaneously abject preoccupation of the millions with dogs and pools, street-betting, gangster films, the price of forty cigarettes a day and hours spent near smelly bars. The era, indeed, of lip-stick heroism, costly rouge and face-dabbing worthy of our most backward African citizens. The historians will ponder on the grotesque surrender of opportunity, on pitiful, premature resignation of solemn tasks by elderly office-seekers.

G.B.

IN *S.S. Korcula*,

NEARING CASABLANCA, OCTOBER 1949.

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Friday, March 28th, 1947,

Prisoner of King George V in the first world war, more recently honoured guest of King George VI, quizzical Sheik Hafiz Wahba, K.C.V.O., bearded Saudi Arabian envoy at the Court of St. James's for 17 years, greeted me at London's only presentable terminus for travel, Victoria 'airport',⁵ precisely at 3,30. He was accompanied by his son, Moustafa, aged 23, who is engaged on a post-graduate course in international relations at the London School of Economics, and will go on to study oil-drilling in the U.S.A. With us were several shy members of the Legation (now Embassy) staff, headed by the Charge d'Affaires Ahmed Safei El Din (Second Secretary), and Shafik Abdul Rauff Sabban, Attache. All wore European clothes. The First Secretary, jovial Dr. El Sayed Jamil Dawoud El Moussallamy,* is, unfortunately, still in bed with heart trouble.

The Sheik wore only "half" Arab dress, the ogal and goutrah, (head-covering and scarf over shoulders) but attracted curious attention at Waterloo where we were shepherded to our seats in a carriage reserved for passengers venturing thousands of miles to Cairo, Nairobi, South Africa.

The struggle through the body-smelling, crowded corridors to get brown beverage that is termed tea is absurd—why can something not be done to enable the skipping passengers and hopping officials to be sure of free passage? In the event of panic, casualties must be considerable. Ought there not to be a comfort limit for safety in trains as there is a Plimsoll line in ships? People in the corridors, when studied in repose, seemed worried, dishevelled, disinterested. There was a fatal sense of poverty in the foul air.

The inimitable fields of England inspired attraction, while the Sheik spoke to me of his early friendship and association with King Ibn Saud. They first met in 1916,

***Dr. Mousallamy died early in 1948.**

when Hafiz was in Kuwait. The Sultan of Nejd, as Ibn Saud was then, received an invitation from the British to visit Basra, and during the trip called at Kuwait and Bahrein. Hafiz says he 'made' an opportunity of speaking to the Sultan, and, after that, they corresponded every three or four months. Ibn Saud always wrote in his own hand. They met again in 1923, when he was asked to join Ibn Saud, during the successful battle for the province of Hejaz.

Many of their early letters he has retained and these I hope, when we return, to see, in part, for "some portions are, of course, still secret."

Courtesies of a rare kind startled me when we reached Bournemouth West, for the polite but not sycophantic superintendent of the BOAC station at Poole waited with his car. The envoy, he and I left before the passengers' bus, and were shown up into excellent rooms at the company's hotel, which has picture-postcard views over the shimmering waters of the harbour. Horace Bingham, former vice-consul in Mozambique, is the BOAC head here. At once we set him a problem. Could he arrange the dispatch from London of an important parcel left behind by the Minister (now Ambassador), and have it delivered to us *before* six-thirty tomorrow morning? He said understandingly, "It is arranged, already!"

We dined adequately, in serious solitude, in a cosy dining room, on soup, chicken, ice cream, and lashings of butter and cheese. Then Bingham joined us for a chat. Our Golden Hind tomorrow has Captain E. Rotherham as skipper, carries a first officer, radio officer, flight engineer, two stewards and twenty-three passengers, one less than the permitted maximum.

Three chauffeurs, says Bingham, work all night to collect drivers from their homes, so that these, in turn, can begin early their tasks in the radio, maintenance, signals, traffic operations, cargo departments. On an average Bingham signs his name 500 times every day and deals in a twelve or fifteen hour day, with 300 telephone

enquiries, Poole serves the East, Cairo, Iraq, India, Burma, Siam, Java, also New Zealand.

Hafiz told us tonight in the lounge that camels can exist three days without water in summer, and eight in winter. They drank enough every time, about two hours after feeding, for 'reserve' purposes. Once he crossed from the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea in about 32 days. Now, by aircraft, journey was done *in* a few hours. King Ibn Saud had not till recently liked to fly, because he thought air travel would be exhausting, but latterly he felt it was "rather pleasant," and had extended the trips from short distances.

Bingham introduced a captain who laughingly remembered at once that he took the Sheik on his first flight to Kuwait, in 1926, at 65 m.p.h.

My right arm is painful tonight after the second typhoid inoculation, performed by stomach trouble and venereal diseases expert, Dr. Harold Avery, in Harley Street at 11 a.m. I spent fifteen minutes undressing with one hand. The effort of writing weekly article for 'Tatler'⁵ on diplomatic notables was enormous, and I had to rest by typewriter every few minutes. Went to bed, satisfied with effort, at 2 a.m. We are to be called at six.

Difficult to realise that, all being well, tomorrow we shall be tasting the warm air and crowded atmosphere of Cairo, two and a half thousand miles away. It sounds like fairyland conjecture. Yet I am told, coldly, we are due, yes, due in Cairo about midnight, local time.

Saturday, March 29th.

Called at 6.15 with gracefully served pot of tea. (It included phrase, "If you please . . .") Learnt that the Sheik's parcel had arrived safely, despite astonishing adventures. Of course, the first guard on train from Waterloo forgot to tell second guard about package, so that when the driver of our car called at station the guard "knew nothing." Parcel went on to Weymouth. Car

travelled specially from here about five a.m., returning to Poole about 7 a.m.

What was in the parcel? Hafiz's tiny pocket diary, with indispensable names, addresses, telephone numbers.

Minister and I went in style in the superintendent's own car to airport office, where currency and passport expert interrupted examination of passengers to 'pass' us through without formality. Customs men were equally pleasant, generously assuming that, because I was with His Excellency, I must be equally honest, and privileged, and not indeed, carrying quantities of forbidden export in my suitcases (one large, one small).

"Two Jews who are on this journey we will put in front," said an aircraft officer to me urgently, and he chose the seats at the back which he thought the Sheik and I would find comfortable. We did. A spotlessly clean launch, captained by a frozen young woman, happily silent as the Navy, took us lazily to the flying boat, four engined, colossal, capable of raising an over-all load of 73,000 lb. The engines revved up. We swished the water. At 8.30 a.m. we were flying.

This Golden Hind looks, and is, an unnaturally luxurious bird. There are two 'cabins', with two seats on one side of the gangway and one on the other. The over-all width is better than in a British railway diner. The armchairs are comfortable, and one can move them at will, but why have inventive persons not yet discovered a seat of pliable material, which would fit the human frame like plasticine, and thus give even greater maximum comfort? Hot luncheon consisted of soup, veal and vegetables, with welcome fruit, coffee and water. (I am forbidden alcohol for 10 days).

Over France winds reduced our speed of 180 to 150 m.p.h. As we crossed the Tyrhenian sea, quiescent as a lake, we came in view of the barren rocks of Sicily. Mount Etna, with healthy deposits of snow, gaped at us, as we took off our coats, but one fidgety gentleman who shed and replaced fur coats and fur lined jackets with rapidity

and obstinate consistency, seemed uncertain whether it was his duty to do the one turn, or other.

We were due in Augusta, of sanguinary memories, on the eastern coast of Sicily at 345, but arrived an hour later. The launch took us to the local British colony's lifeless outpost. It was comforting to stretch our legs on earth, and, perhaps more amusing to admire superciliously the quaint memorial outside the BO AG offices on which hopeful Fascists had once carved the quainter words, '*Mare Nostrum*.' Near the boast stood four, better-forgotten, symbols of the Duce's brutal, brief triumph over a pathetic little black state, four biggish shells. (Pity there were no Ethiopians with me to join in applause at the ultimate fairness of history).

One of our officers informed me, as I prepared to have tea, that the town of Augusta is "indescribably filthy/" so that the 20 Britons associated with BOAC stay safely behind the wires of the 'colony',⁵ and use a good tennis court. Yes, in the heart of the island there were many pitched battles when the natives, of the Maffia brigade, opposed their enemies, the 'away' Italian, visiting to collect food as part of tax payment. The Maffias, he explained, were descendants of North African races, disapproved to this day of Italian conquests.

When the superintendent, obviously a Welshman, arrived with an air of gloom, he said, "Excellency, there is a table reserved specially for you and Mr. Bilainkin."

As we reached the lounge, however, the superintendent coloured, for he saw three gate crashers from the flying boat in occupation of the reserved table. He apologised and led us to tiny bare writing desk, on which we were served hastily with individual, over-full cups of tea, and buns smudged with cream. However, I changed to a cool crimson orange juice, in an outsize glass.

Inside the hour our machine was refuelled. I eyed the luggage, for someone had warned me not to leave anything on the table, or anything precious on the racks, as the "natives are light-fingered." Luckily their fingers

lightened the load only by a large bar of chocolate I left by the window.

We were off again, at five-thirty, 4,30 Greenwich mean-time, or 6.30 Augusta time, which is also Cairo time. The engines ticked over calmly, then noisily. Dinner, after a longish spell of work on my new Royal portable, one of the five machines imported this year into the U.K., came as a pleasant relief. We had turbot, chicken, sherry trifle, fruit, coffee, and real orange juice, as distinct from the fancy concoctions liked in the back streets of industrial slums. Various passengers sat in the lounge, fore, being busy near a bar. Others lowered the back of the armchair, and slept happily, comfortably.

Hafiz says, though it is still difficult to credit the feat the boat accomplishes, bringing us two and a half thousand miles in a day, this is a slow aircraft. Some already average 330 miles an hour. Thus, passengers will soon breakfast in Poole and take a late luncheon in—Egypt's capital.

About nine o'clock I glanced at the lights of Egypt. The boat slowed down, the engines hummed louder, we were between the generous sacred waters of the life-giving Nile, and in a searchlight, a motor boat raced towards us, with urgency. A turbashed young Egyptian, (I recall that his forefathers were civilised in 3,400 B.C.) stepped importantly into the aircraft and loudly directed the passengers into the launch. The Sheik and I listened, casually, to painfully shouted enquiries for certificates of vaccination against this and that, including yellow fever (about which I had heard nothing in London), about passports, currency and luggage. But we remained silent, I looking distant or disinterested. We were greeted, with deep bows, by the Saudi Arabian Minister to Egypt, Abdullah Ebrahim Al Fadi, bearded, of course, and at 50 venerable and dignified in his Arab dress. For us the formal formalities were over in a few minutes. Cars with our luggage followed along excellent roads towards the hotel known to almost every book reader in the world, surrealist Shepherds. The local Minister's son introduced

a hyper-surrealist air with the loudest silk tie the Americans can have designed and exported.

Sunday, March 30th.

Although it is nearly one o'clock, many modest, one-man shops in Cairo are open for the sale of cigarettes, tawdry food and light refreshments. The houses seem an uncertain mixture between settled West and primitive nomadic East, poor, small, wretched.

Suddenly to be deposited on the steps of Shepherds is to face a contrast sufficient to recall legends about Al Rashid of Baghdad, ten centuries ago. Tapestryed, carpeted lounges, balcony, are immense. Corridors leading assuredly towards the grill and towards the restaurant are vast. Lights beneath the high ceilings are large, luxurious, show a fantastic mixture of gay tones. Carpets are ostentatiously thick, bright, new, loudly opulent, and the bizarre-coloured dresses of the staff are breath-taking, with their copy of types in Hollywood abortions.

For a moment even I, hardy traveller to the gaudy capitals of sinking Europe, who am not moved by the facades of Claridges of Paris, London, Rome, stood awed. I returned to earth when the (naturally superior) reception clerk, in European dress, politely asked me to fill up an inquisitive form. It is the kind presented in Tree⁵ Paris, 'behind the iron curtain' Belgrade, 'acrobatic'⁵ Prague. Deferential, silent, meek porters in humble white robes reaching the ground, moved my cases—in a class-consciously separate lift. My room was old-fashioned, with indifferent, ill-assorted, dated furniture, but everything seemed overwhelmed by the ceiling. This was lofty, about 15 feet. Remembering the study in my London flat that is still waiting for Jan Masaryk's long-promised carpet from a factory I know in the hilly Sudeten area, I glanced enviously at the collection at my feet. Designs, age, varied, but all seemed highly desirable!

At 2 a.m. I listened in a surprisingly sentimental mood, to the bands playing in the grill room below me, and looked out for a moment. Straight above me was the half moon set in a speckless sky, dotted here and there with bright stars. Palm trees reached the level of the third floor, equivalent to about the fifth floor in a London hotel.

Two slim girls stood on the forecourt, outside the ball-room, with cavaliers. They swayed expectantly with the alluring music, stopped their private dance, and, said a personal adieu. The palms waved, but slightly, as I left the window to get under a single, perhaps needless, coverlet.

At nine o'clock I pressed the button offensively marked 'Native,'⁵ and a waiter in white robe stretching to the ankles, came in, bowing low. He decided that I would have the normal "breakfast," grape-fruit, two poached eggs on toast, two rolls, butter and jam, two oranges, a banana and real coffee.

At eleven o'clock the Sheik and I drove to Abdin Palace, large, rambling, modern. Slim, tall soldiers in khaki were changing guard as we entered by an imposing wrought iron gate. Soldiers presented arms as we stepped in to sign our names in the visitors' book; we also left cards. The Sheik's Egyptian friends, in one of the salons, greeted him warmly. Then I stopped at the surprisingly massive, cold, British Embassy, to sign the envoy's book; few Egyptian names appeared on the latter pages. Few non-Arabic signatures appeared in the King's book, scarcely one for days.

Next I went into the Foreign Office, where a dozen elderly messengers lolled, in a style that would make Whitehall proud, on long benches. Cool marble pillars, marble stairs, marble entrance, all spotlessly clean, produced a cool air. I enquired the whereabouts of Egypt's Ambassador in London. In the first office I entered I was politely told that his address in Cairo and telephone number would be provided in a minute by "the archives department." I waited fifteen minutes inside, while the

archives department, several youngish men, debated the issue with an important, pre-occupied little man of bulk. The department's considered decision, announced with cold courtesy, was that the ambassador did not approve of his "Egyptian address or telephone number" being given to callers. I then sat down and wrote a brief letter for little, mobile-eyed Amr Pasha, and the archives department, represented at this moment by a youth squeezing successive spots on a pimply face, promised the note would go at once.

In the hotel an hour afterwards I looked at the intelligently sub-divided telephone book. There I noted that Amr's number *and* address are provided, together with those of any grocer, cook, housewife, government chief, or the King, to whose staffs is devoted an entire page in—crimson lake. Medical doctors are grouped together in a separate section. (London please copy).

Cars were screeching behind me, in front of me, long new limousines, yesterday's dear but poor British four-seaters, silly little two-seaters, and horse-drawn carriages. The hooters were incessant, consistent only in what must be termed the ceaseless murder of the atmosphere. Why all the rush? Apparently there was a ceremony at Kasr el nil barracks, the British Army's last garrison in Cairo, which was formally handed over to the Egyptians yesterday morning, two days ahead of the original schedule for our complete evacuation of the capital. British troops, in a mobile column, left, and soon Egyptian troops entered, hoisting the Egyptian flag.

For certain notable people living in Cairo the departure is full of memories, memories that will not die before the turn of the century. But, these thoughts are not to be included this day. Their place will be elsewhere in this book. Important, over-riding fact: on Thursday, September 14th, 1882, British troops from Shrubra moved into the barracks; here (despite a succession of promises by statesmen) they have stayed. Araby Pasha, who led the revolt against the Khedive, which resulted in intervention

by the British in Egypt, was held in these barracks while awaiting trial.

I walked slowly back to the hotel, followed at intervals by professional beggars, blind, old, children, too facilely telling me that they had no father or mother, that they had had nothing to eat all day, and so on. Sellers of walking sticks and fly-swatters offered to take me to places "just round the corner" where I could, if I were so silly, witness a few of the more tepid vices of the human race, or merely to watch native girls dancing in the nude. As a last resort, of course, the tormentors offered a variety of "real good" postcards. Offers and, or 'negotiations'⁵ as the gentry imagined, are carried out in a strictly conventional style—the tout whispers while shadowing the would-be victim within two or three feet.

And so I never noted the faces of the gentlemen eager to sell cards or the visual joys of Cairo.

At several corners and cross-roads I stopped, indolently to watch traffic control by local policemen, corporals or lance-corporals. A Greek, uninvited, came up and eloquently, gratuitously, told me how he "hated the new regime,"⁵ hated the departure of the British. "It is all graft now, and the pashas and the beys get new cars, sell them for a profit of £500, without, like Europeans, going to prison. I tell you, sir, because I can see you are not Egyptian."⁵⁵ He added that people who wished to register newly bought cars could not do so, for the authorities told them they had run out of registration plates, "just run out."⁵⁵

In a shop I spoke to a courteous proprietor about suit cases. Yes, the British and American troops had gone and so prices were well marked down. He would ask for a raw hide case, for which about £10 would be charged in London, only £3, instead of £3 15s. od. Yes, trade was slack, very slack now.

In the clothier's I felt embarrassed. Splendid silk socks and silk stockings, made in Italy, were marked at prices ranging from 18/- to 25/- a pair; the poorest cotton

specimens, advertised gratuitously as 'made in Britain/ and obviously sent by people innocent about the price of bad propaganda, remained dusty, (happily) unwanted, at 3/6 and 4/-.

Two out of three of the passers-by seemed on starvation's edge; many men were suffering from eye trouble; women (they are scarcer in Egypt than in the United Kingdom) looked in an obvious minority, many had enormous, abnormal ankles; in the cafes a lot of humble people sat, with little to do but sit.

Early this evening tired, weary, well-to-do folk, of many races and nationalities, crowded the open-air balcony at Shepheards, the inner lounges, the bars, and eating rooms. The women's shapes were fairly usual, exaggerated, though the height was modest; but odd marriages are not uncommon, with slight, tall women and tiny, but vastly built, males. The luncheon menu in the well-ventilated grill room was attractive, the meticulous service excellent, the abundant food superbly cooked, all by London Coq d'Or standards. From a dozen egg or other appetiser dishes, my host and I chose an omelette (about 7/- a plate), followed by veal and spinach (ten and sixpence, including 10 per cent service charge), fresh fruit salad (seven shillings), orange juice (about three shillings).

Sheik Hafiz, who holds court for old friends in the hotel lounge and in his room, tonight agrees, when we are alone, that, "the Arab states are rising again," also that, if King Ibn Saud, aged 66, were twenty years younger, and King Farouk, aged 27, ten years older, there would be immense changes in the Middle East, changes of world importance. As it is, Hafiz has done much to settle less technical differences with Arabia's neighbour, Iraq. Some years ago he suggested a customs, postal and currency union. But, the Hitler war intervened. "Egypt's 18 millions, with Saudi Arabia's six, Syria's three, Iraq's three and a half, also about three million more, make 34—a power." Indeed, a power.

Monday, March 31st.

Taxi-cab gangsterism is apparently the same the world over. (I thought London and Manchester held the blue riband). The moment the driver reached my destination this evening, he slapped clock back to 'Tree,' and decided loudly, because guiltily, the fare was 18 piastres. As it was only eight or nine a few seconds before, I said, almost inaudibly, I would pay him nothing, and instead would report him to the police. Now he spoke quietly. I decided the lesson might not be bad for him and his fellows, paid ten. The rogue was delighted at escape from certain trouble, and obeyed smartly when I said, 'Now off with you, as quick as you can.'

I am considered a fast driver in a fairly powerful car, and think that in London traffic at its worst, I am fairly alert. But, I hesitate to speak in printable terms of the ways of the taxi-drivers in Cairo. When the hand goes from the gear lever they struggle to overtake fast-moving vehicles by a margin of inches, often on the wrong side, often at the risk of a head-on collision with another car engaged in the same lunacy. The strain on the lock must be immense, for drivers swerve from light-headed pedestrians while accelerating to forty m.p.h.

The honking is endless, emphatically angry.

At party given by Ernest Main, former colleague on 'Daily Mail,' now well liked assistant press attach^e at our Embassy to Lord Kinross (widely remembered as columnist Patrick Balfour of 'Evening Standard'³), heard of growing concern by Anglo-American community over possible "turns" by unruly Egyptians. Spitting into non-Egyptian cars is, I am assured, not unknown, and may presage less savoury incidents. Altogether, I gathered sense of alarm. Particularly worrying to some is the reluctance with which return visas for resident Britons are now granted, and only for maximum of 12 months, with qualification about permission to work here. New law, it is said, provides for minimum of 70 per cent Egyptian capital, considerable proportion of Egyptian

directorates and staff. Why should it not?

Is Western era over? Capitulations were indeed ended long ago, in 1937, and much more followed, without any paper filling.

Main, who wrote valuable book about experiences as editor of daily in Baghdad, served there during the war and in 1941 took part in 48-hour paper-burning at embassy, when pro-German premier, Rashid Ali Gilani, led insurrection. British landed troops with surprising speed at Basrah, and that partly led to failure of revolt. In Cairo, during 1942 scare, a real one, with Germans approaching Alexandria, he knew similar document-blaze thrills. This evening's live company included Main's efficient assistant, Miss Margaret Gilruth, slim Australian who formerly acted as secretary to our Minister of State in Cairo, and is economic raconteuse of adventures round the world.

Following discussion of merits of palmistry and graphology, I invited another guest to write her signature and four phrases on lined notepaper. Told her (privately) that current acidulation was due to recent disappointment, that it occurred either at opening or in the middle of holiday (last word appeared in test sentence), that as librarian or research student she had been fond of standing on one foot, that father or mother, artistically inclined, had induced in her at age of twelve to fourteen desire to express herself in writing or painting. Yes, correct, she answered.

Walked back along thinning streets, amid less honking, and pondered just before midnight on unhappy State Budget. Revenue is anticipated to total £89,000,000. More than half the expenditure is on civil servants, while £25,000 is being allotted for Olympic Games and £15,00 for Royal Egyptian Air Force. (No, last figure is not a misprint).

Tuesday, April 1st.

Dreamy waltz music is being played below in airless

ball-room as I walk along the lonely corridors and acknowledge the bows of servants sitting outside my monastic bedroom. My mind is humbled with the beauty of the colouring of the dresses of the women in the grill room, the garishness of the general gaiety and well-doing, offset a little by the indolence clearly visible on the faces and in the general demeanour of the coffee-sipping folk.

There are long, ineffaceable memories of the day's several astonishing conversations on Anglo-Egyptian difficulties. I have listened, cross-examined, and written many notes .

At the Foreign Office fenced with head of press department, Mons. Mohamed M. Hamdy whose promises make me nervous; elsewhere I met other folk who spoke.

Complicated picture is becoming less confused.

Young King Farouk, it seems, was eager that the revised Anglo-Egyptian treaty be signed last year; he hoped, this I emphasise is said by *British* people, that with the removal of British troops he could rule as in the good old Ottoman Empire days, with firmness, and that opponents of his policy, principally Nahas Pasha, head of the troublesome Wafd, Nationalist Party (formed during the 1914-18 war to struggle for complete Egyptian independence) would be politically wiped out. More relevant dates of our association with Egypt:—1882, intervention following internal differences; 1914, British Protectorate, deposition of Abbas Hilmi, lately Khedive and selection of Hussein Kamil, eldest living prince of family of Mohamed Ali, as Sultan; end of Protectorate, 1922; proclamation of the late Kamil's successor in 1917, Sultan Faud, as King in 1922, and Egypt's independence.

When the Wafd, led by modern Egypt's first independent Premier, Saad Zaghloul Pasha, pleaded for freedom from Britain, Zaghloul was twice arrested, in 1919 and 1921. Zaghloul was succeeded by Moustafah el Nahas Pasha, who has popular following. But Farouk cannot forget that Zaghloul opposed the Palace in the early years, when the Palace relied on the help of Britain.

Often exercising royal prerogative, the present king has dismissed Nahas from premiership, and relations are, to put it politely, bitter between king and ex-premier. For five years Nahas and his Wafdists ignored Parliament. In 1936, when Mussolini could and did threaten effectively to kick Baldwin's armless Britain out of the Mediterranean, Nahas was returned with majority to power, immediately negotiated and signed the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of friendship and alliance for 20 years. (Nowadays the words "of friendship and alliance" are meticulously deleted here from all references to the agreement.) Nahas was dropped in 1937.

But the enmity, Nahas v. Farouk, and passionate Anglo-Egyptian rivalry, rose to a new climax on little-publicised February 4, 1942. This is a local Briton's version of the day.

Others, by a Briton and by an Egyptian, will follow later when I hear them.

Nahas, according to version one, had been beneath the surface, staunchly pro-ally during the Hitler war. The British Ambassador, then Lord Killearn, more widely remembered as Sir Miles Lampson, and important British personages in Egypt, became concerned at trends among a few of the king's advisers, and alleged leakages from War Department of military information, at a time when allied fortunes were at their lowest and our sinuous position in North Africa was particularly vital to our survival. Killearn went to Abdin Palace, while a destroyer awaited the king's possible arrival at Suez, for a journey into exile on Mauritius or the Seychelles.

The audience was brief, ended in 20 minutes. Killearn at 6 feet 4½ inches probably tallest, heaviest-built British diplomatist, was once again on earnest business. The twenty-one year old ruler of 17 million people looked calm, well prepared for a vital discussion.

To the king Killearn scarcely seemed the envoy of the Power that had chosen the boy's father, Fuad, brother of Hussein Kamil, as Sultan of Egypt in 1917. Fuad who

became king in 1922 ruled, in name, until his death in 1936. In February, 1942, a week before his birthday, the boy saw his throne trembling, as a piece of paper was placed near, or in front of him. Outside, by the window was visible the ultimatum: three British tanks or armoured vehicles, small, serried, sufficient.

Killearn who at 62, thrice Farouk's age, had the vices of the strong, and failties in equal proportion to qualities, who had been given more authority by Churchill than any other ambassador in modern British history, relented. Killearn agreed to let Farouk stay if he now, at long last, asked Nahas to form a Cabinet. Farouk consented. The throne was safe, but that dark day was born a new feeling for the occupiers (as represented by Killearn) the years would not reduce. Here ended the interested Briton's account of the Palace 'invasion'.⁵

Should Killearn, High Commissioner till the conclusion of the 1936 treaty, have stayed on as British Ambassador? In 1936 British political acumen was not at its highest. The MacDonald and Simon, Hoare, and Windsor era was to produce bankruptcy in buying "friendship" with Hitler, and in collecting costly taunts from Mussolini.

And at this moment? There is talk only of the method so-called, in which the pathetic negotiations for revising the 1936 Anglo-Egyptian treaty were conducted last year by Viscount Stansgate, on behalf of the absent leader of the delegation, Mr. Ernest Bevin, and by Killearn's successor in the Embassy, frail, ailing Sir Ronald Campbell.

Labour came into office in July, 1945, and the elderly Foreign Secretary, new to this onerous post, and new to a hundred puzzling problems demanding a long acquaintance with foreign statesmen, countries, international history, might be forgiven for believing there were more pressing areas than Egypt. In any case, how could any gentleman, who had not imagined the sum of responsibilities daily accumulating in a vast Empire, be expected to recognise and decide the priorities of pungent notes to or negotiations with Russia, the U.S.A., Persia, Syria and

Lebanon, Palestine, Poland, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, France?

Bevin was advised, this time correctly, that Killearn would no longer be acceptable to Egypt. The Wafd, notably Nahas, was being pressed, by the people, into insisting upon the closer observance of the 1936 treaty. During the Hitler war we had saved our technical ally, Egypt, from scientific decimation by the Germans and Italians, largely at the cost of British blood and material. Naturally we had quartered there vast numbers of troops and equipment. That had unfortunately, but inevitably, meant the return of Egypt to partial foreign rule, in all but name. Incidents between 'allied'⁵ troops—Egypt did not declare war—left sharp impressions. Some soldiers were patronisingly to repeat the semi-educated ranker officer's sneer, "Wog." Many Egyptians, proud of their older civilisation, did not appreciate the courtesy, pressed bitterly for the earliest freedom from occupation. They emphasised the precise terms of the 1936 treaty. They recall that, the agreement includes recognition of the independence of the country (four times larger than the United Kingdom, but only 14,000 square miles, a glorified Belgium, not desert). Egyptians pointed to the tens of thousands of British and American troops swarming over Cairo and the rest of Egypt in 1946, although the war had been ended in Japan for months, and danger from Monaco and Costa Rica was limited.

Moreover, it was further argued, the 1936 treaty was out-dated by the Atlantic Charter. The agreement permitted Britain to keep up to 10,000 soldiers and 400 aircraft on the Suez Canal; specified the use of Alexandria and Port Said as naval bases; allowed our troops to move across Egypt, in time of war, or when war threatens; provided for joint administration of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan.

Killearn and Bevin responded slowly to Egypt's pressure in 1945. Killearn was blamed by people who knew he enjoyed real authority, had always been supported by

Churchill with the words, "Trust the man on the spot."

Suddenly British residents and troops became victims of abuse and unhappy scenes; riots spread. Bevin acted, too late, and weakly. The Killearn strong era must stop. We would, for obviously we must, negotiate. *Fortissimo* would give way to *pianissimo*.

Today I heard also the relevant dates which are important, as well as revealing. On December 21, 1945, it was announced in London, a note requesting the revision of the treaty had been handed over by Nokrashy Pasha, * the Premier. On February 10, 1946, in the absence of any public mention of discussions over the treaty, demonstrations against the British woke Whitehall, roused Cairo and Alexandria. On February 14, in the middle of an Egyptian cabinet crisis, Killearn left for London, for consultations. On February 17 the septuagenarian, Ismail Sidky Pasha, became Premier. On February 19, 1946, the beloved head of the Royal Cabinet, Hassanein Pasha was killed in a motor collision with a British army truck. On February 21, after the burning of British vehicles, British soldiers opened fire on crowds in Cairo. On March 4 the situation became grave, with the killing in Alexandria of 29 (including two British soldiers), and the wounding of 324. The British, it was alleged at the enquiry, occupied a post in the city which had been declared to be out of bounds, that day, to troops. Still no news reached the excitable Egyptian public of formal negotiations. On March 30 Killearn's successor, Sir Ronald Campbell, was received by Sidky Pasha, ten days after arrival by steamer.

Belated appeasement had begun. Campbell was the complete antithesis, one foot smaller than Killearn, pale-looking, polite, mild, deferential.

To the accompaniment of comment, the Killearns had announced in the local press on April 5 the holding of a sale by auction on Sunday, April 7, at ten a.m. in the British Embassy, of some Valuable Chinese *objets d'art*

and household goods belonging to Lord Killearn.' The goods were to be on view in the Embassy the preceding day, Saturday, specified the notice, signed 'M. G. Levi.' Within 24 hours, on Monday, April 8, Lady Killearn and her children left Cairo by air.

Economic mention in the 'Society Column,'⁵ five or six lines in the shyest legible type, ended the Killearn family's viceregal era in Egypt. Killearn had himself left the aerodrome late at night on March 9, 1946, to the farewells of a modest crowd, one member of which says it included one or two Egyptians. Thus vanished the burst bubble of Imperial power,

British Embassy officials, including the head of chancery R. L. Speaight, and Killearn's personal private assistant, Second Secretary Anthony Dove, ex-cavalryman, tall, aesthetic, misleadingly lethargic-looking, came to greet Bevin's new choice on March 20, 1946. They scarcely dreamt the end of an epoch was in sight so suddenly. They could scarcely imagine the surprises in store for them. They were given little time for reflection. Shocks were to shower on them with speed. The Egyptians were not unmindful of the long days of foreign power, of the soldiers, and of the officers of the Protectorate, of the war-time occupation.

Speaight and Dove sat comfortably in the luxurious coach provided for travel by a British ambassador, by courtesy of the titular owner, the premier of Egypt for the time being. The usual coach reached Port Said. This time, the Britons noted, the coach lacked the military aides de camp, tall, handsome, imposing relics of the dramatic days of High Commissioner Miles Lampson. This anachronism continued, although after 1936 his title was, it may be recalled, Ambassador.

Speaight and Dove then went to the Cunard White Star Liner *Ascania*, greeted Campbell, who, in the halting words of a local newspaper reporter, looked 'fairly well,' perhaps worried, doubtless over the coming stern ordeal in his new office. (Had he not been told in 1934, when he

was counsellor to Lampson, that his health would not allow him to return to Egypt? But, following requests by Bevin, Campbell was examined by one doctor and another, passed as fit). The party returned to the railway platform. Alarm spread among the official Britons. Dove noted that the Premier's coach had disappeared. The honours were walked away. The cause. What had happened? Some mistake, surely? No, no mistake, the outwardly polite, but frigid officials assured Dove. There was a clean coach for the Ambassador, a Pullman. But what of the cases and luggage left in the Premier's coach? Yes, yes, yes, those had been transferred to the Pullman. A higher official of the Egyptian railways confided apologetically to Dove that the Premier's coach had (considerately) developed axle trouble, must be repaired. The mild Ambassador's reign had begun, in a mild, common Pullman. The scene on the platform had inaugurated the mild era.

Only seven weeks remained to Campbell for meeting this and that notable, encountering the heads of an enormous staff, largest now by far of any embassy in Cairo. In six or seven weeks, six months too late, would formally begin the fateful Anglo-Egyptian discussions. Would Egypt remain Britain's effective ally, or at least friend? The head of the Egyptian government, Ismail Sidky Pasha, aged 71, Premier by royal prescript, led the 'talks.' Sidky knew the king's determination to get the negotiations through. But he also was remembering that on February 2, 1946, Nahas had declared that the Wafd would not be tied by the result of 'negotiations,'³ and had called on Egyptians for further struggle. Sidky, non-party leader, had followed Nahas in 1931, becoming virtual dictator of Egypt, under King Fuad, until 1936. Sidky faced the British.

First positive news of any step for the revision of the treaty was issued on May 7. The deputy leader of the British mission, Lord Stansgate, who had arrived on April 15, now announced what was planned, adding unequivocally, "The United Kingdom have proposed to with-

draw all British naval, military and air forces from Egyptian territory." Talks continued. On August 20, Egypt rejected the British offers.

Politeness was the order during the early days of the 'talks.' Stansgate heaped the courtesies; so did Campbell. But, night after night, the British cypher boys and girls grumbled at the heightening shoals of work. The Cairo negotiations proved a tragedy.

Stansgate did not lead, any more than tired Campbell. Exhausted Stansgate confessed moodily to General Sir Miles Dempsey* that he was spending there a large portion of the tiny balance of his allotted span. (He was born on May 10, 1877.) When Bevin's endless new instructions came, he turned to his military advisers with, "What do we do now?" Only one forceful voice was heard, that of 'Bimbo' Dempsey, (whose Second Army raced through Northern Europe to the Baltic in 1945, now, at 50, a full general and Commander-in-Chief of 17 of our land forces in the Middle East), assisted by Major-General E. I. C. Jacob. The 'talks' led nowhere. Bevin, nominal head of the delegation, could not travel to Egypt, being engrossed in many other pressing affairs; his plate was overwhelmingly full. Meanwhile anger arose throughout Egypt over Eden's patronising observation on May 23 that a suggestion that the 1936 treaty inflicted humiliation on Egypt was "entirely unjustified." Four days later, moreover, Sidky attacked Premier Attlee's assurance to Churchill that, if negotiations broke down, the 1936 treaty would stand, i.e., British troops would remain. Sidky, whistling in the dark, bravely said, "There can be no going back on the British pledge to evacuate Egypt." Bevin invited sick Sidky to London. Sidky arrived on October 17, had some meetings, retired to bed at Claridges on October 20, cancelled a Bevin chat, scarcely saw the streets of London. For a while negotiations went on, a draft treaty being prepared. But a loophole was left uncovered, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, with its 7½ million inhabitants of an area

Retired from the Army in June, 1947.

of 970,000 square miles, in which the Nile runs for over 1,000 miles. Nahas now demanded that the talkative talks be transferred to the Security Council.

A doubtfully timed announcement on December 7, made on the orders of Premier Attlee, Bevin was in America, by the (British) Governor-General of the Sudan, Major General Sir Hubert Huddleston,* led to uproar in Egypt, and, this January, to the breakdown of the negotiations. Sidky went on December 8; Nokrashy resumed power on December 9.

Huddleston said last December—Stansgate returned to London in October—that the Sudan Protocol left the Sudanese free to choose their own future and in no way prejudiced the right to achieve their independence.

Huddleston thinks that the statement would have had to be made some time or another, and would never have been popular—so the timing was unimportant.

Sidky Pasha immediately retorted that the Huddleston statement did not agree with the conclusions reached by him with Bevin in London. He made the better point, however, that, in any case, the Governor-General of the Sudan as the servant of both the Egyptian and British crowns should not have expressed views approved only in London and not in Cairo. The official Whitehall line was that Huddleston's statement was required by the partial disclosures in Egypt of the Sidky-Bevin talks in London and that silence in the Sudan might have led to 'serious unrest, if not worse . . ."

Now the issue may go to the United Nations, with a demand by Egypt that, to accord with the Atlantic Charter, Egypt should be freed at once of British troops, and the clauses about the Sudan be altered to make it possible for the Sudan to come factually under the Crown of Egypt.

Tall, blunt, scrupulously fair, unimaginative administrator chosen for the non-pensionable £5,000 post by Mr. Churchill late in 1940, was relieved early in 1947. The Governor-General is technically "appointed by Egypt with the assent of Great Britain."

Sidky's terms gave us two years more on the Canal zone

And now? We have little goodwill left. Our troops are out of Cairo, may not enter the city boundaries, except in mufti, if and when provided with passes signed by—a brigadier.

I wonder whether the British Cabinet, and its advisers, working at top pressure to ensure coal and houses, had ever studied a minute weighing the prospects of success of a gesture of courtesy to the people and ruler of Egypt? Had he, someone of importance in the Middle East, been invited to Britain? Had he been offered a suitable honour? If not, why not?

The year 1946 may be remembered instead as one when many British notes were sent abroad.

If we still need Egypt's assistance in tired conceptions of strategic 'routes' to the East and Australia, why not try the early and generous, rather than last-minute and minimum, concession method? And why send a dear, elderly gentleman, instead of a known and powerful negotiator? In Cairo in 1946 the Chamberlain festering fatuousness heaped on Moscow in 1939 was evident again in almost every possible detail, except that a counsellor, Mr. (now Sir) William Strang, was replaced by a seventy year old Liberal traveller of no known attainments outside persistent question-time heckling of Lloyd George. Was inexperienced, entheastic Bevin's one-man control to blame? Was over-worked, surprised-looking Attlee's lack of grasp of the intricacies and bigness of the Egyptian problem a complementary reason for failure? The reasons no longer matter urgently, but the chasm has widened.

History, however, will not be so generous over the Government's failure, as are the one-minded leader-writers of current days. Tautologous 'explanations' in Parliament will arouse less than tautologous comfort when full knowledge is widespread. "I won't have it" will go down as doubtful diplomacy.

What is to happen to Cairo Turf Club? Immense

temporary membership, swollen thanks to officers of allied armies, has fallen again, and club is committed to heavy expenditure. Problem was related to me by member of committee, Gordon Helsby, managing editor of morning 'Egyptian Mail/ of evening 'Egyptian Gazette/ of illustrated weekly, 'Sphinx,⁵ and other publications belonging to Sodtete Orientale de Publicity. Formerly on the 'Daily Herald,' Helsby now wields considerable power, though I doubt whether anyone in the Embassy realises the potentialities the journals still possess for retrieving something from the Anglo-Egyptian divorce.

Over luncheon at their colourful flat Mrs. Helsby told me of her splendid work for the troops here, and in desert, also in Baghdad, as Director of Ensa welfare unit. Ate rare luxuries, including thoroughly roasted pea-nuts and milk chocolate. English tea followed, and we returned to Helsby's imposing, well-protected offices at five.

Examined embassy, with its overpowering grandeur, under the guidance of Dove, 30, ex-Shrewsbury, Sandhurst, invalided out of cavalry. He disagrees with popular tale that people often refuse embassy invitations. "That may be, but nonetheless I get many more folk protesting to me at being left out."⁵⁵

Campbell, who became a GCMG in January, a bachelor, will not have help of related hostess at parties. After Eton and Magdalen, Oxford, he served as private secretary to Viscount Grey of Falloden, at intervals acted *Chargé of Affaires* in Washington between 1928 and 1931, when he was sent to Cairo. Temporary High Commissioner in 1931 and 1933, he was advised, for health reasons, to return to temperate climes, and rejoined the Foreign Office in 1935. Three years later he became Minister in Paris, and in 1939 went to that forlorn hope for the vacillating allies, Belgrade, where Prince Paul continued to flirt with Hitler and Mussolini. The allies lost ground all the time, Hitler signed a treaty with Paul, early in 1941, and shortly afterwards Campbell was in daily flight through the mountain passes with members of the boy

King Peter government. In July 1941 Campbell returned to Washington, and thence to the Foreign Office, in February, 1945, serving on the committee that struggled over growing differences between West and East with, Ambassadors, ever far-away John Winant, obdurate Feodor Gusev and smug Rene Massigli.

Campbell has regular massage, is shy, entertains foreigners sparingly.

Wednesday, April 2nd.

Two dried up women at Shepherds, who said they were Greek, stood near as I read on the useful Reuter tape machine a despatch describing the sudden passing of King George in Athens. Both said, inconsequentially, in good English, "That is for us a great tragedy, for he was so nice and strong, and now important."

To me he represents the recollection of a sad, middle-aged man in sports coat, looking far younger than his years, discussing at an adjoining table at Claridge's the virtues of vanilla and chocolate ice-cream with a handsome British brunette; also the man who gallantly never forgot to send a Christmas card to Miss Margaret English, private secretary to one of George's favourite physicians, the Italian Professor Aldo Castellani, * then Harley Street's leading star for fighting tropical diseases.

It was warm when I stepped out of the hotel into the xar that waited to take me to the most elusive figure in modern Arabian, indeed European, history, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.

On the (splendidly kept) tarmacadam highway I passed by workmen slowly constructing an ostentatious entrance gate to Farouk's palace outside Cairo, where he retires after the day's duties. The men were also completing sizeable walls at the Cairo end; I glanced at the garish

Castellani is Lady Killearn's father and an old friend of mine.

railway station, built opposite a minor entrance to the palace.

And now, about fifteen miles from Cairo, the chauffeur stopped by the lawn of a residence of the style and standard of one in Kensington Palace Gardens. Here waited an Egyptian soldier, tarbush cockily on one side; he was armed with a revolver and rifle. Two cars were on the roadway, and two in front of the garages. By the entrance gate I saw three Arabs, roughly dressed, rising from a bench. They led me to young students who showed me into an office.

The Mufti's English-speaking secretary, Haidar al Hussein, a nephew, came in, wearing well-cut English sports jacket and flannels. While I waited we drank coffee in a long reception room, filled with large, modern, well-designed, crimson covered chairs and settees. The decorations were typically Oriental, with luxurious carpets, open woodwork serving as walls. Around us were well preserved lacquered Oriental boxes, with Chinese and Indian paintings.

Haidar and I were joined by two young Palestinian Arab students who inoffensively compared in good English or French the heat of Palestine with that of Egypt. They said it was warm in Palestine, but "nothing" when compared with Cairo in July and August.

And then, walking slowly, erect, with measured steps, entered the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, head of the Moslem Supreme Council. The flawlessly cut fine black robe reached the flawlessly polished black shoes, was relieved starkly by the superlatively white imama that almost overwhelmed the consciously poised, powerful face. The white hands, with nails carefully polished, evenly trimmed, were under perfect control, restful. The voice never rose above mild polite pitch. Set or smiling, immobile, the never-averted grey-blue, resolute eyes often posed inaudible questions.

Soon I was listening in what seemed a theatrical setting to the soft unhurried answers of a stormy personage. This

calm meeting was far removed from any threat to world peace, or to the lives of Jews and Arabs around the reawakening Mediterranean. Haj Amin's French was easy, accentless, unlaboured. Lineal descendant through 13 centuries of the Prophet, sacred to many of the 400 million Moslems about the globe, the Grand Mufti held himself rigidly only when he came to mention the word uppermost in his mind, Palestine. Unconsciously, he relapsed into the charm and atmosphere simple for persons who have spent years in diplomatic society.

As we spoke I pondered on his astonishing career in the last quarter of an increasingly bellicose century. Yet Haj Amin sounds academic in his approach, mostly untroubled. Now and then a harsh glance charged the expression, or he laughed slightly. The eyes ironically suggest sadness, disconsolateness, distant horizons outside the perceiver's imagination. The disproportionately strong nose, the chiselled jaw line, the square chin beneath a modest red or russet beard turning grey, tell of obstinacy, relentlessness in the pursuit of vast dreams and greater hopes.

Listening in the comfortable residence with gardens and guards set at his disposal by Farouk, I felt no surprise that Haj Amin has so easily and so often outwitted the military and intelligence personnel who came in conflict with the chief opponent of British and Zionist policy in Palestine. There is no sense in belittling his exceptional calibre, vigorous intellect, the passion behind the nationalism, and the racial intransigence.

Educated in a Jerusalem school, and the thousand year old Moslem university in Cairo, Al Azhar, Husseini served as an officer in the Turkish Army during the Kaiser war. He held minor posts in Palestine and turned against the British after the Balfour Declaration to the Jewish people in 1917. For anti-Jewish activities he was sentenced to a long term of imprisonment, but eluded his would-be guards, and crossed into Transjordan, the tiny state now ruled by King Abdullah, Britain's old friend.

Careless fate decreed that a Jew should lead this Husseini

back to Palestine. Thanks to the British High Commissioner, Sir Herbert, now Lord, Samuel, Husseini was pardoned and the Liberal philosopher's act resulted in his election as Mufti of Jerusalem. But "because recourse was had to the Turkish system," the nomination was not sent to the Mufti-to-be, and the appointment was not officially gazetted, the Mufti, according to the highest authorities advising the Peel Commission, "holds office for life."

Then he became Rais al Ulema, chairman of the Supreme Moslem Sharia Council, and custodian of funds averaging between £60,000 and £100,000 yearly, nominator of all religious judges, director of Islamic institutions. The religious leader was an artist, too, beautified the celebrated Al Aksa Mosque, and a politician, as president of the Higher Arab Committee. He was on our Civil List pay-roll, criticised the administration, and was to be arrested outside his Arab Committee offices. But Haj Amin defied the warrant for his detention, spent two or three weeks in the Mosque of Omar, by the Wailing Wall, and surprised the world by landing in Beirut, Lebanon, dressed as a bedouin of humble status.

When war broke out, Haj Amin anticipated French action by going over to the capital of our Iraqi allies. He was treated in Baghdad with the honours and courtesies due to an international notable, feted, and provided with facilities for comfortable existence. The British authorities were told that no political activities by the Mufti would be tolerated. Then Rashid Ali revolted against the allies in April 1941, was defeated, and fled, being subsequently sentenced to death by the Iraqis.* The Mufti also fled, landing in Teheran. When British and Soviet troops landed in Persia, the Persians promised to arrest the Mufti. But the Mufti smilingly entered a foreign legation, and next

King Ibn Saud told a press delegation in Cairo on January 13, 1946, "We are Arabs and we respect our traditions. If our sister ally demands that I should hand over Rashid Ali, who is sheltering under our protection, I should prefer handing over some of my sons, instead."

smiled out of our press pictures when he stepped from an aircraft in Rome. He had been reported in Kabul, Afghanistan, and Eden had somewhat shamefully to confess, in Parliament, "We cannot catch him." By December 1941 the Mufti had met Hitler in Berlin, returned to Rome, and, it is said, broadcast on enemy wavelengths against "British Imperialists and Jewish invaders" in Palestine.

In 1945 when the allies were racing into Germany, Haj Amin stepped out of an aircraft, in Switzerland, accompanied by Petain's medical adviser. The Swiss interned the German pilot, and invited Haj Amin to leave the country. In southern Germany French troops took him into custody and Paris became the Mufti's home two years ago. Georges Bidault gave a 'personal' promise to Bevin that the Mufti would be 'retained' in Paris.

I am not certain what, if any, undertaking was secured about his political activities, but the Mufti was often seen at Egyptian and Syrian receptions in the French city. Then for a bizarre fortnight he suffered in bed, from flu. About this time a 'Syrian' gentleman, without a beard, (or flu), slipped into a U.S. Skymaster. Some days later the 'Syrian' went to Abdin palace, King Farouk's home in Cairo, claimed the right of a fellow-Moslem for shelter. With unforgettable memories of clashes with Britons in recent years, King Farouk listened, gladly granted asylum. Meanwhile the British searched ships in the Mediterranean, in the Suez, sent lengthy enquiries to Bidault, asked questions in Cairo. But the Mufti laughingly read the newspapers in Egyptian cafes, where he drank coffee and learnt with interest about his latest adventures in mythical ships.

Parliament now heard demands that the political acts of the Mufti should be 'curtailed' by Egypt, Ambassador Campbell read out a *demarche* to Cairo. But, perhaps our authorities remembered best the warning by Mr. Jinna's newspaper, 'Dawn,' that no harm should come to Haj Amin. While Jews in America declared that the British

had deliberately encouraged Haj Amin to 'leave' Paris, to make trouble for the Jews among the Arabs, others said the French were glad to let him cause headaches for a Britain that had dealt so ungenerously in 1945 with French ambitions in Syria and the Lebanon,

Today, the Mufti smiles last at the British and the Americans, as do his many Palestinian and other Arab guests. For to the Arab and Moslem world his quarrels with certain British administrations, the reproofs about his pro-Axis war-time activities, are subject for jest. He is the leader to many among seventy million Arabs, the skilled politician, the ambitious executant, with a mind so obviously more fertile than that of most opponents.

Today in his phrases to me there was no hatred of Britain, or America, or Jews who are not Zionists,

Impoverished, divided, the West is too busy with its own troubles and increasing dangers. The Mufti and his friends will fight partition in Palestine. Some Britons fondly assume that the moment our troops leave Palestine, Americans will step in, save Arab-Jewish bloodshed, because American high strategy cannot contemplate in the Middle East, area of limitless oil wealth, flirtations between Arabs and Russians. They anticipate the arrival of American military missions in Egypt will be followed by American transports and troops.

And the Mufti? His friends plead, of course, that a generous Britain guided by intelligent politicians, turned an unyielding enemy into a general Smuts.

Our conversation today began with a reference to a mutual friend who had lunched there. The Mufti then told me that he had been in this house since arriving in Egypt in June 1946. He was previously in Egypt ten years ago, in 1937, had later stayed in Lebanon, Damascus, "Iraq, Persia, Europe," and lastly, in France. His eyes studied his knees during this eclectic tour. What had impressed him most about the change in Egypt in ten years? The awakening. Palestine was now a real issue "with all Arabs who thought."⁵⁵ Arabs totalled sixty five to seventy million,

and, when one stayed in Egypt or Lebanon or Syria, it was home, for these were only political divisions* He included the Arabs in Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, Would he in his lifetime see all these Arab countries as one state? That depended on circumstances. Palestine before U.N.? The question was hopeful, if U.N. was something different from the League of Nations. He feared that everywhere, but not so much in the Orient, materialism was gaining ground; in the East spirituality counted yet for much, more than anywhere.

Calm Haj Amin looked young, yet for a quarter of a century his name had been hallowed to millions of belligerent Arabs in North Africa, Ethiopia, Sudan, and, of course, the states around Palestine. The fingers rested on the knees, but the hands came to help with a deftly expressed sentence. The eyes were never hesitant. Their fixity was rigid, mostly both on mine. Now and then, in the heat he made as if to take off the imama, and at last he did. We had gone into yet another drawing room, tasted coffee in tiny cups, drank tumblers of cold water.

Main impression? Friendliness, watchfulness, eagerness to fulfil a certain destiny, whose frame we, no more than the Mufti, can yet conjecture. After the storms he is conscious, he suggests, of the rising years, said the lesson of history was that we must build so that a stronger man did not come suddenly and remove the weaker. This was a reference to the Palestine problem before the U.N.

Yes, he rises for daily prayers before sunrise, as ordained, and, in confirmation, his eyes moved to the distant table on which rested the thick, leather-bound Quoran, the Muslim Bible with the teachings of the Prophet in 114 Suras.

The sun was still powerful when I led the Mufti into the garden and delayed him for an appointment with two shuffling gentlemen. The Mufti avoided the direct rays of the sun as my camera clicker worked again and again,

Arabia's most militant figure looked impressively regal as he waved "Au Revoir." He seemed unlike the other

men about him, or the guards, or the tired Egyptian soldier.

Three strikingly lovely daughters of Sheik Hafiz lunched with their father and me in Shepherds restaurant. The problem is where to go for five weeks' holiday. Youngest of three, aged 14, Leila, insists on inclusion, in all schemes, of Switzerland. Others want a tour of Europe. Father is concerned about currency regulations that limit expenditure to £75, And, in any case, he has to be back in New York for meetings at Lake Success in September. Voting is to be tried to secure solution of family tangle.

Thursday, April 3rd.

Enormous camel suddenly decided to rest in middle of Cairo street, ignoring hooting drivers of taxi-cabs, ignoring horse-carriages and the undisciplined donkey pulling milk cart side-ways.

I watched the procession, studied the majority of bare-footed citizens. How many of them survive the legal minimum for agricultural workers in Egypt, i/6d. a day? Foreign troops have gone but in the streets are too many shops selling coca-cola and popcorn from nice white ice-boxes.

At luncheon the restaurant seemed packed with Syrians and Turks and other local visitors, who drink costly wines and dance at night; slowly eat luxurious cream cakes at tea time, slowly sip tea and lazily smoke good quality Egyptian cigarettes.

Tonight accepted invitation of friends of Sheik Hafiz Wahba, to join their Thursday discussions of current problems in newspaper house in old Cairo, under presidency of co-proprietor and editor of *Akher Sa'a*, Mustafa Amin Bey. About fifteen attended, including members of the Fuad university, a fluent English scholar who knows Britain, America and the Sudan, Ismail Kabani Bey, an adviser to the Ministry of Education. I was under examination for two hours. In an introduction I said, " Please



THE GRAND MUFTI WITH FRIENDS FROM PALESTINE
In residence lent by King Farouk of Egypt.



H.E. THE SAUDI ARABIAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON
bluntly outspoken Sheik Hafiz Wahba, K.C.V.O.

do not hesitate to speak with the utmost frankness. I shall appreciate your candour, and endeavour to explain what is possible. If there have to be any apologies, I shall offer them."

Pity some of our statesmen did not attend. Here was superb opportunity to hear views of Egyptians, clearly expressed, with facility, felicity, friendliness. I gathered that, for individual Britons, there was individual Egyptian liking. But, for Britain's government, there was veiled contempt. "We have learnt," one of the most applauded speakers declared, "to think that, when we bargain with you, and you make an announcement, you mean a little more than what you have stated, there is always something Oriental at the back of your heads, which you *do not* announce."

"Arriere pensde," broke in a lecturer at the university, and embarrassed laughter and agreement, were indicated by the shaking of heads.

"Psychologically," continued the former speaker, "we still want to be friends, but you make it scarcely possible. We have the choice between advice from the Americans and the British, and we prefer the latter. But, lately you have made it so awkward. Take the Sudan. It was to be a *condominium*. * But it is not. You are Sudanising the civil service. We do not mind that at all, but we find, and I know, for I was there only a few months ago, that the Egyptians are being put away and their places taken by Sudanese. That is not fair, is it? We never found, I never found, that when Sudanese had to be appointed British officials were requested to leave. Why?

"The Egyptians find great difficulty in entering the Sudan, with passports and so forth. Do you, as a Briton, have all that ceremony as well? If the aim of the *condominium* is to make the Sudan fit to become independent, it means that we both want to help education. But, we had to wait permission for a year to be allowed to open a school in Khartoum. And then there were all sorts of conditions

Joint control of a State by other States.

about the education that was to be given, who was to be admitted. When we did get the school, we had to provide all these undertakings. It seems almost silly, if we are really partners,"

I confessed, though the Condominium was abrogated by us with the murder of the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, in 1926, if these facts were accurately reported, it was a pity the Egyptian Government did not have a "high-power" public relations department which could place the relevant considerations before the British people. We were a democracy, and I did not think the "British people would countenance, if they knew, the negation of our agreements, of our bonds."

There was loud laughter at this from two members of the assembly, and the chairman looked uneasy at what he conceived to be my embarrassment. One of the speakers continued: "We thought Britain was going Socialist after the election of 1945, but we learnt fairly quickly, that, in her deeds she is just as Imperialist as ever."

Several in the audience wished to take part in the discussion. The observation had kindled further interest. Said one, "If you desire to have the Sudan because of Imperial strategic reasons, and think it is essential for a wider reason than just plain Imperialism, why not trust us, and say so?"

I replied that it was clear the Sudan would be considered by the soldiers, whose advice was naturally accepted by the lazy politicians, an essential substitute for our general bases in Egypt. These would go. I agreed candour would be much better.

Sheik Hafiz argued the ultimate status of the Sudan should be left unsettled in the treaty till the time was more nearly ripe for independence. For the present let the parties deal with the question that was outstanding, and secure limited agreement.

Dealing with my complaint that there was no suitable public relations department in London serving the Egyptian embassy, the Sheik said this could "not help

greatly," for "British newspapers do not publish what does not please the Foreign Office." On issues between Britain and foreign countries, only one, the British official side, was written and printed in London; written and printed, he repeated. The Press, and he included the big papers, was not free, it seemed, at least not as free as were the great journals in America. These had their faults, of course, but they had more freedom and sense of fairness to both sides. The Sheik mentioned by name an important London paper that had suppressed an article on Egypt after he had seen and read, the proof in type. The piece had been friendly to Egypt.

I said, "The Sheik is in another position. He has been so long in London, is known to so many people of standing and influence, that he merely 'rings a bell,' and they come to see him. Would they all consistently refuse to publish his views?"

Sheik Hafiz showed himself an astute negotiator, scored the point. He snapped back, amid loud laughter, "But in Saudi Arabia we have no quarrel with London."

Outside we were in oldest Cairo again. The street was narrow, the car could scarcely move on the pavements. We saw candles and oil lamps. The squatters were squatting, and a few tiny children followed us, with hands outstretched, vainly hoping for alms.

Charles, restaurant head waiter here since 1939, who has just returned from a visit to London, to see mother-in-law and other relatives of English wife, says, while ordering special raspberry ice-cream for me, he is Swiss-Italian. Doctor who could slim women would make fortune in Egypt, Charles adds with regal, comprehensive, wave of hands. I can well imagine the size of this fortune, as I look about me. I congratulate Charles on the strawberry and cherry ice-cream, say the service by a few tarbushed and red flowing robed waiters is second-rate. He answers, "It is difficult to find staff, for men would prefer to work for a fellow-Moslem for £5 a month than for twice that here, under Copts, European Christians. Religion still has

a strong sway."

It has, indeed. The giant palm outside my window waves scarcely at all this night, and I listen to the dreamy refrain of the tango played in the grill room below me, watch the cruel mess of a beautiful dance, invented by ungainly males with the aid of crumpled females.

Friday, April 4th.

Bought fly swish, with buffalo horn handle, from man with tiny stall on pavement near hotel. The business all began yesterday afternoon with his saying, as I slowed down, that swish was worth eighty piastres, 16/-, but he would accept seventy as he had "absolutely no money," and wanted sale. I walked away, and he reduced price. But before doing this he solemnly insisted on solemn rite being carried through: "Hold it in your hand." As soon as I took the swish, he announced the latest reduction. Final price was 30 piastres. After precisely similar ceremonial I bought a stick, covered with strips of camel skin, with lead rod base. Price at the beginning was 80, at end 50. At this point coster opened his purse; it was empty. He added, pathetically, "My little boy here has been asking me for money for hours, and I have had none to give. I have three other boys. My age? I am 43. You think much more? Perhaps three or four years. No, no, I am not fifty three. Good luck to you, sirrh, good luck."

Near entrance to the hotel nomadic young vendor of sticks and fly swishes approached confidently and offered the same goods. "You have rubbish here," he announced expertly, adding wearily, "What did you pay for this rubbishy thing? Thirty? That's all it is worth."⁵⁵ He looked more and more pitifully at the purchaser of the rubbish, immediately offered him "something less rubbishy," said, "I swop with you, and you pay me seventy for this." I did not "swop." Then, another patronising glance at the stick. "It's not so bad, but you want a proper stick, a malacca cane, like this, stick for *gentleman*. You have this

for bargain, only fifty piastres. Only fifty piastres. I tell you what, sirrh. You give me this stick and I give you this and you pay me only—"

Ten steps from the hotel entrance he tried another line, "You want to see follow me."

Relief and astonishment that anyone can steer a motor car, without sounding the hooter, without sending me crazy. Young officer who hails from Muswell Hill and works in Public Relations department here, dressed in civilian clothes to take me, in what is termed a 'civilianised' old Humber, to luncheon appointment in Fayid, on the Canal. His P.R.O. chief is my former colleague in Fleet Street, Colonel Tom Laister.

Through Cairo the panorama of contrasts, extremes, is the same, smart shops, with attractive eau de cologne in indifferent bottles, with splendid English cloth, including Harris tweeds, with English-made silk lengths for women at 30/- a yard, with excellent shoes for men at 38/-, flannel trousers at £6, cine-cameras at £19 and £29, silk shirts at £4 14s. od., chocolates at eightpence and a shilling (nut milk variety) a quarter, splendid leather bags at undisclosed prices. And, side by side with all this, squalor, want, gross inefficiency. The policemen look exhausted, as well they must be by the cacophony around them, the angry faces of crazy drivers.

We passed near a cinema and a park. As in many industrial areas in the decadent Midlands and outside London, the 'homes' of the people are often suitable for pigs, but the cinemas and the places of worship are obviously intended for human beings. Cairo's little tin huts, shacks, where men and women exist at night, outside which they squat in the day, were not meant by the Creator, even for goats* That is all Egypt provides for them, and I am not unmindful of the grave responsibility of others.

As I said frankly to the Arabs and Egyptians meeeting last evening, "Let me confess that, as I walk your streets in Cairo, I feel conscious that we did not ensure you had

sufficient leadership and advice and help to remove filth, ignorance, and disease- It is not enough to see British designed uniforms on your officers, and troops on guard outside Abdin Palace, to see splendid engineering feats and excellently finished roads. Our experience is sufficient for us to have ensured your inheriting lasting legitimate pride in the association, enjoyment in the marriage."

They agreed when I pleaded, "Having admitted that, I say now we must try again, as equals, as friends. For we need one another."

It is breezy despite the warm sunshine as we leave Cairo, past parks where already young men and women (covered in depressing black clothes) sit together on the thin grass, in the needed shade of palm trees. Early going for soft words.

The majestic fatality conjured up by limitless sand, the infinite desert, requires a slow pen. My abiding impression? I cannot congratulate skilled men who invent machinery for killing their fellows, yet fail to invent simple means for winning back the good earth below to help sustain the hungry common people. We travelled miles and miles without passing a tree, spotting only here and there a slight shrub, evidence of the recent miracle of rain. I gather "We may have rain again before the summer, perhaps once."

Is the mass of sand a curse of the Creator's, the sign of His decision that all here shall labour hard or shall vanish, or is it merely a challenge to slothful creatures? The desert is a spectre sword threatening man. Here is the punishment, says the unspoken message. Sand is so fine, so merciless. It falls now and then, rises in mounds. It rests, and with the bare breezes, moves.

By the side of the well-built tarmac road Egyptians, mostly Nubians in appearance, squat as if at work. But they do not put hands to ground, move lazily, as if life has almost deserted them. From the desert the spirit is indeed far away. Few creatures may be noted.

And now, at long last, we reach the much discussed

"half-way house." The modest restaurant has several rooms, one being (inevitably) marked "for officers and civilians." The driver and I order tea, drink it in clean cups, and munch bars of nut milk chocolate. The manager says the water is brought all the way from Cairo. Yes, I can have biscuits and tiny sandwiches. At the adjoining table tarbushed Egyptians, in flowing deep blue robes, drink ginger ale. And an English-looking officer, in flannels and someone, presumably an ATS, in minimum dress, enter, and order beer.

Three hours and fifteen minutes after leaving Cairo we are in Fayid, and pass dozens of signboards in English, with their mysterious initials. I note two checks, one Egyptian and the other British and military. The Egyptians are daily becoming stricter over incursions by our troops, though wearing civilian clothes. Passports or official passes have to be shown and entered in the Egyptians' registers.

Huts, more huts, now came into view and in them tanned Britons, in shorts. Here and there I saw dusky Egyptians, busy with the laundry. Now and then, a shop, run by a Greek or Italian. Queer turn of fate that Exodus, this time, is of Britons, and they should appear to be segregated like lepers on this batch of sites, with Greeks, Italians, and, now I see them in their thousands, vigorous Nazi prisoners of war. The Germans in smart peaked caps and their friends march well; few bother to produce evidence on the coats of being a p.o.w. British service women walk (badly), as a needlessly ostentatious emotional provocation, by the huts, near cinemas and officers messes, or messes for other ranks, or, for sergeants. Some of the women (whom none would notice in London) stand about, look like camp followers of no specific nationality or race. Near many of the houses I noted patches of greer grass, smallish lawns; soon the modest Tommies will provide green grass and proof of man's costly inventiveness in harsh desert, by planting roses.

We stop several British officers and n.c.o.'s—none know where the GHQ, of the C. in C. is situated. All tell us t

turn right, and then, favourite phrase, "At the roundabout take left and left again." Repeated several times it seems like a hiccup. We accept the advice, with results disastrous to my promise to the a.d.c. to be at the GeneraPs home by one o'clock.

At last the driver thinks he has the right idea. Inside five minutes we arrive. A German prisoner of war lazing outside the next house, occupied by a senior naval officer, says, blandly, "Nobody is here. No, no British general occupies any house here. Am I certain? Yes, I am." He salutes with a slouch, astonished to hear German. I ignored him; we drove in.

Fayid often appears in the newspapers, but few folk know where it is; 70 miles south of Port Said, thirty north of Suez, on the western side of the Great Bitter Lake; east, north east, of Cairo.

Major A. E. S. (Alan) Jackson, M.C., the M.A. (for the uninitiated, Military Assistant) to General Sir Miles Dempsey, Comander-in-chief, Middle East Land Forces, welcomed me. He is the kind of handsome, tall, easy-going young Briton one expects to be turned out by Marlborough and Sandhurst. His father, Jedburgh J.P., D.L., won three D.S.O.'s in Kaiser War.

In a comfortable residence, so cosy that I could scarce believe it had been raised but four months ago on what had been for endless centuries, a part of the great desert of limitless horizons, I met one of the military stars of our time. Dempsey supervises British armies or military missions in seventeen countries, from Malta in the West to Iraq, from Greece down to Rhodesia. Also, of course, Palestine.

Tall, lean, lithe, unsmiling, he does not suggest readily the owner of a bookcase filled with volumes on race horses, breeding, on dogs, hunting, together with thumbled books of poetry. When he speaks of Britain, he sees the white cliffs two and a half thousand miles away. My G.P.U. on him followed.*

'Bimbo' told me his grandfather came from Queen's County,

Dempsey, in mufti, spoke sharply, easily, glanced from the attractive, polished table, at books on the side, then at the small table used by a member of his personal staff. On this were copies of many confidential messages, cables, decoded memoranda from ambassadors or ministers or generals in the seventeen Dempsey territories, intended for the Foreign Office, or the War Office in London.

It was sad to hear the bachelor's saying that in a few months he would leave the Army at his own request, for it is commonly known that when Montgomery goes Dempsey is the 'certain' next Chief of the Imperial General Staff. "Why must you go," I asked. Dempsey did not give me a straight reply, said, "I have destroyed all my life." It sounded, may not have been, a stock, conventional phrase. He added coldly, "I am fond of green grass, and the

Ireland. He captained the cricket team at Shrewsbury and in January 1915 at 17, went, without an examination to Sandhurst. He was wounded and gassed in France at 19, collected the M.C. on the Somme, and after serving in Iraq, Persia and India, went to the Staff College, the War Office, Aldershot (as brigade major), South Africa (on loan to the government), as C.O., 1st Battn, Royal Berkshire Regiment. He took out the battalion to France in 1939, later commanded the 13th Infantry Brigade. He was at the Dunkirk 'exit' on June 1st. By 1941 he was a major-general, commanding the 46th Division, took over the 42nd Armed Division, and, a year later, the 13th Corps in the Middle East. At El Alamein the Corps dropped out and he prepared it for the invasion of Sicily, capturing Augusta.

In Italy the Corps shone at the battle of Salengro. In January 1944 he commanded the Second Army in Britain. In the great invasion, June 1944, Bradley's First American army and Dempsey's Second, led the way. Dempsey reached the Baltic. In August 1945, when Europe had been cleaned up, Dempsey left to prepare the 14th Army for the assault on Malaya, with two British corps, Britons and Indians. In November 1945 he was gazetted C. in C, South East Asia, and his parish included India, Burma, Malaya, Siam, French Indo-China, Borneo, Dutch East Indies, Celebes, Java, Sumatra, Ceylon.

country. I want to breed things. Yes, I am prepared also to use my brain."

How did this G.H.Q., come to life? Dempsey arrived late last year at Fayid, looked round for a site, saw a place where he counted 27 healthy palms growing. "This will do," he said to two experts, Lt. Col. A. P. Lavies, R.E., and Major G. Stross, R.E., adding, "Here is a rough sketch of the type of house I want."⁵⁵ German prisoners of war worked. The Ministry of Supply co-operated. In four months, by January 1947, the house was ready for occupation. Decorations provided by the (oft-maligned) Ministry are unexceptional. The "London's West End calling"⁵⁵ curtains charm, and most of the lamps deserve praise. The eager desert has been quickly and triumphantly eliminated, grass grows luxuriously on lawns near the bedrooms, the offices, the reception rooms; for brief seconds, indeed, the chasm of over two and a half thousand miles goes as a dream and the England of the cliffs of Dover returns. The rustle of the silks can be nostalgic in this bachelor exile.

Modern aircraft have revolutionised the duties of a C. in C. in a local army. Thus, Dempsey pointed out to me that, if he received a telegram in the morning from Palestine suggesting the need for reinforcements, he spoke to Khartoum and the necessary troops were taken out that, or the next, day in Halifaxes. The same, say, with Tripoli. The arrival of the troops had a quieting effect, before difficulties developed. Often the existing threat was thus resolved more easily, less expensively, and, with greater durability.

The troubles in Palestine are caused "by less than one half per cent of the entire Jewish population."⁵⁵ Our responsibilities in Cyrenaica and Tripolitania are considerable since the territories are run under British military authority.

I do not think that Dempsey, eye-witness, is impressed with our military management of the Sudan, for the only report this kindly officer made about the disputed

territory was concluded with a rare sneer, "They brought out all sorts of ancient cavalry drill with swords, lots of polish and brass, and seemed thoroughly self-satisfied with Victorian life behind their own little curtain."

I do not think Dempsey is in favour of the size of the present British Army, for it is "not large enough for immediate hostilities," and, it is certainly "too vast for peace-time use, in the light of the country's poverty and need for real industrial mobilization."

It will doubtless astonish British readers to learn that publicity disliking Montgomery is not an absolute teetotaller, has broken the 'record' claimed for him by audible innocents. Witness? Dempsey. When the British and Russian troops first met in Germany, the Soviet Commander, Zhukov, threw a big party. The British liaison officer warned the Russians that, in no circumstances, would his chief partake of alcohol. The Russians said with regret they understood. But, when the celebrations began, Montgomery realised the Russians would be deeply disappointed if he did not join them in—at least one champagne toast. Montgomery slyly gave the necessary signal. The Russians were overjoyed to see Anglo-Soviet history in the making, with the (German) vintage liquid crossing the teetotal little Briton's lips.

Next day the Field Marshal asked Dempsey's advice. A certain British officer was wanted, and missing. He had been to a party given by the Russians. He was discovered at long last, in the field marshal's aircraft, 'lost' to the world, by the world forgotten. Dempsey pleaded. Monfr agreed: no disciplinary action was taken.

Dempsey did not attempt to challenge my statement that some of our highest military chiefs believe Palestine will be a main area in the, a, third world war. The oil regions will be pivotal lines, on the Russian and on the Anglo-American side. Thus Palestine will have to provide the supplies. How, then, can we say truthfully that we wish effectively to surrender the mandate for Palestine? Is Russia's oil not to be the main target for assault? Is th

West's oil, in Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, with the pipelines to Palestine, not the Russians' obvious target? It is perhaps not to be wondered at that the Egyptians claim we have never provided a date earlier than 1949 for 'immediate' (term used since 1882) departure from the Suez Canal Zone. We have plainly stated that we cannot easily use the East African colonies as substitute bases for the defence of the Suez, since it is 'awkward' there to maintain the Royal Navy. If Alexandria goes, is Haifa not essential? That is credible.

In 1947 we seem to be naturally preparing for a forthcoming war by 1914 standards.

Over dinner, attended by Dempsey, staff and one or two friends I gathered that the Emperor of Ethiopia, weak but pleasant gentleman, lives in luxurious surroundings, a contrast with those of his people. A certain minister is desirous of supplanting Haile Selassie on the throne. Recent visitor to Malta told Dempsey and me that, he is not impressed by the work of Governor of the colony, but thinks the gentleman in Cyprus, Lord Winster, is "doing tolerably well."

Why, I was asked, do the newspapers not send live, known, writers to the various corners of the Empire with orders to report just what they see and hear, rather than fill so many columns with accounts of the 'probables'⁵ and the 'certain' winners, and the tales of greyhound doping gangs? To say nothing of the extra-marital complications of a charwoman's daughter with the son of a publican, or, even the relative of a poor, dissolute peer.

Dempsey has two giants as A.s.D. G. in Captain Michael Pelham Burn of Beaconsfield, 24, Radley and Oxford, 1st Royal Dragoons, who writes poetry; Capt. Edward Laughton-Scott, 21, Tonbridge and Life Guards, shrewd son of Harley Street heart specialist and member of National Coal Board, who hopes to become barrister on demobilisation. Others at the meal included ex-Ambassador Sir Walford Selby's son-in-law, Major Rupert H. Bromley, M.C., Eton, Sandhurst, Grenadier Guards.

I did not realise Rupert was related to Selby, and during the meal I described our former minister in Vienna as one of the less scintillating stars in diplomacy. But, even if he were the greatest genius, what serious service could his, or any other envoy's, dispatches provide to the country? How many people outside privileged band of five or six, read cables—at the *material* time?

For the post-prandial talks we were joined by Sinbad, Jackson's spirited Airedale, native of Palestine, aged one and a half who chose to divide his attention between Dempsey and the latest visitor. It seems that during tests at the Staff College in Haifa, Sinbad proved he could not be fierce to anyone. Accordingly, he was bought by Jackson. Pelham Burn's piece on Sinbad is worth an extract. 'The Ballad of Baskerville' has a chorus:

*'Get out of my way !
D'you hear what I say
I'm no pyedog,
Or sly dog
Ton listen to me
I'm chien de campe to the C. in C*

As we spoke, England's headaches, security, seemed technically far away, but, while dinner was served, I realised that home was not so distant. Germans served us at table with distinction. I noticed, sadly, as I put my name in Dempsey's register, next to Wavell's, Mountbatten's, and that of the Churchill peace-making genius, Tug,' (Lord Ismay), that I was having German prisoners as companions all round . . . I then went to my suite. A tiny British corporal coloured as he said, "I hope you did not mind my opening your suitcase, with my own key, as I wanted to lay out your things." For a long moment I must have appeared startled into speechlessness, and then smiled, saying, "Do you often open visitor's cases without permission with your own key?"

The subsequent explanation struck me as highly ingenuous: "I like to get the things ready for gentlemen as soon as I can, sir."

But I was not in favour of this hurry, even in the slow desert.

Saturday, April 5th.

After breakfast I travelled back to Cairo in a suitable saloon car lent by Dempsey to Rear Admiral H. W. V. McCall, Senior British Naval Officer, Middle East, who acts as a medium between the Army C. in C. and the C. in C. Mediterranean, Admiral Sir Algernon Willis, at Malta. McCall attends the monthly meetings of the C. in C. at which Dempsey for the Army, and Air Marshal Sir Charles Medhurst (C. in C, Middle East and Mediterranean) for the R.A.F., discuss high grade affairs.

With us were sundry minor officers returning, in mufti of course, to Cairo, also Mrs. McCall. The rear-admiral fidgeted lest he be asked for his papers by Egyptians and was angry because a British corporal said apologetically he could not read the signature of a major on the *laissez-passer*. Egyptian officers standing with the N.C.O. became involved in the dispute. Eventually, at another stop, the Egyptian received the British naval man's doubting looks because he told us there was a new regulation which required permits to be signed at least by a brigadier, or above. "I am well above that," protested McCall, without making any visible impression.

At least I was grateful because McCall now brightened his monologue. "If the Egyptians begin trouble here, there is plenty we could make in return." Wearily I said, "I don't think that sort of chat will get us very far." At which certain hypothetical subjects dropped.

I welcomed "cool" Cairo, and the greetings of porters at Shepheard's. Charles was ready at 2.50 p.m. to blow away all the crumbs that did not exist on the table. I wonder what my reception would be in London if I arrived for luncheon at that hour.

There were smiles also from the two best known hotel porters in the world, the brothers Meyer, who have served

unlimited statesmen, and persons of international distinction, crowned heads, royal princes, generals, admirals. The Meyers wear immaculate, but not ostentatious, clothes and are a further credit for manners to Switzerland, Hans, at 65 he looks 45, began work in Switzerland in 1900, and joined Shepheards on November 15, 1906, as assistant hallporter. Since 1914 he has been chief, with Ernst, aged 53, as his assistant for 27 years. The Swiss Francesco Ferrari has been head waiter in the grill room since 1914, Paula Weibel housekeeper since 1910. I wonder how many notable hotels can claim a similar record?

This evening Sheik Hafiz and I talked at length in his suite on Palestine, over his favourite light supper, yoghurt bananas and jam, ending with luscious oranges and a tumbler of iced orange juice.

"The Arabs will always defend Palestine because they fear vast Jewish immigration into a country that has nearly always belonged to the Arabs. If the Jews must be found a home, why cannot the Western nations take many of them into their own enormous territories, and not displace Arabs who want to live in the Arab homeland. You in Britain would not favour the return suddenly of lots of Italians because the Romans existed in Britain a few centuries ago? The example is felt intensely/⁹

Today's light on Egyptian feeling.

'Al Ikhwan El Muslimun' launches an attack against magazines which publish 'indecent pictures' of women: 'Husbands and fathers are ashamed to introduce these papers into their houses.'

The Egyptian Press Syndicate, the paper continues, has decide to present one of these magazines before a Discipline Committee.

Sunday, April 6th.

Parliamentarians here in great numbers from poor countries, large and small, also Americans, British, for chirpy chatter at inter-Parliamentary Union, It seems a lot

of wasted breath. Everybody in the hotel is asking, will the King be well enough to open the meetings tomorrow at his own reception? I gather that for sundry reasons he will not attend.

Cairo has attractively set-out Zoological Gardens which I inspected hurriedly this afternoon. I asked English-speaking Egyptian for the way to the restaurant, and he insisted on accompanying me. He soon began to tell my 'fortune' by examining the palms of my hands, and studying the manner in which I passed over (to him) one coin and another. Then he "borrowed" a note, and chose to say that he put it in his pocket for Moslem charities with which he was connected. At this I wearied, and said that if I decided to give money to his Moslem charities I would present it myself, and meanwhile the 5/- paid him for the amusement was enough. Otherwise, he would find himself at the nearest policeman's hut in the grounds. He now showed me, entered obviously in his own handwriting, the names and addresses of British 'Tommies' who had donated pounds to the thug's nearest pet charity. I said coldly, "Back with the pound, or you go to the police hut by the scruff of your neck." The surprise of my hand suddenly resting on his neck led to the pound's prompt journey to its owner. I said, "Now let me see you run fast." He showed he could win his blue for sprinting.

Monday, April 7th.

To enter the British Embassy in Cairo past uniformed and other officials is no mean feat, for the fear that undesirables might sneak in to deposit bombs has led to the introduction of exceptional security measures. But, foolishly, the studies of the ambassador, of his diplomatic private secretary (Dove), of the senior clerk and two of the women secretaries seem vulnerable at the back of the building that overlooks the waters of the cynical Nile. The Embassy was begun on a generous scale, like a palace for a wealthy maharajah, but then obviously a firm foot came



FAREWELL PARTY AT FAYID BY OEN. SIR MILES DEMPSEY, C. IN C. MIDDLE EAST.
On the General's left are the author and Major A. E. S. Jackson and
on his right Capt. E. Laughton-Scott and Capt. M. Pelham-Burn.



KING IBN SAUD
AND KING FAROUK IN EGYPT

down on architect, builder and planner. This is clear in the sudden cramping of style, for the staircase inside is a comic contrast and suggests a width suitable for approaching the sewing rooril at the top of a Victorian house. The marble staircase to the main balcony at the river side is ostentatious, grand, deliberately magnificent. It has seen us at the height of our power, when invitations to the Residency must have meant much. It now sees us in our decline. But the Nile, world's third longest river, flows 3,850 miles from the Victoria Nyanza, 960 miles through Egypt, by the stilled lawns, by the bougainvilleas, unimpressed by the temporal bigness of the house.

As I stand inside, and glance at the pictures in the study that face the ambassador, I wonder what Kitchener, Allenby, Cromer think of the situation in 1947. Incidentally, with the swing of the pendulum and the new significance of the term, sovereign independence, what do Egyptians who visit the ambassador's study think of this trio?

Liked this morning phrase, challenging, proud, in Farouk's message to 36th conference of Inter-Parliamentary Union in Egyptian Chamber of Deputies, for envoys of 24 countries, "In the name of eternal Egypt, I extend my welcome."

Empires come and go, 25 out of the 26 identifiable civilisations have almost departed, but Egypt, after nearly six thousand splendid years, stands.

For the first time in the Chamber's history women occupied official seats, as representatives of the Netherlands and of Rumania.

I see that a non-humourous correspondent in 'Musa-marat El Geib' credits Britain's policy of evacuation from Egypt as Churchill's idea, he being 'the most despotic of all tyrants.' How is that? Mtre. Abul Khair Nagib, the writer, bitterly criticises the government for not inviting to the celebrations of 'Evacuation Day' any of the relatives of Araby who led the 1882 revolt against us

This afternoon in all the streets are to be seen men and women trooping to the barracks which have spelt for 65

years the presence since 1882 of a foreign power on Egyptian soil.

I wonder how many home newspapers have received from local correspondents in Egypt material about our being openly snubbed? When Egyptians are introduced, and they see I am British, they make the least effort to continue a conversation, or even to open one. There is no smile on their faces. As soon as convenient, they go. Others here tell me of similar experiences with Egyptians. The atmosphere is thick with dislike—and comes as a surprise, for I have read nothing at home to prepare me for this iciness.

Tuesday, April 8th.

Legends have long been woven round the name of Sir Walter Alexander Smart, since April 1, 1926, Oriental Secretary at the British Residency (now Embassy). By the British, and our friends in the Middle East, he is deified, and a brilliant expounder of the intricate situation, as maker and moulder of British policy. By anti-British Egyptians he is described as the dreadful Imperialist who fathers most measures curtailing Egyptian freedom. Thus, for example, I am assured by a leading Egyptian functionalist that, during the war, Smart insisted on the return to the Embassy of the sole copy of the Beveridge report and continued the translation ceasing. I think the work did not stop though the copy was sent.

Primarily because he is acquainted with the local language and idioms better than a passing ambassador who probably struggles along with French, and, maybe German, an Oriental Secretary keeps an envoy off the social rocks. Thus the O.S. writes minutes or, explains trends in the local Press, prevents life-long family enemies from being invited together to luncheon in the Embassy. Heaven help us, from their being placed at adjoining seats. He it is who goes to see local leaders of sufficient importance, to discuss future trends, and developments.

Tall, cadaverous, slim, Smart speaks through a mental sieve, looks wearily past glasses, brushes his greying but thick hair with the back of his hands, and sits crumpled up in a room always carefully locked during his temporary absence elsewhere in the mission* Iron bars by Smart's window add prison touches in this city of returning destinies and resounding awakenings.

Smart told me he went from Clifton to do oriental languages at Jesus, Cambridge, where he took part in bumping races. 'Persian was my language,' and after passing a competitive examination in 1903, he rose to vice-consul in Tehran in 1909. The later list is amusing: Tabriz, Magazan, Tangier, Fez, New York, (1917-1919), Salonika, Aleppo, Beirut, Damascus, with many understandable return visits.

"It is important to recognise the power of family feuds between the descendants of the Prophet, the Hashimites, who are still represented in power in Iraq and in Transjordan. Between them and King Ibn Saud, for instance, there is this strong difference. The hope for the greater Syria movement has the approval of Transjordan and of Iraq. Today Egypt plays with Ibn Saud, and Syria is against the Hashimites. Why? Because the question involves leadership of the Arab League. If Greater Syria arose and Iraq came in, Egypt might have to take second place, but now Egypt is greater. Lebanon is in a queer state, for with its slight Christian majority, it is terrified of a Greater Syria which would swallow the country. The Syrians are careful, since they do not wish Lebanon to go into the other camp. Therefore, Abdullah always excludes Lebanon from his claims. The French made a mistake after the last war to include, with Lebanon, a number of Muslim districts."

With artistic, sensitive, sinuous fingers rising often to emphasise a point, Smart continued this fascinating, primeval exercise.

"Egypt is recognising the rivalries with skill. Though Egypt is 'so European/ yet it is also one of the most insular

states. Deserts have isolated the Egyptians, while the other Arabs have been more mixed up. Over Anglo-Egyptian differences the Arabs want us to get to terms. They are torn between their desire to help Egypt, and to help us. They have even tried negotiations. But, if Britain and Egypt could not agree, Egyptians would be helped."

Smart on clash between Nahas Pasha and King Farouk: "The Wafd has sabotaged all the Anglo-Egyptian treaty negotiations. Because the chiefs did not wish the Premier Nokrashy, to sign the agreement and get control of the country. Some Egyptians want the Wafd back."

Yes, during the abortive 1946 negotiations, Sidki would see Lord Stansgate, the acting head of our delegation, and both would return to their followers. After this the delegations were toyingly split into committees or groups.

We spoke of King Farouk and Smart recalled emphatically that he had to leave England, where he was being educated at the age of sixteen. Till then the boy had been constantly *given* advice, by the tutor Leki Ibrahim, who had charge.

How did he view our tanks entering Abdin Palace of Wednesday, February 4, 1942? Smart said he "did not wish to justify the move, necessarily," but, would explain the background. The king, in his opinion, was then taking the advice of Aly Maher Pasha, and, it was impossible to find a government that would abjure politics at a time of great international crisis, and, danger. For instance though Sirry Pasha was in power from November 1941 till that February, 1942, we had the greatest difficulty in closing the (French) Vichy Legation which was working in Cairo openly against the allied effort. At last the Egyptians did it, without, apparently, previously informing the king. Farouk was wildly angry and Sirry had to resign formally on February 2. For the second time Rommel was advancing hard on Egypt, and again Benghazi had fallen. Most Egyptians thought the British were going to be defeated. We were fighting at the back of the Marble Arch

line. Demonstrators outside Abdin Palace were shouting, "Long live Rommel." We had also remembered that, when Wavell advanced quickly for the first time in 1941, we found certain of our papers or copies in the Italian GHQ,. These corresponded with papers sent previously to Aly Maher's Minister of War by us, were not necessarily the originals. Moreover, the task of turning out the Italians from Cairo was not easy, was achieved only 14 days after the Italians had begun the war in 1940. The Italian men were interned.

"In February 1942 we were passing through the darkest moment of the war. One Egyptian government had fallen and another was not coming in. This proposal and that was made to the king, but in vain." How? Through the director of the royal cabinet, Ahmed Hassanein Pasha (who has recently died and been succeeded by Ibrahim Abdul Hady Pasha).

"The King," Smart went on, "refused all the representations. There was now a dangerous vacuum. Government was carried on without real authority, or responsibility. This went on four days. Saturday, Sunday (February 1st), Monday, Tuesday, We know that Aly Maher stood behind the scenes, was generally credited with coming to power. Our ambassador, Killearn, had full authority from London to act. Hassanein, Oxford product, came to the Embassy several, indeed many, times."

Smart repeats that in the proposed agreement with Sidky last year we had offered international guarantees about our good faith in the Sudan.

Smart and I smiled as we repeated the words, "international guarantees."⁵⁵ I thought perhaps the Egyptians have learnt since 1882 to have normal faith in those two words of another world.

And then I had a chat (too often interrupted by telephone calls initiated by the ambassador) with the prematurely lined Minister, Reginald Bowker, C.M.G.,* who

has jet black hair, strong nose. He is 46, slim, deferential, speaks with precise, yet gentle vowels.

"We have, some of us, too often forgotten," he said, "that after the murder in 1926 of Sir Lee Stack, the Sirdar, Governor-General of the Sudan, all Egyptian troops there were at once turned out. When posts fell vacant in the Sudan, they were advertised in British and Egyptian papers, and the Sudanese Government made the choice. But Egyptians did not like to go to the Sudan really, for they always looked upon it as exile." I fear Bowker, who has served in Paris, Berlin and Oslo, may be wrong.

Tonight to wealthy suburb, Zamalek, for dinner with surprising sportsman who surrendered Egypt's most important, influential, diplomatic post—for love of Englishwoman. Hassan Nachat Pasha, fencer, criminologist, industrialist, inventor of gadgets for libraries and book-readers in bed, Dijon University graduate, solicitor in Cairo at 19, could still have been Ambassador in London. However, he chose to defy the ban in his country's service, on marriage with foreigners, to wed Patricia Priest, Devon blonde, of 23. So he is now technically out of the picture but may yet become—Premier. The Nachats were married by Sheik Hafiz, Patricia having turned Moslem, and their baby, Leila, aged nineteen months, demonstrates precociously startling character.

Hassan had appalling task in London as envoy of oft-humiliated state. But never once did he take advantage of our friendship, beginning in 1939, to give vent to his feelings, which must often have been near bursting point. The furthest he allowed himself to go (at least, in print) was to say, with flashing black eyes, "We have carried out the terms of the alliance one hundred per cent, and more we cannot do. In any case, decisions for war are to be taken by the Chamber and not by the king."⁵⁵

As I entered Hassan's palace in Zamalek, we could not help recalling the contrast of our last meeting—in Exeter prison. I had asked my friend, Capt. H. G. H. Evered, the humane Governor, to invite the ambassador to inspect

the premises. We went all round and took away with us newly baked bread, which was whiter than that sold to the (more worried) Tree' people outside. (But Hassan annoyed me by turning down the offer of a visible sample meal).

Beautiful Patricia, with attractive voice, and generous words about women, proved a kindly hostess and Hassan an entertaining but surprisingly restrained story-teller. He confirmed that he had not been asked to visit the king since his return home, a long while ago. I did not tell Hassan, that whenever I met anyone close to government or palace, I asked what had happened to cool Farouk-Nachat relations and had not been given a satisfactory reply. Meanwhile Hassan is restlessly busy with a scheme for electrifying the Egyptian countryside, to bring industry to the people who will continue to starve, starve, unless their present acute poverty is attacked by modern means. He is also head of a paper-making factory, and of many other businesses.

Below ground level we walked in one of the most luxurious private libraries I have visited. The volumes are in six or seven languages which the ex-envoy speaks fluently, including German, Italian, Spanish and Persian. Edgar Wallace crowded some shelves; others included studies from ancient manuscripts about Egypt.

But still happiness escapes Hassan.

Wednesday, April 9th.

If the two thousand Pashas do not, soon, wake up to the need for drastically changing conditions in Egypt, the local slaughter will be on a scale to turn the Romanov royal tragedy of 1917 into a pleasant Sunday afternoon tea party. The thought arose about the narrow streets near Shepheards early this morning. The disease was startling.

Dawn of awakening will be costly.

Twice the Yugoslav Minister to Egypt, pleasingly low-voiced Echref H. Badnjovic, a has dropped cards on the British.

being favoured by the conventional return card, or by an invitation to call. In Legation he told me today that British officials still seem to recognise, to all intents and purposes, the people connected with former King Peter regime. He alleges that several Yugoslavs who desired to return home have recently been court-martialled, and sentenced to terms of five or six years. One of the judges, he further charges, appears on the list of wanted people in Yugoslavia for alleged war crimes. And the judgments have been recognised by British G H Q in Cairo.

The Minister comes from Poctei, in Herzegovina, looks younger than 40.

What is the point in recognising the government in Belgrade, and our envoy here ignoring the existence of representatives of allied country?

Several ambassadors accredited in London find it "impossible" to return visits by ministers, or drop cards. It is said that one ambassador is often also too busy to see new ambassadors.

Second enjoyable session with Smart this morning, to discuss the Grand Mufti. Hashimites oppose Haj Amin, who heads the notable Husseini family in Palestine, whose rivals are the Nashashibis, now led by Ragheb Bey, principal in the Palestine Defence Party. During the General Strike and revolt by the Arabs in Palestine in 1936 we tried to arrest Haj Amin, but, he locked himself up in mosque and escaped, to Lebanon, where he stayed until the outbreak of war when he moved to Iraq. There he established himself with a lot of Palestine exiles and worked with Vichy. All through the war he broadcast into allied states, notably against Russia. He told the Arabs that, if Hitler won, "Zionism would be over."⁵⁵ It was known that he had given the Nazi salute in Bosnia, when inspecting members of the Moslem army, but, his supporters claimed that it was "but a gesture."⁵⁵ He had always been anti-Zionist.

Negotiations in 1936? We succeeded then in making all Egyptians sit round one table, Wafdists and non-Wafdists.

Our Mediterranean position was "not easy," after Italy's victory in Ethiopia, and we gladly signed the mild treaty. Incidentally, did I realise the Wafd was our spiritual baby?

Soon Smart will be away, on retirement, in a place in Normandy, where he hopes for reminiscences and, gardening.

Found the ambassador's Cochran-ish private secretaries, Mrs. Jessie Violet Onslow (dark-haired widow of Capt. Richard Onslow, M.V.O., commander of *Hermes*) and Miss Mary Grepe, pondering blonde, tussling—who should occupy fourth seat at luncheon of Parliamentarians, M.P. with military rank, or M.P. who is a Privy Councillor? I am not sure, but fancy that Socialist M.P. and Liberal journalist, Haydn Davies, secured the implied distinction. Ambassador had not given his decisions, matter was raised with Dove, who in turn rang up someone higher up, and, this gentleman was not absolutely certain. Neither was I, who am, nevertheless, interested in protocolaire niceties.

To Abdin Palace to hear about the much discussed monarch, and the 1942 affair. Strikingly handsome, well-dressed, well-fed soldiers of the guard, in red and blue uniform, took me through endless, much decorated, much furnished, much painted, much carpeted corridors. For two minutes I waited in ante-room where I met one of four young men who permanently draw the diplomas given to officers receiving commissions, to pashas and beys about to be so honoured.

Like a consultant in Harley Street looks King Farouk's principal private secretary, miniature Hussein Husny Bey. He speaks quietly, confidentially, in flawless English with restraint, modesty. His manners are impeccable and I enjoyed the visit.

King Farouk, says Husny, has an English governess for his children, himself had an English governess, and English was his first language. Books in English continue to come to the palace from W. H. Smith's bookstall near Putney Bridge, which he frequented while being educated in England.

The King, he said, was sufficiently English in his modesty to inspire many stories. This one was true. Two British officers were worrying about getting back late at night when a limousine drew up. The king asked the a.d.c. to invite the officers into the car. Later they wanted to know who was driving them. The king answered, "I happen to be the commander in chief of the Egyptian Army." The younger of the officers thinking the driver was joking, said, "I happen to be Montgomery," and his companion said, "I am Wavell." When they reached Cairo the officers realised they were with the king. Next day they dutifully came to sign the visitors' book.

Husny asked, how many formal promises had Egypt had from Great Britain about the end of the occupation? Since 1882 they totalled at least 60.

Naturally I have wanted to get the royal version of the British tanks' entry into the palace. Here it is, presented by the king's secretary, who told me, and I believe him, that he wept on Wednesday, February 4, 1942, as he had never wept before.

"The king gave orders to the royal bodyguard, himself, by telephone, that they were not to show any resistance, uselessly spill any blood."

The background of the dispute? On Tuesday, the preceding day, the king had called in Nahas, requesting him to form a coalition cabinet. They were pretty sure a coalition government could be formed. But the British wanted a purely Wafd cabinet, with Nahas alone to choose everybody. That day the king saw the other leaders of parties and fixed an audience for Makram Ebeid Pasha*, who currently had the greatest influence over Nahas.

* Then Secretary-General of the Wafd, now leader of the Kotla Party which holds 23 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Makram is a Copt and product of New College, Oxford. Member of the Wafd in the early days, he was exiled by the British at 32, in 1921, for political activities, to the Seychelles Islands with Zaghloul Pasha and Nahas. He was dismissed by the British from professorship at School of Law. Became estranged from Nahas Pasha in 1943, published the "Black Book" of many serious

"Various audiences were fixed for February four, people having been invited meanwhile to accept posts in a coalition, A coalition, it was thought, would suit the country at that time. The theory spread by Lord Killearn was that the king desired a cabinet to be formed by Aly Maher Pasha, former Premier. That was false, without any foundation, for I had myself spoken to the King who had said/This is not the time for Aly Maher. I have no idea for that at all.⁵ There was a crisis over food and demonstrators called for bread. The king ordered the distribution of bread from the palace. He also ordered that corn throughout the land be sold to the government, for supplying the hungry.

"At midday on February 4, Hassanein Pasha, director of the royal cabinet, received an ultimatum, from Lord Killearn, the text of which read:

'Si je n'apprends pas avant 6 heures ce soir que Nahas Pasha a ete appile pour former le Cabinet, le Roi Farouk devra supporter la responsabilite de ce qui arrivera.'

(If by six o'clock the Ambassador did not hear that Nahas Pasha had been asked to form a Cabinet, the king would bear responsibility for what ensued.)

"Hassanein went at once to see the King at the palace. When he returned, the king decided upon a meeting of elder statesmen, former prime ministers and others,*

allegations against the Premier and Wafd officials, and went to prison. A day or two after Nahas's resignation in 1945 he was chosen Finance Minister in Nokrashy's cabinet,

*The list, in the light of the resolution passed, is of historic importance: Hussein Sirry Pasha, Prime Minister; Cherif Sabry Pasha, former Regent; *Moustafa El-Nahas Pasha, former Prime Minister; Aly Maher Pasha, former Prime Minister; Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil Bey, President of the Senate; * Ahmed Maher Pasha, president of the Chamber of Deputies, head of the Saadist Party; Ahmed Ziwer Pasha, former Prime Minister; * Ismail Sidky Pasha, former Prime Minister; *AbdelFattah Yehia Pasha, former Prime Minister; Hussein Heikal Pasha, vice-president of the Liberal-Constitutional Party; Mohamed Tewfik Rifaat Pasha, former President of the Chamber of Deputies; * Mohamed Helmylssa Pasha, president of the Chaab-Ittihad Party; *Hafez

including Nahas Pasha, to decide whether the British Ambassador had the right under the 1936 treaty to address this form of ultimatum. It was (according to the official, royal, proces verbal) unanimously agreed, Nahas voting, that the decision be communicated *in writing*, that the British ultimatum constituted a major violation of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, and of Egypt's independence, and that the king could not, therefore, consent to an act which resulted in the violation of the pact or the independence of the State.*

"This meeting was held between three and four p.m. Those present desired to persuade Nahas to accept the coalition. He presided over the conference and later left, returning just before the end. Towards the conclusion of the assembly, Ahmed Maher Pasha requested the king's permission to speak. Consent having been given, he declared, 'I imagined that Nahas Pasha, if he is entitled leader of the country and author of the treaty of honour and independence, would refuse to form the Ministry. But, if he has accepted, I declare in this sacred place, and in the august presence of the Sovereign, as I declare to all the world, that Nahas Pasha took power supported by British bayonets.⁵'"

And that, I am assured by Husny, "represented the sentiments of all present."

The ultimatum was to expire at six. About that time

Afifi Pasha, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, former Ambassador in London and head of the Banque Misr; *Aly El-Chamsi Pasha, former Permanent delegate of Egypt at the League of Nations; Mohamed Bahieddine Barakat Pasha, former President of the Chamber of Deputies; Mohamed Hafez Ramadan Pasha, president of Hizb Watani; Mahmoud Hassan Pasha, president of Comite du Gontentieux de l'Etat. Names with asterisk denote they signed the Anglo-Egyptian alliance in 1936.

'Les personnes reunies s'avancent vers Sa Majestd, Lui declarant que le fait d'adresser l'Ultimatum Brittannique constitue une grande violation du Traite Anglo-Egyptien et de Findependance du Pays, et qu'en consequence Sa Majeste le Roi ne peut consentir a une action dont il resulte une violation du Traite Anglo-Egyptien ou de l'independance du Pays.'

Hassanein went to see Killearn. The ambassador told him he would visit the king at nine p.m. Husny continued in hushed tones, obviously reliving the occasion, "A few minutes before nine we found that all the streets leading to the palace were filled with British troops, lorries were careering about, also armed cars. The palace was surrounded. Three tanks were inside the gates. One of the British officers gave an order that the wrought iron gate be forced. Three tanks then entered.

'Upstairs the principal chamberlain to the king, Ismail Taimur Pasha, came forward when Lord Killearn arrived, to show the way. Killearn brushed past, saying, 'I know my way.'⁵ He was followed by six or seven officers. With him was Lieut. General Robert G. W. A. Stone, the newly appointed G.O.C., British troops, Egypt. The officers had revolvers in their holsters. The king, accompanied by Hassanein, was in his study on the first floor. The king was firm, but calm. He retained his usual dignity. Most of us nearby felt proud. The British officers did not enter the study, staying behind. All of us Egyptians cried for shame. My children cried when they heard the story.

"The king opened with some remarks about the situation. He then said that it was in his power to refuse, but that he knew the result would be bloodshed, and as he loved his people dearly, he would not have the blood of his people shed in their streets. He was going to accept. But Lord Killearn would regret it. The proceedings lasted about ten or twelve minutes."

The king, said Husny Bey, was about to form another government in April 1944, with Hassanein, but, at the last moment Killearn came to the palace with a note to the effect that the British government wished Nahas to remain in power.

"It was during the premiership of Nahas that the decision was reached that a.d.c. officers attending Killearn as High Commissioner would continue to serve him as Ambassador,

"Apparently, when Killearn went to a certain provincial

town, it was expected that a reception would be held for him 'as if for a sovereign.' The king heard of it, and gave prompt orders that Killearn was to be received 'only as an ambassador.' "

Husny commented, "Killearn disliked this act very much."⁵⁵

He added later, "Friendship between us is wanted, and needed. But what is the value of a treaty obtained by force?" Of the 1936 agreement he said, "We Egyptians accepted it as the best we could obtain."⁵⁵ Referring to the Sudan, he said they recognised the fact that, while tens, hundreds of important appointments were filled by Britons the only notable post, that of Chief Kadi, was, under the pretence of 'Sudanising' the civil service, going from an Egyptian to a Sudanese. He gathered that, the Sudanese themselves had said there was not a Sudanese good enough yet to replace the Egyptian. Husny said Egypt was shockingly over-populated, while in the Sudan they had not enough hands to till the land. The same language and the same traditions operated. Modern installations had been built by the Egyptians, a wonderful school, mosques, hospitals, rail communications. Sudanese went to Egyptian schools and universities. Indeed, to Egypt came missions from the whole Moslem world of Iraqi, Lebanese, Syrian, Palestine, Saudi Arabian and Indonesian students.

This Egyptian quashes any supercilious thoughts some of us, writer excluded, gratuitously cherish about Egypt's capacity to think, to express itself, and to act.

I have been glancing today in local newspaper files at issue of Monday, February 2, 1942. A small paragraph in the 'Egyptian Gazette'⁵ announced that Sirry had resigned and Makram Ebeid Pasha had visited the palace. The newspaper on sale in the afternoon of February four, declared, in a modest place, that the Anglo-Egyptian Union would be hosts that night to Mr. and Lady Diana Duff Cooper, and that the British Ambassador and Lady Killearn would bring them at 6.30 p.m. Another attraction that evening was to be a curiously topical lecture on

'Propaganda, past and present,' by Sir Walter Monckton, K.C. The paper announced that Major General R. G. Stone, former president of the British Military Mission, and now G.O.C., B.T.E., and Mrs. Stone would be the guests the following Saturday at a cocktail party at the Officers' Club, Zamalek, with the Chief of the General Staff of the Egyptian Army as host.

A small paragraph stated that Hussein Heikal Pasha had announced that the king desired the formation of a national government.

What was the dramatic splash, principal banner, story? Singapore. The bright forecast was spoilt a few days later. What was the astrologia? 'Singapore will be the Moscow of Far East/ declared the 'Egyptian Gazette.'⁵ (Singapore is *not* in the Far East).

On the day following the tank invasion and ultimatum, the front page of the 'Egyptian Gazette' carried a cool, pathetically inadequate reference to the crisis—in a 'box' headed 'Nahas Pasha Cabinet Making.' The box contained 21 lines. It stated, 'Following the King's invitation to Nahas Pasha, the Wafd leader, late last night, to form a new government, Cabinet making has been in progress today. Nahas Pasha is expected to be received by the king either this afternoon . . .' Elsewhere was a reference to the meeting of 'party leaders' which began at four p.m. on February four. It explained that Hassanein Pasha left during the proceedings, and returned after half an hour. At eight o'clock the meeting broke up. Another meeting was held shortly after when the king was again present, "and it became known that his Majesty had invited Nahas Pasha to form a new government."⁵⁵ (In London 'The Daily Telegraph'⁵ of February 5 carried a nine-line report from Cairo, which said an election in Egypt was likely . . .)

On February 6 an escapist English leading article in Cairo praised 'The Russian Genius,'⁵ the front page carried a four-inch blank white space, before opening the account of the cabinet crisis. Understandably, in the circumstances, came news of the postponement of the

Stone cocktail party. On the day following the tank affair, the king visited his father's grave.

Here, I think, may be interpolated authoritative observations by other people connected with the affair. Those actually present at the historic interview, it will be recalled, were Farouk, Hassanein, Killearn and Stone.

This (telescoped) version declares that Sirry, Premier until the 'incident/ had helped us as much as he could, was in fact largely responsible for Egypt's carrying out her side of the 1936 treaty, and going beyond it. As non-belligerents the Egyptians played their part well. The Egyptian Army performed many tasks, including A.A. defence, guarding vulnerable points, pickets on the Canal, and so on. Anglo-Egyptian relations were cordial, although for political reasons the Egyptian government would not consent to the Army's taking a greater share in the actual war. Something could be said on both sides, but on balance it was probably better for us that the Egyptians stayed out of the actual conflict. For instance, bombing attacks were cut down by Egypt's remaining non-belligerent, and that was to our advantage.

Some time before the palace affair, the Wafd had been 'gunning' Sirry, who was vulnerable, as he had no party behind him. And Nahas had made violently anti-British speeches, accusing Sirry's government of being too subservient. The British thought Sirry was losing his grip on the situation, and, moreover he had trouble with the King. He had come in as a friend of Farouk's, was friendly with us. The actual quarrel with the king concerned the "dispatch" from Cairo, at our request, of the Vichy French envoy, without previous notification by Sirry to the king. For some time there had been a good deal of anti-British agitation, some of it allegedly inspired by the Wafd, following our military difficulties in Egypt and elsewhere. Rommel was doing better than he had expected, and recovered Benghazi. It was essential that we should not have avoidable problems at the back, where supplies were situated, and risk trouble arising out of a political crisis.

Informed Britons did not think there was much risk of sabotage at the back. For instance, despite some fears to the contrary, Egypt did very well during the Alamein crisis, gave the soldiers "no headaches at all."

Killearn, this version continues, decided on a political solution, with Nahas as Premier. Many of the British felt Nahas was not fundamentally anti-British, would have a grip on the country, could keep things going. Killearn, therefore, told the king to get Nahas, whom he had previously kicked out, to form a government. The king jibbed because of the long-standing Farouk-Nahas quarrel. Finally, on "D-day," the Embassy sent an ultimatum. The ambassador insisted on the king's calling on Nahas to form the Cabinet and hoped for a reply by six. At six o'clock there was no reply.

It had been previously arranged at conferences that, if the king did not comply, he would be asked to abdicate. Naturally, our arrangements included the forcing of the abdication, if necessary, succession by the elderly Mohamed Ali.

Stone, who had taken over the post of GOC only a few days previously, carried out an order to "lay on" certain military preparations. Everything was ready, under Brigadier John Chrystall, Cairo Area Commandant. Instructions to the local military chiefs had been issued by Capt, the Rt. Hon. Oliver Lyttleton, Minister of State, the Ambassador and the three service heads, General (now Field Marshal) Sir Claude Auchinleck, Admiral Sir John (now Viscount) Cunningham, and Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Lord Tedder, A.O.C. in C, R.A.F., Middle East, who formed the Council of State.

The plans were to surround the palace and adjoining area, to make certain that nobody slipped away. Something was also essential in front of the palace, to overawe the Palace Guard, in case of trouble. The king's plans were not certain. But it was known that there had been no reply to the ultimatum, and rumours that the king was going to 'clear out/ Ultimately there were reports that he

was going to bring his guard into the palace. Our moves had to take place "without causing alarm and despondency," by creating excitement among the Egyptian public beforehand. This was achieved successfully by the troops. They took up positions after dusk, did not move to surround the palace until the actual moment when Killearn and Stone went inside.

The tanks? There are iron railings outside the palace, and it was thought necessary to have a few men inside, in case of opposition. The railings were forced. The local British authorities chose, in case any difficulty arose, specially trained O C T U men. These had orders to get into, and through, the gates, and to station themselves outside the main door of the palace, in case they were wanted. Stone was accompanied by two or three liaison officers, one being stationed on the landing outside the conference room. The A'sDC with the ambassador also remained near this room.

At the door the ambassador and Stone (according to this version) were met by Taimur Pasha. He escorted them to the waiting room. After a few minutes they were shown in, the king having at his side Hassanein. They sat facing the Britons across the table. Killearn read out a prepared statement on the situation, and said in the opinion of the British Government it was essential that Nahas Pasha be requested to form the next government.

"A coalition cabinet would not be possible, and Nahas must form the government himself. It was made fairly clear this was a demand, and we should not take a No for an answer.

"King Farouk was obviously shaken, but, it had to be said, in fairness to him, that he behaved with exemplary dignity. He was perfectly good mannered, retained a reasonable amount of dignity. He thought for a few moments. Then he discussed the matter with Hassanein, who had leant over to him. It looked as if Hassanein said, 'You'd better accept.' Then the king declared, 'I accept.' Obviously relieved, Killearn turned to Stone and said,

'Well, that is what we want.' Killearn slowly repeated to the king that he would summon Nahas to form a government, and the king said he agreed with that. That having been done, the tension relaxed; all four became reasonably affable, the king offered cigarettes to the Britons and smoked. King and visitors went on speaking of general subjects"

This version declares that Killearn did not ask the king to look out of the window. The king may already have seen armoured vehicles, or heard of them, because five or ten minutes passed between their arrival and the visitors being shown in. The king remained seated throughout the audience.

There is direct conflict on an interesting issue. Did Killearn hand a declaration of abdication to Farouk? One version states that Killearn took out a form of abdication at the same time as the formal statement to be read by him to the monarch. This form, it is said, was placed on the table. Maybe the king saw it. Maybe not.

What material for a play! I must consult London theatre tsar, Walter Payne.

Banquet of Inter-Parliamentary Union was held tonight at Shepheards, and in case the menu of Wednesday, April 9, 1947 is of interest to some of the British visitors⁵ overfed constituents, I append principal details: Petite Marmite Madrilene; medaillon de Turbotin Amiral Mousseline de Grevettes; Goeur de Charolais Armenonville, petit pois a la Frangaise, pommes noisettes; Foie gras de Strasbourg a la gelee, salade Gauloise; Parfait Grande Chartreuse, mignardises; corbeille de fruits (for any volunteers, or none); Moka. Served: Graves Rosechatel Dry and Pommard 1937.

I had a Sheik Hafiz supper of sour milk, various fruits, and an immodest number of fruit ice-cream helpings.

Thursday, April 10th.

Overlooking the Nile is a vast block of fashionable flats.

The numbers are not easy to distinguish and my directions were not perfect, but when I asked, deliberately in French, where lived the ambitious, energetic, passionate, ubiquitous, Secretary-General of the Arab League, Abdur Rahman Azzam Pasha, all the 'guards,' official and unofficial, immediately pointed to the flat.

Azzam studied medicine for two years at St. Thomas's, London, hates Imperialism, has been an Egyptian Minister several times, began politics with Zaghloul Pasha in 1924, has fought for Libyan independence, possesses Jewish friends, smokes incessantly and is best known for his work as head of the Arab League since its formal birth in March 1945.

Our meeting was helpful, stimulating, but absurdly annoying because a male servant entered the room every few minutes to tell Azzam who was calling on the telephone. Azzam looks overworked, under-exercised, tense.

"Ultimately, ultimately," Azzam began, "the Arab League is a friend of Great Britain's, because both are interested in the stability, security and peace of this part of the world."

We turned to our difficulties in Egypt, and Azzam said, "Most of the Arab states are either allied to, or friendly with, Britain, and it is difficult when your two friends are quarrelling. The Arab states have to side with Egypt, for Egypt is the centre of the Arab movement. Not only because it is an Arab state, but, because they feel that Egypt is right. The public here is growing excited, but only, I think, against British Imperialism. The British would be better advised to rely on the goodwill of nearly twenty million Egyptians than on ten thousand British troops on the Canal zone. The Egyptians do not hate the British, this is only a quarrel. They still care more for the British than for any other people. It is wiser not to let the Egyptians glance too deep into the past for they remember that in 1882 the stay of the British was to be for six months, and, in Constantinople, it was to be for five years."

Azzam agreed the British had attachments to the Sudan:

Britons were killed fighting for it. But to the Egyptians it was a source of endless nervousness. They lived, or died, by the Nile. The Egyptians knew, when they read of separatist "movements" that, if they were in control, these would not be running. Two million Sudanese walked about naked; the rest were living in forests, almost.

Azzam spoke of the Palestine problem with equal calm. "The question was started by people who did not see ahead. It arose at the wrong moment, when the Arabs were shaking themselves off from a long sleep. These people's plans did not work. So now they use force. The English were rough with our people in 1929 and 1936, when we showed disapproval of the Jewish rush into Palestine. The British did not hesitate to shoot people found with arms. England has used all sorts of means to get her rule in Palestine, cunning, brutality, and so on. Unfortunately for England and for everybody, this has turned out to be an insoluble problem, practically insoluble. The Jew has become truculent, intransigent, and now a terrorist, armed by the British themselves during the war. He imagines he can win.

"Unfortunately for the Jew, fortunately for the Arab, he could not achieve his object early, and now it is too late." Azzam then issued his warning.

"The Arabs are waiting. Ultimately it will mean war, in which the chances of the Jews will be modest. They may bank on help from a big Power. I doubt whether England can do it, and whether America can. The terrorists are building up an inevitable clash between the two races, two religions. I had an important Jew here recently, a member of the Jewish Agency. I said to him, 'Your young men think they have an organised army of Hagana's 60,000 men, and a few thousand terrorists, better equipped, and with Jewish wealth behind them. I warn you against this policy, because when the Arabs put up a fight, it will be different from anything you have seen. For five years Abdel Krim defied the French and Spaniards. For twenty years the Italians were defied with their half million men

in Tripoli. I fought there personally for seven or eight years. France was defied forty years in Syria. . . . ' " "

Azzam did not stop to finish the endless cups of coffee brought into the room, went on in an even voice: "I told this Jew too, 'It will not be an easy problem. It will not be alone the Palestine Arabs, but fifty million Arabs against you. To achieve ultimate victory the Jewish Hagana will have to occupy Cairo and Khartoum. That means a crusade. If we Arabs seem to want to avoid all this trouble, it is not because we are afraid of war. We wish not to go down in history with a black spot, on our traditions, that we have massacred the Jews. For if we fight, it will not be like the British, with silk gloves. You will get 600,000 Jews killed in Palestine.⁵ I begged my visitor to avoid that. I added, 'It is a great shame to go on like you are doing and have the massacre. There are 120,000 Jews in Baghdad. They will disappear. There are 300,000 in North Africa and recently five hundred were destroyed in Tripoli. All over a letter and threat. I do not think anyone could protect the Jews of the various Arab states. The Jewish terrorist is building up his own destruction. So far, the British Army is his protector.' " A long pause. The Arabs "will never accept Partition: a Jewish state means war."

In an Arab Palestine state the Jew would get Orientalised, and leave his dreams of flooding Palestine with people of other ideologies behind him. But, if the Arab were forced to see the flood entering Palestine, the Big Powers would be simply sowing the seeds of future war. And "the future war would not be confined to the Jews or Palestine: but must produce a general conflagration."⁵⁵

Does Azzam foresee in the creation of the Arab League an even closer link between all the Arab states in the Middle East?

"Whether it will be an Empire,⁵⁵ he replied, "federation or confederation, the unity that will make it one is coming, in foreign policy, defence, economics, inside ten years. Because, even in my short experience of two years I have

discovered that many difficulties that would have broken the League in peace, were resolved."

As Azzam spoke, eagerly, easily, elegantly, I remembered a sentence in his pamphlet, * 'It is my ardent prayer and earnest hope, therefore, that the statesmen determining the fate of nations, will realise that it is high time they adopted these noble Arab and Moslem doctrines and traditions, as the means of establishing sound international relations, conducted on lines other than those dictated by Power Politics and the law of the jungle, and to ensure that these relations are based on that spirit of peace, goodwill and brotherhood inspired by Islam, which knows no distinction between race, or colour or creed, nor even discrimination between knowledge and ignorance, progression and retrogression, but recognises one and only one truth, that all men are brethren, the descendants of one father, Adam.'

As I rose to go, the servant announced the Palestine Arab who is now the deputy Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Sheik Yusuf Yassin, a truly Biblical type, swathed in spotless white silk robes with a remarkably pale white face, yet black beard. Sheik Yusuf sided vigorously with Egypt at the recent meeting of the Arab League called to discuss the dispute with Britain. As we were introduced, he closed his eyes and said simply, in Arabic, "When you come to Saudi Arabia, you will be at home." The Arabs have much to teach us.

Learnt later of the bitterness nursed by progressive Egyptians because of education during the decades of occupation. I confess the figures produced for me, and I imagine they are not 'cooked' specially for my benefit, induce a sense of embarrassment. I studied the statement before visiting the Minister for Education, sturdy, defiant, hyper-candid Abdul Rezzak el Sanhury Pasha. I began, for I knew we had only a brief while together, "Tell me,

'Imperialism, the barrier to world peace,' published by the Arab League, printed this year by the Cairo Government Press.

if you will, what is uppermost in your mind when you go home to rest?"

Sanhury snapped back, "The best thing you British have done is to get out of Cairo. But the Egyptians will not be satisfied with that. If you can take your troops out of the country before the dispute goes to United Nations, it will be much better for the friendship between the two countries. I should be delighted to forget politics, and to be occupied solely with education, because I know that Egypt is in a bad state educationally. But do you know that since the British control went we have raised our figures of students ten times?"

"Our achievements? We have created two universities, in Cairo and Alexandria. The first a short while after English control ceased and the other in 1942. Illiteracy is a good proof of what I mean by change. The British representative in Cairo had complete control of our education from 1882 until 1922. He was helped by 'advisers' attached to various departments. In 1882 illiteracy was 91.7 per cent, and in 1917 it was still 91.3 per cent."

Sanhury laughed bitterly. In 1882 about 162,000 pupils were attending school and in 1920, forty years later, 298,000. By 1945 the change was dramatic, 1,375,766 pupils, a rise of over a million.

I can understand Sanhury's feelings, for I note, in the dossier prepared for me, that in 1920-21 the Ministry's expenditure was £1,013,503, or 2.5 per cent of the budget of the state, with £155,921 spent on elementary education, in a state with about 16,000,000 inhabitants ... In 1945-46, with the Egyptians in control of their affairs, the education estimates rose to a little under £10,000,000, (11 per cent of the state's budget) and of that, £3,875,000 was to furnish elementary education.

One of the allegations against the British that seems scarcely credible is that our 'crabbing' representatives in Egypt refused to recognise the degrees granted by the National University founded in 1908, until 1925, when it

was taken over by the State.

With a density of 1,400 inhabitants per arable square mile, highest of any state in the world, the Egyptians realise they must turn to industrialisation, and have now established 70 technical schools for over 20,000 students of both sexes. Foreign languages are to be taught in the lower schools, free meals will be, or are already, given, children will stay in school six years, from six to twelve, medical inspections are in force. Sanhury said he desires to see in twenty years no fewer than three million children attending schools, is building colleges for teachers. Fortunately he does not believe that Egypt, any more than Britain, can dispense with foreign professors.

What kind of background has Sanhury? For one and a half years he has been Minister (in two periods). He comes from Alexandria, is a lawyer, worked 12 years as professor of civil law there, and latterly as dean of faculty. When requested to become Minister he was engaged in preparing civil code for Egypt, Iraq and Syria, eventually unifying the Arab civil code for all Arab states.

"If you did not stupidly insist on making excuses, worthy of kindergarten standard of intelligence, for retaining British troops on Egyptian soil, I should be a good and valuable friend, but I cannot be blamed for bitterness.⁵⁵

Across the road are the offices of the Prime Minister. Here, after avoiding Egyptians praying on mats in the corridors, I met one of the Premier's advisers, Saad Kamel Bey, doctor of civil law, who speaks faultless English and French. He belongs to the small Copt (Christian) community. What is the mystery about the heat generated at the recent meeting here of the Anglo-Egyptian Union? It seems that the 400 Egyptian members complain that "many of the 200 British always sit on one side, and will not attempt to mix; also, when the Egyptians request political lectures, the British reply, 'No, it cannot be done'."

During the premiership of Hussein Sirry Pasha in 1941, when Kamel was engaged in translating the Beveridge

report, he received a telephonic request from Smart: "This must be stopped, because it is little else than Socialist propaganda." He was then working in the Ministry of Social Affairs. Finally Sirry gave him the order for the work to stop. The translation was not finished.

Kamel has shown me tribute, that should make us a little less supercilious about Islam's contribution to world progress. The writer is the American educationalist, Professor Paul Monroe:

' At the time when Christian schools of both Eastern and Western Europe were falling into decay, the schools of Baghdad, Basra, Kufa and other Saracen cities were growing into splendid activity and great renown. While Christian Europe was enforcing as a religious belief the idea that the world was flat, the Moors were teaching geography from globes. When the Christians finally conquered the Mohammedans, they turned their astronomical observatories into belfries for want of any other use. From the Arabs came, in the tenth or eleventh century, the knowledge of Hindu notation as a substitute for the cumbersome Roman method. Knowledge of algebra, as well as of advanced mathematical processes, came from a similar source. In medicine, in surgery, in pharmacy, in astronomy, in physiology, they added much that is now considered fundamental. They explained the refraction of light, gravity, capillary attraction and twilight.'

Kamel says we have made officially, over one hundred promises to leave Egypt "soon." He has had charge of the preparation of a statement, giving chapter and verse. Here are some of his quotations:

Gladstone, in the Commons, November 14, 1882: "The British troops have been reduced to 12,000, since November 4. The occupation is only provisional and the government will decide the conditions in agreement with the Egyptian government."

Chamberlain, president of the Board of Trade, at Ashton-under-Lyne, December 19, 1882: "I shall not

waste my time dealing with the suggestion that the Government desires to maintain a perpetual protectorate over Egypt . . . Once order is established, we shall retire."

Dilke, Foreign Under Secretary, in the Commons, August 9, 1883: "The Government is opposed to the annexation of Egypt and everything that resembles that . . ."

Harcourt, Home Secretary, at Derby, April 15, 1884: "Britain has not the intention to annexe Egypt . . . that would be an unwise measure. The annexation of Cyprus has been regrettable. No annexation, no protectorate. We shall evacuate Egypt as soon as security and tranquillity are assured."

Gladstone, in the Commons, February 15, 1895: "Government is determined not to stay in the Sudan one day more than is necessary."

Gladstone, in election manifesto, September 18, 1895: "England should withdraw from Egypt as soon as British honour will permit. We will never admit that there could be any question of annexation."

Smith, First Lord of the Treasury, in Commons, December 1, 1888: "We can foresee at an early date, the evacuation of the entire Valley of the Nile."

Salisbury, Prime Minister, in the Lords, August 12, 1889: "We cannot proclaim a protectorate over Egypt, nor any intention of an effective and perpetual occupation."

Kamel is cool, calculating, destined to go a long way. Later in the afternoon I welcomed in the hotel an old friend, Rady Abousef Rady Bey, former Counsellor in the Egyptian Embassy in London, now joint Under Secretary in the Ministry of Social Affairs, and his colleague, Mohamed Kassim Bey, brother of Hussein Husny Bey, the king's principal secretary. They are proud of the efforts Egypt is making, "under the king's direct initiative and pressure," to create "Social centres" in the villages.

Impressions spread abroad that the king and royal

family do not care deeply about Egypt's intense poverty and misery meet here with derision. Last year, for instance, during an epidemic in the south, leading Cairo personages, including members of the royal family, voyaged at once, and in many cases stayed about two months, working and succouring the sick. Social workers in every village are being budgeted for, to see about cleanliness, education, child welfare, latrines, agricultural improvement, local industries, home crafts. For every unit of 10,000 people a social centre is planned, "as soon as possible."

Once during a session of the Higher Council for combating Poverty, Ignorance and Disease, with Premier Sidky presiding, the king arrived, unannounced. "I assure you," said Rady, "that His Majesty took an active, direct interest in the proceedings. His Majesty introduced his remarks with these words: 'I have come here to claim the rights of the poor to protection against poverty and disease.'³ He remained with us for forty minutes. He insists upon personal reports being made to him of the progress of the campaign, and is not satisfied with formalities. This surprise visit? On March 31 last year."

Rady showed me interesting report of the Technical Committee on Social Insurance which, in the light of Saad KamePs statement about the Beveridge paper, has this telling reference in paragraph two: 'Meanwhile, in 1943, the Beveridge plan had become known to all the world. . .' Tut, tut to the British Embassy. Rady assured me that, in the plan to ensure proper nutrition for 'all classes of the people'⁵⁵ the government had offered in 1946 no fewer than 108,000,000 meals, including 90,000,000 in rural elementary schools and 765,000 in Al Azhar University (for Moslem students) compared with a total of 66,000,000 in 1945, at a cost in 1946 of £955,198. The next budget provided for an expenditure under this heading of £1,470,000.

Popular kitchens are subsidised for the humbler classes, meals at universities are also subsidised, and works canteens are contemplated. Meals in the Ministry public

kitchens include meat and vegetables thrice weekly, bread, rice, with lentils, beans, boiled or cooked, or alternately, potatoes. "At feasts, festivals, and happy occasions, fresh fruits are offered with the ordinary meals,"⁵ says the Ministry. In the Alexandria kitchens meat is offered twice weekly, and the quantity "is a bit less although more varied. On some days fresh vegetables, such as radish, salads and fruit are offered."

By no means paradise, but at least an attempt at progress.

I must not forget here a note of appreciation of the efforts made with enthusiasm and competence by Rady who is chairman of the Technical Committee on Social Insurance, and of Kassim, to provide me with help and guidance.

Friday, April nth.

In his splendid limousine, with chauffeur dressed in good middle-class London style, I drove to see the head of the giant Misr Bank, and chairman of the Misr (Egypt) Spinning and Weaving Company, Dr. Hafez Afifi Pasha, at the head office in Sharia Mohamed Bey Farid. Former Foreign Minister, first Ambassador in London, recent envoy to the Security Council, Afifi is slow, short, stern, well built, with powerful nose, one directly focused, immobile eye. His office is richly panelled; four private secretaries, not shorthand typists, of whom there are legion, sit in the outside sanctum. Afifi, who toys lovingly with his string of beads, said frankly, "I am greatly concerned in the amelioration of the low standard of the poorer people of Egypt/' I had come to see him because of the much publicised experiments he had begun at the company's works at Mehalla el Kobra.

The factories are one of the new 'show-places' of Egypt, and accordingly I think one or two details may be of general interest. The company owns the largest textile concern in the country. Four cotton spinning mills com-

prise 143,000 spindles, four cotton weaving mills include 4,000 looms. It buys raw cotton and wool and sells it after processing as yarns or finished textiles, greys, bleached, dyed and printed, for men and women. Orders have been placed for the replacement of the extensive machinery worn out during the war in the buildings spread over 130 acres. No fewer than 300 acres are needed for the staff and workers' dwellings and houses for social gatherings. Production of cotton yarn during 1946 totalled 19,000,000 kilos and 95,000,000 yards of cotton textiles. The salaries of the 780 employees rise to £E200,000 yearly, and the wages of the 26,000 workmen total £E 1,400,000.

Afifi told me that the company has sent 15 engineers and 98 foremen abroad to study spinning and weaving, officials go abroad at intervals to learn about changes. Two schools have been established, one to combat illiteracy and the other to show modern methods of weaving.

To enable the staff and about 120 workmen's families to live inside the factory boundaries, hygienic buildings were constructed, but Mehalla is wisely notable for the workers' settlement. This accommodates over 4,000 people, occupies 67 acres, and is equipped with the latest type laundries, public baths, two schools, a clinic, maternity hospital, sports ground, fashionable restaurant, costing £E 1,200,000 towards which the government contributed a modest sum.

I think I felt impressed most when he informed me that a recreation ground for all sports has been built, that clubs exist for furthering the theatre, fencing, orchestras, hiking, brass bands, library, weight lifting, basket ball, football, tennis, swimming, scouting (about 1,000 boys enrolled).

That is industry playing its modern role, work by the side of social development.

Afifi said, "The only way to provide a decent standard of living for our people is to raise considerably the products of the country." He stresses industrialisation, as did his successor in London's Embassy, Nachat. Afifi is managing director of the bank and also head of several affiliate companies that control cinemas and other leading

concerns.

The gentlemen in the yard behind the bank manoeuvred the giant limousine; it faced the road, and I was on my way to Abdin Palace, to see the director of the Royal Cabinet, an influential figure in Egypt, for the King takes an active continuous part in government.

It being a Friday, the local Sunday, the officers of the guard looked incredulously when I asked to see Ibrahim Abdul Hady Pasha.* "But His Excellency is not here today," they said firmly.

Hady had generously come into the palace, specially for my convenience, although it was the day of rest. What sort of experience has Hady of governing? He told me he had held the portfolios of trade, public works, health, foreign affairs (under Sidky Pasha, in 1946), finance, justice. I am not sure this collection does not fit an obviously able man the better to carry out the work of a highly skilled shadow Premier, as he is now. (Nachat Pasha held the post with King Fuad when aged about 30 or 32, but his irony roused the ire of Killearn's predecessor, the then British High Commissioner).

As a student of law Hady was attracted to the Nationalist movement of Zaghloul Pasha in 1919 and became university delegate to the conferences. Many of his friends were sent to prison for four years when Zaghloul won his way to power. For some time Hady became chief legal consultant to the Bank Misr and subsequently entered Parliament as a Wafdist deputy. He remained one of the close associates of Zaghloul, who vainly appealed to the British Labour Government of 1924 for amelioration of the conditions of the treaty under which the British Protectorate was ended, and Egypt became independent in 1922. In 1938 he was re-elected for his native Zarka, where relatives and ancestors lived and his property was situated.

During the period when Nahas Pasha was Premier, in 1942, the king heard privately of the outbreak on a grim

* Premier of Egypt from 1948 until the middle of 1949.

scale of malaria, ravaging Assuam, Kena, Girga and Asute. About 300,000 died, "As we were under martial law, the people could not publish anything, and as a result, the king knew nothing for a long while."⁵ There was a recurrence of the outbreak. "Suddenly, on May 19, 1944, the king left Cairo and appeared in the middle of the plague spots. Then everything was revealed."

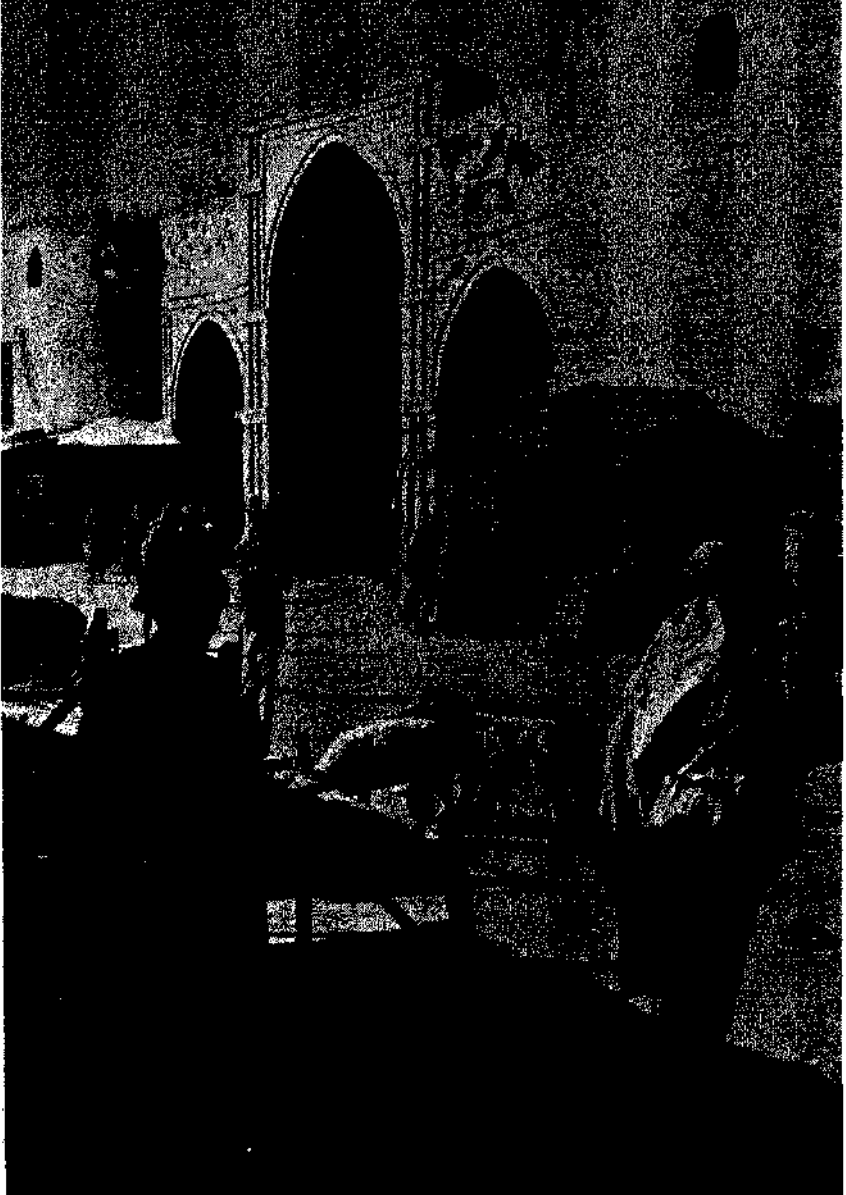
Hady, slim, neat, well-dressed, spoke revealingly in a slow, sad, soothing voice, of the calibre of officials recently sent to Egypt by Great Britain, the land that gave birth to Milner and Cromer. He detailed allegations about certain people made here during the war, and it cannot be denied that he must have had access to top secret files.

I should feel happier if we had the courage to send a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the charges.

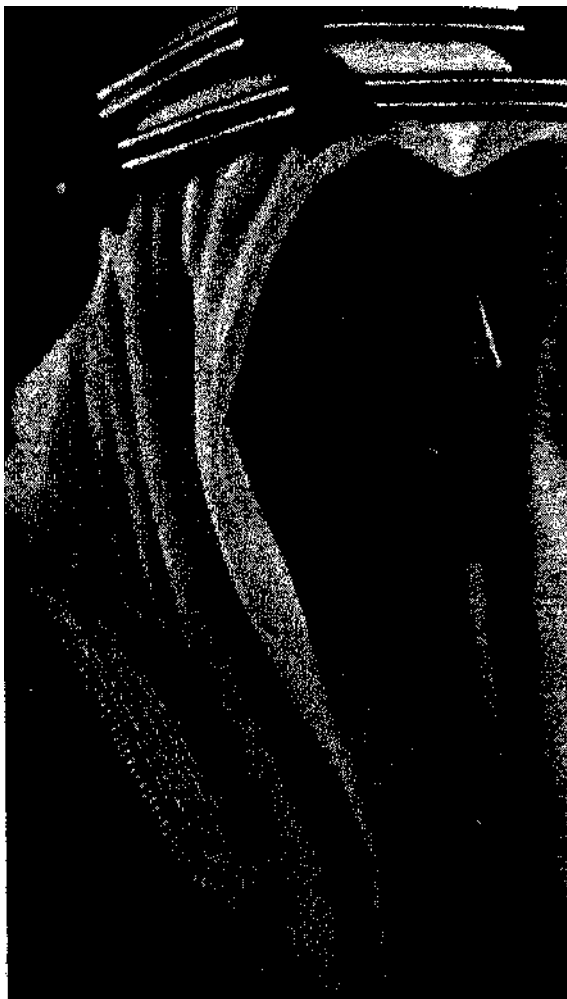
We dealt with the future of the Sudan and he said, with telling logic, "You tell us that you are determined now on protecting the right of the Sudanese to self-government. We asked you, during the recent Anglo-Egyptian negotiations, 'When do you think the Sudan will be fit for self-governemnt?' You replied, 'In about 40 or 50 years.' We then said, 'Should we trouble ourselves so much with difficulties that we cannot now resolve; should we not deal with troubles that stand in the way and can be resolved now?' To that the British gave no answer during the conversations. We said, 'Could any British statesman have said six months beforehand, that Britain would be so generous to India and give her self-government?'⁵ The British replied, 'No.' "

Hady pondered for a moment and added, "We want to face a new future in the Sudan with a new idea: let us not tie ourselves up with anger."⁵⁵

He is impressed with the fact that he, a landowner, who knows the lives of the fellaheen, who is not a 'grand seigneur'⁵ of Cairo, should be chosen by the king for this high post. If he thought the king desired a 'grand seigneur' for the office, he would have requested permission to refuse.



JEDDAI EXTERIOR OF MECCA GATE



H.R.H. THE CROWN PRINCE OF SAUDI ARABIA

We spoke with exceptional frankness of men and matters. Hady said as I left, "Tell the story as you wish."⁵⁵ There were no fearful requests for this or that to be toned down or for anything to be shown to him before publication. I liked Hady's passion-less passion, appreciated his judiciously judicious respect for a shorthand note.

Impressions tonight? How carefully we should 'sift' our representatives at the lower strata, who may be more important in creating or destroying goodwill than £11,400 a year heads of missions.

All day preparing for departure early tomorrow, for Arabia.

Saturday, April 12th.

It is nearly eleven o'clock as I type this diary in mountainous Ta'if, in the breakfast room of the house for guests of the King of Saudi Arabia. The outer doors are being slowly, silently, locked by various servants, barefooted, heads covered with handkerchiefs, in white clothes, mostly long robes. And it is one of the days of my life that I find it painfully difficult to record. For I seem to have stepped suddenly into a tale of the yesterdays that I could not have credited had it been related to me, a picture I could not fully dream. Have I turned the pages of history books, and achieved the miracle of seeing the pages stop perhaps a thousand or more years ago?

The metamorphosis has been achieved inside a few hours, thanks to the wonders of aircraft. At two o'clock this morning I was awakened at Shepherds by a night watchman who brought an excellent breakfast, omelette, orange juice, orange and banana, with tea and plenty of sugar. By three o'clock I had surmounted the horrors of packing. At three-fifteen I registered my outgoing letters downstairs in the night receptionists⁵ office, and heard the friendly Sudanese, Hussein, telling me why he looked so tired. All day he had not had a wink of sleep, because his fifteen-days⁵ old son is ill. Both he and his wife were proud

of the fourth arrival, after a lapse of eleven years, so he had taken the boy forward and backward to the doctors.

Sheik Hafiz and I waited in the hotel lounge for the Saudi Arabian agent, who has our passports, while the staff were busy washing floors and cleaning. There being no sign of him at 3.45 we drove off to the Farouk I aerodrome. By the stillness we could tell there were no cars on the streets. A few shops remained open for the sale of cigarettes, matches, sweetmeats. Gangs in prison clothes marched by, dealing with the night soil, led by men with bright lamps. Stars were still above us and the half moon illuminated the attractive, almost deserted, roads. In twenty minutes we came upon the desert, sheer emptiness on either side, and then passed the places with which, principally during the war years, Britons⁵ names are linked. At the airport dozens of weirdly over-dressed people travelling by Transatlantic four engine liners, were standing about, the women in exaggerated make-up and lipstick, even at four-thirty in the morning. In a few minutes, with a minimum amount of fuss, the (American) pilots and crew of the (American) Dakota, bearing on its fuselage the sword, national emblem of Saudi Arabia, had us in our seats. Americans, engineers, oil experts and others, followed the Sheik, also Richard R. Stokes, M.P., the Roman Catholic chairman and managing director of the £1,706,312 engineering firm of Ransomes and Rapier, who sits as a Socialist for Ipswich, and his friend, Sir Alexander Keown-Boyd. K.B. lost his appointment of Director General, European Department, Ministry of the Interior, head of public security, under a special clause in the Anglo-Egyptian treaty alliance of 1936, but has remained as a business director in Egypt ever since, Stokes, whose second Christian name is Rapier, once played for the Harlequins. K.B. who did so for St. John's, Oxford, has spent forty years in the Middle East, first in the Sudan, and apparently speaks fair Arabic. The Sheik's party also included the Grand Mufti's cousin, now principal figure in Palestine Arab circles, sharp-eyed, bitter

Jemal al Husseini Bey, who wasted 1939-45 as our favoured political prisoner in a convent in Salisbury, Rhodesia, and ill-at-ease, ailing Abdul Rahman Seddigi, former mayor of Calcutta, keen admirer of Jinnah. Jemal speaks English as flawlessly as does Seddigi; both revisited Britain recently. Jemal said seriously, "Jewish influence enabled the Ritz, where I stayed during your 'freeze-up,' to produce better heating than most of the other, expensive, West-End hotels."

Stokes who dressed sensibly in the warm aircraft, presented me with the Hansard text of his speech* in Parliament on February 25, when he warmly supported the Arab case over Palestine. He carried many copies of address in which he said, "People do not realise that the Balfour Declaration was only a sentence embodied in a long letter from Mr. Balfour to Lord Rothschild." Said (to me) it was a mistake to hold the forthcoming youth conference in Prague because of the strong Communist atmosphere there. He announced that he has 'landed'⁵ a £1,000,000 contract for his firm, four £250,000 excavators, to produce coal in the Sudeten areas. The Czechs, says

If Stokes will go to the British Museum he will find a copy of 'Changing Opinions,' (Methuen, 1938) in which I cite the Balfour letter on page 238. The communication comprises three paragraphs, and reads:

"I have much pleasure in conveying to you on behalf of His Majesty's Government the following declaration of sympathy with the Jewish Zionist aspirations, which has been submitted to and approved by the Cabinet:—'His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their utmost endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country,'

"I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation/'

That scarcely suggests a long letter, to normal folk using normal standards.

Stokes, have been "unreasonable" by expelling the Germans, and he had recently "popped down" to the Suez Canal Zone to see how the German P.O.W.'s were faring. He has a forthright manner on subjects on which he feels acutely.

We rose over the pitch black aerodrome at five o'clock, and by seven-twenty had descended at Luxor. I gladly slept most of the time, having had only fifty minutes' rest before being called. At Luxor, the stop was too brief for me to explore the archaeological wonders. American oil experts spoke while the machine was being refuelled. They warned me of "The bedbugs that will swarm in Jedda," and of the need for buying citronade to stop mosquitoes from assaulting the newcomer.

We rose again at eight and came down at Jedda precisely at eleven. As we circled over the Red Sea port, we could see square tall buildings. And then came into view a number of American limousines, Pontiacs and others of that kind of standard. All slightly disappointing. For it was too much.

As I write I see a number of Arab servants going down the splendid garden paths to the main entrance, with a large 'storm' lamp. Illogically, the brightness of the lamp makes me aware of the distance from cold, old, England. I sense vivid, vital glamour, too intangible to 'contain'⁵ in a sentence.

What is so alluring about Arabia? Is it perhaps the knowledge that only a few white men have visited the heart of the peninsula? That the dried vastnesses could reveal the true drama of the passing of many, including Jewish, civilisations a thousand years before current Western traditions strutted across the world stage? For me there is little or no delight on landing in Bombay or Calcutta, for I am conscious, first and foremost, of the backwardness, or negligence, or both, of those responsible for life among the millions. The wide starvation, cruel homelessness, constant stench and squalid poverty in India are a brutal, audible, if unspoken, indictment of

myopic hypocrites who write and speak of the 'appeal' of the Orient. Doubtless free India and Pakistan, or united India, will change the horrible scenes that greeted me when last I stepped on Indian soil, I felt then as embarrassed as I always do when travelling to our leading ports, from Waterloo or Liverpool Street, or from those hotbeds of decadence and penury, Paddington and King's Cross. Do these sordid pictures not proclaim, long ahead, the collapse of so-called Western civilisation?

Arabia, I had better note for the uninitiated, is about five times the area of the British Isles, has population of five million. In 1932 King Ibn Saud proclaimed the union of the two regions he had conquered, Hejaz and Nejd. At Jedda, port of the Hejaz, hundreds of thousands of Moslem pilgrims from all parts of the world land on their visit to cities sacred to four hundred million souls, Mecca and Medina, birthplace and resting ground of the Prophet. Jedda also claims to be the resting place of Eve, 'mother of mankind.' Here are situated the nine or ten foreign diplomatic missions to Saudi Arabia, since infidels are forbidden access to Islam's most important centres, Mecca and Medina, and the Arabian capital, Riyadh, seven hundred miles inland, is kept tolerably clear of foreigners, term which includes the welcome American oil and agriculture specialists.

One political item about the port: Twenty years ago we signed the treaty of Jedda, under which we undertook to recognise Ibn Saud's independence, but left undecided the future of Akaba and Maon, strips claimed by Ibn Saud. Later the towns were included in Transjordan, the kingdom of Emir Abdullah, which covers 25,000 square miles and has a population of about 400,000. (He became a king and ally following the treaty signed with us in March, 1946). Akaba and Maon are now again wanted by Ibn Saud.

Representatives of the Saudi Arabian government greeted the passengers as we descended at Jedda airport which seemed at first a patch with a few houses and

buildings in the middle of a limitless desert. I noted the spontaneous gladness of many Arabs at the return home of Sheik Hafiz. Business friends, in their grand clothes, were kissing him lightly on the cheeks. Restraints over expression of happiness seemed wholly different from those we see in the West.

I expected ancient motor cars to take us to our destination, the Government's 'Rest House.' Instead, I found 1947 Lincoln Zephyrs capable of racing at fifty miles an hour, four cars in a Une, along an unmade "track" of fairly hard sand. The sky was blue, lacked a cloud. I found myself waving to the young man in white robes who had taken my passport, and who had assured me that "all" my luggage (both suit cases) had been entrusted to the driver of the car to whom I had also handed the portable writing machine. Before the party had driven a mile, several unusually large, new, limousines crossed the horizon. The occupants, looking for all the world like stars in a film, stood up, their loose, light Arab clothes waving in the breeze, and welcomed us in—in faultless English. They were the local poobahs, bankers, merchants, pilgrim brokers, the Alireza brothers. I commend the "talent scouts" of British films to take their cameras to Jedda for screen tests of these startlingly handsome and imposing young men as Valentino's successors.

As we drove past the ancient wooden homes, high and low, with coloured doors with lattice work in the place of windows, Jedda seemed a page out of the Bible. It suggested our invasion, a thousand or fifteen hundred years ago, of a land which had stood, unaltered, ever since. In the guest house we sat in a richly, warmly furnished room, with all the blinds drawn. Despite the great heat there was much discussion by Stokes of the recent peregrinations of the Anglo-American Palestine Commission. Finally he decided, with the Sheik's help, to telegraph a protest to someone.

Then I welcomed a local celebrity. Abdul Kader Muhtasib told me he has been post-master of Jedda for 20

years and is 43, He was puzzled at my expression of surprise and repeated that Jedda has two postal deliveries a day. The internal daily mail consists of about 8,000 letters. Yes, they have registered letters, and a telegraph office. The head office opens at seven, closes at sunset, with a break of an hour in the middle of the day. The post office is open on Friday. The officials' work becomes "enormous" when the pilgrims arrive.

He explained how representatives of the pilgrims descend from all parts of the world to organise the Holy trips. Many people notably from Malaya and from Java spend six months on the journey; some take over four years to cross Africa on foot. Pilgrims had told him of seven years spent travelling from the Sudan. "They earned their living on the way," he added.

Into the room now stepped a curiously-domed Lebanese, who studied at the American University of Beirut, Fuad Hamza. He is to be King Ibn Saud's Minister of State for Development, and has served Saudi Arabia in Paris. He shocked me by casually taking off his skull cap and, incongruously in Arabia, smoking a fat cigar. In Arab regalia he looked, until then, as imposing as do most Arabs, but with a shiny top, he suffered by seeming neither oriental nor occidental.

Fuad told me, "Saudi Arabia lacks water, but, in October this year considerable quantities will be available, thanks to British technical skill. The water will have to be carried 45 kilometres from natural springs. We used to drink distilled water which was sea water, or, from cisterns," he added. "On this side of the sea there is no fresh water. We have drilled, without success, as deep as 100 feet. Wherever you turn, in this land, you will discover we lack water. Before the present regime came into being, the supply was rationed. A London group has arranged for tapping the water.

"We have widespread legislation, for protecting labour, and we have now a 48-hour week. Our people do not work on Fridays, always have the day off."

Luncheon was my first experience of Arabian hospitality. It was served in a plain room at a long white table, which was under the concentrated, relentless attack of a large number of buzzing flies. The waiters, barefooted Sudanese, were perhaps overwhelmed by the solemnity of the occasion. We faced six meat courses, including veal, lamb, kidneys, beef, any one of which would have been considered a full-dress meal in London. But, the capital of the United Kingdom, if united it be, seemed now painfully far away. I began to use the comical-looking, but serviceable, fly-swisher I had brought from Egypt, but local flies are too skilled to risk direct action. They seem to enjoy testing their wits against man, and, on this occasion, approved most the endless salty perspiration on the foreheads of the guests; the succulent food; dozens of plates filled with known and mysterious vegetables, even bread, made from seemingly unleavened dough. We battled with the heat, drank orange juice, and battled with the heat.

My notions about minimum essentials in plumbing suffered swiftly in the tiny bathroom adjoining one of the bedrooms. About the bathroom there hung a moist air one associates with temporary shacks in the tropics. As I passed towards the delicately secured door of the bathroom I observed gentlemen in the kitchen being assisted by several little boys who performed the culinary arts on the floor. The sight, sound, of sizzle in the frying pans, on a hot day, had instant effects. I felt little appetite and less desire to eat. But the bathroom, with broken taps and broken, or, missing woodwork, with towels that had to be hung on a rusty nail, was a warning. All around the country there is a generous heart, yet, in the first minutes, a decadent, soft Westerner experiences here, his sense of well-being and well-doing is shattered with harshness.

My smugness when travelling round Europe was destroyed in seconds. For here none of the European languages was of use. One language is spoken, Arabic, the common tongue of 40 millions. Across the luncheon table, fortunately, there was occasional English, and then I heard

spleadid French from the diplomatist and poet who works in the Foreign Office in Jedda under the Emir Feisal, Khair El Din Zirikli. He was formerly political adviser at the Saudi Arabian Legation in Cairo, and his books describe with rare sensitivity travels around Amman.

After the festive luncheon, Sheik Hafiz greeted another visitor and friend from the days, during the battle before Holy Mecca, when both watched by the side of King Ibn Saud, If colourful shoes were made for men, Sheik Abdullah al Suleiman, Finance Minister, was made for colourful leather sandals. His head was covered in rare white and gold finery. His body was wrapped in splendid silks which, however, did not annoy by rustling, like the rustling of an insensitive woman's nail across her stockings. The coolness induced by watching his flowing dress in this outpost of heat and dust, unrelieved by any electric fan, made my European clothes seem foolish and feel doubly thick.

Abdullah, with wizened face, taut about the jaw bones, smiled kindly as his grey, bearded, biblical features relaxed. He spoke replies to my questions through an interpreter.

"First, I am anxious as Minister of Finance, to increase the resources of this country. Secondly, I am eager, after the war, to reconstruct. The war stopped everything. We want to build the railways and airports and water in Jedda and we wonder what is the first, the most important, to begin. Three schemes are in hand. The railway from Ras Tannura to Riyadh; will cost 20 million dollars, and take two years to build. The ground is flat. Americans are building the railway, an English company has a £250,000 contract for providing water in Jedda."

As we spoke a tall barefooted guard, carrying a revolver, came up with a letter. He was a Negro type. I noted meekness on the gentle, unsmiling face, as he stood patiently waiting for a reply.

Sheik Abdullah tells me he goes to see King Ibn Saud fairly frequently, and sometimes stays in Riyadh for several

weeks. This year the authorities anticipate about 130,000 pilgrims, including 60,000 from the Nejd and the Yemen. The pilgrims pay duty for quarantine and, or, health on an average £2 a person. Other Arabian income consists of 5/-, in gold coin dollars,* paid on every ton of oil raided in the kingdom. Production is going up.

Sheik Abdullah has been Minister of Finance for 23 years. He recalled that, five days before Ibn Saud entered Mecca, he and Sheik Hafiz had marched into the city. Last year Sheik Abdullah spent most of his time in Mecca, this year mostly in Jedda.

"What gives me the greatest pleasure as I look back on these 23 years? The last 10 years, because the resources of our country have been increased and we may be able to do something."

No, he has not yet been to Great Britain but, "of course he has been to America."

About the hawk-like features there hangs an air of enviable resolution, coupled with the eternal evidence of experience of really harsh days gone by. Abdullah has known, in this stubbornly conquered State, the harshnesses as well as uncertainties.

Palestine and Arab impatience with the British, to say little about the annoyance with the "meddlesome"⁵⁵ Americans, were a major post-prandial menu. But ciolism is not one of my (many) frailties.

On the verandah I studied the unhurried scene below me. There was no difficulty whatever in realising as four o'clock approached, and the heat became less unbearable, that I was indeed thousands of miles from London. But, as I watched donkeys, camels, noisy trucks and out of place limousines, I reflected that here was to be seen a warning to our entheastic civilisation. The self-assurance we take as part of our lives is meaningless, if we take the trouble to remembdfr that thousands of years ago on these dust-cursed roads, by these fly-infested lanes, there

This year, 1949, the income is expected to be £5,000,000 in gold coin, bought by the company in South America.

flourished civilisations as advanced, as apt, and, as alluringly seductive as any of our era.

As I breathed sand shaken off their sandals by some of the humblest looking creatures I have met, I wondered what would happen if the stupidities of so-called statesmen in the West, and the East, persisted sufficiently long for Europe to be struck artificially, blows of the kind that enabled Nature to turn Arabia into a wilderness.

But what lesson in history is so obvious as that none learns from history?

Friendly waiters saw us down to the battery of limousines. We drove to the luxurious, indigenous-looking house occupied by the modest-sized British Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to King Ibn Saud, Mr. (since June this year Sir) Lawrence Grafftey-Smith. Smith told me he was born in Dorset at his grandfather's house, a vicarage. From Repton he went to pick up the languages necessary for the Levant consular service, and arrived here on Christmas Eve, 1920. On landing at Jedda, he had a meal with "all the Europeans," numbering eleven. "In those days, none was permitted to go beyond the city boundaries. Now I can travel almost where I choose, provided I do not go beyond stones marking the approaches to Mecca and to Medina."

He spent many years in Egypt or in this corner of the world. Smith is not inclined, in my judgment, to fear enough the advance of the competitive United States of America, and our restless retreat* * Thus when we spoke of

* Since the above was written I have studied the important and authoritative observations on the delicate relations between Great Britain, the United States and Saudi Arabia in "The Memoirs of Cordell Hull" (New York, 1948).

In July, 1941, Ibn Saud, suffering financial difficulties owing to the war-time curtailment of pilgrim traffic to Mecca and Medina, asked for a credit of £2,200,000 from the U.S.A. The British Government having recommended payment of cash and goods subsidies, "the President felt also that there was more reason for the British, in their greater strategic and political interests in the Near East, to attend to Ibn Saud's financial

the complete Americanisation of everything in Arabia, he suggested deprecatingly that it "does not really matter so much as all that because . ." American Mrs. Smith, alert, with intelligent eyes, greying-haired, whom he married a few months ago, supervised the serving of cool drinks from a spotless refrigerator. This seemed, at the moment, the height of luxury and desirability.

And then, with mixed thoughts, I went back to the rest house.

About tea time I was too hot to want any drink, and returned to the aerodrome. We now entered a transport

needs." In May, 1942, the Americans opened a Legation and in 1943 decided Saudi Arabia eligible for Lend-Lease assistance.

On October 3, 1943, America agreed to loan 5,000,000 ounces of silver to Arabia, an American military mission visited the country at Ibn Saud's invitation to survey his military requirements, and, in the spring of 1944 a small U.S. military mission went out.

"Rivalry with Britain in Saudi Arabia sharply disturbed us in the first half of 1944," says Cordeli Hull. In March and April reports reached him of "increasing British activity in Saudi Arabia potentially prejudicial to American interests." He felt "there was no blinking the fact that they had at Jedda an over-zealous Minister, S. R. Jordan, who was working in numerous ways to supplant American interest in Saudi Arabia by British interests. Britain had been subsidising Ibn Saud for several years, and Minister Jordan was making full use of the fact, to exalt British prestige by lowering our own." The U.S. Minister, Mr. James S. Moose, Jr., reported to Cordeli Hull that Jordan had persuaded Ibn Saud to remove certain key officials known to be friendly to the United States, and to agree to appoint a British economic adviser and possibly a British petroleum adviser. Jordan, he alleged, had, without consulting him, arranged for road work to be undertaken by the British military, although Major General Ralph Royce had in December, 1943, secured a promise from Ibn Saud to survey two military roads for construction under the United States military forces. In 1944 Britain was going to subsidise Ibn Saud with about \$12,000,000. On June 26, 1944, Cordeli Hull called Lord Halifax to tell him "that our officials were convinced beyond peradventure of doubt that Jordan was doing his level best to injure the United States' good relations with Ibn Saud, and was endeavouring in other ways to undermine our position in Saudi Arabia, and that, we just could

Dakota, and sat crowded round an upturned motor truck. Passing within sight of Holy Mecca, we came down near Ta'if, which spoken by Arabs has an attractive lilting, caressing sound. Ta'if is true to its sound. For the first time in Arabia we saw green grass at last, large green patches.

I witnessed more affectionate embraces. The Arabs make only a suggestion of a kiss on either cheek. There to greet us was Sheik Ibrahim, head of the cabinet of the viceroy of the Hejaz, the Emir Feisal, second son of the King Ibn Saud, also other notables. While soldiers with rifles, and others with enormous, sheathed knives stood guard over the entrance to the aircraft, I photographed the scene. The soldiers with long hair visible under the romantic, Arab, headgear, looked like men of another era. But there was no mistaking their dignity, no mistaking the meaning of unflinching, jet black eyes.

Three cars, with Arab chauffeurs, raced skilfully again at fifty and sixty miles an hour. We drove throughout over sand, and often I pitied the springs. In fifteen miles we did not see a dog, cat, camel. Then a solitary garden came into view, with a few goats, and Arabs in the far distance. Most of the way we could see a telegraph line, held up here and there by a thin, wooden, stick. The sun was sliding down to rest on our right, and as night crept in, we passed the first homes in the mountain resort of Ta'if, five thousand feet up. We were glad, though the ride was comfortable, to step out, for over the dangerous, sharp-not put up with these activities without making constant and louder complaints to the British Government." Following other telegrams from the United States Minister in Arabia, "we informed the British Embassy that the continuance of Mr. Jordan in Saudi Arabia was unacceptable so far as we were concerned. Eventually, some time after my resignation, Jordan was transferred."

In fact, Mr. Jordan was unemployed by the Foreign Office for a year, and then went to Palestine as Trade Commissioner.

Concern was later expressed by Mr. Churchill and President Roosevelt about their aims and intentions over Arabian oil. In August, 1944, after many long conferences, an Anglo-American agreement was signed.

peaked crags, thousands of feet high, the aircraft had lurched like a launch in a rough sea. I was glad to welcome signs of the new Arabia I was to meet for the first time. I passed houses, mostly of one storey; I saw barracks, low built, for the troops near the headquarters of the army of Saudi Arabia. I passed soldiers, standing guard over buildings that looked like stores, rifles at the slope or ready. Other soldiers walked about, carrying knives and revolvers.

Now and then I noted a few civilian men. But the streets were unlit, and only here and there could I see any sign of life. Shadows fell over the corners, silhouetting soldiers with rifles, and, again, with knives. None of the houses that I found as I came near had a window, only lattice work. I had had notions of streets being paved, throughout the world, but, in Ta'if, as in Jedda, I saw them of hardened sand.

Suddenly we came to a long wall, fairly high, spotlessly white. The cars all stopped and men, with white turbans, hurried from the main wooden gates, and shone vast torches and lamps before us. Men came out, there were low conversations, in keeping with uncertain stillness of the mysterious night, the dazzling blue, star-lit sky. We were bidden to enter, walked a narrow path through the garden of roses, and pink local flowers, and artificial ponds, towards a wide, U-shaped room. The setting was startling, and, for a moment, we were silenced. The walls were painted light green. Round the entire room I saw silk brocade seats, as if prepared for a dance. The padding was thick, the silk came down to the floor, flush with the carpets, immense, thick, rich, colourful but not exotic. About them was a design of pretty weaving and luxuriance. The room seemed as unreal as a page out of Crusoe in a village dance hall in Devon. Perhaps the majesty of the occasion was heightened by the whispering voices of the Arabs, greeting one another and then us, by the tiptoeing servants, by the quiet orders of the various court officials to the staff, the consultations about our future movements. I sat down and watched the Viceroy's principal adviser,

Sheik Ibrahim el Suleiman, handsome, tall, a Nejdi, whose jet black, sparkling eyes revealed the unusualness of his jovial personality. Soon I heard a ring on the neat (Ericsson) telephone, and Sheik Ibrahim replied. Nothing about the drawing room, a picture out of someone's absurd creation, was in keeping with a telephone, much as I love (and hate) the telephone. Then Sheik Hafiz spoke, and I gathered the viceroy was sending a message of welcome and an invitation for dinner. When would it be suitable to have a meal? If I had been asked to decide for myself, I should have said a bowl of fruit, fresh or tinned, and sour milk would be admirable, because the luncheon had been so long, the courses so unlike the quantities to which even a favoured diner out is accustomed in London's select West-End. I changed, and shortly afterwards the new limousines collected us for the dinner party.

Officers of the guard saluted, and the soldiers, smart in an Oriental, distinctly their own, fashion, presented arms. Courtiers were on either side. The Emir Feisal stood at the end of the series of drawing-rooms. Greeting his visitors, he smilingly, silently shook hands. The alert, lively face is of remarkable, pointed shape. The Emir began to do his best to put us at our ease. In any other setting in Europe the task would have been light, but the sudden transformation was too much, and the stiffness persisted. The furnishings in the room were similar to those in the guests' reception room, but here were also luscious damasks hanging on the walls. As the conversation went on, two swarthy men took up positions on the floor near the edge of the salon, clutching unusual silver swords sheathed in silver scabbards. Behind sat, or stood, numbers of attractive-featured men, tall, slim, turbaned, or in garb similar to that of the Emir. He wears on his head an ogal consisting of four gold rings, unlike his brother, the Emir Mansour, fifth son of the king, at 28, Minister of Defence for the kingdom. Mansour had two rings.

After the ceremony of sipping coffee, the quantity poured is equivalent to a teaspoon and the handleless cup

is uniformly an inch and a half high, the host pointed to the only door, into the brightly illuminated garden. There were endless electric bulbs among the young trees and on the well made stone path. At the sides were clusters of rose trees and beds of strange flowers of every colour. The Prince was at ease and walked with the grace that seems to be so simple for the tall Arabs of long lineage. And then, deferentially, he called to Sheik Hafiz, "Come, father, tell us where to sit." The Sheik, who taught the Emir about government twenty-two or three years ago, did the placing. We were eleven. The table was covered with a hand-woven silk cloth, bearing the royal arms in green colours. The trees, planted methodically and neatly, formed a perfect circle in this oasis thousands of feet above sea level. Service, worthy of host, followed from turbaned, bare-footed waiters. Two guards, with sheathed sabres, stood just behind the host. They had one unrehearsed major task during the eight-course meal, soup, various kinds of meat with vegetables and well cooked rice, also schnitzel, and at the end, a superb sweet with cream and fruit. An outsize black flying beetle landed near one of the visiting guests, then moved a few inches to rest in front of the royal host's bread plate. The swifter of the guards pounced on the wretch, and it flew off into the trees, for a moment disturbing a yellow and white cat that seemed to spend part of the evening near us, chasing an invisible quarry.

I studied with fascination the face of the Emir, as he spoke freely on Palestine and at length, in a studiously quiet, but not unemotional voice. The Emir said that he had listened to Mr. Bevin, whom he trusted and respected. The Briton seemed willing, and perhaps eager, to do what the Arabs thought right, but, appeared to be held back, tied, as Jemal had said (in a piece of brilliant interpreting, into mellifluous, sensitive, idiomatic English). Now and then the Emir added a phrase or a few words in surprisingly accentless English. "I told Mr. Bevin frankly that, the Arabs were being exhausted, their patience was only of a specific duration, and, when the reprisals took place



SCENE NEAR CROWN PRINCE^ OFFICES IN RIYADH



THE ONLY WOMEN THE AUTHOR SAW IN RIYADH

against terrorism, it was uncertain and unsafe to say where the wave of revenge would end." To make sure we were under no illusion, the Emir deliberately repeated the words, and Jemal gave the sentence again.

More thoughts on Palestine, principally the terrorists, who, they alleged, "include most Zionists and almost as many non-Zionists," came from the two Moslem visitors. Jemal announced that Britain was being as naughty as America, for it was a "fact that ninety-five per cent of Unrra officials were Jews." Was that not proof that Unrra help came only for one people in Europe? Generous words about the pro-Arab tendencies of Mr. Bevin, spoken by Stokes, produced a hissing, withering reproof from Seddigi.

"At the end of the latest conference on Palestine I went up to Mr. Bevin at a reception, and said, 'I would like two minutes with you, Mr. Bevin, for a specially important talk. Please will you give me two minutes some time?'⁵ Mr. Bevin turned and said, 'I will give them to you with pleasure.' I spoke to his private secretary by telephone, and he arranged an appointment. Then they rang up, and said they were sorry, but the Minister had so much to do that he could not possibly spare the time, with Moscow coming, and so forth." So much for Mr. Bevin: the assembly agreed that, if he was not always so warm, he was "far, far better than Mr. Creech Jones," who was "horribly pro-Zionist" from the start and all through. That statesman being far too busy also, Seddigi was "permitted to cast my countenance briefly" on a gentleman named Bottomley.

The Emir said he agreed with every word of my (less emotional, less partisan) summing up of the past, but, he asked me what had prevented Britain's giving Arab status to Palestine between the wars, before we became indebted again to the Americans? I said, "Promises of Palestine could not be abrogated for one side."

Could I then pursue the subject, explain the bankruptcy of British "statesmanship" in the tragic years of Mac-

Donald, Baldwin, and Chamberlain? When they were childish, uninformed and incompetent, incapable of steering a toy boat in Hyde Park's Serpentine, let alone the ship of the British Empire? Now the stage was filled with less involved arguments about the Indian's experiences in London in the freeze-up. He also said, "I am not so sure about Bevin's honesty at the Conference, or his purpose."

Out in the garden again, I congratulated the Emir on its planning. A Ta'if bedouin, he told me, had planned, laid out, the beds. We studied the stars above us and then I heard the shrill cry of a boy, the youngest son aged five. "He will not go to bed till he has seen me," the Emir explained. I spoke of the delicate flowers on the table and his Highness stepped on one of the beds to pick a rose. But his head-dress became entangled and he said several words in Arabic. Jemal translated, I think diplomatically rather than literally, "There are no roses without thorns." The Emir showed me the lovely specimen. It has a delicate hue but does not give off a strong scent. He said that for two years they had been troubled by a pest that attacked the edges of the bloom. So far they had not been able to solve the problem. He showed me a larger specimen, white and with a richer scent, declared that this too had been attacked, and he was now hoping that an expert sent from Kew Gardens would be able to advise on action. The roses he had shown me were of the kind used for extraction of scent.

Above the stars were playing; below, I kept on remembering Jemal's candid words at the meal, "Because I do my best to keep the Palestine Arabs calm, my people call me a traitor, say I am a British agent. U.N. is nothing but an American affair to help the Jews of Europe."

I had mentioned a wish to see the head of the British Military Mission in Saudi Arabia, who is quartered near Ta'if. The telephone wires were busy, and we now left the Emir Feisal, and the Emir Mansour.

We drove slowly through the stilled, lifeless, empty town

of whom could not hope to see anything of it, were present. For our soldiers there was no social life whatever, they did not "mix," and so he insisted on their having good food and reasonable conditions.

To bed at 3.0 a.m.

Sunday, April 13th.

Britons, Saudi Arabian, Palestinian and the Indian took it in turns to wash in primitive bathroom in Ta'if. Shortly after dawn I assaulted a colossal breakfast, of cheese and quantities of poached eggs, tinned fruit and good tea. We waited patiently for news by telephone of the arrival at Ta'if aerodrome of a comfortable Dakota of the royal fleet. Sheik Hafiz explained that the king felt we could not travel five hours in the transport machine that had brought us from Jedda yesterday. Accordingly, the king was sending another aircraft.

By day Ta'if looked as incongruous as last night. Boys, seemingly of 10 or 11, worked on a large house opposite the entrance to the royal guest quarters. In our garden men were tending flowers, giving the scene a touch of splendour in contrast with the frightening dust and rising sand all round this precious oasis.

Sheik Ibrahim, Jemal, Seddigi and I shared one car to the aerodrome. Seddigi still complained of the noise made last night by fellow guests. He grumbled that he had not been able to sleep because the wondrous spell had been broken at midnight. But then I did not attach too much significance to his worries, because I knew that he was not well and moaned often. Jemal spoke interestingly of the new hospital and new schools he had just visited, making me envious.

We rose from the desert runway, and, in a few minutes just avoided crossing over Holy Mecca. But observation from the aircraft was impossible, because of the great, wearying heat, despite the fact that we were up eight or nine thousand feet. I had hoped to rest, but sleep *seemed*

almost unthinkable. Fortunately nature was kind. Suddenly, as if only an hour had gone instead of five, I woke to learn we were racing down to the strip a few miles outside the inaccessible, romantic new capital, Riyadh.

For a moment I bustled. The mind becomes attuned by continual travel to the unnatural sequels of disembarkation, passports, currency and health tickets, the blue book with its foolish stamps, called visas. (My visa for Saudi Arabia, which they say is more difficult to secure than almost any in the world, had been overlooked in London, was formally stamped at the last minute in the Legation in Cairo.)

There is limited surprise, increasingly less sense of expectation in the cities of Europe, for they are sadly more and more alike. But there was deep suspense as the aircraft gently touched the hot patch, and taxied across to enormous, boiling hot, sheds, for the sun keeps its perpetual, ruthless guard on the tin roof.

Here, indeed, was a new old world, one that in all my travels I had not yet imagined or seen. Here was a world filled with, to me, the draw of the unknown. The barrenness of the aerodrome, the modest buildings; the contrast provided by the splendid appearance of graceful dignitaries in flowing robes; the surprising tableau of a long queue of shining limousines, seven-seaters, and their skirted drivers, seemed satisfying for a stage rehearsal. On the horizon, for relief, I watched the palms, familiar symbols of dignified lassitude, wafting in the gentle breeze. Further in the distance the mobile panorama that must have delighted man a thousand years ago, re-appeared, as if by command. Fat camels and thin camels in two's and three's dawdled, conscious that time is of no count; small boys rode slowly swaying donkeys. I walked away from the official reception party led by Sheik MouvaflTak Aloussi, who in Parisian French expressed the royal welcome.

Wide and luxurious is the motor 'path⁵ or so-called road, from the aerodrome to Riyadh city. Sometimes four or five of our cars moved in a line, separated by three or four lengths. I did not sense a rule of the road, there were no

traffic policemen, there was certainly no speed limit, and jay-walking pedestrians did not impede us.

Our Yemeni driver, with luxurious blond locks showing beneath his ghoutrah and ogal, took out a cigarette, and smoked. I felt astounded at this fall from convention in the chief stronghold of the strict Wahhabi monarch, but the driver explained smilingly that he was a bad man, and an American air crew had given him lots of cigarettes.

We left the desert.

An officer in British type khaki uniform, adapted for local usage, by the addition of a green handkerchief (ghoutrah) which is kept on his head by the black ogal, (rings) showed us into a palatial building circling a white-washed yard. Here goats were happily eating from a small bag. I followed servants up many stone steps, and was shown a spacious sitting room, and then my bedroom with shuttered window, overlooking the yard. Another window looked out on wide open spaces among which I counted several trees but no grass. In the distance I heard the irrigation pumps, which are generally enclosed by stone walls. I found a bowl with water in the room, an attractive silver urn, towels and scented Indian soap in plenty. In the communal bathroom, interpreters proved unavailing and I looked with sympathy at the staff of servants struggling to make a ball-cock work; struggling to turn on the tap in the bath in which two inches of discoloured water proved it had not been used for a while. Eventually, with the staff departed, I secured a tiny mirror, and induced water to flow from the cold tap in the basin. A little too soon for me cars arrived to take us to the King's main palace.

Many men, including St. John Phil by, who occupies by choice a modest little home here, and is generally referred to as Haj Abdulla, have striven to penetrate the reason for the affection Westerners develop for Arabia, why it exercises an undeniable spell.

As a novitiate, I confess the problem is too difficult for a satisfactory reply. The humbling presence of the

disendowed desert about me, the capacity even for a short while to be in close communion with these empty, calling spaces, the sight of men who do not even wish to struggle for speed and for success, jointly blanket the average European's depraved race to transient, doubtful glories. The pervading slowness of movement, the absence of endless rubbish disguised as bloated rabbit-hutches on the majestic horizon, are astoundingly instructive. This journey was not as my travel in a commandeered furniture brry to the palace of King Haakon; or my voyage for the first meeting with the tragic linguist, President Benes; my dall on the close-hearted General de Gaulle; the delight of candour and repartee and reminiscence from Marshal Josip Broz-Tito; the chats with the sports-loving ex-king Veter of Yugoslavia; the debates with the erudite President Karl Renner; or other heads of state. For today I had not am idea of the physical scene that awaited me. I felt submerged under a wave.

For about twenty minutes we were driven along 'roads' of sand, past tired mules and camels, into the shining white marble residence of the King, the outside of which is like all others here, covered with mud walls. I stepped into a Painly furnished ante-room, and walked, self-consciously in European clothes, with Sheik Hafiz, past an endless arrar of exquisitely poised, handsome Arabs, with sparing eyes, many of African descent. They rested on carpel their firearms by the side. Many had knives.

in a corner of the L-shaped throne room, king Abdul-Aziz Ibn Abdur-Rahman Al-Feisal Al-Sa'ud, C.G.I.E., real head of Saudi Arabia. Lattice wch made the room dark, but in the failing light there could no mistaking the strength of this towering personality, ther than anyone near, who stood, not only courteously bu hospitably with powerful hand gently outstretched. He ro easily from his comfortable chair, which is higher than th other armchairs on either side. He sat down again slow with unaffected dignity and still towered above us. told Syrian delegauon in Cairo

last year that he hates speed. It was clear Ibn Saud enjoys taking time in rising and sitting down.

Easily the most striking feature about Ibn Saud are his eyes, though at a distance both seem damaged. It is as if one were partially closed (which I later heard is the case), and the other was of little service. The brow suggests immense effort to gain through the ear what is missed by the eye. The king is restless in the chair, would probably be more at ease in the open, riding or shooting. Rested in his armchair, he loses little in dignity: the massive, powerful body, with ever-swinging square shoulders, taut neck, retains advantages over those near him. The man courtiers, in a line, sit listening reverently to their monarch and I thought of the picture that must have been presented to guests of Confucius, absorbing his talks to pupils. The Crown Prince, the Emir Saud, who is 42, was alone among the guests to wear four golden rolls in the oghal; he sit with the counsellors. The king's four rolls seemed a little thicker than the Emir Saud's. There was no visible fidgeting among the courtiers, or whispering, except with one, who revealed the strange antics nervous folk can perform with the toes. The designs reminded me of the puffs I watched in Sussex skies during the bloody battled Britain in 1940.

The king spoke words of welcome. Large, restless heads were visible clearly because Ibn Saud was busy fanning himself against inconsiderate flies and real heat. (could not help irreverently thinking that an electric fan and a fair quantity of D.D.T. near the windows and was would save His Majesty the worry of flies and needful heat.)

At 66½, this triumphant conqueror shows signs that he fought and struggled for a major portion of his meteoric life. But he has a will of his own! I recalled his remarks to Sir John Singleton, in July 1946, when the Anglo-American Palestine Commission visited this palace. Roosevelt told him, Ibn Saud informed John, he wished America to spread knowledge, improve Saudi Arabia's agriculture, and assist the country to in a modern army

Ibn Saud had replied that he did not want America's help, and preferred to work slowly, but surely, and detested haste. As I watched the gestures of Ibn Saud, he looked the man to speak with precise candour to Roosevelt, or anyone else.

I thought, too, of another observation by Ibn Saud last year, to demonstrate his passion. He had been asked about the emigration of European Jewish children into Palestine and had answered, "A boy will come up to become a man. Therefore, I cannot agree." He opposed partition. Asked if he would accept emigration of 15,000 yearly, Ibn Saud answered simply, "Death is better than immigration, any immigration, into Palestine." If immigration and the sale of land to Jews stopped, the "whole enmity" would stop. Ibn Saud is capable too of dramatic force in his near-Biblical statements. During the war he had told Arabs to support Britain and the allies because of the Axis menace. Recently he announced, "I now face a serious problem. If Britain wishes to depart from the path of justice on Palestine, to ignore her promises, then I have nothing to say to the Moslems but, 'Here I am, kill me or dethrone me, since I deserve it. It is I who made you victims . . .'"

Ibn Saud wore red and white silk slippers today. He waved his fly-swisher (a modest edition of my Cairo acquisition) violently, as he said that U.N. was "extraordinarily pro-Zionist." Suddenly the king dropped the slippers and was wriggling his toes comfortably in brown woollen socks. I glanced at the four gold rings on the large, hairy hands, which rose expressively again and again the better to emphasise a point. Thanks to the lattice windows all round the chamber, I could at intervals admire 14 carpets in front of the king, saw the grill protection for the windows. I counted 14 men, notable members of the royal Advisory Council, on his right, sitting just within listening distance. Armed guards, about eight to ten, squatted silently on the floor, swords beside them, faced their monarch.

The king said to me through an interpreter, "The

Zionists are fighting the British with British arms. Let the British Government act. The fear of the Arabs is, the British will disarm the Arabs in Palestine and allow the Jews to arm." He saw no prospect of an arrangement between the Arabs and the Jews who do not want to be Zionists. The king added, "The Jews have taken up the attitude that, the British are their enemies. If the Arabs were left alone in Palestine, the Jews could be got out of the way and disarmed."

To the question, could he not call a conference and appeal to the better side in Jews and Arabs, the king replied (in Arabic), "I am on the Arab side. I would not call a conference. I am first and foremost an Arab. There is no need for me to take the initiative. What I would like to do is, take up arms there, in the name of the Arabs, and to be slain in battle. It is not only because the Jews are invading there, but because the Jews have quite deliberately made up their minds, and have taken steps also to turn out the Arabs. That is the reason for Arabs wanting to fight them. The Jews are holding up a sword of Damocles over the British. The British are showing their impotence in dealing with the situation, and are suffering."

As the king spoke I noted the warmth of which the deep voice was capable.

Staring at me long and pitifully, Ibn Saud went on, "I am ashamed for the British, because the Jews are making the policy of Britain. The road is quite clear," added the king. "The country is Arab. We like peace in Palestine, we want independence for Palestine. The Jews are invaders and, of course, the Arabs demand freedom from the invaders."

Sheik Hafiz, who occupied a chair nearest his king and friend, now announced that it was time for prayer. The infidels departed. The king shook hands and smiled jovially through one eye. Courtiers and council rose. I was shepherded into a car and driven along the desert track to El Ba'dia. Here the situation in relation to water and washing had not improved, and even after sundown, I found the heat intense.

Supper was served in the dining room with St. **John** Philby, trader, scholar, politician, as one of the guests. He said he failed to see why British troops should stay another day in Egypt, and he failed to see why Britain should continue to break every promise she had solemnly made to the Arabs over Palestine.

I stepped on the roof, and standing in pyjamas, studied the stars above the bed. I successfully signalled the servants to put out two muttering incandescent gas lamps, and was soon striving to sleep. But, the piercing intermittent sound of horses or mules working the irrigation wells, two or three miles away, returned with cruel, mocking, monotonous disdain.

Monday, April 14th.

Early this morning during crazy cacophony from wells awoke to notice many of our servants noisily asleep on carpets on the roof. They appeared to be resting comfortably, I put on my sandals, and walked about to enjoy the dawn. In the yard below us, whitewashed and cool in the fresh air, the goats were as busy as last evening. After breakfast I drove to the palace of the Crown Prince, accompanied by another young officer who, unhappily for me, knows but five or six English words. It could not be much fun for him to escort someone he could not understand. However, the driver smiled all the time, whether hooting in Cairo style at corners at straying mules or a lorry, or merely for the joy of the adventure at control of a new American limousine.

Was my journey necessary? I was to be measured for the Arab dress I am to wear this afternoon at the audience, and this evening at the royal banquet in the king's main palace. In the Crown Prince's palace I was led to the principal tailor's. This gentleman, a silent Arab of good caste, examined me casually. He then lost me beneath a chocolate covered robe with much gold braid around the neck. He made sundry marks where I am a little larger or

smaller than the outer dress, the zabun. Waving a heavy key, he walked solemnly past a number of tailors, all lesser in rank, who seemed politely preoccupied in the white-skinned, beardless guest, rather than in the task of completing silk cushion covers for royal chairs. Then the head tailor opened a trunk the size of a wooden coffin, and extracted cotton and needles. He carefully went all over again into the problem of my measurements, and decided how to deal with this and that momentarily ill-fitting portion of the outfit. The smiling guestmaster, who has control of my movements, happily turned the proceedings into the nearest copy of the fitting of a schoolboy into a first pair of long trousers. He argued that the quality of one of the garments was obviously not as good as it should be, (correctly), that a second was not long enough to cover the slippers, that the neck might be left uncovered in a third, that near the hem there was evidence of fruitful activity by moths (of the local genus). I was fascinated, meanwhile, by the kerchief-covered Arabs busily working on the machines, and noted outside the toy-town turrets and odd water pipes running high out of the mud walls.

Luncheon meant a struggle with vast menu in ElBa'dia. Recovering, I explored one of the roads in a motor car. When I returned the robes were ready for me, lying in the sitting-room. At four, I drove again to the palace for a visit to the king. This time I noted the writing in colour over the entrance into the main gate of the palace, over which are electric lights. The words form a phrase from the Quoran. I waited patiently in the ante room of one of the leading officials, Rushdi Melhas, the Palestinian. He is slight, small, rather wizened, and seldom struggles to relax otherwise serious features. He wore light cream silk garments. I became aware of the temperature in my unfamiliar, and much thicker robes made of fine camel hair. The sandals or slippers, of multi-coloured leather strands, almost held in place by a single narrow band over the ankle, provided a lesson in self-discipline. I learned to shuffle almost as noisily as a mill girl in Bacup. I began **the**

electric fan in Rushdi's room, studied his Arabic type-writer, and the curiously incongruous Western chairs.

The king spoke to me on Palestine, with the same emotion as on the previous day. It was a brief visit, for this evening there is a banquet.

I shuffled out of the throne room, and was driven to the Crown Prince's desert garden. In the car Aloussi told me of the "goodness and graciousness" of Ibn Saud, "who acts as a father to his people." We passed men on donkeys, transporting precious water in disused petrol tins. Travellers rested by the "roadside," under tents. The stone hovels nearby were not used. Children played mildly; it is difficult in the heat to do any jumping. Little girls noting someone who held a camera, promptly retired to the tents. But not all of them escaped with sufficient speed.

I sat on the lawn in front of the Emir's residence, enjoying the sight of flowers and bulbs in the heart of the desert. Only a few hundred yards away, the parched world, bare, barren, blistered sand ruled life. Moistened, gently nursed by irrigation, the gentle earth was blessing its friend.

There being little time left before the banquet, I decided to wash here instead of travelling back to Ba'dia. Every guest took it in turn to go into a novel but modern concrete floor chamber. With the help of small buckets of water, I removed a little of the dust and dirt gathered in three or four hours.

Chocolates were passed round, and the Emir Saud before retiring to his own quarters, insisted that Aloussi and Haj Abdulla take generous quantities in paper extracted from layers in the big round box.

My hosts carefully watched the dying sun.

Sheik Hafiz, this time wearing a light cream silk zabun and pure white silk kaftan, under garment reaching the ankles, moved away to a wall. One of the lesser gardeners cried out, "Allah Akhbar," several times. Sheik Hafiz turned, to face Mecca, and began the intoning with a deliberate respect for consonants that appealed to one who

disapproves slurred, unclear speech in any language. Hafiz bowed forward a little. Walking quickly, or running, gardeners, chauffeurs, guards, formed two obedient rows behind the Sheik with members of the party. They were silent, inclined their heads when Sheik Hafiz gave the lead. Across the short distance separating me, the chant assumed powerful and scarcely explicable fascination. The faces of the faithful were calmed. Cares, concentration on the drudgery of life, disappeared. They listened to the message and words made familiar every evening of their existence, and the existence of their forefathers for thirteen centuries, during battles for survival, during raids and feuds, during the brief, uncertain periods of blessed peace. None of the faithful moved head or hands, except as Sheik Hafiz unspokenly directed.

Clipped words rent the supreme silence of the garden in this lonely desert oasis with added nobility. Sheik Aloussi stood next to a gardener, another personage prayed next to a chauffeur. There were no privileged or reserved pews.

Momentarily the little band of faithful knelt, their heads low, the hands joined near the chin. Without a fuss, they silently all rose again, to rejoin us for the drive in darkness towards the king's palace.

In the car the conversation was worthy of England—would there be drops of rain this night or perhaps even a shower? Learnedly men studied the clouds.

Coloured bulbs lit up the entrance to the king's principal home and I passed through corridors crowded with white-robed guests and servants. Maybe the electric lights added much to the warmth of the atmosphere and by the time I reached the ante-chamber, where I was presented again to Ibn Saud and various members of the royal family, I wished I could have taken off at least one garment and sat for a minute under running cold water. But, instead, Sheik Aloussi steadily introduced to me seventeen of the king's thirty-two sons by his wives. All wore black rings on their heads, all bore a remarkable

resemblance to their father, all had white, or light cream, silk outer robes.

Slowly, the king led the way to the banqueting chamber, walking with the aid of a stick. One of his knees was injured during a battle for Hejaz about a quarter of a century ago, when he completed the destruction of the last of his enemies in the lands of his forefathers. Today Saudi Arabia is greater than any ruler has known her, and Ibn Saud holds undisputed sway. Mercifully he exercises unquestioned power over his peoples. As we walked in procession I was conscious of the immense spirit of this still handsome giant, strength visible in every step slowly taken, past marble walls, along stone floor. At every corner of the many corridors I passed after entering the palace, I noted squatting priests chanting verses out of the Holy Book, their heads near the ground, their eyes shut, their minds unconcerned with passing creatures.

I now faced an enormous concourse of fellow guests, officials, sons of the king. I was placed on the king's left, nearly opposite the Emir Saud and Jemal Husseini and Seddigi (the last, of course, still worried by something). Behind me, touching the walls, stood close to one another, retainers, members of the guard with swords, revolvers, all in dazzling uniforms. By the opposite walls were more retainers, guards, officials.

In front of my place, a glass of water was prominent, good English cutlery, and fifteen plates, with chicken, mutton, veal, lamb, kidneys, liver, vegetables also found in England, cooked in sundry ways. I hoped to carry on a conversation with Jemal, but found that the armed waiters had only begun the service. They now deposited enormous dishes, the size of old-fashioned wash basins, filled with splendidly cooked rice, on top of which were family portions of camel's meat, beef, lamb, veal. Every basin was intended, presumably, to act as appetiser for six or eight guests. The temperature of the chamber may be imagined, and as I struggled again and again with the sole, wet now, handkerchief in my thick robes, the Grown

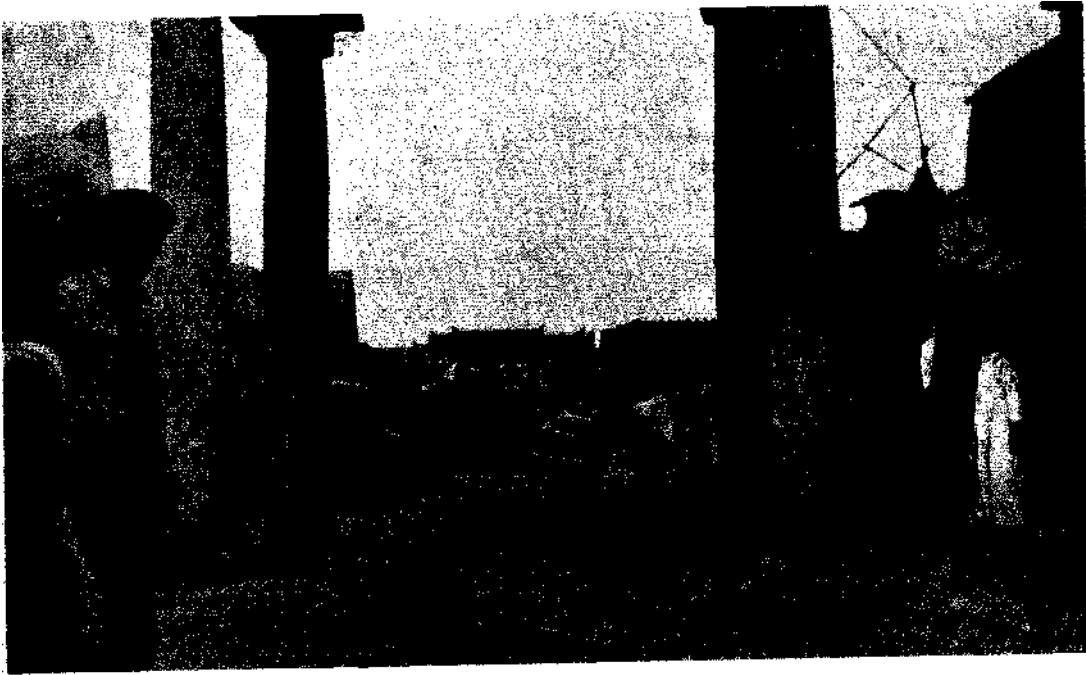
Prince mercifully asked if I was warm. The king ate sparingly with complete, natural dignity. In feeding only the right hand may be used. Ibn Saud delicately picked up food with the thumb and little finger, slowly. When the host was ready for a sip of water, the principal coffee-server and sword-bearer, Bin Abdel Wuahed, member of a notable family, tall, graceful, fearless, and in no manner sycophantic, handed over the plain tumbler. As the king ended sipping, the glass was returned to Abdel, who watched for a move that the king required another drop. In reply to enquiries by Seddigi, I informed the king and the Crown Prince, about the size of the meat ration in austerity England. They laughed, both said in Arabic meat was "a great joy for the people." Soon the Crown Prince signalled to his majesty, suggesting that, perhaps, it was time to rise. The king had his fifth sip of water, and left the table.

I was grateful for initiation into the succeeding ceremony. Armed attendants approached the king and four or five guests, each holding a silver jug of water, a silver bowl, a cake of scented soap, and a new towel. The king rinsed his mouth thoroughly, washed his hands and face. I followed suit with pleasure. The habit might well be copied by folk seriously pretending avid affection for the arbitrary amenities of superior civilisation. (The only addition I might introduce to the Arab custom would be the provision of a modest toothbrush that can be thrown away after use.)

Ibn Saud led the guests into a neighbouring salon, where I sat on a long settee, on his left. Opposite us were the relatives, and the handsome sons. Abdul Azziz, the young interpreter, sat cross legged on the floor facing the king. Ibn Saud glanced at the coffee server and he left the room, promptly to return with a platoon of colleagues who trod noiselessly along the flawless carpets to serve a helping of rose perfume. Next the officials produced smouldering incense. Studying the lead of the host, I dried my scented hands. Now came tiny cups with coffee, slightly bitter, sugarless, milkless. Then followed tiny tumblers of milkless tea,



KING IBN SAUD RELAXES DURING TEA AT ALEISHI



MAIN STREET IN RIYADH

Shows vivid contrasts, new twelve cylinder U.S. limousine, roads of dusty sand, shops with tarpaulin poles. In foreground author's guide.

the glasses resembling the baby jars with jam available in the England long gone before the Hitler war.

K.B. told the king he liked the scent, and his majesty promptly asked one of the younger sons to fetch some bottles. In these were souvenirs of the visit to Riyadh for a few guests. I had made no reference to scent, nor had I commented on the king's interpreted remarks about certain intimate uses for scent, and was left out. (Later the all-seeing Sheik Hafiz promised to make good the omission, "as I have much rose scent in London." I am, however, waiting in 1949 for implementation).

As the questions now being discussed were 'light/1 asked Abdul Azziz what advice the king thought it prudent to give to his young sons. The unhesitant answer was, "I tell them, at 15, to get married for that stops vice, and, is good for them." King and courtiers enjoyed the observation, also another about the desirable number of wives. Ibn Saud turned suddenly to Sheik Hafiz, "How many wives did Solomon have?" The teacher from ancient Al Azhar answered, to everyone's audible delight, "One thousand." That seemed the quota. But I might add that, in Saudi Arabia, the process for dismissing a foolish or flamboyant or fickle wife is more intelligently conceived than in woman-ruled West.

Then we said our farewells to his majesty, on whose behalf presents were distributed to guests who are leaving Saudi Arabia tomorrow morning. Some of us walked with the Crown Prince to an open terrace, where we were to see a display of films. Fortunately the apparatus was not co-operative and we enjoyed instead, a chat, more coffee and more tea. A page out of another world's history book, one I should deeply regret to have missed.

There were dear drops of magic rain as I fell asleep, just before midnight, in Ba'dia. I raced below to my bedroom. But sleep was difficult, for the celebrations by barking dogs added to the penetrating, agonising creak of the irrigation machinery.

Tuesday, April 15th.

Measured sleeping hall in my four-room suite in the palace of the Crown Prince to which staff transferred me this morning. Length is 48 feet, and width 24 feet. It is crowded with dozens of silk cushions, covered by more than adequate carpets. Mecca-born Mohammed Meolla Niazzi, youthful, jolly, smiling head of staff in the king's guest houses, presented the folk who are to look after my comforts here, Sayid and Ma'jeep. Arrangements are more studied than in lonely El Ba'dia. Ma'jeep spends his time in setting and adjusting the mosquito net over the four post-bed, in case the other, already taken out on the limitless verandah, is not in use tonight because of the slight rain. (Annual rainfall is two to four inches, and Arabs rightly speak of occasions when rain has fallen as—events).

Sheik Hafiz came for luncheon. I did not know until he arrived. Here the isolation is complete, and the solitude welcome behind bars. I was delighted to see Hafiz, for I had spent the morning alone, except for short pleasantries with sundry members of the staff of Ba'dia, who transported my belongings in limousine. There was a little upset, nothing serious, because in attempting to learn all their names by heart I muddled those of lieutenant-cum-guide with those of a junior servant in Ba'dia. Latter is a gentleman I recognise for he broke my heart in Ba'dia's one bathroom etc. On my arrival on Sunday, he and four other members of the staff began to turn taps above bath and above lavatory (both Western design). But, as the water pipes determined on non co-operation, the five Arabs chose firmer steps. They ended the brief and (to me) inglorious life of the ball valve by crashing it off. Now the tap above seemed to lose its thread. And, when I returned from my bedroom, boyishly expecting to see wash-basin, bath and lavatory all in action, I faced instead muddy water in the bath, a multiplied concourse of fierce flies in a terpsichorean frame of mind around the wash-basin and the lavatory. It was, of course, a sultry day, agonising; I shall long remember it. I day-dreamt of my

London friend Alan Froy, unconventional, distinguished Home Guard, poobah in Sussex, maker of luxurious baths and etceteras, wished he could despatch his products to help. After this interlude I had an audience of King Ibn Saud, visited the palace for the royal banquet, and then, toured the suites of the Crown Prince. But the mild Occidental, frivolous in the need of these comforts, was injured. I felt unwashed, unkempt beneath my new clothes.

Today, to Hafiz I poured out my plumbing woes, in the hope that the Crown Prince, now my host, who had shown me last night a splendid vacant double bed, with London white tiled bathroom, etc. (that is the important element in the sentence) might hear of my plight in the new surroundings. Hafiz promised to intervene.

Over the luncheon with Hafiz I tried bravely to assault the sundry meat courses that arrived before us, but in vain. Delectable liver, chicken, stewed beef, roast beef, eggs, rice, potatoes, vegetables, soup, stewed fruit, of excellent quality and cool when served, as well as delicious tea. With the meal we drank fresh, iced, orange juice, or tomato juice.

Mohammed, emboldened with the beloved, revered Sheik's presence, asked if there was anything I should particularly like. I said, could he provide tomato, or orange, or pineapple juice? The thought of serving his king's guest delighted Mohammed. At breakfast, luncheon and dinner, there is to come, in a big jug, a sample of America's best contribution to the world, her incomparable fruit juices (plus ice). The Crown Prince has a refrigerator "the size of a big room," installed by the alert Americans, who showed him this sort of thing when he was out in the United States.

I am depressed a little, for evidence of British skill, Britain's contributions to the world, is painfully, humiliatingly absent. But none seems to care. The race is to the strong, and we appear to be preoccupied with jejune diplomacy, that sends rude useless notes to small powers, like the lazy emasculated creature who nags at his wife for

slily studying the glances of less devitalised creatures. Could we not better employ this energy by striving to supply backward, primitive states with practical guidance, encouragement and constructive help? Surely we have contributions to offer to Arabia? Are these to be measured solely in the efforts of one or two small trading posts or companies? In comparison with America's show, in Jedda, Riyadh, to say nothing of the newly sprung up Floridas in the Persian Gulf, we represent a weary moth by the side of a new sixty-seater aircraft.

When Hafiz left me, I observed (through the barred windows) restricted life on the undefined highway. Soldiers paraded outside the palaces; a few younger Arabs led blind friends along a short, made, path; dogs ran about aimlessly; camels dawdled past stationary donkeys with water bags for eagerly waiting humans. Occasionally a veiled woman appeared on the horizon leading a young child, or children.

The servants outside my suite visited one another, mine going to the quarters of their friends for a chat, others coming to call here. They have no conventional Western frailties, like betting on pools, chain-smoking, drinking alcohol. They seem to find a distinct pleasure in my leg-pulls, conveyed by the repetition of odd words like bra-bra-bra-bra, or in the limited humour available in international sign-language. (How I sympathise afresh with people travelling the world with their own tongue as sole passport.)

But, I am deeply touched by the consideration shown by Ma'jeep for my well-being. He holds the silver jug with hot water and pours a little over my brush into the silver basin while I shave facing a tiny mirror perched perilously on table top. He manipulates several towels so that I can dry my face quickly, swiftly produces soap out of the bathroom.' In that strange chamber there are many bottles with water, earthenware pots with water, a tin with water, a huge earthen vessel into which I suppose I am expected to step to 'bathe.' Towels and soap are the sole concession to a soft Westerner's needs in a modern bathroom

Wednesday, April 16th.

Clocks and watches disturb my already limited sense of assurance. There is Greenwich time, recognised by almost everyone, Cairo time, discussed by most people, Riyadh time which is understood by the elect. The main clock outside the palace, visible from my rooms, merely adds to my confusion. And this disastrous sense of uncertainty is not relieved by the information vouchsafed to me by one of the officials that, there is a difference of three and a half hours between Greenwich Mean Time and Riyadh time, i.e. when it is noon in Riyadh, it is 8.30 a.m. in London.

Sheiks Hafiz and Aloussi here to accompany me to the luncheon given for me by the Crown Prince. Reports of my movements had spread quickly and widely, for Mohammed, the staff, and their friends from neighbouring suites, all arrived to examine my appearance with exceptional care. Mohammed moved the goutrah a little, while Ma'jeep demonstrated professional concern in the accuracy of the placing of the ogal upon an unaccustomed head. They held a mirror between them, and finally said, with meticulously considered approval, "It is good." The outer garments are long, and I hold the edges off the ground with my left hand, the right being reserved for the exchange of greetings.

Soldiers at various points near and out of the palace, on guard duty, examined the white stranger, infidel—I think I am the only one in the city,—with courteous curiosity, but with no other expression on their aesthetic faces. And now we were on the little highway between the palaces.

Aloussi, whose wife and family live outside Iraq, his native land, told me that he had had a difference with an Iraqi minister, hence his resignation and subsequent transfer to the diplomatic service of Ibn Saud. He has a lively wit, is so Parisian or at least Occidental in manner and speech, that he strikes an anachronistic note in these staid, monastic surroundings, where cinemas, music, smoking, dancing, alcohol and laughter are—technically, officially unknown. Yesterday when he saw the barber who

had come to attend Sheik Hafiz in the palace, Aloussi suddenly decided that he wished his head to be shaved. Today he reminds me of my old friends, the Cistercians at the Leicestershire monastery of Mount St. Bernard, hidden in Charnwood Forest. Only Aloussi's little beard, a stage version of French 'imperial,'³ suggests the Arab of Arabia.

As we walked towards the Crown Princes' main palace, the all-seeing (in Jamaica the word is 'Tour-eyed') Aloussi noticed that one of my sandals, gorgeous with sundry leather strips, was partly undone. He said that if I took off the sandal, it would be mended promptly. All of us consulted our watches, and agreed we had several minutes to spare. One of the guards behind us then collected my sandals. I walked on barefooted, faithfully convinced that, somehow, somewhere, the sandal would be repaired and I would enter the royal presence suitably shod. Alas, I slowly climbed many fine marble steps to the reception room of the Emir Saud, but arrived minus socks or sandals. Thus I sat through a grand meal, thus I heard the Emir's broad jokes, saw his albums of well-kept cuttings about journeys round the world, enjoyed again Arab, therefore strenuous, hospitality. The Emir fortunately developed a weakness for certain Western dishes, and the ice cream was no different from anything produced by Henri Sartori. My sandals? They returned a few hours later.

How little difference there is the world over can best be realised, perhaps, in Riyadh's market. Precisely the same universal expressions are to be noted. I drove past the sand tracks this afternoon with a young officer in uniform, a lieutenant. Unfortunately his vocabulary was limited to six or seven words, "good," "bad," "car," "king," and "market." I am told it has not been found possible so far to discover any other English-speaking guide, for the king's principal interpreter may not leave the palace while the royal master is about lest he be summoned. The second interpreter was required for American geologists who were

to appear before the Crown Prince, with a report on their work since their arrival at seven a.m. ("Cairo," says the latest version, "is one hour ahead of Greenwich summer.")

The lieutenant and I left the limousine, by the entrance to the main market, and I stood peacefully gazing. The tiny shops, about five feet wide and six or six and a half feet high, contain the merchants' possessions: tins of various kinds, a choice of coffee pots in bronze, new and attractive saucepans, petrol-tins filled with coke, wooden chests of tea or other eatables like rice, carpets covered with stationery, (the average quantity on display being two or three packets of envelopes and two or three pads of lined paper to a merchant), two or three bottles of new Quink and often a dozen empty bottles of older vintage (British), Principal attraction were a series of stalls, where people bought hot tea or coffee, an ancient copy of a book (mostly the Quoran). Every time I stopped to admire an animal's skin being sown up into a water container, the crowd would press so tight around me that the perspiration no longer flowed gently but dropped from my forehead. A few sharp words from the officer, and, for a moment, there would follow a gentle respite.

Here and there we passed two merchants discussing the piece of paper on which a deal had been arranged and I saw how carefully they counted the large *riyals*, silver coins resembling a five shilling piece, stacked in wooden boxes. One man was counting about five or six hundred. Throughout the market, I sensed real competitive liveliness, for no sooner had one merchant-hawker passed us, imperiously, loudly announcing the price of the article he was anxious to sell, than another would reach us. The words represented little significance, lacked any consonant, but the guide insisted that he knew the carpet seller asked 200 riyals (just over £10), and another wanted for an outer Arab covering of good camel cloth the equivalent of £10.

At times I enquired who lived in this or that high mud walled palace and the guide ever answered, 'the king's/⁵

Now we drove to the track, minus houses, where mules were grazing.

We sat in the car watching deals. None of the would-be buyers vaunted enthusiasm for camels on show. First he would bend forward slightly as the vendor-to-be ordered the animal to lie down. The smiling seller opened the camel's mouth and pointed to lots of good, or yellow, or decayed teeth in the mild, weary, patient, unenthusiastic animal. The buyer-to-be still looked casually at a future transporter of his family, and of water, and of food, across endless desert wastes, where breakdown through ill health might mean people's death from exposure or starvation or thirst.

With the approach of the hour of evening prayer, the market, *suk*, behind us was closing, but here, bidding went on, I studied the way merchants disparagingly tickled the camel about the middle, almost counted the hairs on the (seemingly hairless) chest. My eyes returned to the distant well, where only women, heavily veiled, and children, stood slowly filling the cans. The picture was unchanged, from any of two thousand years ago.

We returned by another route to the palace, through narrow streets, unpaved, stoneless, really openings between small houses.

It is not yet dark as I write today's entry. I am looking out of my seven windows. One faces the clock leading to the king's palace. I see one of the four or five places in Riyadh, where a stretch of paving exists for pedestrians and for cars (when these pass). An empty modern truck is racing down. Two bedouins, in red head coverings, and the conventional white ankle-deep robes, are walking slowly. On the right I see a stretch of desert sand, a continuation of the paved road for about 600 yards, to another mud-walled palace. Across the (unpaved) track which is at times used diagonally by motor cars, five or six camels follow a tiny white-capped man, suddenly stop to make way for a vast gathering of black sheep with a modest white speck on their noses* I have counted several donkeys

during the half hour, some carrying two petrol tins of water on either side, led by a man or boy. I have not seen any cows or horses (sorry, there was one outside the market today). The dogs are light brown, thin coated equivalent in size to an airedale, but with a miniature Alsatian head. Unfortunately for me the canine army possesses an inexhaustible capacity for a monotonous bark, at any provocation, or none, all night and most of the day. At least half the people are barefooted, but this does not necessarily mean poverty, for in the presence of the king some folk walk, or sit without shoes.

As I strive to sleep tonight, ignoring dogs and the distant sound of irrigation buckets, I ponder on the remarks of the Crown Prince over luncheon. He is concerned over progress of roads, of health, of agriculture, and technical education, in this order. The big railway to Riyadh may be completed in two or three years. Other roads and railways have been begun, or are contemplated for early attention.

Riyadh is, of course, wholly unlike any city I have visited, largely because vast blank walls give streets an 'empty' appearance. It has been the capital of Nejd since the destruction in 1918 of Dar'iyah, about twelve miles away. It stretches about two miles from north to south. According to Shakespeare the forty-two palaces of the present royal family, renewed since Ibn Rashid's "tenancy" in 1891-1902, occupy, together with the gardens, one third of the town. There are four wards. In the N.E. live the notables, in the S.W. the middle class, in the S.E. (khaziq), the poor. To the N.W. are confined outsiders and persons not of strict Wahhabi persuasion. Estimates of the population vary, but I should say sixty thousand is near the correct number.

During the five daily prayers, all shops and stores and markets are closed, as well as the doors of all government buildings, for it is assumed that everyone is at prayer in the nearest mosque.

Slowly Saudi Arabia is attracting world attention.

Why? Let me briefly tell a story to wound British hearts and cheer go-ahead Americans, for it is one of the romances of the modern world.

In a sentence, Saudi Arabia is part of the Persian Gulf territories where 150 wells have already indicated supplies of crude oil greater than the present proved crude reserves in all the United States of America. Mr. James Terry Duce, the U.S. vice-president of the Arabian American Oil Company, has recently suggested that sufficient crude oil will be found in, and near, Saudi Arabia to supply the Eastern hemisphere 'Tor generations to come.' Till now Western hemisphere reserves have largely supplied the world, and the strain will be relieved. Mr. Joseph E. Pogue, the economist, calculates* that the total new reserves to be found in the Gulf area may exceed 150,000,000,000 barrels, and a third of the prospective part of this area lies within 'Aramco,' the Saudi Arabian concession owned by the Arabian American oil company.

How did the British lose, and the Americans win, this immense liquid gold concession?

In 1910 India Survey geologists discovered a few oil seeps on the island of Bahrein (not under the control of King Ibn Saud). For various reasons they concluded that the prospects for oil were not considerable. Later a British group secured a concession for Bahrein. But the group eventually sold the concession, to the Gulf Oil Company. Gulf offered the concession to the Iraq Petroleum Company Group, which recommended that Gulf dispose of it. Thus it came into the hands of the Standard Oil Company, of California. Standard, according to Mr. Duce,† sent Mr. E. A. Skinner to Bahrein, and the first well was drilled at a site recommended by Mr. F. A. Davies, now president of Aramco. It was realised at once that deeper horizons on the Persian Gulf would be productive. Skinner and Davies looked out over the Arabian mainland, saw the low dome of the

* In the *Tale Review*.

†

Writing in the *Texaco Star*.

Dammam field standing out against the sunset and strongly urged the company to acquire concessions. Standard promptly sent the late Lloyd Hamilton to Arabia. In 1933 Hamilton sat down with Ibn Saud, and "negotiated a concession for what is now one of the most prolific producing areas in the world,"

That is a fair description, for the concession covers 350,000 square miles, or an area four times greater than the United Kingdom. Exploration has *scarcely begun*.

Ibn Saud, who invited American oil men to investigate the land in 1933, must be satisfied with the brilliance of his prescience, or, premonition. The king later said he was impressed by the efficiency of the Bahrein operation, and was "glad to make an agreement with a company that would not involve itself in the complicated politics of the Middle East." He was able to make this concession because the Treaty of Jedda, signed in 1927 with the British, recognised his complete independence, and supplanted an earlier convention, which had compelled the king to make contracts with companies approved by the British authorities.

Drilling began in 1935, with disappointing results, but the geologist in charge, Mr. Max Steineke, persisted, believing that deeper zones existed. In 1938 the seventh well found prolific deeper zones. In Abu Hadriyah and Abqaik fields were opened in 1938 and 1942. In 1936 Texas acquired a half interest in the Arabian and Bahrein concessions. Soon other fields were found and worked. One, Dammam, covers about 10,000 acres. Abqaik, forty miles to the south, has been proved at over 30,000 acres. A few years ago Dr. E. de Golyer, of the United States Government, estimated Saudi Arabia's reserves at "a minimum of 2,000,000,000 barrels."

In the early days American explorers, geologists and production engineers had, on landing, in the interests of safety and tact, to grow beards and wear Arab clothes. The Americans overcame the high temperatures, 90 to *3° degrees at midday in summer, by introducing air

conditioning. Special tyres and equipment were invented for sandy areas. The company was able, in the winter of 1946, to put 260,000 barrels a day through its Persian Gulf ports of Ras Tanura and Al Khobar. The Ras Tanura refinery, completed during the war, has a rated capacity of 50,000 barrels daily "and became the mainstay of our naval fuel oil supply in the Far East."

What a revolutionary change the Americans introduced! Modern houses, trees, grass, soil, flowers have been imported, flourish with proper irrigation, at Dhahran. The Americans have even placed pipes beneath the Persian Gulf, so that much of the crude oil is despatched 25 miles under water to the Bahrein Petroleum company's refinery out on Bahrein Island.

Nourishing vegetables are being grown on a model farm, at Al Kharj, where a 2,000 acre tract, suitably irrigated, is serving for an experiment, so far successful, in the production of onions, dates, tomatoes, melons, alfalfa. The irrigation canals bring in their train more mosquitoes, and war is waged on them, as on locusts, with characteristic American relentlessness. Hospitals exist in plenty.

Thus 1947 presents a new picture in this land of the long yesterdays. The two bearded men who landed in September 1933, have been followed by over a thousand Americans, 500 Italians and about eight or nine thousand Arabs. Movies, elsewhere forbidden strictly, are allowed in America's new state, Dhahran, almost every evening in a special theatre. American food and American schools are imported, gas, telephones, electricity, radios are available. Housewives shop at a fashionable 'commissary'⁵ or canteen much as do official Americans in "Austeria," London. There are soda fountains, facilities for swimming, in pools and sea, sports . . . 'refrigerated'⁵ bungalows that must be seen to be credited. The battle for drilling among dunes the height of six-storey buildings has been won, and the dunes that move fifty feet a year under the influence of the 'shimaP, the ever-present north-wind,

have been stopped—by the oiling of surfaces. The sand particles are thus held together.

I wonder whether history is turning again, demonstrating a real swing in the pendulum. In the ice age, many thousands of years ago, when the northern hemisphere lay buried under immense glaciers, Arabia was fertile. Its plains and valleys were watered by three mighty rivers. Then, with the retreat of the great polar ice cap, the continents of Europe and North America reawakened. Under a blazing sun Arabia parched into desert.

Today it attracts the eyes of the world, with its riches, its potential riches, its importance, in a world depending increasingly on oil for power in industry and locomotion and war. Will Arabia be the world's next tinder box? Or will it be allowed to help the world, until atomic energy, harnessed for industrial and transport uses, revolutionises mankind's ways once again?

Have just discovered that earlier information on watches is wrong. The clocks are set here every day, by the sun. Sunrise is zero, sunset is twelve midnight. The length of the day varies but every day is theoretically twelve hours long, sunrise to sunset. Two-thirty in the morning by Riyadh watches is—ten by mine.

Thursday, April 17th.

Sheiks Hafiz and Aloussi here for luncheon. I thanked them for advice about fruit salts, announced that I felt somewhat better. We went through six or seven courses, I through pecks of each, except the creme caramel. It was an occasion, because by the kindness of Mohammed a tumbler full of ice arrived, and the orange juice from California tasted even more excellent.

This afternoon I am invited to the Aleishi garden, in the desert, about twenty minutes drive by car, where sometimes the king spends two hours before prayers. "None," I learn unnecessarily, "speaks, unless, the king

first addresses him." Would I take myself about three p.m. to the office of the political director, *cum* Court Chamberlain, monosyllabic Rushdi Melhas, and wait there? I collected the Sheik about 3 p.m. and we went into Rushdi's office. I began to work the electric fan, not available in my suite, and waited. Soon two non-Arabs in Arab clothes entered, and were introduced. They are American geologists from the oil state. One said, "There are already 1,400 of us down there, and soon there will be many times that number. Oh, yes, we are making ourselves comfortable with air conditioned homes, building them as fast as we can."

The giant Emir Saud entered, bowed stiffly to the Americans, and noticing me, extended his hands. Then he sat down opposite Rushdi, motioned the geologists to take chairs. From nowhere sprang a young Arab interpreter, an Abdul Azziz junior in appearance. He knelt in front of the Prince, sat cross-legged on the floor. The Emir began, by asking, "Have you had a successful mission?" The younger American answered, obviously before the interpreter had ended the sentence, "Satisfactory, but not successful. We think we have found water in a well on the road from X to Z. It may run fairly well." He added that they had sent a telegram to the Emir five or six days ago saying they had found another well and would like to establish an engine there. There had been no reply. Could they have permission to proceed?

The Emir answered that the place was important, on the road to Kuwait and he would look into the telegram. After a sign by the interpreter, officials standing outside, on the marble floor adjoining the carpeted office, brought the head of the wire receiving department. He studied many telegrams and a book, said there was no record of the wire. The Emir commented that he would look into the question.

Meanwhile a young prince entered, whispered to the Emir Saud, and smiles having been exchanged, warmly

kissed the back of the older man's right hand. There was warmth, real pleasure, about the act that robbed it of any sycophantics. The sabre-carrying gentleman with coffee pot and cups came, served us, was away, and I saw Aloussi outside, beckoning to me. I was now to accompany him in the royal party to the Aleishi gardens.

A cricket pitch ahead of us the king was wheeling himself in an armchair. A vast number of officials became mixed with soldiers, some with sabres, others with rifles and revolvers, who stood waiting about the entrance to the main gate. Here the Negro chief chauffeur, Abdel Kerim, left the seat, on the left, while the king helped himself into the front of the vehicle by the driver. The chauffeur entered, followed in a second by Sheik Hafiz, who sat behind the king. The car drove off, and was followed by two jeep-loads of young soldiers, carrying revolvers and rifles. Other cars and lorries moved off, at speeds of twenty-five to thirty miles an hour, along the desert "roads." Soldiers on either side, at intervals of about one hundred yards, presented arms. Then a large mud-wall, surrounding what turned out to be a garden, came into view. The king's car was already there, also five or six lorries, with troops, officials, food servers, servants.

All around us, again, was desert, a sea of monotonous, merciless, but staring sand.

Aloussi led the way and I saw a planned terrace. In the top left hand corner of the rectangle, facing us, sat the king, propped up by lots of gaily embroidered silk cushions, harder material cushions behind him. His feet dangled beneath. Immediately below were several carpets. About fifteen feet away, on his left, sat Sheik Hafiz. A few feet nearer to me, on cushions too, on a stone bench at right angles to the monarch, were Philby, and, well apart, Aloussi, four dazzling, independent, proud bedouin chiefs, a number of fierce-expressed, armed guards. Between the king and the opposite end of the rectangle, near a low wall with iron bars many

feet high, squatted officers and soldiers of the guard. In a tiny opening in the wall, between the king and the sheik, sat, cross-legged, yet more servants and guards. Now and then the king addressed a remark to Philby, or Aloussi, and a brief, light, conversation ensued. To Philby the subject matter was certain kinds of biscuits; to Aloussi, an impression of what the Prophet or certain sages in the book of tradition sought, kindness, bravery and—an agreeable face. That, said Aloussi, they lacked. Quick as lightning, the royal master answered, "You, Aloussi, provide that." The king's own coffee server entered slowly after our host had quietly said it was time for coffee and the server's brother, one of the heavily armed guards sitting near the main door, repeated the command in stentorian tones.

General silence returned. Had my guides not said, "It depends upon the king whether anyone says anything; he may be a bit tired, or, he may be in a good mood"? Now and then the royal face relaxed. I noted a movement of the right hand. One of the four bedouins sitting a few feet from me, danced into the air, and amid general laughter, pirouetted along the vacant spaces, between the bedouin sheiks.

Aloussi whispered, "It's the court jester."

The bedouin danced wildly among the visitors, and when approaching one of the soldiers, lying on the bare ground, was challenged. The two came to grips, at first lightly, both almost laughing. Then they indulged in major and minor, free for all, wrestling. The jester, strikingly handsome, tall, charming in bearing when not acting the fool, had a simple task with the older, lesser soldier. He tore the opponent's shirt, pushed him down with lightning strokes, forced him to the ground, while king and guests laughed uproariously. The king once or twice encouraged them saying, "Get to it." But when the wrestling became really rough, after ten or fifteen minutes, the king quietly said, "Bas." The men collected parts of their gowns, watches, remnants of a pair of braces,



INSIDE OF LAMB SKIN TURNED BY BOY INTO WATER CONTAINER, IN RIYADH



ONE OF THE 42 PALACES OF KING IBN SAUD, IN RIYADH

from their friends. The jester, however, still looked fresh.

The king asked Hafiz the time. Was the sun about to set, was the new day about to begin? Philby and the king examined their watches, studying the western sky, indulged in a discussion about the precise hour. Then the Briton walked out. "I am going to see," he told me quietly as he passed, "whether the sun is setting." Philby returned in a moment, and said to the king, "The sun is still high." The king dozed off, for a few moments, woke, and looked with surprise at the gathering of guests and guards around him. Sheik Hafiz and Aloussi exchanged a few whispers, and Philby went out once more. The sky had now lost real brightness, but the time had to be specifically decided. As the only infidel in the assembly (Philby embraced Islam in 1930), I now withdrew, being led by Aloussi to the door. We spoke outside for a moment with the king's chief chauffeur.

I moved away alone, looked at the soldiers dotted about the ends of the temporary camp.

One of the elder men near us now called the faithful to prayer, crying, "Allah, Akhbar." The call was repeated several times, being chanted. No other voice was to be heard. Life in the sky was receding, it appeared to lose tone, vigour. The stillness was audible. And then, as in a flash, soldiers dropped their rifles near the entrance, and walked hurriedly to be in time for prayer in the rectangle. The imam's voice came over the walls. He chanted slowly, quietly. Only two soldiers remained as on guard, in sight of the trucks and cars. They stood at attention, rifles at the slope. I looked for, but could not find, any stars. The imam's words, mournful, plaintive, unforgettable, melted towards me. I studied the ridiculously modern cars and trucks in this setting of oasis garden, Arab king, courtiers, humble dwellers, and fighters of the desert. Away to the north west, for we all faced Holy Mecca, the deep dunes rose a little. Had the dunes not known before civilisations that had vanished? Would these cars and trucks, our era, leave as many

traces as had the earlier civilisations? Suddenly the compulsory prayers, furd, were over. Soldiers and others raced out of the garden door, to lie down in the open. They dropped on their knees, as fast as possible, for the sunna, private, voluntary prayers. Those were said quietly, under near-dusk skies, in a memorable solemnity words are insufficient to portray.

Several minutes later the king walked slowly out of the gate. The soldiers of the guard, their headdress of green handkerchiefs, the goutrah, affording a novel contrast with the obviously foreign, khaki, uniforms on their slender bodies, and the black ogal, adding a touch of relief, stood, presented arms. The king was by his giant driver, Abdel Kerim; the Sheik sat again in the back. The rest for all was over. Soldiers stood on the running boards. Jeeps, lorries and cars, made four avenues of traffic, involving the sentries at various points of the desert track (how drivers find the way I am not able to guess) to danger from frontal attack.

Night had quickly overtaken us. The Sheik, Aloussi, and I stepped out, walked to our quarters. This meant marching over long, open corridors* Servants in strange costumes passed us, and to them we would offer the Arabic greeting, "Peace be with you."

This evening as I look outside, past the iron bars of my suite, I think how strange it is not to have seen anyone smoking a cigarette, any Arab taking a drink other than water or milk, tea or coffee. How strange it is to exist in a world of men and boys, camels, mules, donkeys, goats, dogs, but no adoring, adorable women, with alluring curves, lips, and speaking eyes.

Aloussi explains the Quoran forbids anyone, except a husband, his children and brothers, from seeing the members of his harem or even his daughters after they have reached the age of puberty, "when sight might arouse desire." And so, it seems, none of the highest officials has technically set eyes on the present four, or any past, wives, or elder daughters of the king.

Slept well tonight in the open, on the terrace. I was tired, and did not long hear the bark of the dogs nor the fiendish sound of the water buckets.

Friday, April 18th.

Aloussi today brought for luncheon with me the king's chief interpreter, young Abdul Azziz Mu'ammār, whose official post is 'assistant in the political department.' His father, Ibrahim, is one of the eight or ten members of the King's Advisory Council, chosen by Ibn Saud. Sessions in the audience chamber begin daily at 6.30 G.M.T., go on sometimes for three hours and a half, or four. The council, the king leading, discusses the telegrams received during the night. Abdul, sitting before the king, reads out to the council the digest of news as recorded in English from wireless bulletins in New York, London, Paris, Delhi. Material from Arab-speaking stations, in Cairo, Damascus, Beirut, Baghdad, London, Jerusalem, Paris, is reported by others. In all twenty stations are 'monitored.' Speeches by prominent personages are reported to the king and council in full. That morning, for instance, the king read out the telegrams, he the bulletins.

Public or private beheadings? I had read rumours of their frequency. "No," said my two guests, "executions are rare, for the king grants clemency as often as possible. Amputations of the right hand, the Arab form of punishment, are carried out only in cases of chronic theft and robbery.

"In the royal mosque prayers are said by two to three hundred people, the king reading out certain portions himself."

What happens after the first royal council? Ibn Saud spends about three hours in private, in the portion of the palace called the harem, and later returns to the council.

The evening session lasts about two hours, but has been **known, in special** circumstances, to last four.

Abdul was educated in Beirut, the American university which cannot be said to produce among several Oriental students I have met excessive appreciation of the "American way of life."⁵⁵ His intellectual horizon may best be gauged by the fact that, he has read almost all French classical works in French, and discussed Nicholas Berdayev's 'Destiny of Man'⁵ as if he had waded through it last week. Victor Kravenchuk's works, Purism, Kant, all came into our fray today.

I gather the king has not been in an 'easy'⁵ mood for some time. Tomorrow morning I am to be received in audience, to say my farewell, or Au Revoir, and what is still more important, his majesty *may* be inclined to give answers to questions I have posed, as requested, in writing. (This is unsatisfactory method. I said so).

Saturday, April 19th.

Slept magnificently this morning, for the dogs did not succeed in disturbing splendid, cool night. It was enthralling to spend day and night wholly without the clock, as a creature of nature rather than a slave to convention. So I had gone to bed fairly soon after dark, and had risen just as day was breaking. Odd feeling of satisfaction, plus fresh sense of desire to arise. I cannot remember number of occasions in recent years in England, and in the rest of Europe, when I have wished to rise.

Ma'jeep, the faithful, awoke at the sound of my footsteps, or he is a splendid authority in telepathy. He walked slowly to the bowl, now kept between the sitting room and the bedroom, in what would be described in England as the entrance hall, and pointed to the hot water, just produced. He helped me with the ablutions, now knowing precisely how much hot water I required in the tumbler for a mouth wash, and how much cold water in tumbler number two for fruit salts. There was a courtesy about the handing over of the towel which **reminded** me of the occasion in a Salisbury hotel where

I had pluckily breathed the words, 'Towel please?' late one evening. I had had a towel almost slung into my hands by an irate waiter in the so-called dining room.

This time I noticed as I descended the stairs, and marched casually into the courtyard, that two goats were grazing on a small patch in the centre. That solved the mystery of modest noise-making at night. Lots more soldiers, askaris, were about near the palace. They appeared to possess small arms of varying kinds, British, maybe Czech and some, I fancy, Polish and French. One of them marched up rather shyly to Sheik Hafiz and asked something, after which he withdrew and saluted, as if reassured that the European visitor was harmless.

Riyadh seems full today. Cars and camels and donkeys came in a never-ending procession. I made my way to the king's audience chamber, through Rushdi's sanctum, where I waited for Sheik Hafiz to tell me when Ibn Saud was ready to receive me. Rushdi hurried hither and thither with letters, which he examined carefully, near the disused Arabic typewriter. I passed by dozens of retainers with swords, sitting, or lying, on the carpeted floors. On my arrival the king rose, shook hands heartily.

Disappointing beginning. The king answered my questions promptly, through Sheik Hafiz but almost monosyllabically. He is, it appears, best pleased by the agricultural progress of his people. This is the textual reply to the question, "What is your majesty's greatest achievement in the years you have ruled Saudi Arabia, and what remains your greatest single problem." The king added, "I am interested in prosperity for everyone in the land."

Question number two was, "How are your relations with the ruler of Egypt? What impression was made on you by Roosevelt and Churchill?"

Ibn Saud: "The best friendship and brotherhood exists between King Farouk and myself. We consider his my country, and, at the same time, King Farouk considers this country as his own. I met both Roosevelt and

Churchill. I found them very good friends, who showed sympathy for the Arabs."

Had the king any message for Great Britain? He had. It was brief: "The road is quite clear. Palestine is an Arab country. We love peace there. Palestine must be independent. The Jews there are invaders."

The audience was over. I thanked the king for his generous hospitality. He smiled, wanly held out his hand, stood up, and I was gone.

I must see whether the Emirs Saud and Feisal are more amenable. Judging by all available accounts, the king has been in a pretty grim mood lately with advisers, guests, visitors. Today he certainly appeared out of sorts. One of his council said, "This is when we tremble . . ."

On the way to my suite, met the Syrian physician, diminutive Sheik El Ard Midhart, graduate of Paris, who had been in the king's service for twenty years. It is said that during the battles around Mecca, he took a rifle and refused to leave the king's side. He tells me that the king's right eye is perfectly well, but that the left suffered a cataract and ulcers. Madawi, the king's favourite daughter, is aged seven. His youngest boy, Megrin, is three, and Apta is 2½. In July a birth is expected in the king's household. Yes, Midhart smiled, under Moslem law it is sufficient to say, before the Imam, "I divorce you," three times, to be free of the wife. (Hollywood papers please copy.)

I gathered this morning that, the latest bride, who makes up the number of the king's official wives to the usual total of four, is twenty, handsome, and comes from the Iraqi frontier.

Spent instructive hours in the offices of the Crown Prince, and his brother, the Governor of Riyadh. I felt I was, at last, in direct touch with life in the kingdom.

Past tortuous concourse of humble people and leaders of tribes, I shuffled along the narrow roads of the market, in the centre of Riyadh. I was to watch the Crown

Prince at work. He sat, feet tucked under, on a high, crimson plush settee, facing comfortable benches occupied by representatives of the family of Rashid his father defeated and conquered forty odd years ago. Officials, on bent knee, dutifully presented various papers, many of them typed. Generally, after the Grown Prince asked for and heard an explanation of the notes, he would say, "Yes," He then damped the ring on one of his fingers in an inky pad, and set the seal of office on the document. He does not write his name, or initials, for "these might be forged." When I said, "Will you let me have an interesting specimen with your seal, please?" the Emir Saud answered, "Dictate your letter in my name, and when it is typed, I will gladly give you the souvenir." (He did.)

During an interval, between hearing requests for money, and setting the seal, the Emir turned to me and said, "Some of these papers represent millions of riyals. I am responsible for granting the requests of the people, for the spending of the money."

I asked, "Why are these tribesmen getting money from you?"

The Emir answered, "My father took all these tribes by force, so now we make them payments every year, to help them."

I was shown documents being sealed by the Emir, and learnt that a few announced the movements of nomadic tribes.

Sitting opposite the Emir Saud, across the room, was the 21-years old Emir Nazir, sixth son of the king. He presented, strictly in his turn, a report, and the Grown Prince smilingly said to me, "He is the governor of the city, so we *have* to O.K. him." In the original Arabic phrase the 'O.K.' sounded more poetic.

A succeeding report concerned the state of the royal cars in the garages. The Emir said the number of large cars was 300 and of small, nearly 150. The report explained how many were road worthy, what major repairs were in hand.

A member of the royal family now entered the chamber, and I noticed that all present, except the Crown Prince, stood till the latest arrival had sat down.

Now the chief of the royal bodyguard, Colonel Sayid Gowdet, arrived. His report stated that certain members were "absent last night from lessons." He declared that he would desire to know the reason.

Sheik Mohamed bin Dugether, head of the cables, entered, followed by the secretary to King Ibn Saud, Sheik Abdullah bin Osman, who held a number of letters just arrived from the Persian Gulf. He has an unusually agreeable face, as has my latest interpreter, Beirut educated Abdullah Balkhair, who has been twice to the U.S.A. Abdullah is a Meccan, aged 28. Head in the Palace political office of the department which deals with Arab League affairs, he interpreted for Ibn Saud part of the time during the meetings with Roosevelt and with Churchill.

Now he acted for the Crown Prince, during a formal interview. I had prepared in advance a set of questions. The Emir Saud replied, "I am responsible for everything that goes on in the country. It is a great pleasure to me to be of service to my country, and I have to be satisfied with everything I do. I hope, in the future, to do a great deal for the benefit of my people. We are paying attention to everything. We are striving to improve much, education, health, and in building many schools in the land, also in Riyadh. Already we have four schools in the city, besides more in the country. My work is my hobby, for I love my work very much."

Anything on Palestine? "Yes," answered the Prince, "that is really of great importance to the Arabs. We should like to hope that our good friends, the British government, is going to find a good solution, a solution according to the friendship between it and the Arab world. We hope the United Nations is going to find a fair solution."

And now I walked down to the offices of the Governor

of Riyadh. Could he show me the text of the report he had presented to the Crown Prince? Certainly! It said, "I should like to have the honour of telling your Royal Highness that during the past twenty-four hours nothing notable has transpired in the city, except for two items. First, a soldier from Division one, in the Army, was riding on the lorry driven by Abdul Ibrahim; the lorry was driven very fast, and the soldier dropped from the lorry, breaking his hand. We sent him to the hospital. The driver is in prison. Waiting for your answer. The police car has nothing to report in the city for 24 hours."

I said, "Emir Nazir, why do you seem so happy this morning?"⁵⁵

The Emir smilingly replied, "Because the King and the Crown Prince are in very good health." He has been governor of the city since the age of 17.

Previously poor in this respect, I was suddenly rich: I now had yet another interpreter, Khalid Mohamed al Khalifa, a Sudanese, educated in Khartoum, who spent years on the Sudanese railways.

Next I chatted again with Rushdi. He excites much curiosity, in Riyadh, for he is mostly silent, unobtrusive, and keeps a stern eye on the younger people, who tease him (at least, when he is not there, they say they do), because he is that Arab rarity, a bachelor. His official post is assistant to the deputy Foreign Minister, Sheik Yusuf Yassin; for five years he edited 'Mother of the Villages', the Mecca weekly newspaper. He had previously worked on newspapers, there and in Damascus. I have not seen Rushdi relax, except when I teased him. Otherwise the face carries a mask, of inexplicable, perpetual martyrdom. But beneath it there must be eagerly waiting for an opportunity of escape, a sly, slight demon loaded with laughter.

One of the most respected members of the royal family is the king's younger brother, the Emir Abdullah ibn Abdul Rahman. Slim, tall, with deep set, questioning brown eyes, he reads more than other members of the royal

household, and lives part of the week on the royal farm near Riyadh. The subject of part of our conversation, which he regretted very much (but not less than I) could not be carried on in English, was Palestine. "We have done our best," said the Emir. "We have sent our representatives to the conferences many times; our representatives go to England and America; we have a Legation in London and Washington. We have accepted the suggestion that the question be discussed before the General Assembly. But I have found no results whatever. What is going to happen? Do you know? The Arabs are concerned about the unity of the Arab case."

For significant seconds the Emir looked directly at me as he said, "The Arabs are going to look for a strong friend. In the future every small nation will seek strong support. The Arabs know the character of the British people more than they know the other governments and peoples. When they feel sure that Britain wishes to help them, the Arabs will help Britain, whatever the need, whatever the circumstances. But, but, if the Arabs find that Britain is not paying any attention to them and their needs, you will see the Arabs placed in the position of seeking other friends. To you the Mediterranean is vastly important. Soon the Mediterranean is going to be Arab-governed. So far Britain has been able to depend on the Arabs and they have not chosen any other country. But, if Britain refuses to help them or pay any proper attention to their needs, they will change their mind about her, look for other allies. It is not the Jews alone and their money that count, or count always."

There was a faraway glance in the Prince's oft-averted eyes as he spoke, suggesting that he preferred only part of his meaning to be orally expressed to me. The remainder I might speculate upon after I left him. Had he not said that he informed Grigg and Killearn frankly that, Britain must do something for Saudi Arabia 'so that our faces remain clean in front of our fellow Arabs?"

I gather Abdullah was given Churchill's Rolls Royce

Phantom III by Ibn Saud, after one drive in the Hooper special all weather sports model with fan, wireless, silver bowl, vacuum flasks all fitted in the centre. As Ibn Saud always travels by the side of the driver, the fan would be of service for the royal guests.*

It was time for midday prayer. All doors to the road were closed. I was asked by officials to wait. "If the king knocked now, it would be wrong, forbidden, to open the door. Yes, in every palace of the king, and of the princes, there is a mosque." I waited and accepted the young Emir Nazir's gift of a set of unused Saudi Arabian postage stamps. There is little on them in the way of compromise with the non-Arabic world.

The Imam's call sounded long

Abdullah Balkhair proves sympathetic interpreter this afternoon, as we toured the market. I asked various men what is the average price paid for camels. The answer is "Two hundred to one thousand riyals." (Riyal equals 1/6d.). One who said he is a 'middle-man' declared he gets an allowance or commission of five riyals for every camel he sells. Today he has sold fifty. How far has the latest purchaser travelled? One announces he lives 600 kilometres away. Another, Kasim, declares that he is in the market because he has little else to do, having arrived here twenty days ago to visit friends.

Kasim looks 'flashy', with frightful teeth, and I ask him how old he is. He is about thirty.

"I am twenty," answers Kasim studying a far away cloudlet a little uneasily, to the amusement of bystanders and my companions.

One of the crowd interrupts, says, "He is 26."

Kasim leaves the clouds, searches the earth, protests, wanly, "I am only twenty."

Abdullah drives me to the famous gate in Riyadh, where Ibn Saud celebrated his victories against Rashid. There remains the spot where his sword penetrated the

Sheik Hafiz explains the situation by saying "The king needs a much higher seat because of his knee injuries. That's all."

wooden door. The door is now used for entry into a prison.

I wanted to enter the prison, but Balkhair tactfully explained that, this was momentarily inconvenient. (A visitor from abroad would not be casually allowed into Dartmoor).

Later, at the back of the town, I visited the buildings described as the Post Office. Biblical indeed looks the P.M.G., Hussein Abu Boker, who came here six years ago after service in Medina and Khartoum. He has lived 34 years in the Hejaz. Once a week, he told me, the royal bus goes from Riyadh to Mecca, taking three days over the journey. Once a week there is the air service. Three of his clerks receive £9 i5s.od. a month, three get £12, his own salary is 500 riyals, or, £37 ios.od.

Just before dusk Abdul Azziz arrived to escort me to the broadcasting station, so that I could watch the staff monitoring the news bulletins. We waited about half an hour for the royal car to take us, but gave up the idea and shuffled along in sandals to the house of the chief sword-bearer and chief valet to the Emir Saud, Mansour el Saud.

We passed fifty or sixty children, who at a signal rushed into the same house, by another entrance, to fill small containers with food left on the royal table.

I had coffee with Mansour, who was smoking a cigarette. Other young men, described as sons of various royal princes, were not at ease about smoking cigarettes in my presence, and slowly walked out. The sword-bearer and I tried, on an exceptionally powerful set, to find the correct station, but failed. So we listened instead to a French broadcast from Switzerland or Belgium.

During the coffee-drinking there was much coming and going, chatter between our host and Abdul. Eventually I realised that, from a respectful distance, they were studying the size of my head, for the host (who on public occasions appears with sword, dagger and pistol) was determined that I should accept, as a

souvenir of my visit to his home, a set of hand-worked coloured silk skull caps, with gold braid. My protests proving unavailing, I consented to take these lovely indoor hats- Walked back wearily to pack, for early tomorrow I leave for Jedda, Cairo, home. The dream is nearly over.

Sunday, April 20th.

Sad farewells from the staff and friends in the Emir Saud's suite before I motored to the aerodrome. Sheik Hafiz presented, in the name of the king, an inscribed gold wristlet watch. For a moment I was childishly disappointed, for I remembered that after the royal banquet Stokes and K.B., both received (wrapped in newspapers from Mecca) solid gold daggers. Then I decided it was better to have a reliable watch than a dagger, however valuable. The dagger might be useful for a showy fancy dress party, but the watch would be a serviceable memento. I wound up the watch, it began to tick and I discovered, to my pleasant surprise, the important word, 'automatic', near the royal signature on the back. The other (self-winding) watch, a memento of 1930 from Penang, I put away in my pocket, out of sight, and felt it was like yesterday's discarded lover.

Aloussi and others said the staff were grateful for my "simplicity" and kindness. I could only reply that, I was deeply touched by their tireless solicitude for my every want and comfort, and that I can never forget them. All paraded outside the palace.

I should like to see this gathering again. But will I?

From Riyadh to Jedda the Dakota behaved pleasantly, the great heat notwithstanding, and that is more than I can say about the banality of the loud-voiced, thick, white-skinned occupants who had boarded the aircraft at Dammam. At Jedda I was met and driven to the government hostel, where Fuad Hamza has his headquarters.

In the afternoon I took a car placed at my disposal, and called on Mohammed A. Alireza, president of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The entrance to his establishment was not particularly imposing, but once inside, I realised why Sheik Hafiz had asked me to visit his friends. Mohammed is bearded, about 28 or 30, strikingly handsome, tall, big-built, and speaks faultless English. I had already met him, on my first visit to Jedda, for I had seen the venerable looking head of this 94-years old firm of bankers, shippers, pilgrimage brokers, Haji Yusuf Z. Alireza, of Haji Abdullah Alireza and Co., and his associates at the aerodrome. Haji Yusuf's brother, Haji Abdullah Alireza, is father of Mohammed and of his brother, Ali, who stopped us along the desert highway outside Jedda aerodrome. Haji Abdulla was civil governor of Jedda during three regimes, and negotiated the surrender of the sacred port to Ibn Saud 23 years ago.

Discussing trade Mohammed said that shipments from the United States took about 17 to 25 days, from Great Britain 20 or more. "But your orders can be booked now for 'probable' delivery in 1949 or worse." Mohammed's brother, Sheik Ali Alireza, looks after the company's motor car business, showrooms of Stockholm standard, workshops, assembly plant, and offices, equipped with surprising thoroughness.

The remaining member of the trio, who direct the company's affairs, Ahmed Alireza, son of Haji Yusuf, kindly gave me a description of the annual pilgrimage.

"Provided you can afford it, the pilgrimage is compulsory," Ahmed explained. About fifty to sixty thousand arrive every year from abroad, and with pilgrims from the state itself, the total rises to between 150,000 to 200,000. In the old days they came four months before the pilgrimage. Sometimes they arrived during Ramadan, the fasting month, went to Mecca and Medina, to perform Omra. First they went seven times round the Kaaba, sacred shrine in Mecca in which is to be found the vast black stone reputedly received by Abraham

from Gabriel, and later, seven times round the mountains Safa and Marouah.

Pilgrims from abroad have to put on the towel dress, eh-ram, so soon as they land at an Arabian port, the idea being that all men are equal in the sight of God. So soon as the eh-ram is put on, the pilgrims must not cut their hair, their nails, must not sleep with their wives (who often accompany the pilgrims on the journey), must not cover their heads. Many pilgrims wear two towels round the body and lower parts. In the event of a pilgrim transgressing, by cutting his hair or nails, he has to sacrifice a sheep and present it to the poor.

On arriving at Jedda in launches pilgrims are received by the agent, who takes their documents and escorts them to hotels or houses of the Mutauf. Those already wearing the eh-ram go to Mecca, others travel the next day to Medina, where the Mosque of the Prophet contains the tomb of Mohammed, who died on June 7, 632. There are four means of transport, according to the pilgrim's means, camel, lorry, omnibus, private cars. The pilgrimage lasts a night and two days, and food has to be taken for the journey. Nowadays ninety-nine per cent travel by car, in one and a half hours along macadamised roads. Having done the walk round the Kaaba, the pilgrims proceed till the eighth day of the month of Alhaj, to Arafat, the mountain, 16 miles away, where most of them sleep two nights in tents about the mountain side. They remain the ninth day on the mountain, where they pray, read, and also say private prayers. If the pilgrim spends five minutes or even one second on the mountain, he has performed the pilgrimage. The theme is that Moslems from all the world should meet and discuss ideas together. The mountain has to be left by midnight. In the case of those who have been delayed, the pilgrimage is considered effective provided it be performed before sunrise on the tenth day. Watches are carefully adjusted two or three minutes every day. The pilgrims proceed from holy Arafat to sleep, about two or

three in the morning, on Mousdalifah. They go on to Muinnah, before dawn. It depends largely on transport facilities. The most important rite is, of course, the throwing of seven stones from the mountain, at Satan. The stones are carried easily from Mousdalifah. On the morning of the tenth day the people go to Mecca, for the walk round the Kaaba. Thence, the seven walks around the mountain of Safa and Maroua, in Mecca. That concludes the pilgrimage. The pilgrims sleep two nights generally at Muinnah and rest two days. On the third day they return to Mecca.

It was dusk but Ahmed had not yet said his evening prayers. I mentioned this to him. He thanked me, retired to a small alcove at the side of the office, and made his devotions. Mohammed explained (guiltily) that he would do so later.

Ali, Mohammed's brother, is honorary adviser to the Emir Feisal, whom he has accompanied to all recent international conferences. He speaks faultlessly the language he learnt in an American boarding school. Since the war his firm has delivered in Saudi Arabia about 800 lorries. Assembling is done by Arabs, and only one Englishman, his (Moslem) secretary, is on the staff. Monthly wages range from 50 riyals(^3 ios.od.) for boys, to 1,250. After 7½ hours, the men receive overtime at one and a half times the normal rate.

All laughed when I asked if, perhaps, he had a few films for my Kodak. He promptly promised to let me have a camera loaded with films, and also, if I chose to use it, a Cinekodak, with ordinary as well as colour films. A car and chauffeur would be at my disposal. What sort of car? Would I like the loan of a Lincoln Zephyr, twelve cylinder giant, selling here with wireless for about £800? When a button is pressed, the doors open automatically, and lights at once shine on the pedals below the dashboard.

I studied the deserted offices of the Pilgrimage opposite the hotel, various legations, pathetic poor youths dawd-

ling with goats. Here, occasionally, a cigarette is to be seen in an Arab's mouth, for the Wahhabi spirit is not so strong.

In the house flies in the dining room were in particularly good form, the mosquitoes had a day out in the bedroom, I spent hours scratching my ankles and wrists, and sleep was impossible because of the howl of hordes of dogs.

Monday, April 21st.

Wrote much last night, with new Sheaffer presented by Ali. It works for months without a refill, does not leak in aircraft, looks light. I remembered, when I gratefully accepted the pen, that I had been trying for months to secure a cheaper and heavier looking edition in London, at fashionable shops, direct from the makers and from newsagents. The makers forgot to acknowledge my letters.

Visited the British Legation's staid (unenthusiastic) chancery, with ancient wooden stairs, rooms popping out on all sides, and Arab servants appearing like jacks in the box. Much is to be said for tradition, but, the impression left by the building is that it might well be blown up and replaced by something serviceable for the staff and visitors. It looks, is, decadent.

Thence, along the markets, lanes, and places of interest, to take cine pictures. The boys filmed splendidly, but now and then the older people objected. At one o'clock lunched with our Minister and Mrs. (now Lady) Grafftey-Smith. With them was an eye physician from Moorfields Hospital, English-born despite his Italian name. The hostess is ill, must go soon to hospital and I doubt if she will be able to stay here for long, as it is a trying climate even for a healthy man. Smith says he does not go often to Riyadh as he is in touch herewith the Emir Feisal. When I speak sadly, and in detail, of our endless retreat in Arabia, and, of unchallenged American monopoly, Smith superciliously suggests, "It does not

matter as much as appears on the surface, for we are liked and respected."

Visit to the Egyptian consulate, to see about re-entry visa. I had not counted on the superb efficiency of the head of the protocol department in the Saudi Arabian Foreign Office here, Zirikli. When I showed my passport to the Egyptian Charge d'Affaires, he at once sent it to a consular officer. But, it promptly came back, with the remark, "The visa is already stamped in." Thus the charming note to the Legation written by Husny Bey, King Farouk's principal secretary, was not needed.

Good news: the international conference delegates to Jedda, who are 'doing' the port and considering changes in health regulations, will fly back to Cairo tomorrow morning, and there is room for me in the machine.

Mosquitoes tonight maintain their pressure, the flies have multiplied since luncheon, and the howling dogs are determined on making my last evening in Arabia memorable. Farewell tonight to my Arabic teacher, little Saleh Awbood, who is the assistant in the office of the brother of Sheik Hamid al Suleiman, Finance Minister. Saleh runs the office for the brother, who trades in imported U.S. goods.

Tuesday, April 22nd.

Everything about Americans seems greater, more masterly, vigorous; their cars dwarf British productions, and their diplomatic missions are housed on a comparably superior scale.

Poor little Britain's chancery in Jedda is, of course, historic. Here once worked Lawrence, and Storrs. The real Arabian air about the architecture is not to be denied, but, in a climate like Jedda's, the American style is preferable. I found frigid politeness yesterday.

In the American chancery today, the sight of a stranger from Europe instantly produced the kind of welcome I wish we could ourselves offer more frequently. First to

greet me was Mr. T. Andrew Galambos, a Third Secretary, formerly an Army officer, who at once took me to his private quarters. I do not drink at eleven o'clock and so we sought, in vain, a bottle of milk, in his ice-box near the sitting room. I did not see or hear one fly in the flat, the fans were silently revolving overhead and the handsome, transparent, curtains set off shelves of varied literature and large batches of classical records. Pistols here and there on a table, combined to produce an excellent first act for a play on Arabia.

The United States Minister, Mr. R. Rives Childs, a cheery little man, with shirt-sleeves rolled up, working at a typewriter by his side, received me without appointment or fuss. He has been here eight months but seems to know far more of trends, as well as complexities, than most people with whom I have spoken. He has written books, been a journalist, entered the diplomatic service at the same time as my old friend George Tait, Senior Counsellor at the United States Embassy at the Court of St. James's.* During the first Great War Childs was in Intelligence, but so disarming is his manner that today one might well have assumed him to be no more than a youngish Second Secretary. Childs spoke of the people who hopefully imagined in the grisly days of 1940 that Britain might, perhaps, survive a German invasion. I defended my old friend, the staunch Catholic Joseph P. Kennedy, for sincerely if misguidedly risking the much-attacked observation in 1940 that, if the Germans landed on our shores, resistance would last three or four weeks. Today anyone in his senses knows this to be true, whatever puerile facades a false sense of pride or of patriotism might induce.

Childs said that in June 1940, when he was busy collating intelligence reports from naval sources about our chances of survival, he went to see an old Irishman near Washington. The wit declared, "As sure as I am

Now Consul General in surrealist nalace in Algeria.

living, that madman is doomed to tragedy." Ghilds commented, "I am not a sceptic: my faith gives me a great deal of confidence."

Galambos drove me to the guest-quarters where I packed, distributed largesse, and raced back with my multitude of luggage to the airport. The Arab dress was carried in a large white bundle, resembled a country woman's Monday washing from the big house. In the almost deserted streets the dust was racing towards me. And along the unmarked tracks we went as fast as possible with the American Legation's official 'pouch'. The heat was intense, the flies were swarming for an attack, and the sand descended confidentially into my shoes.

At Jedda aerodrome, as I waited about for the medical men to finish their seven course luncheon and listen to almost as many speeches, Zirikli was paying the courtesies. I was indebted to the port 'policeman', Osman Horeb, native of Mecca, aged 18. He took pity on me, for I had had no food, having arrived at the aerodrome at the directed hour, long, long before the machine took off. He produced a vast tin of biscuits (from London). They came from the aerodrome shop, where travellers may purchase tins of jam, orange juice, and sundry American preparations.

I greeted the Emir Mansour (before he inspected hundreds of soldiers who parade for his arrival from Riyadh) and six hours later, landed in Cairo. The doctors were shepherded into a corner of the customs office, for by courtesy of the Egyptians, their hosts, they travelled to Arabia without visas or passports.

Dr. Montagu Travers Morgan, M.C., principal Medical Officer of Health, Port of London, graduate of Liverpool, told me he had been in Saudi Arabia to examine facilities for examination of pilgrims on arrival and departure. He and his colleagues desire to amend the operation of the pilgrim clauses in the International Sanitary Convention, 1926. The delegates will make recommendations to the World Health organisation

under United Nations.

Cairo's noise and dust notwithstanding, it is pleasing to be in Shepheards again, to enjoy baths, hot running water, the essential etceteras. Splendid welcome from the receptionists, porters, night staff, lift 'boys'. They came towards me from all parts of the lounge. I cannot see this happening in a West-End establishment of similar status.

Wednesday, April 23rd.

Feelings in Cairo against British medical men were described graphically to me by Dr. Hosny Farid, whom I first met long ago in London. He studied for years there to secure his F.R.C.S., London, fell ill, and was failed. In the end he won, and then "just to show them," repeated the triumph in Edinburgh. He now has a busy private practice, lectures at the Fuad University. His bride-to-be is twenty years younger than Farid, "but in the East this does not matter," (says Farid).

We spoke of the minor sensation caused in Egypt by the news that the dinner that was to have been given to their colleagues in the Faculty of Medicine by two distinguished British visitors, Sir Henry Tidy and Sir Gordon Gordon-Taylor, was cancelled suddenly. It seems the newspaper 'Akher Sa'a' began the campaign against attendance at the meal by Egyptians.

For an hour and a half, while armed gendarmes guarded various parts of the long corridor, I chatted with the Emir Feisal in his suite at Shepheards, Sheik Ali Alireza interpreting. Feisal is off in a day or two to Lake Success, for discussions on Palestine. He is accompanied by Sheik Ibrahim and other members of the suite. Cairo newspapers have been devoting much attention to the Emir's arrival. During the conversation various Arab notables sat with us.

The Emir said, "We have been friendly with the British. If you see any of us looking harshly, or hear us

speaking harshly, it is not because we feel that we are not justified in our cause. First it is impossible for the Arabs to give up any of their rights, secondly the Arabs are disappointed in Great Britain because recently they have sought the just aid of the British and they have found Britain's doors closed." After a chat with a Lebanese diplomatic dignitary who came to join the circle, the Emir continued, "When we visited Great Britain, hoping for aid and help, we found no response. In spite of that the Arabs are still hopeful. We know that we are right, and right will always prevail. With God's will we shall reach our goal."⁵⁵

Expressing sympathy with the hopes of the Jewish people the Emir said, "The Jewish race is being driven about because a group of Zionists have taken matters into their own hands. For purely personal interests they are pushing the Jewish race around. Consequently the group of Zionists will abolish one of the ancient races of the world. I think it is the duty of the world to save this race from the Zionists."⁵⁵

Assad Bey Daghir, director of the press division of the Arab League, agreed with what the Emir said, and a nod of approval was also made by another member of the audience, Takieddine Solh, president of the Press Syndicate in Lebanon.

This evening first of long discussions in my room with notable friend of King Farouk's, Karim Tabet Bey. Farouk, he says, was most displeased when Killearn used to sit during audience with his long feet out-stretched, with emphasis on comfort. He felt that Killearn made up his mind to 'sit on' the king from the opening of his reign. Tabet feels that Farouk is popular because he is the first Egyptian king born in Egypt. He has always had pro-English feelings, but, is first a good Egyptian. He is the first Egyptian monarch to speak fluent Arabic, either literary or colloquial. He is the first Egyptian king who does not speak Turkish. King Farouk has no Turkish accent in his speech.

Tabet explained the pro-Italian leanings in the Court, Much play has been made in certain newspapers in London concerning the king's Italian friends, including the famous barber. Tabet said King Farouk's grandfather, Ismail Pasha, went into exile and was received with great courtesy by King Victor's father, Umberto I. He put at his disposal three palaces in Naples. Umberto decided that, so long as Ismail remained there he should be treated as a reigning sovereign. Farouk's father, Fuad, then a child, was brought up in the Italian court by Umberto's wife, who treated Fuad just as if he were a brother of Victor Emmanuel III, now living in exile in Alexandria.* Fuad studied in the military academy in Turin. Years passed. War was declared, in which Egypt did *not* take a nominal part. Farouk had three Italian servants in his royal household, who had nothing to do with politics or public affairs. One was Pouli Bey, a private secretary, the other was the barber Pedro. Today only Egyptians could be given titles, and Pouli was naturalised. The third Italian was an electrician. All these people had been in the palace since Fuad's time. Pouli was with the king. Killearn wanted the Italians to leave, but Farouk remembered all that the Italians had done for his father and for his grandfather. Tabet declared that Killearn never asked the king to send away these three Italians.

Tabet also said the king noticed that following Nahas Pasha's return to power, "after Killearn's notorious ultimatum of February 4, 1942," two important Italians were freed from a concentration camp. He did not see, therefore, why his three Italians should leave the palace. Tabet dealt warmly with the allegation that Farouk does not like English people and does not mix with them. "In fact, many British service people used to attend the king's parties, Tedder down. The king often went to parties at their private quarters. The king was often to

* Who died in 1948.

be seen in public restaurants with English people. All the British Commanders-in-Chief, Army, Navy, and Air Force, were guests of the king."

Farouk became king at 16. He tries now to complete his studies by reading and writing. He always has six or eight books by his bedside, in English, French and Arabic, on sundry subjects. Three or four times a week he goes to Shepheard's, late in the evening, and "never forgets to go to the library bookstall to purchase a new volume."

Thursday, April 24th.

Alarming report on state budget presented in Egyptian Chamber of Deputies today; it contains depressing figures. Eighty per cent of the people are illiterate, nearly ninety per cent of the university students are unfit for military service, the average income per head stands at £12 a year, 1.43 per cent landowners possess half the cultivable area of Egypt, the current wage in industry of £42 a year is insufficient to maintain one man, let alone raise a family.

One of our critics cried to me today: "You have been here since 1882; Arabi, who demanded 'Egypt for the Egyptians/ and burnt Alexandria before the bombardment by the British fleet under Admiral Sir Charles Seymour of July 11, 1882, was routed, and exiled to Ceylon. Gladstone and several Liberals then wished you to evacuate Egypt, but others remembered that Disraeli had secured the greatest interest in the Suez Canal by buying for £4,000,000 the shares of the Khedive Ismail. Half a century ago Sir Edward Grey told Parliament and, Atlantic Charters notwithstanding, many folk still think today—'Any attempt to encroach upon the Nile Valley would be regarded as an unfriendly act.' Is that right?"⁵⁵

Realised in conversation with unusual young Egyptian Copt how little some of us know about the value of

precious stones, or even the order of their worth. Thousands of visitors to Egypt have passed the shop kept meticulously by Mansoor at Shepheards. His son, Edmond, aged 24, today gave me a splendid lecture on antiques and stones here, amid civilisation's heirlooms. He spoke modestly, and with infectious assurance. There was no hesitancy in his phrases, and an affection for the shining subject that communicated itself to me. The real test for turquoise, only pure Egyptian stone, is the correct colour, which is generally ultramarine blue, without variations. In ancient Egypt they met the cornelian, amethyst, emerald, garnet, crystal, and of course lots of semi-precious stones like red, yellow or brown jasper, green feldspar. The most important indigenous Egyptian stone now was the peridot.

His father had had the shop for 35 years, and previously worked on the railways as an engineer. Edmond came into the business at 17, when he wanted to learn all about hieroglyphics. So he spent a year at Liverpool University under Professor Aylward Blackman, the Egyptologist.

Farouk often comes to the shop. Six weeks ago he arrived with two Egyptian friends. Edmond was there alone and he found it not only a privilege but a joy to do business with his sovereign, for "he really is a collector and lover of antiques."⁵ The best pieces they sold to Farouk, for thousands of pounds, were eleven Tell el Amarnas. These represented the reign of King Akhnaton, three thousand years ago. They were small sculptures of King Akhnaton and his wife, in limestone, still in a superb state of preservation and came from Tell el Amarna. The collection, 105 pieces, was found by an Arab who sold it to his father. In this his father sank his fortune. "He could not buy the collection at one time, so over 18 years, he secured two or three pieces every few months."

Lord Moyne was a regular customer, and came to the Shepheards museum two or three days before he died.

Who can tell off-hand how many kinds of precious stones there are? This teaser is worth trying at Christmas parties. Order, according to Mansoor: 1, emeralds; 2, diamonds; 3, rubies; 4, sapphires. These are the *only* precious stones. Enjoyed his clean phrase, "If I don't like a customer, I make the price so high that he can't buy a gem. If I do, I reduce the price."

Most official residences in Cairo are large, but, few are so imposing outwardly as the headquarters of the Arab League. It is worthy of its place as the centre for creating colourful, and historically important policy, affecting not only Arab millions, the Muslims, and indeed the Western world.

Azzam, the Secretary General, received me here for the first time. The telephone rang incessantly. Conversations were protracted. Lesser fishes marched in, and out, knocked at the door, interrupted, and made cohesive thinking difficult for Azzam, and the visit almost worthless to me. But, the views Azzam expressed with firmness, are the result of feeling. "We cannot tell the Palestine Arabs, 'Get out, for this country is necessary to the Jews.' We cannot, moreover, say to them, 'You have to leave, or become absorbed in a Jewish country.' The displaced persons problem is human, and, international. But we must solve it on an international basis, and the Arabs should co-operate.

"The Jews," said Azzam, "wanted the best of both worlds, to be a race, and, a religion. They wanted, by corruption, to encourage immigration into Palestine. The extremists said they had reorganised Palestine and the Arabs should get out; the moderates were willing to face *a. fait accompli*, and allow the Arabs to remain, on Arabterritory,"

In the Arab view the Jews should occupy one third of the seats in Palestine's Parliament according to their numbers now, and, one third seats in the government. Government should decide, on a democratic basis, the future of immigration. The Jews' autonomy, religion,

language, communal interests should all be guaranteed. They would feel they possessed a cultural and spiritual home. "There will still be many difficulties, but this is the only solution of a problem that looks at present like being permanent. If in a tiny country like Palestine you build two opposition forces, heated by race and religion, you are building for war. That surely is not in the interest of the Jew."

In the past the Arabs had always protected the Jew, because he had been considered weak. The property of Jewish people was always safe. It was even considered cowardly to attack Jewish property. An Arab who molested a Jewish woman or girl would be dealt with by his fellows, promptly, effectively. Persecution of Jews had not been known in Arab states. It was the Zionist who was producing the fighting Jew, strong as the Arab, or stronger. Thus the Arab was being challenged. He felt he had to challenge the million Jews in Arab states. The Jew felt safe over the challenge, because he thought he had 60 or 100 thousand Hagana men.

"If the Jews go on, the Arab states will stand together accepting the challenge to—a world conflagration."⁵⁵ If there was war the Jews would be exterminated in the Arab countries. "I have no animosity towards the Jews, who, remember, are our cousins."

Azzam speaks his mind carefully about his detractors, who describe him one moment as being 'in Britain's pocket,'⁵ and, in the next, as 'a dream-fighter.'⁵ But is he well-informed?

Omar Azzam, his eldest son, took me to my car in the grounds, where a number of Egyptians and visitors from abroad, crowded eagerly to see the Secretary-General before he leaves for crazily named Lake Success. Omar said he was planning to go to an American university, and explained why he preferred not to study in Britain, in 1948. He wants to go to America. I suggested that it might be more fun to study in a country where Arabs were treated as equals with whites, for

colour consciousness had not, with us, yet reached grave proportions. Young Azzam saw the point and said he would be grateful for any help.

This afternoon, in my suite, second discussion with Tabet Bey, about King Farouk. "The king tries to get his mind back on reading and exploits his natural sense of curiosity,⁵⁵ vast numbers of appointments, and extensive reading of documents notwithstanding. He gave annual party to the best five graduates in every faculty in every university, presenting book and signed pictures of himself to every guest. Once Farouk said, with feeling, "Most of you are not aware that you have been more lucky than I was." Ramsay MacDonald made a similar observation about the (economic) tragedy that prevented his membership of university. "You had the opportunity to continue your studies, I did not have that advantage. I had to become king at sixteen or seventeen, but I am trying to make up for the loss by reading much. Remember, a man cannot say, when he leaves the university, 'I have finished my studies'."

Karim explained, with illustrations, that when something displeased the people, young or old, they marched to the palace and shouted, as occasion warranted, "Long live the king, protector of science,⁵⁵ or "Long live the king, protector of the constitution.⁵⁵ The king really disliked interfering, did not do so needlessly, but, if he did not take action over, say, an error of judgment by the government, people immediately asked, "What is the king doing?⁵⁵ The monarch went about a lot. He attended public restaurants, but not cabarets and night clubs. He would often be seen in the grill room of Shepheards* or, at the Auberge de Pyramides. The relaxation was also welcome, for he had missed the average young man's lighter years. It enabled the king to study people he did not meet officially. He saw Britons

Where a cabaret turn was presented every evening during my visit.

and Americans who did not otherwise enter the royal circle. Would anyone credit the visit by Queen Mary to a public restaurant? But, who was shocked by the attendance there of Princess Elizabeth? Farouk was only 27, represented the new generation typified in the Orient by the evolution begun by Kemal Attaturk.

"The king cannot forget another important fact. that Egypt is a link between East and West. He is no partisan of abrupt methods. He wants to see evolution, but, it has to be begun. And so, when the university graduates⁵ parties were introduced, he decreed that if a girl was among the five winners she should be admitted. Now tens of girls attend the graduates' parties at the palace." Karim mentioned yet another innovation, the party at Abdin for the national troupe of artists. The best actors had been honoured, made beys.

The monarch had inherited from Ismail Pasha the conviction that "all hours were the same." Thus, if an idea came to him at three in the morning, he rang for the a.d.c. on duty, or the chamberlain in charge, gave the orders, and added, "Don't forget to do this tomorrow." Then the king would return to the private study near his bedroom. People seeing his arriving about 10.30 for a light meal at a restaurant wondered whence he had come. The answer often was, the office. One rule the king had made, and kept rigorously: he did not go to bed before working through all the correspondence, and giving decisions (or comments) on all papers submitted, from members of the government, cables from embassies and legations abroad, and messages from the Grand Chamberlain, together with newspaper cuttings. The papers, in a sealed box the size of a suitcase, are examined by the king himself.

The king alone chose the books he desired, from lists submitted by librarians, in English, French, Italian, and, of course, Arabic. The volumes covered literature, science, biography, atomic warfare. By his bedside were always to be found the latest books, which he liked to

'dip into', one after the other. The private library occupied many rooms in a separate wing in the palace where he also had his own study. If for any reason the librarian should not be present, the king was able to find the wanted volume by examining a miniature, specially produced, catalogue.

Hobbies? The king has probably the best military museum in this part of the East. But Karim agreed that, while a rich monarch could buy everything he wished Farouk also worked in the museum. He had all the modern rifles as well as ancient revolvers, carefully catalogued. He was fond of carrying out chemical experiments, one of which cost him a burnt hand two years ago. Firearms? He was considered a good shot with either hand, with revolver or rifle. Some time ago he was at a private party, when people were firing at a lamp. He borrowed the lipstick belonging to Miss Margaret Gilruth, the Australian, formerly on the staff of Mr. R. G. Casey, Minister of State in Cairo, and placing the object on a table, split it in two at 15 feet. To enrich his collections, and to discuss latest developments as well as unusual discoveries, he maintained correspondence with stamp and coin experts all over the world.

Appetite? I had heard stories. It seems Farouk eats only two dishes at luncheon, and dinner, is fond of meat, does not touch alcohol, drinks only lemonade, 'citronade' or, may the Yanks be forgiven, coco-cola.

Farouk seldom smokes cigars before the evening, and prefers (humanly and intelligibly) only the best Cubans. He goes to the Mosque every Friday. His tailor, an Englishman, lives at the palace. The man kept a shop, made the royal suits, until Farouk said, "Close the shop and come to work in the palace." The nanny to the children was English. Two barbers accompany the king on all his journeys. He liked to be the best informed man, and was unconventional in his method. On D-Day he rang the American military attache. The conversation

began, "It is me," The colonel asked, "Who are you?" The answer came, "It is Farouk. Have you heard the news? D-Day has started." That was how the M.A. received the most momentous report in 1944.

We turned to more delicate problems. Until 1914 the wife of the Khedive (viceroy of Egypt) had no title. During the lifetime of King Fuad the picture of his consort never appeared in public. It was not fanaticism, but a question of reputation. Now things were changed and photographs of the queen were published and none thought there was anything wrong about the new procedure.

Tabet and I did not discuss reports current about the differences between king and queen. *

On first floor of Shepheards hotel discovered horde of officials and police outside suites of Emir Feisal. I told Ali that I wished to have a serious talk with the Prince about his career.

Friday, April 25th.

Royal dignitaries are not all eager to provide a neat, compact autobiographical sketch. In the category must be included the shy, diffident, Emir Feisal, but today he remained under fire for over an hour. He told me, mainly through Ali Alireza, that he was born in Riyadh, then already freed by his father from the Rashid dynasty, 41 years ago. They lacked "any regular school, so had a special tutor in the palace, for Arabic literature and religion." Now, of course, there is a school in Riyadh for princes, and schools for the rest of the population. The sons of Rashid, whom Ibn Saud defeated, attend the princes' school. Feisal was by the side of his father during the battles with Al Rashid outside Mecca. Ibn Saud was in Mecca a year and a half before the arrival of Feisal; Jedda was still unconquered. Ibn Saud asked Feisal to go to the front outside Jedda. He did so, and

Divorced in 1948.

few days later, twenty-one years ago, the opponents surrendered—to Feisal. Ibn Saud asked his son to remain as viceroy of the Hejaz. He is still in office.

Feisal became Saudi Arabia's first Foreign Minister in 1930, reorganised the department till then named the Bureau of Foreign Affairs. His other tasks include control over the wanderings of nomadic tribes in the land.

In 1919, aged 13, he undertook his first journey abroad, to England. Since then he had visited Europe eight times and the United States on four occasions. Asphalt roads appealed to him, and he laid out the first in the kingdom. He had built new government offices in Mecca, Jedda, Ta'if, largely because he carried away, as an impressionable boy, an "immortal" picture of destruction in civilised Europe.

Rising early, the Prince does "his home tasks"⁵⁵ in the palace and then travels to his office to look after matters of state. From midday till five or six he receives callers; whether in office or palace "he is always approachable to the people." And when state duties permit, Feisal resumes the role of father who enjoys playing with his children. Prince Bandar, aged five, is an obvious favourite. There is a telephone line between the palace in Riyadh and the palace in Ta'if, but most dispatches are sent by (strictly private) telegraph. Feisal's favourite saying to children and officials? "Above all be honest."⁵⁵ He adds, "Be truthful, regardless of everything . . ." Feisal's favourite quotation from the Quoran? "Forgive whenever possible, be always just, and avoid the untrustworthy."⁵⁵ There is little time for riding, hunting and swimming. A sense of destiny in Feisal's eyes is evident to the ordinary beholder. He is a man to meet. But I realise the insurmountable, needless barrier that separates men unable to speak fluently in the same language, which means nine aspiring statesmen out of ten in the United States and Western Europe.*

I think of the Berlin and Vienna tragedies, where language turns British, Russian and American fellow-officers into suspicious

Ali said Feisal could be described as a father of education in Saudi Arabia, for through his intervention, students had been sent to the U.S.A. The happy-faced Sheik Ibrahim, whose family came originally from India, joined Feisal's staff 15 years ago, having previously been engaged in commerce. Ibrahim is a member of the Royal Advisory Council of the Hejaz, over which the Emir presides in Mecca.

Long chat this afternoon with hilarious Bahrein island pearl merchant, Sheik Abdul Rahman Elgosaibi, who is here on his way to England, France and Switzerland. He told me he has telephone at his home and office, and that tiny Bahrein boasts 1,500 cars! When he left Nejd for Bahrein he was "very poor," The most important pearl fisheries existed in Bahrein, others in order of significance to experts being in southern Arabia, Venezuela, Australia and Yemen. The divers in Bahrein worked without machinery or special suits. They place stone weighing 10 pounds between the toes. That helps them to go down quickly. When they reach "the near bottom," the stone is removed by someone working in the boat immediately above. The man then dives, remaining below, thanks to a clip held over the nose, for one and a half minutes to two.

"Sometimes the divers find many shells, often none at all. They go down from 30 to 50 feet. At times the divers meet sharks. In a whole season we succeed in escaping with but two or three accidents. Special regulations for the protection of divers have been provided by the Sultan of Bahrein. The boats often belong to a company of ten, or maybe of sixty. Before selling the shells taken from the sea, the divers 'take out' their expenses, food. A fifth of the value goes to the captain of the boat. The divers are allowed three parts out of five.

and embarrassed satellites of interpreters, generally men who have failed at all else in life, and, therefore, in their old age know more about everything than unsoured specialists.

"Often divers wait till next morning, for opening of shell is easier then. Sometimes the shells cover the size of two hands, at others only the thumb. In a big shell may be found tiny pearls, in a tiny shell big pearls. During the war the trade ceased abruptly."

Tea this afternoon with the Nachats, Leilah, her English nurse and charming relatives of Hassan's. Arabic here, English there, French the remainder of the time: the host was equally at ease in all three. Patricia showed me side of residence used during the cooler time of the year and also that in the warm months. For the hot season they all go to the residence in Alexandria. The bathrooms and nurseries here are the answer to a dream. I wonder, however, when, if ever, Leilah will appreciate her good fortune.

Hassan agrees that, if Egypt and the Middle East do not tackle the problems of poverty, hunger, under-nourishment, in good time, the Romanov butchery will seem to historians to have been a Devon Pleasant Sunday Afternoon party by comparison with events in Cairo and other cities.

Saturday, April 26th.

Tabet Bey tells me, in resumed conversation, of King Farouk's stay in 1943 in a British military hospital outside Kassassin, following an accident on the road. Farouk refused special accommodation, and was grateful for attention by two British nurses by day and two by night. Some of the male staff, in uniforms, were subsequently invited to stay at Abdin Palace, and all who had looked after their royal patient were decorated. Tabet told me (what others have confirmed) that "in a short while the royal visitor earned the respect and affection of staff and fellow patients."

Royal courtier's version of much publicised 'incident' following which member of the staff at Shepherds departed suddenly from Cairo. He says that a colonel,

to whom the king was grateful for services in the hospital, was reported to have arrived at the hotel. The king and the (former Italian) court official Pouli, went to the hotel. At the enquiry desk the official asked a member of the staff whether the colonel was there. He (it is alleged) replied, "I don't know." Pouli continued, "Show me the list of guests and I will tell you."⁵⁵ After more discussion, Pouli showed his visiting card to prove that he was a member of the royal household. Someone near the two advised the official, "He is with the king: I should. . . ." The official, it is alleged, answered, "What can the king do against me?"⁵⁵ The king was sitting in the lounge, near by. Shortly afterwards a police officer invited the gentleman to leave the enquiry desk. (Another version is that he went home and thence to the police station). And the Swiss colony in Egypt despatched the offender home. The charge? Tabet said it was, Lese Majesty.

Tabet's grandfather and father still work on their famous paper, *Al Mokatta*. He became Press Attache to King Fuad in 1929, was made Bey three years ago, and recently was promoted in the order to first-class. Karim's journeys, before the Hitler War, as special correspondent in Europe, are well in evidence, thanks to collection of good pictures of the notables he interviewed, Hitler and Mussolini, Benes and all the others. Mme. Tabet speaks good English, is dark haired, slim and looks French. Their charming daughter sang and danced for us after regally served luncheon in their flat. Tabet looks 35, must be older.

Sunday, April 27th.

I filled up detailed form in post office near Shepherds Hotel, for conversation with Lilian in London, and paid about £3 for the three-minute call. I asked for the call to be transferred to hotel. The queue to reach the gentlemen behind the counter was long. But, fatuous Poona

sahibs⁵ complaints notwithstanding, I enjoyed courtesy from all the officials. The courtesy, as ever, followed their prompt recognition of the fact that I thought of them as equals

Husny Bey recalled to me today interesting sentence out of Farouk's broadcast to his people in 1945, during Ramadan, "The poor are not responsible for their poverty; this responsibility lies with the rich. Give the poor their due without their asking for it."

Moreover, I am reminded that, after ascending the throne, the young ruler decided that a third of the sum allotted for the household, £50,000, should be spent on social reform. Small but significant.

Surprising, disturbing, to pick up telephone, and within a minute to hear clearly and recognise a voice two and a half thousand miles away. Charming sounds.

Noticed in hotel grounds that, despite regulations, youthful British army officers appear dressed in half-civilian style, with khaki shirts and collars and ties. The Americans, of course, appear in army uniform. Maybe they are all privileged members of the diplomatic mission.

Monday, April 28th.

Husny sent me invitation to the distribution of prizes by King Farouk at Fuad University. Contrasts between Orient and Occident are not difficult to find, in a flash, but, the lighter approach is easy for I see—one English woman, in an audience of thousands who crowd the palatial, really magnificent auditorium beneath a vast dome. Red curtains are drawn aside and Farouk enters amid the flashing of dozens of cameras, held by peregrinating photographers only a few feet away. There were loud cries of "Welcome, majesty," ('Malik' is the melodious Arabic for king) and the young monarch suggested to me an even line between dignity, pride, and affection, for the successful students. Other cries

included, "Long live Farouk, supporter of education," and, "Long live Farouk, king of the valley of the Nile."

I had a few words with the acting Rector of Al Azhar University, Sheik Mohamed Abdul Latif diraz, venerable, wiry, happy about his pupils. He has about 12,000 students, who come from China and India, Kurdistan and Turkey, and all other corners of the world. The University was founded in 970 A.D., when the mosque was begun, being finished two years later. It seems that when Gowhar, the Sicilian general, conquered Egypt, he ordered the construction of the city of Cairo for the triumphant entry of the Fatimite Caliph Al-Moezz-Lidin-EUah. He built 'Al Azhar', the city's first mosque. The Rector said that he remembered my friend Sheik Hafiz well, for "he was prominently arrested in 1916." In 1919 they met again, for the Rector was banished to the same place.

Arab state diplomatists were on my right. Charming young Egyptians helped to interpret the proceedings, which were conducted by the Minister of Education, Sanhourî. Soldiers in tarbushes were recognisable in this sea of tarbushes in a modernised edition of the Albert Hall. The soldiers wore white gloves, white. In the aisles were military policemen with truncheons drawn. The king occasionally looked across to a gallery of women students or graduates. He wore the hat at a dashing angle, but retained appearance of courtesy, despite the painful length of the speeches, all read, that impressed. Farouk held his right hand inside the waistcoat with Napoleonic air, then took off his tarbush to cool forehead.

Proceedings began with the sonorous chanting by Sheik el Chai, the celebrated Quoran reader, of a piece out of the book.

Are the Cairo or Egyptian police really obstructive and troublesome as I am told by certain foreigners? After the ceremony at Fuad University, I was involved in a longish hold-up at a roundabout. The taxi-driver

informed a police inspector that I was in a hurry for an appointment with the Premier. He replied that we should be allowed to go in five minutes. I felt that we might be held back until the ceremony was over, in say half an hour. I then asked the inspector myself if he would not allow us to travel for a short distance on the wrong side of the road. "The Premier is still," he said, "at the University."⁵⁵ I replied, "Yes, but I do not wish him to get to the Presidents offices first. That would not be very courteous, would it?"⁵⁵ At once I was given right of way. But my taxi-driver's enthusiasm for speed almost convinced me that I should never reach the Premier, a conviction that every corner nearly served to confirm.

The official from the Foreign Office borrowed by the Premier to act as personal private secretary, Mtre. Fayid Farid, received me affably, told me that his chief, as Minister of the Interior, spends every day from nine a.m. till noon at the Home Office. He works in the Premier's building from noon till two, and from five to eight. Every Tuesday, as Foreign Minister, he remains in the Foreign Office. Every Friday the head of the government goes to his home near Heliopolis, and becomes the devoted husband and father of the two remaining unmarried children.

Nokrashy Pasha wore formal morning dress and black tie, it being the anniversary of the death of King Fuad. He offered me cigarettes but did not himself smoke. We drank coffee and he played with a splendid string of newly presented beads. He spoke with a selection of English words that would do credit to a scholar at home, with an impressive pronunciation, and meticulous appreciation for shades of meaning. His deep brown eyes seem forever seeking an opportunity to be playful; there is a sense of mischief round every nuance. He delivers his thoughts complete, with the corners rounded off. Once we were interrupted by a telephone call. The remainder of the two hours and fifteen minutes we were undisturbed. A habit of courtesy for visitors that is

rarely observed. ,And, I may add, might be copied by the British Ambassador in Cairo, who has a weakness for ringing the bell often. Nokrashy succeeded as Prime Minister in February 1945, following the assassination of Ahmed Maher Pasha in whose cabinet he had been Foreign Minister since October 1944. A year later Nokrashy resigned, following differences with the Wafd. Ismail Sidky Pasha became Premier on February 19, 1946 and Nokrashy succeeded him again on the breakdown of the Anglo-Egyptian negotiation a few months later.

Nokrashy began,* "Sovereignty, security and economic reform. Those are our problems. British troops must evacuate the country completely, the evacuation not to be conditioned by a treaty. Secondly, the unity of the Nile Valley. Also, economic reforms, sterling balances, to raise the standard of living of the people.⁵

Turning to the past he continued, "Immediately war with Germany ended, in 1945, I made claims in Parliament for evacuation and for unity of the Nile Valley. I notified the British government, through the British Ambassador. My statement was prepared in the first half of that August. I gave your government plenty of time to make its own solution of the problem. You sent us your Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Lord Alanbrooke. I spoke to him frankly about complete evacuation. But the British would not respond. In December 1945 I sent an official note, proposing negotiations, mentioning evacuation. I received a reply—at the end of January, five weeks later, through our Ambassador, Amr Pasha.

"Certain factors cropped up, of which you are aware, and these made me feel that I ought to resign. I remained a supporter of the negotiations. On February 21 and March 4, 1946, came demonstrations, and unhappy incidents, Negotiations were opened in April and they

**This interview, like all other cited conventions in the diary, is
ased on shorthand notes made by the autho time.**

kept dragging on until December 9. When it was made clear to the British that they differed from Egypt's Premier (Sidky) in their interpretation of certain points, and the Egyptians disavowed certain points, the British asked the Premier to write a letter which they had drafted. This would have given their own point of view on the Sudan protocol. My predecessor protested against this. His health was not good and he resigned, as he could not carry on. I came back. I pointed out to the British Ambassador the meaning of the Sudan to Egypt. I asked the British to make a statement of their own that they would not encourage the Sudanese to secede from Egypt, and, that if the Sudanese chose to continue in unity with Egypt, they would not object, would welcome the desire. That statement did not commit the British to any course except to one of not antagonising Egyptian security in the Nile. The British would not make the statement. Unless, it be part of the agreement."

Nokrashy Pasha burst into laughter. "And, in the meantime, the Governor-General of the Sudan, made a declaration, during his tour in the Sudan, and moreover, discontinued the services of the Grand Kadi, an Egyptian judge of Moslem law."⁵⁵

I glanced up at the bright chandelier, and found, I always count the lamps to see how many are missing, that all eighteen bulbs were in place, and in action. The room had character, more than the cabinet room outside, where there are life size pictures, in oils, of Farouk's two predecessors, and a three-quarter photograph of the reigning monarch. Facing the Premier's armchair is a frame on the wall with modest size photographs of all Premiers since 1878, some of them pictured several times. On the table immediately in front of the Premier's chair, are two gold panels, bearing reference to the presence in the chair, on two occasions, of King Farouk, in 1941 and again in March 1946. On the first the king launched his famous national campaign against "poverty, ignorance and disease."⁵⁵

Nokrashy returned, and I remembered the remark of a friend at this afternoon's ceremony, "The students cheered the king heartily, but in this country they *could* be a trouble." I confess I found most of those in sight of my chair a harsh comment on the allegation of their being either effeminate, or so feeble that ninety per cent cannot be accepted for military service.

Quietly Nokrashy resumed, "The Governor-General of the Sudan brought matters to a head. I was compelled to make a statement in Parliament, declaring that matters were proceeding from bad to worse We cannot be expected to take part in talks on the security of the Middle East, and, at the same time, jeopardise our own security. And those acts to encourage the Sudanese to secede from us, look to us as if we were being treated as hostile. The British Ambassador saw me afterwards, and said the British Government was ready to sign the treaty if—I was ready to sign one of two versions of the Sudan protocol. Scarcely a spirit, there, of friendly agreement. I discussed the matter with him. I made a version, and he asked to talk it over with me the next day. And he sent it up to London. And then I was given back the same policy, the same version, from London as before. Some more meetings followed, and I was compelled to make it clear that unless our point of view was accepted, we had to refer the matter to UNO. But now came a statement from your Foreign Office that the 1936 Treaty would remain in force!"⁵⁵

Nokrashy spoke swiftly for the first time, showing no smiles round his poised mouth. The laugh had disappeared. Instead the eyes flashed, continued to flash as if he had been struck violently. "This means," he exclaimed in a wholly different tone and pitch, "that they force us to accept the British troops in this country against our will. *That* is the situation."

I asked whether originally there had been any mention in the Premiers requests for removal of British troops from certain specified places and by specified dates.

The Premier replied that they asked for "removal of British troops/⁵ in that definition, and the British had said that Cairo and Alexandria would be included. "But to us the meaning of the phrase is the presence of your troops, and I am certain that Lord Alanbrooke made it clear in his reports of our conversations; that point is definitely contained in his material."⁵⁵

We now came to the question of the evacuation being disconnected from the treaty. Nokrashy replied, "In our earnest desire to come to an understanding originally, we did not refer then to the evacuation of troops as being disconnected from the treaty. Whether on one side or the other, the idea was the troops would evacuate the country. But when negotiations were broken off, we said, 'The British announce that the 1936 treaty remains in force, and they give the idea that the troops will not evacuate unless a treaty is concluded. That treaty thus bears the stamp of being with a Protectorate, infringing upon our sovereignty.'³ Therefore, we made it perfectly clear that the complete evacuation of the troops is totally separate from a treaty."

Nokrashy referred to my phrase, earlier on, "I find about Cairo society a sense of rising anger which is becoming more evident, less restrained."⁵⁵ He commented, "Yes, there is rising anger, but, if anger is allowed to develop, you must blame yourselves for the enmity, if it leaps into enmity. There is anger, a most justified anger, over the complete lack of appreciation of the Egyptian point of view and the completely unbearable ignoring of Egyptian susceptibilities—at a time when Greater Egypt was most helpful, and contributed tremendously towards winning the war."

Yes, he was sure the "present gentleman," our Ambassador Campbell, was "giving fair reports"⁵⁵ to his government. But, courteously, yet firmly, he refused to say a word about Lord Killearn, "to pass his name over my lips."⁵⁵

I asked, at length, what prospect there was, and on

what terms, of eliminating the discussions at U.N. and coming to the proposed mutual defence arrangement. I said our friendship was, underneath, fundamental, because it was necessary, and mutual in many links. At U.N. many bitter, harsh things would be said, and "love after public quarrels is never the same."

Nokrashy pondered for a moment, answered, "If Great Britain eliminates the sources of friction that trouble our relations, and create the tension now evident, begins the complete evacuation, unconnected by any treaty, I still believe that Egypt would be willing to make a treaty of mutual assistance. Of course, in a different spirit. . . ."

I asked, "Linked, or not, with the Claridges treaty, Sidky-Bevin?"

Nokrashy laughed, made a gesture of contempt, or disdain. "Oh, no, no, no, that treaty is finished We should take terms imposed by a joint Defence Board? Ahaha . . ."

Suppose, I said, that we had sent, soon after the end of the war, instead of nine months after V-E day, someone young and prominently known, instead of a kindly septuagenarian gentleman like Lord Stansgate, or, had here an ambassador of vigorous personality and physical strength obvious to opposites at the conference table, one who had plenipotentiary powers, instead of referring every night to London, Would we have had a satisfactory treaty early in 1946, at less costly terms? Frankly, I entertained no doubt whatever in my mind. What did Nokrashy think?

"Take Campbell-Bannerman in 1906," he answered, with a laugh. "Think of the way in which *he* overcame difficulties. I can imagine a man of his calibre and forcefulness overcoming the obstructions and restrictions that inherently pervade the British Foreign Office."¹⁵

"He electrified the atmosphere."

"Electrify the Egyptians? That is not needed. We are quite happy. Thank you, we do not need to be electrified."*

Silence. Then, Nokrashy as a gifted mimic, with altered, gentle voice.

"What happened last time I met your ambassador? Ahahaha. I said sharply, 'I am still waiting for the date of the departure of the troops.'⁵ Campbell answered, mildly, his head down, 'But, Excellency, you, have, not, written, to us, officially, about that.'⁵ I replied, 'In my note of December 1945 I said the presence of British troops in Egypt has no justification whatever, and, it is humiliating to Egypt.' I added, also, 'Every day you stay here more, you are impinging upon our sovereignty.'⁵ Campbell said, 'But we discussed the matter, and we almost came to an agreement'^{5 55}

Had there been any specific period requested by the British for evacuation? "Frankness has been lacking,"⁵⁵ answered Nokrashy, "all through the negotiations. The British have never said how long they need. If they said, even now, 'We need six months,' or, 'We need nine months,' that would be a new fact."

I asked, "How far would it be a new fact, induce any change in the atmosphere, which I do not like?"⁵⁵

Nokrashy did not hesitate long about a reply. He said, "It might well induce an orientation"

My hopes rose that there was still a possibility of avoiding the issue going before U.N., but Nokrashy almost reduced them to nil, by adding deliberately, "When the matter comes before U.N.,"⁵⁵ instead of, "If the matter comes."⁵⁵ He continued, "Everybody will be free to present his case, and use every argument, to produce every document possible to help his case."⁵⁵

Just in case I had any wishful delusions, he snapped, "No doubt about that."⁵⁵

Was there then no hope at all? Oh, yes, there seemed to be some. "A genuine declaration, about the beginning, beginning of evacuation, the actual beginning of effective evacuation, and a reasonable time limit, certainly would relieve the tension that is poisoning the situation. No doubt about it, no doubt."

I expressed gratitude for the frankness with which Nokrashy had spoken. He answered, "I am a school-master and politics came to me only through Nationalism, so you see I am not a trained politician. The moment I can speak frankly, I feel at home."

We turned to current affairs, and routine matters that last brought the British Ambassador. "You evacuate our cities on March 31, and within three weeks, the Ambassador comes along and says this and that, troubles already, and what is worse, you already want to return. Only three weeks later. Let me cite you recent cases that provide an instance of complete misunderstanding of the Egyptian point of view. You bring troops or civilians from Palestine and put them along the Suez Canal, and you ask the Egyptian patrols to protect them because you intimate that terrorists have arrived. You receive news that terrorists might arrive in Egypt, and you actually make your men come along and, at a stretch of nine kilometres, stop and examine every car. One evening three bombs were exploded in Ismailia. The second day you think you find terrorists, and we naturally have to provide for the protection of certain persons and establishments. All this happens because you want me to protect Tommies who desire to spend the night in some of Cairo's cabarets. Is this not an absurd situation?"

There was silence for a moment, and Nokrashy continued, "You left us only on March 31. Why do you not wait two, or three months at least, before you wish the troops back again in Cairo?"

Dealing with Egypt's demand for the repayment of the LE.450,000,000 owing by Great Britain as a result of expenses incurred during the Hitler war in Egypt, Nokrashy said, "Much has been said of Egypt's contribution to the battle. Had we provided only the money to carry on the war, surely would that not have been a great contribution? We have approached the British about the debt on two occasions, first in 1945 and then during the subsequent negotiations."

Was Egypt seriously concerned? "Yes, we must have payment on account," replied Nokrashy, solemnly, "for you must see what happens after July 15 (1947). The currency will be controlled solely by imports and exports. Now our imports are greater than the exports because we have not imported for six years, and you, you have taken about LE.450 millions from us here, so that if you do not give part of it back to us straight away, we shall be in a bad way."

On the Sudan the Premier was equally direct. The Egyptians had to ask themselves, he said, with a forcefulness of tone hitherto absent, "Are the English encouraging the Sudanese to secede or are they not?" And then with an expressive wave of the hand, perhaps contempt for certain promises or assurance, "I am not satisfied with negative statements. I want you British to encourage the unity and, therefore, the security of this part of the world."

We turned to discussion on the plan for regional defence and I mentioned the British Military Mission. It is known in Egypt that for the Mission, not its personnel as individuals, Nokrashy entertains the most firm dislike, for reasons that I may be able to state further on.

"We will get a mission as we like,⁵⁵ he said, "and then when your mission is finished here, we will have a new one. We will buy our arms as we like, we will start factories for small arms and heavier material, as we like and we shall change the law here for compulsory military service. We shall provide money for our defence.

"We know what it is going to involve, in price.⁵⁵

I hoped for a direct answer to my next question. I said, "It is said that Russia is to support Egypt's case when, if, it comes before U.N. What is the position, for, naturally, you have been taking soundings in the capitals of the world?"⁵¹

The Premier replied, "This is the first time that a small country is going to U.N. against one of the Big Four, without flirting with anybody. In spite of the fact

that the break-off in the negotiations led people to believe that it would result in an outburst of anti-British feeling, the situation in Egypt has been maintained with a good will that surpasses all expectations As to the implications in your question, well, we are in the democratic tradition, as understood in Britain and in America.^{55*}

What was happening about the situation between the two countries now? Any talks? He did not think the recent mediation by Syria and Lebanon was serious. The British were doing nothing. The negotiations were broken off on January 27 (1947), and this was now April 28. The position had not changed. The Egyptian people knew their own mind. And they were clear about the course they were taking. "We will not address the British people direct, for that would be misunderstood now. We will address them through U.N. They say, 'What are you Egyptians waiting for?' I say we know what we are doing. I have said now, 'No mediation, I am going to U.N.' "

While the British military experts were here he would not bring in any others. But he had been at work ever since 1945 on this subject when he had prepared notes on complete, military evacuation. "You do not expect us to bring in the new experts while the British are here, do you? Yes. the new experts will be here as soon as the British are out. And they will include experts of various nationalities."

Dealing with the home front, Nokrashy told me it is hoped to build six thousand houses for a population of 20,000 "as an opening instalment," to reduce the slums of the city. The State will pay £3½ m. and also £1½ m. to establish the necessary conveniences, schools and so forth. He also spoke of other reforms.

What is Nokrashy's favourite saying? It is a quotation from the Quoran, which translated freely means, "Man

*** This portion alone of the original text was amended by Nokrashy Pasha.**

will be a loser if he is not a believer in good works, adheres to right and maintains justice.⁵⁵

Two hours and twenty minutes had raced away quickly in the company of this jovial creature, who has natural, visible, gaiety, but who shows signs of proud desire to be rid of the British, any occupying, force.

And in the view of most Egyptians it would be vacuous on their part to feel otherwise. For in modern war they are as safe with the Suez, as without it.

And now I was chatting with the A.D.C. to the Premier, giant Major Mohamed Hayati. I think the chief of the Cairo police force was glad to see me go, for he arrived just after six, and waited two hours and a half.

Tuesday, April 29th.

Telephoning in Cairo is a long way from being as pleasant an experience as in Stockholm; the boxes at Shepherds are not ventilated properly, the telephonists are charming and helpful (acting, when required, as, skilled multi-lingual interpreters and private secretaries) but the system is in need of atomic improvement. Calls are connected, cut off, reconnected after unpredictable and inexplicable delays. Altogether, a comparison with London may be made with no detriment to the conceit of West or—East.

Absorbing story of life in Egyptian capital from young Cambridge Orientalist, married to Russian here. He is Denis C. Johnson-Davies, son of Colonel K. C. Johnson-Davies, who has been for years head of the powerful British Motor Trade Association, in Park Lane. D.C. matriculated at 14, spent year at the School of Oriental Studies, then a while in Egypt, and going up to St. Catherine's, Cambridge, read Arabic and Persian for the Oriental Language Tripos. His father read for the Oriental Language Tripos at St. Catherine's but the Great War interrupted his studies, and he

subsequently took up law- D.C. is eager to write. During the war while he served locally in civilian capacity, he once wrote harmless notice of concert in which he mildly reproved rowdy conduct on the part of our military personnel, being obviously concerned for the good name of his countrymen. A few days later he was requested—I give the story as told me here this evening—to go in jeep to visit a certain British military official. He refused to do so at once, but, under further pressure, went next day. It was made crystal clear to him, he said, that this sort of conduct could not be tolerated in the future, he must apologise, and must promise not to repeat the offence D.C. is hoping to join the staff of the Fuad University in Cairo, where I am sure that his intelligent affection for the people of this country should be of service to both Britain and Egypt. It was refreshing to listen to a youthful Arabist, who did not spend three-quarters of our time finding fault with the Egyptians, who did not use the stupid word, 'Wogs\ Throughout he spoke of the Egyptians as members of a race that knew elements of civilisation already at a time when we had three or four thousand years to travel before abandoning stone caves.

Spoke at long last, on incredibly bad telephone line, with Jackson, at British GHQ, in Fayid. I go by train tomorrow to Ismailia, and fly thence to Palestine. Hot day, and, after usual type of meals arranged by Charles in Shepherds restaurant, it is easy to feel 'bowled out.'

Wednesday, April 30th.

I added days to the life of a taxi-cab driver in Cairo* Following instructions, I directed him to take me to a railway station, thence I named other streets. Eventually we arrived outside the Grand Mufti's residence. The driver slowed down, and began to giggle. "Why didn't you say, first of all, that you wanted the Grand Mufti? It is so easy, for we all know the house, of course. For

Arabs there are no secrets in Cairo or Egypt, no secrets." And he resumed the giggling. Round the street corner I watched the small boys and impoverished old men sitting on the ground, lightly discussing the world and its affairs. Only a few yards away was the elusive Grand Mufti, creature of destiny.

Haidar, the Mufti's nephew, showed me into the reception room. The Mufti arrived a few minutes later, and we drank coffee. I told him I expected to see General Dempsey tomorrow and the High Commissioner (General Sir Alan Cunningham) the following day. I asked, did he desire to return to Palestine? I took down the reply.

"Naturally, everybody likes to live in his own country. I am denied this privilege and right. Yet it is the Jews who kill English soldiers." Later he said, " I have not asked the British to allow me to return to Palestine, but it is obvious that I should wish to do so. It is my home and my world. It is simple justice that everyone should be allowed to stay in his own country. I have not asked the British till now because "

Then he smiled the unspoken end of the sentence. He looked more at ease today, less self-conscious.

We entered the large garden, and two members of the Palestine Higher Arab Committee, Mouim Madi Bey and Refiq Tamini, were introduced. I met Tewfig Saleh Husseini, vice president of the Arab Party in Palestine (of which Jemal al Husseini is head) and Munif el Husseini, who was described as a friend of the Mufti's. Another guest was Sad ed Din Abdul Latif. They watched His Eminence pouring out coffee for me in the garden, and Haidar obeying the Mufti's request that he take snapshots of our group. I have since been handed written replies to questions put to the Grand Mufti. They are as follows:

Q.: Do you wish to return to Palestine now?

A.: I wish to return to Palestine, because it is my beloved country which I haven't seen for twenty

years, and from which I was deprived, whereas terrorists and foreigners are allowed to stay in it. This is one sample of the oppression under which lives the Holy land.

Q.: In the event of U.N. deciding to impose Partition, what would be your attitude?

A.: The same as that of the Arabs in Palestine, and that of the Arab and Moslem peoples elsewhere, namely, refusal of Partition and, to resist it with all means. It is, I am sure, the same attitude you take as an Englishman, if it is imposed upon you to give up half, or a third of England to the Germans or to the Russians.

Q.: What is your proposal for the solution of the Palestine problem?

A.: My proposal is based upon the principle of the recognition of the right of the Arabs in Palestine to freedom and independence, in the same way as has been done towards the Arabs in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. This, of course, will have as a consequence the abolition of the mandate, and the policy of the Jewish National Home. It has also as principal effect, that Jews should live in Palestine in the same way as they are living in other democratic countries, respected in their religious freedom, and in their individual rights.

Q.: Do you, in the event of an Arab-Jewish-Christian cabinet being chosen in an independent Arab Palestine state, consider that it would be willing to receive official guidance from Britain or America or France or Russia, as was for years the case with Syria and Iraq?

A.: We want Palestine to constitute an independent Arab State, administered by a government elected by Palestinians, in proportion to the number of the population, free from any foreign interference. If necessity arises we would accept a short transition period. It is natural that our relations with Great

Britain, the U.S.A. and the other Powers, will be based on mutual understanding and co-operation.

Q. Would you consent to nomination in these circumstances as first head of the Palestine state?

A. I have only one goal in life, namely the freedom and independence of my country. I have no personal ambition whatever: neither to be head of the Palestine State, nor for any other nomination.

Q. World interest, far beyond Europe, has been aroused by your movements and reported statements since 1937, notably in Iraq in 1941 and Germany and Bosnia later on. Could you please state whether you still feel so hostile to Britain or whether your hostility is confined to Britain as an Empire Power in your battle over Palestine?*

A. I am neither hostile to the British nor to any other people. It is a fact that a group of British politicians have considered me, through Zionist instigation, as an enemy to Great Britain. It is this Jewish influence which forced Great Britain to take this exceptional and unjust position in Palestine, a position which made the Arab and Moslem World uneasy. Undoubtedly, this imperialistic policy is detested by the Palestine Arabs, who long for liberty and independence.

Q. Do you envisage, in your lifetime, the possibility of an Arab unified state arising or the development of a Federation?

A. I have great hope that the relations and ties between the Arab countries will be strengthened so as to permit the formation of a federation of Arab States in the near future.

Haj Amin did not tell me that, in 1940, a prominent Arab diplomatist with pro-British leanings, unsuccessfully tried to induce the British Minister in Baghdad to meet the Grand Mufti. The Iraqi Premier, Nuri, also strove to arrange a conference, but, presumably on orders from London, a meeting that *might* have avoided many unhappy sequels in later years, was rejected.

Q,. If you were asked to give a *message* to the British people, tired of trouble in Palestine, weary of losing their men, yet eager not to break their promises to the Jews and not to alienate all official United States policy, what would that be?

A My message to the British people is, not to be misled by Jewish propaganda, to understand truly and sincerely the Arab position. Then, to induce the British Government to implement the pledges to the Arabs, pledges which enjoy the quality of being precedent and more corresponding to the principles of right and justice than that of the Balfour Declaration, which has no logical or just basis. I would like to ask this British people, who are freedom-lovers by nature, not to be a means for killing the liberty of other peoples in order to satisfy the ambition of a small professional group of politicians trying to realise the Utopian, and still unjust, idea of the Zionist leaders.

As to the United States, they have no right to interfere in the Palestine issue. Their actual policy of supporting Zionism cannot make right to turn into wrong, nor wrong to turn into right. It is also important that Great Britain does not make a pretext of the American attitude to continue her imperialistic domination in Palestine.

The military policeman outside the residence looked shocked when I suggested that a view of the attractive entrance could be photographed. "Forbidden," he said, and told the chauffeur to continue.

Hafez Afifi Pasha, under-exercised head of Misr bank, controller of newspapers, cinemas, factories, trusts and a model village, received me again in panelled study in the Bank. Unlike many Egyptians, he is consciously polite, promised assistance, and invited me to Mehalla factories. But as his previous visitors robbed me of half my time, our conversation suffered painful telescoping. Afifi enjoyed toying with a set of attractive

beads just presented to him. I made him stop.

Entering by the main door of Shepherds, I met a youth in a school blazer similar to one I wore many years ago. I asked him what he was doing in Cairo and he explained his sad predicament. He was under orders, he declared, to join the British military mission in Addis Ababa, at the court of Emperor Haile Selassie. At Ismailia a British officer sought him out to present orders for him not to proceed there but to go instead to Cairo, to await further posting. He had just met his mother, who had flown to Cairo from Addis Ababa, where she had been living for a while. The mother explained that she had known the Emperor and his family well in England, had left the capital recently and was now hoping to see someone at the British Embassy for urgent advice. She wants visa for Ethiopia, she says.

Impossible to confirm the news, heard from a reliable authority, that the queen is separated from Farouk and that her sister-in-law, who married the Shah of Persia, has been staying in her part of the palace in Cairo for about a year. Farouk's wife and sister are described as 'particularly lovely'.⁵

Expected to find indifferent railway carriage to convey me to Ismailia, for I had been listening over excellent luncheon to former Poona merchant, who presumably attended secondary school in Walthamstow. Discovered instead spotlessly clean, efficient carriage, for second class and first class passengers. One outsize passenger with second class ticket sat down next to me, but, conductor promptly noticed vacant place in adjoining compartment and pointed to it. She picked up her suitcases and departed, to continue her meal of oranges and lemonade.

I was met by two corporals in General Dempsey's limousine, from bonnet of which his flag has been temporarily removed. I passed large numbers of splendidly-built German prisoners of war, a few Arabs and smaller than average Britons. In the officers⁵ club, an Italian

factotum announced pleasantly that he had allotted bungalow five to me and, that a colonel would share the quarters—"there are two beds."⁵⁵ I replied, briefly, that the colonel would find quarters elsewhere. In his best bazaar French, the Italian grasped the point. The room was fairly comfortable, but drab and austere. Apparently, however, senior officers are delighted to secure accommodation here. As I marched, my ankle buried in white sand, to inspect the bungalow, I saw various women. Presumably wives of officers, they paraded to and from the bungalows and a bathing hut, in dressing gowns suitable for August bank holiday in Southend. A painted notice outside an essential little wooden shack announced that this was reserved for 'gentlemen'⁵. Fortunately the flies were kept out of the bungalow by fine meshing. But elsewhere they had a triumphant carnival.

Life for various officers in Fayid was the long bar, at which I noted a senior German prisoner of war, officer, marching in for his tot. I looked again, but there was no mistaking the head, the walk, and the hair-cut. The man had his hands in his pockets. Outside, in a sort of lounge, I counted many comfortable, empty, chairs. The lone females preponderated, and they drank lots of tea, wrote lots of letters, glancing outside, at the unquiet waters of the lake. I sat for a while and studied expressions. These were so frank, clear, sad. I wondered how many of the girls, or men, had strayed in six years from a detective book.

Alan Jackson and Ted Laughton-Scott dined with me in the mess. I was the sole civilian. Over coffee and liqueurs spoke to Life Guards boys, including Lieut. Paul Hobhouse, 20, Intelligence Officer of the first battalion, off shortly to Palestine. With him was the adjutant, Capt. David Hodson, 22, who has held the post for a year. Hobhouse comes of the Liberal family, shone and wrote at Eton, orates with rare confidence, much sense. We discussed the decline of civilisation

and sundry cheerful matters.

Hitch has occurred. I do not leave for Palestine tomorrow, as the aircraft is 'unserviceable', but on Friday morning, 'Very early.'

I sat out on the sandy beach, and watched wives and sweethearts of young officers, also others not so young, drinking heavily. One girl of twenty-four or thereabouts consumed six bottles of beer in about an hour. There was a little dancing, and much shuffling, on the superb dance floor. The contour women, mostly red-faced wives of elderly men who had slowly climbed out of ranks, danced with relish, swayed.

But what was the attraction about the orchestra? The eyes of the younger dancers turned sadly, almost longingly, often, towards the hungry specimens in the gallery. The band consisted of Nazi p.o.w.'s. When the alcohol is plentiful, or good or strong, memories of war are shortlived. As they danced, or shuffled about the floor, the women turned again and again, with impressive surreptitiousness to the gallery, for a stolen glance that perhaps sufficed for filling their empty, passionless, evening with day-dreams.

I don't much like the washing, or indeed any other communal arrangements, in the camp.

Thursday, May 1st.

Telephoned from manager's room to Alan Jackson, M.A. to C. in C, describing situation here. His car promptly collected me so that I had a bath and shave in my old private quarters. At 10.15 I saw Dempsey in his office, wearing shorts. His ribbons extend to five lines. He sat upright in a modest chair, overlooking imposing entrance to the GHQ,- He said, struggling to infect me with cheerfulness, "I am optimistic about Anglo-Egyptian relations, for the situation will change in a very few months, and we shall regain the initiative. Why, I cannot tell you for the moment. I think you will find I am right."

I am not sure, but I imagine he had in mind Arab annoyance over American policy in Palestine, which is almost a *non sequitur*, for Anglo-Egyptian relations go far deeper than any annoyance with amateur toying at diplomacy in Washington. I then protested about the situation in Ta'if where we had all been made to look stupid by the despatch of transport that had to be towed by more ancient Saudi Arabian lorries. Dempsey emphasised the importance of my realising the priorities. Nothing new was arriving in Egypt, or, at the Command. He did not think that the 'flashy'⁵ Americans would make as good an impression as the steady, unheroic Britons. I agreed, but I pleaded for us not to leave an impression of decadence in a country where the 'soft' Americans were landing shining, splendid, faultless, really mobile 1947 cars, with twelve cylinder engines. I agreed that, in some respects, the "Americans are our best ambassadors," but I still preferred the positive approach. Dempsey likes the Oriental, adds, "We like one another." He is off to South Africa in a few days, returns on June 5, and leaves for home on June 11, on retirement.

Col. Tom Laister arrived in time to escort me to the G.O.C., Egypt, long-nosed Lt. Gen. Sir Charles W, Allfrey. He is tall, hearty, laughs easily, gave me splendid tea, produced by the tidy 'M.A.', handsome damsel in uniform. Allfrey, during my "G.P.U." examination, said he left Navy after Dartmouth on account of his eyes, and although Admiralty said he might remain as Paymaster, chose Woolwich and passed to Royal Artillery. At 21 he commanded a battery, was wounded twice, and has since spent six years in Egypt, two in India and three in Iraq. At Hurlingham he was on the winning side for inter-regimental cup in 1927. In 1935 he went as instructor at Camberley, where he had not been a student—perhaps unique record. He crossed to France in 1939, commanded 5th Corps at Algiers in November 1942, and fought till Tunis fell in May 1943.

Later he struggled up Italian peninsula. Refreshing to be told he believes army should "have decent conditions, which means pyjamas for men, sheets and all other reasonable comforts."

He agrees there are "many more than 70,000 German p.o.w.⁵ here, likes Nokrashy, who used to be a frequent guest at his house for dinner. Allfrey visited the Premier's home for meals, but politics were taboo. In February they spoke about retention of clubs for British troops in the evacuated cities, including Cairo. It was understood the plan would hold, but, suddenly, when the negotiations broke down, the plan fell through. The impression in our circles was that Nokrashy strongly disliked British military mission—"because someone had disclosed to him an alleged plan for disarming the Egyptian army when the Germans were approaching early in 1942—and it was anticipated the Egyptians would surrender/'

The deputy commander in chief, of the R.A.F., Air Vice Marshal J. W. Baker, C.B., is amusing storyteller, explains how he gets on with "all ranks." It seems he took his cricket team on 4,500 mile tour of neighbouring countries.

In Ismailia officers' club enjoyed Laister's hospitality on open verandah. Luncheon was, fillet of fish, steak, fruit, and cream. Our women looked hungry, tired and sad, like dried sultanas, almost as lifeless as our officers. Many sat about, ineffectively, in briefest bathing briefs. The misunderstanding Egyptians looked, and their thoughts could have been read by anyone registering an I.Q., of sixty. Laister and I studied the Egyptians wandering along the dusty lanes. I suppose they admire our efforts to make the land productive, but wonder what right we have to lord it over Egyptian territory.

We sped past the canal which looks forlorn, and we seemed to be so eager to get somewhere. At 4.30 I gave tea to the head of PICKME, Col. Saunders, listened to his well-epitomised impressions on the Middle East. Anyone who imagines that the Arabs are standing still

because they do not appear to be moving, is criminally blind.

At six Laughton-Scott came for a drink, and escorted me to car in which I was being taken for dinner with the Life Guards, As I entered the vehicle, a surprise occupant, middle-aged, big-mouthed, woman in uniform, asked whether I minded her travelling as well, for she had gathered from chauffeur that we would pass her "tent", next to prisoners' camp, I weakly said she might come, and, for the next twenty minutes I was deservedly drowned in a sea of tautological stories of her impressions of a woman's duty in wartime, and, how fully she had carried out her ideals.

The Life Guards staged a splendid meal, and young officers were presented to me over a preliminary drink by the host, Colonel Feries St. George. He went as Adjutant to Wilts Yeomanry before Egypt, expects to take his men to Palestine in a few months. How little we picture the personal element. He announced casually that he had been without his family, in the West country, for five years. Then we drove to the regimental concert. I was not impressed with first item on the programme. A German quartet, wearing British officers' khaki trousers and humbler tunics, with tiny black patches sewn on the trousers, wailed 'Do not fence us in,' were heartily applauded by gentlemen whom they had hoped to shoot out of North Africa. It was nauseating, grossly exaggerated sentimentality, run riot. I thought also of the Nazis, who stood on guard duty outside the residence of the most senior British officers, side by side with British tommies with rifles. It seemed inappropriate, and—indecently early.

To bed at eleven, and am to be called at five a.m.

Friday, May 2nd.

After my complaints about sleep at night because of the dance bands at Shepherds in Cairo, of the dogs

in Riyadh, of the flies in Jedda, tonight seems uncanny, for I am in the terrified city of Jerusalem, mother of the faiths of the world outside Islam. And although it is eleven o'clock I hear the sounds of someone far down the corridor of the Eden Hotel, chatting to a neighbour. Now even this noise has gone, and I am left reflecting on a breathless day. It began eighteen hours ago, when I was called in the officers' club in Fayid. I have flown across the Mediterranean; breakfasted in Palestine; spoken to Major General Richard Gale,* paratroop hero, and G.O.C. one of the critical areas in the world; have listened for an hour and a half to the precise phrases of Jewry's head, Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who speaks with an academician's restraint and calm; lunched with a noted Palestinian Arab Christian, in George Antonius's house, which belongs to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem; visited Jemal al Husseini, uncompromising opponent of Zionist immigration into Palestine, who in mellifluous English issued a grave warning to the world, and to Jewry in Arab lands; had stone thrown through the roof of my jeep-escort, all armed, in a British army vehicle, in sight of the orange groves that spread their scent on splendid roads that climb into the squabbling capital of this fascinating state. And I am typing in one of the most ostentatiously clean hotels I know, after a meal that would do credit to the West-End Coq d'Or, in Stratton Street, my mind full of the woes of the romantic proprietor who is threatened with a water cut, if the garden be watered in the future. And is this garden not the pride of the city, and the embellishment of the city's sole remaining hotel?

One word runs through my mind this night, as I reflect on what I have heard and seen. The fear engendered by the passionate terrorists is intense, and real. The hatred born out of the fear is genuine, searing, reflects in the faces of young soldiers here in the name of

the British Socialist Government. The love for their new home expressed by the Jews, is deeply moving. The comedy of the ceaseless examination of pedestrians and motorists, nine stops in ten minutes is a record I have timed, is framed in incomparable tragedy. Palestine is beautiful and rich, its fragrant green valleys sing a poem of magnetic enchantment. But, grim threats issue from stone homes in Jerusalem, may forecast a holocaust of lives as deadly locally as that of Hitlerism, Genocide in Europe.

In the midst of the unchanging, unchangeable plains, hillsides broken in their gaunt loneliness by the presence of a few sheep or goats and a veiled woman shepherd, there stands this typical contribution of the twentieth century in the West, an enormous wire encampment for political prisoners. On the opposite side of the mountain, I witness a celebrated monastery, where men wisely pray in silence, for their fellows, glad to be cut off from the foolish temporal world.

What message comes to me from the soil as I drive past? What message comes to me from the tidy streets of the capital of the most troubled little state? It would be childish to suggest I have not sensed the stern feeling on the one side of weariness with the mandatory power, and, on the other side, of fear of American bullying, Zionist inspired pressure.

Now back to seven a.m., and the flight in Dakota in eighty minutes from Fayid to Lydda. With us was most sycophantic person I have suffered in my presence, German p.o.w. with British army sergeant, whose German appeared to consist of "Yeah" and "Nein." At Lydda the passport officials asked with an air of airs, vainly, for my papers and visa. I showed a tiny slip, 'Temporary identity certificate', made out on the orders of the C. in C, M.E.L.F., and signed by Jackson. That sufficed when presented in the presence of the P.R.O. in Jerusalem, Major George Bishop. He joins my rare band, Colonel Nigel Dugdale of Vienna, Col. Tom

Laister in Egypt, and Capt. R. A. Ryder, of Trieste—among the men worthy of their posts. Bishop listened intently while I breakfasted, fumed because a midget with pips at the aerodrome refused permission for me to have a bath there, and promptly said he would take me to see the G.O.C., Major General Richard N. Gale, D.S.O., M.G., by whom I was expected at nine a.m.

In the airport many Jews, men and women, and children, were eating hurriedly. The Arabs, fewer in number, seemed intent on studying faces. Bishop and I drove in a large car, preceded by the regulation jeep escort, of two men with tommy guns. Our own driver and escort also carried tommy guns. At frequent intervals we came across 'hold-up' posts, where our papers were examined by young tommies. I asked one who was eyeing me with interest, how he enjoyed life in Palestine. "It's all right except for the — Jews." The soldiers glanced about them the whole time, but fortunately ignored the fact that I lacked the (essential) local pass. Bishop said, "You're extremely fortunate, particularly as a civilian, to be allowed through so often without the pass."

I broke in, "As fortunate as coming into the country without a passport?"

Bishop: "I wondered how you did that, for I don't think it's ever been done before, even with generals."

Smilingly I said, "Generals are generals, but, this was different."

Bishop: "I agree. They are very strict here, and security regulations have been tightened up the last few days. My wife who goes past the sentries half a dozen times daily, had to stay at one of the posts last evening for a long while till she could be formally identified and given the pass."

Barbed wire, yet more barbed wire, and then, a ramshackle set of wooden buildings. I was with the astonishing general whom I first met years ago outside Bulford, where he was secretly training Parachuters for

D-Day. Gale had told me of his remarkable skill as a child in Australia where his parents had been staying, for getting lost; of his shaming the parents at Port Said, when the ghilly-ghilly man returned the boy's handkerchief, saying loudly, "I want a *clean* handkerchief." Gale who spent days climbing the Himalayas, now faced me across a lifeless room packed with maps. He looked taut, strained, puffed, unexercised.

I think Gale would hate to leave the world—in Palestine. It would be a tragedy if he left the world, in Palestine. Few people realise, by the way, that the territory covers but 10,429 square miles. I asked what was happening in his part of the country.

Gale answered, "The left is behind Dr. Ghaim Weizmann, a good friend of mine, as are lots of Arab leaders. The aim of the right wing is to get all they want, by direct action. The large majority is behind Weizmann. Every Jew here is an ardent immigrationist. They know six million Jews were killed in the war, or before, by Hitler, that two million displaced Jews want to come here. Here is a country prepared to receive them, and every Jewish house is ready to receive one Jew, without exception, Whatever the economists may say does not worry the Jews here. That is the mentality. Every Jew is against us, because we are the stumbling block to immigration. The Jews remember, are not against us as Britons, only against the British Government/⁵

We spoke of military force, keeping the Jews and Arabs apart, and Gale said, "The strength of force lies in its non-use. Think of the underground movement that flourished in France under the nose of the Germans. Every British airman was able to escape thanks to the underground movement, which, of course, was supported by 80 per cent of the people."

I studied the maps, the casualty lists, said, "Where is your most awkward parish in the command?"⁵⁵ Gale answered, "It all depends, 'What is the target for tonight'⁵⁵ In his 'parish'⁵, where he is virtual dictator,

Gale has many Jews, 300,000 out of Palestine's 600,000, in the Tel-a-viv area. I wondered whether he regrets the thought that he did not have to go on fighting the Japanese, with his Sixth Airbornes in 1945, when he reached India. For here he exists in a caravan, has not had a single day off in six months. With a secretary he is completing a manuscript. We went over his scrapbooks, with cuttings, letters from Field Marshal Montgomery, and congratulations.

Now the a.d.c, Lt. Gordon Ferguson, of X I I Royal Lancers, and an intelligence officer, showed in a Rabbi and young son. There was an unnatural silence at their entry, about the tone of discusson. They did not wish to disturb the outer spirits Yes, said Gale, it would be easy to arrange a visit to Weizmann. Gale stretched himself lazily to his great height, spoke to his a.d.c. I shook hands and was through the barricades again. Destination, Rehovoth.

Empire building in London is a different affair from empire building in a warm corner like Palestine. Gale scarcely shows to the visitor the expression of a man who must be prepared to meet His Maker any moment of day or night. But the observer cannot fail to notice the drabness in voice, of eyes, the lack of enthusiasm.

Great leaders seldom look slim. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who according to Lloyd George, saved the democracies during the Kaiser war with his invention of an essential chemical, presents instantly a picture of stature. It is not alone due to his 73 years, size, height, outstanding head and dome. He was impressive before he had spoken a word.

I was shown up to his first floor study at the Weizmann Institute of Science, Rehovoth. Officials, who had greeted us at the gate, which was reached after a long drive through magnificent shrubs and plants, were, perhaps, a little nervous. They were 'surrounded'⁵, so it may have appeared to them, by four armed British guards, while my P.R.O., Bishop, also carried a pistol.



EGYPT'S LATE PRIME MINISTER, NOKRASHY PASHA



PRESIDENT GHAIM WEIZMANN

The laboratories, stairs, corridors, cool, plainly but handsomely constructed, seemed a far call from the desert, which I had crossed but two or three hours previously near the Suez Canal.

There is no effort-seeking in Weizmann's voice, no rancour. He does not smile, but is punctilious about the courtesies. We sat together on a sofa while the leader of world Zionism, whom jealous Americans have recently deposed from his throne, spoke frankly of the situation.

"The Jewish community is being ground between two millstones, the Government and the terrorists," he began. "The community is suffering. It all depends on one thing, there is only one solution. The real solution is a political one.

"I think it is the abrogation of the White Paper*: access to land, substantial immigration, and large scale development. No document has been the cause of so much trouble, so much unhappiness and bloodshed. It is unjust, it is illegal, it is wrong, and, we all feel it very much. The Government itself had to turn its back on the White Paper, which said that no immigration should take place after five years. Today, the Government is admitting 1,500 people a month, and so the White Paper is dented in its most important provision. The result is, that it does not satisfy Jews, or Arabs. The Arabs are complaining that the British are not keeping their promises, and the Jews are saying the same thing. Why do it? That is the most pressing problem.

"You will remember that last year (in 1946) we had the Anglo-American Commission appointed by the British Government, and Bevin considered it a great triumph that, he had succeeded in securing American participation. We were all very happy. I do not know whether it is true or not that, some members of the American Commission said that, if there was a unanimous

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report, Mr. Bevin was going to carry it out. They had a unanimous report. The report had some provisions which are quite irrelevant, and some provisions which are quite all right. Then Mr. Attlee said the report would have to be accepted as a whole. Nobody said that it had not. Nevertheless, it was thrown overboard, it was shelved. Today I read that U.N. has decided again, on a fact-finding commission,

"Good heavens. We have had commissions after commissions, to get the real facts. No country has been more investigated and re-investigated than poor little Palestine. It is a hardy annual. Almost every year we have a new commission. I do not want to be disrespectful to U.N.: let them have a commission, but, already the British Government has announced that it will not be bound by the commission. What is the good of it? We shall have this new commission, another report, much waste of time. That is one side of the picture.

"I think it is just playing into the hands of the terrorists. We have this terrorist activity. Naturally, retaliation comes from the government. Repression increases terrorist activity and so the merry-go-round, and the ordinary Jewish people is being crushed.

"This is a beautiful country, really lovely, and its soil has been neglected. However, if you treat this soil with affection and regard, it responds, and there is nothing that you cannot grow. Most of the people who come here are ardent workers, and all they want is to work. Many of the young people have seen concentration camps, and their greatest desire, when they come here, is to breathe freely, and to toil. Some have become bitter, and, because of their disappointment, have turned into terrorists.

"Here, in this village of Rehovoth, they are putting up terrorist notices. Some of them were seen putting up a placard, and one of the villagers marched up to a policeman. He did nothing, but said, 'I can't fight people who do not want to live.' If half of one per cent

of Jews, terrorists, are ready to die, it shows that the policeman has, with his terse language, epitomised the whole situation.

"In spite of all, the British army and the local British administration is not at fault in this matter, it is the policy that is at fault. The army does not create a policy. It carries out orders. The army has tried to humanise the policy. Everybody will tell you that, unless he is a damned liar. This martial law business is very nasty, but General Gale, the G.O.C., and his fellow officers, have done all they can to work it liberally. He and Brig. Moore are excellent men. I am completely convinced, however, that if martial law has to be re-introduced again, it will be more severe. Now I can only say that, the policy at home is poor, useless, costs Jewish, British and Arab lives, and destroys a vast amount of constructive work that is worth saving."

Replying to the question, "What are your relations with the Arabs?" Dr. Weizmann said, "They're of the best, apart from what the professional politicians have said. These are interested in encouraging people to believe the Arabs will fight. But the relations between the Jews and the Arabs, between the settlements, are good. We have a number of Arab villages here, and, on the whole, the situation is satisfactory. If the Arabs had not been told that the Jews are going to take away their land and throw them out, and all sorts of terrible things, and that the Arabs would never prosper, I am ready to believe that all that hot air would go and our relations would improve.

"What is troubling the Arabs is an element of fear. It is very difficult to combat fear with logic. Fear is an emotional quality. You can combat fear with empirical facts."

One or two birds had entered the room and were singing, perched comfortably on the table. For a few seconds, I had not been conscious of their entry, as I had been busy taking notes.

Dr. Weizmann continued, "The so-called Arab leaders are determined to maintain the feudal system. Our work destroys and undermines that system, and our work is raising the standard of the Arabs, improving outlook and education. You will see the effect in this district. Village houses, the whole mode of life, are different. Take Egypt, which is the largest Moslem country. You have seen there, the town, the beautiful buildings, magnificent palaces, hotels and roads, and, in the villages, squalor, misery, disease. In Palestine, too, there has been little change among the Arab villages since the time of the Pharaohs. There is nothing like that here. Among us there are vast improvements."

We spoke of Partition.

"Partition is something final. We can get a part of Palestine which could be made viable, where we could develop. The Arabs will know that, beyond this point they cannot go. That is why I am so anxious for Partition. That is largely responsible, perhaps the reason, I had to go out of office as President of world Zionism. Yet, I am convinced they will have to come back to Partition! There is no other way out. Once Partition has become law, the Jews and Arabs will live amicably, there will always be a common interest, railways, shipping, taxation, and it will be in their interests to work together on matters which are common to both portions of the country. It is inevitable, and it is a sin to delay it.

"Why is the Socialist Government, which is committed up to its neck on the Zionist programme, more and more anti-Zionist?"

For the first time Weizmann raised his voice, slightly above the attractive low pitch he had pursued. He stood, opened the window and took me on the balcony. We looked out at the rich young earth, pouring out its sun-kissed vegetation, blooms, fruit. The air was filled with a hundred scents. For a moment it was difficult to believe that for anyone British, in uniform or out, death might be lurking in the avenues or lanes about us. For the

silence was broken only by the melodious cries of playful birds. We did not speak. Weizmann caressingly stretched his hands towards the agriculturally embellished horizon, said, "This is my life work. I know every corner of this country. It is my role. I cannot complain. I have tried to carry it out to the best of my ability."

Turning to the politicians, Weizmann said, "The High Commissioner here is very thoughtful, a man of high moral standard. The army has a difficult task, and it is our duty to help it. In my little way, I have tried to do my best, but, are the British not merely delaying the final solution by running to U.N.? Who knows the situation better than the British themselves? If only they had the courage, sat down, and said, 'It has to be solved, let us do what is best.' But, Bevin has no choice. I think Bevin is a remarkable man, and fundamentally good, but something has beaten him."

Looking around the office, Weizmann said, with an intellectual smile, "This is my harbour. I am like a ship that goes on the high seas, and, when the weather is too stormy, returns. This is my place. I have built it. We are now working on a new Institute, which will be ready at the end of the year for opening in February or March."

Weizmann said that plastics, as building materials^ were being developed locally. "We are also trying the upgrading of raw materials for cattle food, by certain chemical processes. We want to turn it into something which is good for human food. This has a double interest."

I listened to the celebrated chemist explaining the 'cracking' of petrol, during the last (I mean, in 1947, the 1939-45) war, because there was a serious shortage of the materials out of which TNT is made. He spoke with enthusiasm of the factory in Manchester that is performing miracles in the production of food for cattle out of what hitherto went as waste.

Weizmann turned to the wall, away from the luscious colours over the balcony, "I am not doing too much, at

the moment, for I am handicapped. I cannot see very well. I underwent a serious operation recently, and a cataract has yet to be removed. My left eye is almost blind. I see you with my right eye. Yes, I have had physical suffering, five operations in 18 months. I cannot read extensively, for I have to depend upon others, But, but, I do not complain "

I mentioned his departure from the presidency of the Zionist organisation, and Weizmann pondered for a moment, before commenting, slowly, without bitterness, his words suggesting only sorrow for misguided creatures, "Yes, politicians.... They thought they could do better. I hope they will. I am not complaining and I am not personally depressed. I am still able to make my contribution if I am needed. I am trying to understand both sides here "

The arresting presence became weaker, but a presence it remained. The fervour was less vigorously expressed. But none could mistake for a moment the fierceness of the light in the beacon.

Dr. Ernest Bergman, formerly of Berlin, who worked for the Ministry of Supply, in London, and has been Weizmann's principal assistant since 1933, took me on a hurried tour of some laboratories. "The most important field of activity here is the finding of industrial uses for agricultural products. The search is for a secondary outlet. If we can use wheat and maize not only for feeding people but also for chemicals, you have an independent market for the grower. We found here a substitute for quinine as made by the Germans, and put it into production."

Bergman, his staff of women scientists, felt proud of the institution, of which the Palestine Royal Commission has written, 'The experiments carried out at the Daniel Sieff Research Institute are watched by chemists all over the world.' Founded in 1933, the Institute was opened in 1934 through the efforts of the honorary director, Weizmann, and stands as a memorial to Daniel Chaim

Sieff, who died in 1933 aged 17. He was the youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. I. M. Sieff, of London, who with Mr. Simon Marks have in recent years given about £80,000 for the main building. To meet special wartime requirements the Institute undertook the study of several problems, one being the manufacture of pharmaceuticals needed by armies and civilians in the Middle East. The entire area was suffering a shortage of drugs, commerce in which had been wholly in German hands. The Sieff Institute studied the manufacture of a number of synthetic drugs and the development of new pharmaceutical products.

Bergman is one of a large staff of chemists, biologists, physicists, bacteriologists, from Vienna, Munich, Berlin, Prague, Paris, Brussels, Darmstadt, Geneva, Zurich, London, Jerusalem, who have in recent years published between them about 200 papers (the titles ranging from Tolyphenylnaphthalenes⁵ to 'Heterogeneous ortho-para conversion on paramagnetic crystals', and, Tinacols and the pianacolone rearrangement⁵).

He explained that much work has been done in the Institute on technical fermentations, production of industrial chemicals from carbohydrates, sugar, starch, cellulose, which are plentiful in tropical and sub-tropical countries. In Palestine already local raw materials are producing by the fermentation process acetone and butyl alcohol. The production of chemicals from fermentation products will assume great significance when the existing oil supply is exhausted. 'Tor mineral oil is no longer being formed anew by geological forces, but so long as the sun shines down on the earth nature will continue to produce vast amounts of sugar, starch, cellulose.⁵⁵ Palestine aims at becoming a second Switzerland, and since 1939 over 400 new factories and workshops have been established here for engines, diamond cutting, manufacture of machine tools, precision and optical instruments. Jewish industrial production rose to about £20,000,000 in 1942.

The Institute is most concerned about the preparation of Palestine 'for the reception of immigrants after the troubles are settled.'⁵⁵ Industrial capacity is the answer, and quality goods the speciality. There is no coal here, but, like Switzerland, Palestine has, in the Electric Corporation, a powerful network supplying most parts of the country. The Jordan, which falls 1,290 feet below sea level in its short course from Northern Galilee to the Dead Sea, is utilised. Consumption has risen from 20 million kilowatts in 1938 to 40 in 1942.

There was little enthusiasm in Bergman's face as I left. He wanted me to remain and to listen, and to see. I could not have wished more to stay anywhere, but, I had an appointment in Jerusalem by one o'clock, for luncheon.

As I drove towards the capital, the driver, or Bishop, pointed out here and there "a dangerous field"⁵⁵ where a short while previously there had been an attack, or 'incident'. These fields seemed plentiful. The 'incidents'⁵ seemed endless. Passing buses with passengers appeared to contain an equal number of Jews and Arabs. This seemed curious, for the population of the country is almost segregated. Thus, for example, of Jerusalem's 155,000 inhabitants, 95,000 are given as Jewish; of Tel-a-viv's 155,277, 154,620 are Jewish; of Gaza's 30,327 — one is Jewish; of Hebron's 23,133, six are Jewish; of Rehovoth's 9,062, 9,046 are Jewish. Bethlehem has 8,889 inhabitants, including 73 Jews.

Printed signs everywhere show that the official languages are English, Arabic and Hebrew. Since I am dealing with figures, I may add perhaps that, according to the census taken in 1922 the inhabitants totalled 752,000, including 589,000 Moslems, 83,000 Jews and 71,000 Christians. In 1944 the totals had risen, respectively, to 1,061,277 (largely through natural increase), 528,000 (largely through immigration), and 135,000. In 1944, the latest year for data, 5,692 persons, 5,533 among them Jews, were naturalised.

There was now a slight commotion in the leading jeep. On approaching a 'celebrated' prison, following the advice of Bishop, we had changed the position of car and jeep at various places. Suddenly a big stone crashed on top of the folded canvas covering the leading vehicle. The driver performed a speedy toss in his seat. I shouted, as he slowed down, "Carry on, driver. It's quite all right." He looked back, smiled uneasily, and we drove on. Amid the splendour and historical riches of the land of most religions and so many unreturning civilisations, it seemed a quaint interruption.

We were almost in Jerusalem, seat of many Prelates. The office of President of the Moslem Supreme Council, held by the Grand Mufti, is momentarily not filled. The Jews have two joint Chief Rabbis, for the Ashkenazim (Westerners) and for the Sephardim (Eastern sect). In Nablus there is a Samaritan High Priest. There are Orthodox Greek, Latin and Armenian Patriarchs. The Pope has his Apostolic Delegate. There are Syrian Orthodox and Coptic Bishops. The Uniat communities, i.e., the Greek Catholic (Melkite), the Armenian Catholic, the Syrian Catholic and the Maronite are represented by Patriarchal Vicars. The Abbot of the Abyssinian community, the Anglican Bishop and the head of the Presbyteries end the list.

The entry into Jerusalem is attractive, for the scenery is unlike any other in the world. It lacks on the road from Tel-a-viv the industrialisation horrors of London, the ramshackle huts of Kingston, Jamaica, the poverty shacks of Paris, the (roofless) neo-skyscrapers of Berlin, the glaring inequality of Cairo. But the surprising impact of a westernised city so near to the Suez, is sharp. Many shops look good enough for a minor provincial town in Britain, and some have all the appurtenances of a miniature Paris.

The name is belied by events, for Jerusalem was known before the Israelite era as Urusalim, city of Salim. or city of peace. The Arabs gave it the name of Sanctuary.

It lies about 2,500 feet above sea level or 3,800 feet above the Dead Sea. My reflections on the progress of the West (and our self-confidence) were shaken a little as I remembered that, 2500 B.C., four and a half thousand years ago, the Semites from Arabia settled here, that about 1400 B.C., ahead of Joshua's invasion of the territory, Jerusalem was a vassal of Egypt.

But there was little time to look and think, for we were stopped constantly by British military pickets, and arrived shamefully late at Karm el Mufti (the Grove) for luncheon in the house occupied by the widow of George Antonius, the Arab historian, who wrote 'The Arab Awakening'⁵. He died five years ago, aged 50.

Overlooking one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world, which has in its heart the remnants not only of the great monotheistic religions, but of frail, creaking civilisations that have nearly vanished altogether, the house seems an unnatural super-imposition. I walked round the gardens, ignoring the galaxy of guests waiting patiently for luncheon, fascinated by the jasmine bushes, the oleander, the cactus, lilac, silver pine, mimosa trees • The house is conventional Arab, and over the door are the words, 'Enter in Peace and Security.'⁵ The Mufti has never lived here. The host, in the absence of Mrs. Antonius, was fluent English-speaking Nassib Bulos, Christian Arab Palestinian, who described himself as lawyer and journalist. British journalists, one with a Russian wife, the Bishops, relatives of the Mufti's, and officials from the British Information Office, were among the guests, sitting in the garden and later drinking coffee in the drawing room. Bulos is youngish, cooks, appears dilettante, speaks with clarity and directness.

The core of the problem in Palestine as he saw it? "The right of a people to decide their own destiny, which has been denied them so long, and is still being denied them."⁵⁵ That question had been complicated by side-issues, the capacity, for instance of the Jews to change

the desert into what Palestine was now, because they had water and finance.

A cousin of Jemal al Hussein's says he is back in Jerusalem. Good news. I must visit him, for he appears to have made a sensational speech, a day or two ago.

Meanwhile I am taken to the Eden Hotel, in preference to the crowded quarters occupied by about eighty or ninety correspondents and their wives. That pleases me. I am warned that the Eden is "not wholly safe"⁵ for it is "outside the wire fences." I say, "I gladly accept the responsibility." Courteous, Jewish clerks booked me in, I was suitably impressed by the cleanliness of the surroundings, the newness of the furniture.

Dose of candour today of kind that I have not read or heard so openly.

With my escort, I drove through the busiest streets of Jerusalem, and came to rest outside a big, though unpretentious, house in whose front garden a striking Arab woman was entertaining a child of three or four. Learning previously that the acting head of the Higher Arab Committee was indisposed, I sent in a scribbled note addressed to Jemal. His servant at once invited me upstairs. We met in the sitting-room, and Jemal apologised for the limited, austere furniture, saying that this was not his home and momentarily he and his wife were without adequate help.

Jemal, who still looks hunted, told me that, on the journey from Riyadh, after he had left me, his party had been detained in Jedda for a day in the absence of a permit from King Ibn Saud for the aircraft to proceed to Egypt. In the evening, when it was discovered that the aircraft would not leave, he and Seddigi decided to motor to Mecca and came back late the same night.

I told Jemal of recent report in Cairo concerning his 'inflammatory' speech in Haifa. Jemal laughed at the adjective, said, "We shall know through UNO something about acts, and not only words. More, we are going to know who are friends and who are our foes. The basis

of the whole government is something akin to the principles of the late League of Nations, the present U.N.

"The Palestine Government is so very weak in dealing with immigration and with terrorism. All its actions are inadequate if we apply to them the same rule. According to your government, illegal immigrants into Palestine should be taken to the port from which they have come, or, port from which they had been taken. What happens? The British are simply keeping them in Cyprus and then finding room here to bring them in under a quota, which is itself illegal. Every month there are 1,500 of them here. In three or four months thousands of people are brought to this country and the British give preference to old men, ladies and children.

"They have had now 18 fact-finding commissions here. For every commission there is a set of recommendations. That is quite fooling. One can always delay work by having a commission.

"My presence here is important for the situation is so tense that, one feels rather like an immigrant when one leaves for a short stay out of the country. Our young men want to kick up, want to attack, but my speeches put down people, put down feelings, calm folk. Some of our younger leaders are not very quiet. But, if you are not yourself very strong, these young people will take over the job themselves."¹⁵

Jemal lost the philosophical approach for the moment, added, "We will certainly fight Partition. We are not going to fight it in Palestine. We will fight it all over the Near and Middle East, certainly through the Middle East. Even in Riyadh, where people have no papers to read, and, the radio they hear is, more or less, pro-British, I found tremendous enthusiasm about the Palestine issue. That really struck me. I never thought that, in so far off a place, people would be so sensitive. Yesterday, before I made my speech in Haifa, I received a deputation of Druzes. They said, 'We are peaceful people who want to tell you that our people discuss

nothing but Palestine. We are amazed ourselves.'

"I feel that Palestine is the burning problem. You cannot interest the people in anything else."⁵⁵

Jemal gave me the impression that he was conscious of the importance in the eyes of the British and Americans of Palestine as a strategic problem, as a base after our retirement from Egypt. The real worry seems that, all British and American interests are going to be attacked, everywhere. The Americans even worse than the British.

"You will have repercussions that will lead, perhaps, to friction. The Jews in the Arab world will have to bear the brunt of it. Don't forget there are a million Jews in the Arab world. Zero hour is here. The time when we shall begin to think of the attack. Are they going to stop, or, will there be 'looking at the beards.'⁵ That is a Jewish saying of some importance.

"The British are forgetting what their most firm friends have been saying. Nuri Pasha,* the most Anglophile of them said, in Baghdad, a few days ago, 'I am not optimistic, and, I believe that the best way in which to deal with the Palestine question, would be a strong foundation, because there is no power on earth that can force the Arabs to co-operate with the Zionists. The Zionist influence is said to be very strong in America and in England. Therefore, the Arab States must think seriously in overcoming and avoiding the economic and political connections with these two Governments. In my opinion this is the only way that makes them look to the Arabs in the same way as they look at the Zionists'."

Jemal went on, "If Nuri said that in Iraq, others will say, 'Let us move on Palestine and Iraq, where there are two million bedouins.'⁵ Are the Zionists going to fight all these? The English will not allow them to do it,

"At the end of what they have called my 'inflammatory'⁵ speech, I said, 'The Jews are murdering the British in Palestine. The British Government is lacking

Iraq's semi-permanent Premier.

in courage. The British are not able to defend their own troops because of the lackadaisical manner in which they deal with this terrorism. There may come a day when you, in your own homes will be attacked by these Zionists, and before God and man I advise every one of you to see that, you are well armed, so that when the time comes you will be able to defend yourselves and your homes and your children."

The meeting, he said, was attended by 8,000 people and two loud speakers reproduced the address to an overflow gathering.

Jemal speaks well, scarcely suggests the detached, calmer-expressed but fiercer intellectuality of Haj Amin, knows his mind. He could, I am certain, lead his people any way he chose. The passion of the Palestine Arabs is to be read in his haunted, haunting features. The Arabs have fought the Turks, the British and now, I think, they will fight the Jews. I doubt whether any power can restrain them They fear lest the Jews 'flood the country with powerful, well-drilled young immigrants,' fan out into the neighbouring territories, the rest of Palestine, and later, other Arab states. Hence, the eagerness for battle, while the problem is still fluid and capable (in the opinion of Arabs) of a conclusion in a manner satisfactory for the Arabs.

I noted as we left that the pickets examined the passes not only of Arabs and Jews, but of British soldiers. Who knows that the uniform has not been stolen for masquerade purposes? And so even young men with the red caps are stopped at every barricade. Pretty Jewish girls smile at the Tommies, who, however, seldom smile in return. It is worth noting that the Jewesses here seldom resemble the podgy, over-dressed, powdered and rouged types who parade the streets of London's East End. They looked dignified, tidy, are modestly dressed, speak quietly. But, of course, ladies in shorts, short shorts, spoil the picture now and then. These are land-girls.

During waits at barriers, Mrs. Bishop told me that fat costs 10/-d. a pound, meat is controlled at between 7/6d. and 10/-d. a kilo (a little over two pounds), that tea, flour, sugar, rice are rationed. Sometimes the lights go out in the kitchen or in the sitting room. (I retorted that the custom has spread to London).

Bishop and I then adjourned, through a suitable barbed wire fence, and following enquiries from a series of examiners, to the top floor of the Press building. Here we met the Director of Information, Richard Stubb, whose salary, according to the official handbook, is £1,100. Plentiful officials, male and female, foreign and British, Jewish and Gentile, who seemed to be slack, told me of the large number of newspapers published in Palestine. There are, in fact, eighteen dailies, of which 11 are Hebrew, and four Arabic. 'The Palestine Post', in English, is really well edited, has competent columnists, enjoys the highest circulation, about 20,000. It is considered to be the organ of Mapai, the Jewish Labour Party as well as of the Zionist institutions. 'Davar' (Word or Cause) sells about 19,000 copies, is said to represent Mapai, and 'Haaretz' (The Land), sells 17,000 copies. This is the independent paper, though officials assured me that it is in some degree affiliated to the 'General Zionists'.⁵

Leading Arab organ, 'Al DifaV, (Defence) with circulation of 13,000 is said to be independent in local party politics, but "is gradually developing into a nationalist independent daily." There are also dailies in German and Polish. Periodicals and dailies published in the country number 128, appear in Armenian, Italian, Yiddish, Russian, French, Greek, and, for a population of a million and a quarter, suggest average intellectual interest beyond that of any neighbour or, even Western Europe.

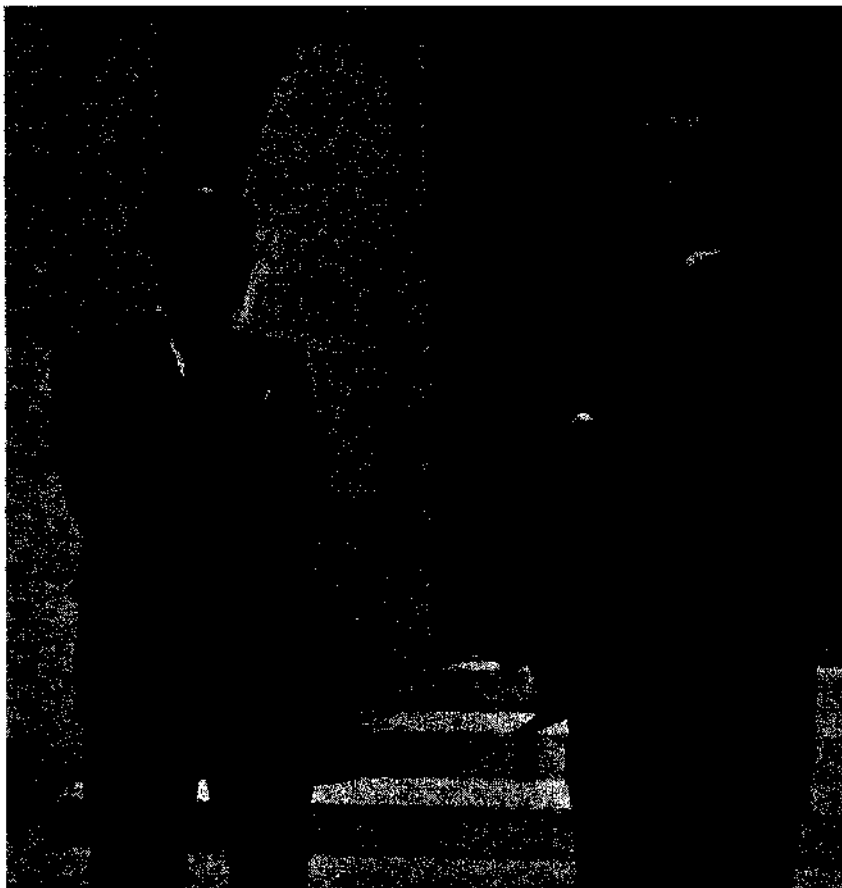
Stubb is the modern P.R.O., who feeds the gentlemen of the Press with answers to their (as he says "often half-baked") questions. He has to apologise, defend,

uphold, guard. And, I should imagine he does his task with skill. For instance, I see, according to the official report of the conference he held on April 9, that a representative of 'Hatzofeh' (The Lookout), daily organ of the World Mizrachi movement asked "about the latest ban on the import and circulation of certain publications, including the pamphlet, 'Arab War Effort', by Dean Alfange, chairman of the American Christian Palestine Committee." The questioner, named Feller, added, says the record, "This pamphlet lists a number of Arab leaders, including the ex-Mufti, who aided the Nazis and hampered the Allied war effort." He asked also whether this was not inconsistent with the policy of the Palestine Government which exiled and banned the return of the Mufti; 2, why was the "local press prevented from discrediting the Mufti by exposing his pro-Nazi activities and acquainting the people of Palestine with his anti-Government activities, especially since a large section of the Arab population still holds him in high esteem, apparently out of ignorance of his true colour."

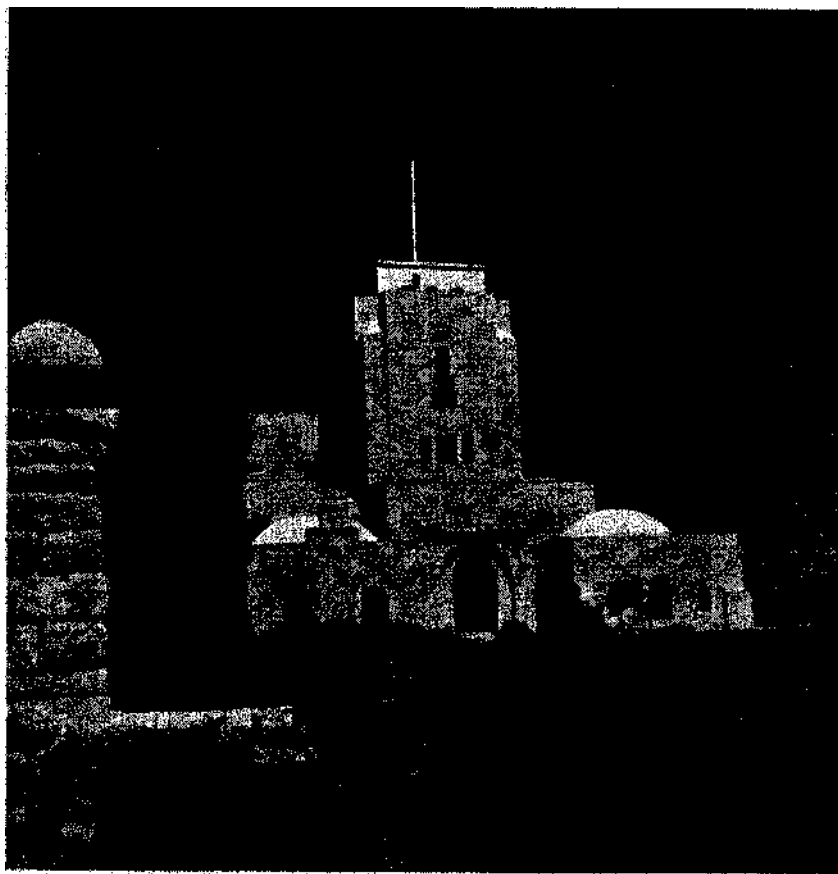
Stubb answered, " 'The Arab War Effort'* has been prohibited by the Press Censor in virtue of powers vested in him by Regulation 88 of the Defence (Emergency) Regulations, it being considered that the circulari-

I have, of course, read through this book, which appears to consist of reports prepared by British intelligence officers and of documents said to have been captured in Germany after the entry of the allied troops. It speaks of the work of the rebels in Iraq, during the abortive revolution in 1941 by Rashid Ali Gilani, of the alleged association of Haj Amin with persons in Berlin, and of activities by other Palestine Arabs who had been opposed to British policy in Palestine. The volume, though small, deserves the preparation of a reply by the Arab leaders. It appears to be little known among Arabs in London.

Incidentally, Rashid Ali is the only notable I have asked to and failed to, meet during this visit. He was in or near Jedda, and Fuad Hamza said casually, 'I do not think a meeting is possible.' Ali speaks French and I believe English, so that even in the presence of a third party, a talk would have been instructive and interesting.



H.E. GEN. SIR ALAN CUNNINGHAM, HIGH COMMISSIONER,
PALESTINE, outside the Residency in Jerusalem.



PALACE OF THE HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR PALESTINE

sation of this work would tend to give rise to inter-communal bitterness and thus be prejudicial to security."

Another questioner, 'Zigroni', of 'Haboker', ('Morning' in Hebrew); daily with circulation of 8,000, asked at the conference about permission for Italian fishermen to visit Palestine territorial waters. Stubb answered that, some Italians had been allowed to land fish caught outside Palestine waters; in 1946 Palestine imported 8,718 tons of fish and local fishermen landed 3,930 tons. The local price of fresh fish was nine times higher than before the war.

A Mr. Laqueur, of 'Mishmar', (in Hebrew, 'Guard'), daily that favours Jewish-Arab co-operation and sells 7,000 copies, asked about the alleged beating-up by the Army of an employee of the Pay Office in the Syrian Orphanage. Stubb said when the man returned from sick leave the investigation would be completed. An Arab gentlemen wanted to know why Arab teachers had been resigning; a Hebrew journalist heard that the Municipality was not making preparations to spray the streets during the coming summer; another asked why Jewish prisoners in Jerusalem Central Prison were not allowed to follow religious practices. Stubb did not attempt to make any reply to the question, but contradicted an allegation that during the festival of Purim there was no reading of the Scroll. "Prisoners," he said "were allowed to, and observed, the Purim festival."

Since the questions reflect a sort of Parliamentary enquiry, I may summarise the others dealt with that day as concerning the allotment of State-owned land to Arab and Jewish cultivators; the name of a film banned during the past three months; the number of officials under suspension on charges of corruption ("Figures of persons accused of bribery will be given later"); Summer time is "not being introduced in Palestine, so that it can conform with other Middle East countries"; an Arab journalist desired (in vain) to know the names of the Jewish leaders alleged to be connected

first communicated with the people on the top half of their list, and then with the folk on the second half. On the succeeding occasion they reversed the process. People on the top list were rung up from one part of the building, those on the second half from another part. The agencies were also 'split', four each time. The work was complicated because the D.I.O. had also to supply the material to the 'strings', technical term for Jewish and Arab 'runners', understudies, employed by correspondents to confirm or follow up news and develop stories (to journalists this word is generally meant to convey factual accounts of happenings). In addition, 17 photographers have to be given all the news—say a murder, burnt house, raid, train derailing.

Bishop and I went to his home 'inside the protected area'⁵, so that he could change for a party at Stubb's house in attractive quarter of the city. The scent of fresh blooms was strong as we slowed down, but uppermost in my mind was picture of the barbed wire on the ground floor windows in British-occupied houses. Life resembles existence in an H. G. Wells horror novel. But, I recalled his writing cheerfully about ten years ago, that general poverty and economic inequality would force those who are well-to-do, to keep armed sentries about their residences and, or to purchase a team of fierce dogs.

Mrs. Stubb proved a lively hostess. Her guests included the French and Italian consuls. Talk sounded desultory. I was far away from the beautifully kept walls, the ideally attractive circular rooms, the splendid liquor, the delicacies. I recalled, and nothing that I heard or said, at the reception prevented the process, the tableau of young, rather pathetic, small-built 'soldiers'⁵ from a foreign land, intellectually inferior to most of those they were ordered to guard, or to search, or to control, wishing to goodness they could be back home, standing in the 'Pig and Whistle'⁵ in Morpeth, or Bacup, or Normanton; waiting in the shilling queue outside the cinema in Avonmouth or Ramsgate; crowding into the ground for the

with terrorism "and so often mentioned in the 1946 White Paper"; during March there were five attacks by British soldiers on Arabs, including three deaths; Jerusalem had been under curfew on so many occasions during and since April 1, 1946; would there be compensation to the Palestine Airways Company, since requisitioned by the R.A.F.? Investigations were proceeding into the unofficial raising of the price of books and periodicals by ten to twenty per cent.

Almost three p.m. in our own House of Commons.

Stubb has been here a year, previously worked in Chatham House, as Reuter correspondent, dealt with Balkans on staff of P.I.D., Cairo. He has to nurse no fewer than 35 foreign journalists a day, occasionally many more. Local journalists with identification cards have risen to prodigious total of about 500. All have been 'carefully vetted' as full-time writers. The Jewish writers and readers were, of course, critical, with a long background of democracy, in Germany and Austria among others. Palestine, said Stubb, was a country without Parliamentary representation. Thus the P.R.O. or D.I.O. occupied a position wholly different from any of his colleagues. The Press was the most enlightened portion of the community, and editors acted almost as representatives of the people. There were no other representatives as powerful. He holds two conferences a week in Jerusalem, one a week in Tel-a-viv, and one a fortnight in Jaffa. Some writers asked 'fantastic' questions, but he did his best to answer them with care and accuracy. He encouraged discussion, feeling that he should inform whenever possible. Last week he had 500 questions to answer. He always carried with him a few written replies.

Bishop explained that to ensure fairness, in the distribution of 'hand-outs', (pernicious, demoralising, post-war method for passing information to journalists, who are thus saved the time and trouble of obtaining more individual, more colourful facts themselves) they

first communicated with the people on the top half of their list, and then with the folk on the second half. On the succeeding occasion they reversed the process. People on the top list were rung up from one part of the building, those on the second half from another part. The agencies were also 'split', four each time. The work was complicated because the D.I.O. had also to supply the material to the 'strings', technical term for Jewish and Arab 'runners', understudies, employed by correspondents to confirm or follow up news and develop stories (to journalists this word is generally meant to convey factual accounts of happenings). In addition, 17 photographers have to be given all the news—say a murder, burnt house, raid, train derailing.

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match between Salcombe and Marlborough; changing to bat outside the village pavilion; lost, on a Sunday, in the front parlour, with the neighbour's daughter; glancing at their friends in the main street of the native village, and passing the time of day with someone they had known from birth. Here these same boys, comically masquerading in uniform, were being frightened of their fellows, learnt to hate perfectly good Jews and perfectly good Arabs, discovered nothing constructive in the presence of one of the priceless treasures of the human race—the spot where the religions of modern man were born. Most of the boys doubtless did not care much for religion at home—here they did not change a great deal. Moreover, here is consumed too much drink; far too much is smoked, out of nervousness, or eagerness to do something with unoccupied hands, time, unspent money.

Bishop and Stubb drove me to the hotel and I listened to the former saying in all seriousness, "We leave you here entirely at your own responsibility, for the Eden Hotel is Jewish-owned, and, as you know, this part of Jerusalem is wholly outside the guarded sector."⁵⁵ I remembered, of course, the long list of instructions about 'guarded sectors', and the curfew hour and so forth, detailed in a strictly confidential document which I had examined earlier in the evening.

Bathed and changed in room with shower in adjoining alcove. I liked the grand palms in the lounge of the hotel. Several people sat at well-separated tables, but the atmosphere was chilly, subdued, like the frontier town of Viipuri, before the Russo-Finnish war in 1939, None spoke above a whisper. The picture also reminded me of Danzig—in the years immediately before the outbreak of the Hitler war. I was surprised to find only three or four of the tables in the Eden dining room occupied, by a group of foreign journalists (including an American of the higher orders), an Arab family, and a Jewish couple. The waiters all spoke good English. The head waiter dancing attendance, enquired where I had been recently, whom I

had seen, when I was returning home, was I travelling by air, and so on. It all seemed part of the routine, and was done with a courtesy that made my cool non-co-operation in the local Gallup enquiry seem ungracious, almost churlish. However, the soup was delicious, the duck was superbly cooked (and visible on the plate). The sweet was edible and the Russian (lemon) tea was Correct⁵ for observant Jews—who abjure milk after a meat dish.

In the cool, sinister lounge, deserted now, I had a chat in voices approaching a whisper with the proprietor, Mr. A. Lifshitz, at 49 pleasant, enthusiastic. He had worked hard to build up the hotel, and said he had been helped throughout by his wife. The Eden was opened on April 10, 1938, hence the modernity and cleanliness on which I had, of course, commented with pleasure and surprise. Mr. Lifshitz had been in the hotel business in Jerusalem since 1919. I liked the relations he appeared to have with his staff. It was the sacred Friday night, and as they walked out of the main door, on their way home, may be to face an unhappy fate, they bowed and said, "Sholem" ("Peace"). Lifshitz replied with the same word, spoken reverently, playing on the consonants as if they meant much more. As indeed they did. Lifshitz does not, of course, know the political affiliations of his staff, some of whom, he explained, may be connected with active terrorists. Lifshitz was asking my views on the future of Palestine. Would there be Partition? Would the British stay or leave? I did not say what was in my mind, "I cannot think of any hotel in any big town in the world, where it is so easy to find a table, and excellent food well served, at so modest a price as in Jerusalem."

Neither did I say that there was an atmosphere of loneliness, of strife, of impending danger, of inevitable war. Hatred could be smelt outside the entrance door. I stood for a few minutes and studied the queer little humans, cheerless, sad, who in the year of our Grace 1947 merely asked to be allowed to live their brief span in peace. The majority of the inoffensive Jews and Arabs I

saw in the street, quiet now with almost no traffic, sought but to earn their bread, have a little money for the cinema, and for dresses for the wife and children. Yet, here they were boiling together in a pot of lethal loathing.

But it is not folly to imagine that, man has progressed so far, that his leaders can keep him peaceful towards his fellows? The perpetual fear of another monkey usurping his leadership, in home, or official post, or business, seems to turn so many men into creatures who behave like the mythical four-eyed Negro monster in the West Indies. Why not in Palestine? Why not, indeed, in Europe and beyond, where possessions accumulate?

I sit by my high window, recalling the lesser interludes of the day. It is thrilling to know that Fate has been so gracious to me, enabled me to see the men who are moulding our history books, to learn of their hopes and fears, failures, triumphs. 'Tomorrow,' later today, I hope to see Generals Cunningham and MacMillan. There is no other profession that I would willingly seek to follow if given a choice, although I know the current effects of serious writing are generally in inverse ratio to the energy expended, the tact employed. What of the unrecorded efforts to reduce high temperature between peoples, men, states, races? Those attempts at the higher levels are not mostly publishable but, as I reflect on my calling, I think this is what often gives me courage to pursue the path with enthusiasm, and strength. Writing, then, has the elements of missionary endeavour. And the fighter for goodwill between nations need not be ashamed of his failures, need not be depressed by the ephemeral successes of enemies of concord.

Saturday, May 3rd.

How many people know the words of Sir George Adams Smith—"Palestine has never belonged to one nation, and probably never will"?

I pondered on the conclusion, as I stood outside the

Jaffa Gate, and admired the vast stone walls, with the belaboured parapets. Soldiers, policemen, some with Caucasian fur hats, Arabs with attractive robes spoilt in a few cases by our comical Western jackets, gentlemen in red turbashes, slow moving personages on lazy looking camels, and endless donkeys, donkeys, donkeys. In narrow David Street I admired women in long dresses balancing large baskets on their heads as they flowed gracefully past the tiny shops. The sheep outside Herod's Gate were a strange and welcome sign of pacific intent in an uncertain world.

My first call was at 8.45 at the residence of the G.O.C. who smiled with an effort that was obvious, Lieut. General Gordon Holmes A. MacMillan, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., Ulster, tall, 50, shot, cricketer, ex-St. Edmund's School, Canterbury, and Sandhurst. The entrance to his home was guarded, rightly, at various points thoroughly. We drove round and round and when I walked in, I noticed a selection of 'mezzuzahs' (sacred Jewish emblems) on all the door-posts. They belong to a man now living in the United States and MacMillan's predecessor, the unhappy young Peter of Yugoslavia, did not remove them during his stay. MacMillan came in, preceded by his G.S.O.i., Intelligence officer, Lt. Col. C. R. W. Norman, who had just concluded breakfast, and the a.d.c, Capt. H. G. Spens. Both appendages remained during our talk, and MacMillan made but a fleeting impression. He smiled again and again. Fortunately I kept a shorthand note of his part of our conversation, or I should find it difficult to produce a record.

MacMillan said he has a command of an area 60 miles wide and about 100 miles long. His most important task, is, of course, the internal security of the region, which takes up a lot of the troops' time, and meanwhile turning the soldiers "into a high state of training and efficiency." Their job was largely to help the police. One of the main difficulties he faced was due to the youthfulness of the troops—"they are so young, so young."

The reports of his staying inside because of threats by terrorists were not accurate. He told me that so soon as he left me (the a.d.c. had said on the telephone last night, "The General has an important, urgent, appointment after you leave him tomorrow morning") he was off to shoot quail. There would be tennis in the grounds of Government House, where he enjoyed the High Commissioner's hospitality. A lot of people still rode. He watched polo three days ago. Football was played all the year round; there was plenty of cricket. The army often played the police and they worked in close co-operation. Sometimes the troops played the Jews.

MacMillan travels about six days a week.

We drove out, and a senior British officer with Trans-Jordan troops in a lorry told the photographer, "If you don't mind, I'd rather not be photographed." Bishop said, "I can't blame him—he's a marked man in his job." Some of the escort said, just as we were approaching the asphalt road to Government House, "At this point, six months ago, five mines, or bombs, intended for His Excellency were found. Fortunately they did not go off, and the High Commissioner is safe."

There was silence in the car for a moment and I wondered whether generations to come would be any more interested in the struggles of 1947 than we were in those of 1900 years ago, when Vespasian and Titus burnt the Temple, scarcely leaving one stone upon another? Whether those generations will remember 1947 more than we do events 1300 years ago, when Persians and Jews captured the city, massacring the Christians? That 700 years ago it went to the Mohammedans?

What did I learn locally about His Excellency General Sir Alan Cunningham, K.C.B., D.S.O., M.C.? Firstly that he did not meet the Press sufficiently often. This was perhaps understandable, as once he had listened at eight p.m. to an authentic, long account across the Atlantic of a strictly "off the record" conference he had addressed nine hours earlier. Moreover, he had once

begun a session with members of the British Press with these words: "Sometimes when I open the newspapers and read what you write, I wonder whether you are really British." Lastly, he had read "with mellifluous grace" the lesson in St. George's Cathedral at the service held last July for the 91 Britons, Arabs and Jews who had perished in the attack on British G.H.Q., the King David Hotel. Yesterday I was photographed outside the rude remnants of the hollow hotel. This morning I thought, as I waited there, of the fatal ease with which men forgot sacrifices. Nobody spoke of the casualties here, although one of the escort mumbled, "It was pretty red all around here once, from blood."

The exterior of Government House is less closely guarded, I thought, than that of MacMillan's G.H.Q.. The residence towers above large portions of Jerusalem, "looks the part." It is all in new stone, Oriental and square.

The exhausted private secretary, James Blewitt, (ex-Harrow, Trinity College, Cambridge), studious, polite, not apparently nervous, told me he is returning shortly to farm in Colchester, prefers it to law.

I walked through long corridors, and, in the sunny ante-room noted on the table by the window a large number of copies of 'The Tatler.' Cunningham began by saying that he always read me first on opening his copy of 'The Tatler.' He smiled naturally, and instantly conveyed the impression (without so much as uttering a word) that if anyone in Jerusalem is nervous, or disposed to get ruffled, it certainly is not Alan Cunningham. His jovial, healthy, pink cheeks suggest he has ridden much in tropical climates. The simplicity of manner, comfortable posture in a big armchair in a lightly coloured study, the steadiness but not impassivity of his grey-blue eyes, the eager smile, suggested a pleasing, efficient administrator, who in private life might be the courteous, gentle, vicar's warden in a Thurlestone church. He was himself the whole time, did not attempt to fence with awkward problems,

or questions, only once asked to be excused from giving a reply for publication. Cunningham made me feel that, he is the type of ambassador I should like to have seen in a difficult country like India—where the people would appreciate an educated, if not too highly cultivated, Briton, who within the measure of (intelligent) instructions represents the better, yet conventional Briton of yesterday, fair, frank, honest, clear-headed, and non-Poona. The son of a notable F.R.S., Cunjiingham did well during the Fascist war in Somaliland, and Abyssinia, has a celebrated naval brother. His (obvious) hobbies are hunting and fishing. As he spoke, slowly, without embellishments, I pondered on the contrast in stature he provides with MacMillan. Here the statesman, there the painstaking, successful filing officer. In Cunningham, too, there are many facets to explore. MacMillan can be read in a flash. I wanted to ask Cunningham to come for a long walk in the grounds.

His stay in Palestine will be debated by historians, by partisans, by friends, and critics alike for years. They will perhaps someday learn of the tiresome, tragic, tug-of-war that went on between two home government departments: one often desired to accept the advice of the man on the spot, the other became involved (maybe for good and sufficient reasons) with a constantly varying foreign pressure. It is a painful canvas. Hence I am giving a full record (taken in shorthand, of course,) of today's valuable conversation.

Cunningham began, early on, "We have to work here for the good of Palestine, and, whatever the difficulties, to carry through the task of a Mandatory Power."

We spoke of politicians in certain countries, and Cunningham appears to appreciate their value, and judge their honesty, acutely. . . . We dealt with the sundry Commissions of enquiry that have studied Palestine. I told him of my chats with Weizmann and Jemal al Husseini, as well as the one-word message I had brought from Haj Amin al Husseini—"Salut." Cunningham

smiled, stroked his silvery hair, and now I noticed the spare frame. He preferred Weizmann to Gurion, "a fanatic," he felt that the Mufti was prepared to go to extreme measures. Weizmann he liked, and had often entertained at Government House. At first, he was High Commissioner for Palestine and for Transjordan, which had since been made into a kingdom under Abdullah. This ruler was "one hundred per cent for us," but, would know where anyone endeavoured to infringe his sovereignty.

In some quarters the question has been asked whether the High Commissioner as a civilian remains in supreme authority of a country that is for a while under military rule. But the High Commissioner of Palestine is also Commander in Chief. Cunningham put it delicately, "The civil governor is supreme: the soldiers report to me.

There has been much discussion at home, and abroad, about the ultimate departure of Lt. General Sir Evelyn Barker, who in an order meant to be strictly private, with a limited circulation, decreed in July, 1946, after the bomb outrage in the King David Hotel, "No British soldier is to have any social intercourse with any Jew, and any intercourse in the way of duty should be as brief as possible, and kept to the business in hand."⁵⁵ In the House of Commons, Mr. Morrison said, "... we must dissociate ourselves from the actual terms in which the letter was couched . . ." Under what must be emphasised as a War Office posting, Barker became in February, 1947, G.O.C. in Chief, Eastern Command, which suggests that the C.I.G.S., Field Marshal Lord Montgomery, was not disposed to criticise one whom he (and General Cunningham) thought an efficient soldier. But, could Barker continue in Palestine with these observations behind him?

Did Barker go, or was he pushed? The latter has often been alleged. Cunningham said to me, "No, Barker went to accept a higher grade post at home. Perhaps Barker

would himself say that he was in error in thus writing the order. He did his best to water down the observation about the Jews. Barker was, in fact, anxious to stay, and get over the difficulty. Tempers between soldiers and civilians in Palestine were at the time rising. Tens of soldiers, civilians and women, had been shot. And one had to do a great deal to calm tempers all round.⁵⁵

I think Cunningham had some regrets at the departure of an old friend.

He went on, "I am extremely proud of how the civilian administration is doing its job. No other nation in the world would carry on civil government in face of the particular things that are going on. Even abductions. For these fellows of ours go on uncomplainingly, forget the petitions and grouses, merely because they do not wish to see this country go down to complete chaos. I have the best colonial staff in the Commonwealth, a wonderful team, Chief Secretary down. Remember, all the propaganda in this country suggests that the Palestine administration is wrong, in everything it does."⁵⁵

The situation could improve, only if a political solution were provided.

But his trouble was that in the 18 months he had been in Jerusalem, he had never had a policy at all.

Therefore, his object had been to keep the country quiet, without any goal for which the staff could all work. There was a hope for a settlement, until America sabotaged the plan. It was seen in Palestine that the plan would be accepted, and then President Truman bleated about the 100,000 immigrants. His trouble had been that, ever since this event, the situation had deteriorated, and there had been no inkling of aim for the staff.

The real problem was whether they accepted the thesis that Arabs and Jews would get on together, or, whether they would not. If the two could get on, and form a government together, that would be the best answer. But, if they made up their mind that Arabs and Jews were so far apart that they would never get together, as

some people had done, then the only answer was to separate them. In some way or another. The heart of the question was immigration. If that could be settled, the two communities would get together.

"As to the institution of a supreme power, there would have to be a transition period. The Arab view is, the Arabs should take over. That is impossible, would lead to chaos. Take the country as it is. Consider how the Arabs would be able to administer a city like Tel-a-viv, and prevent the Jews from fighting a purely Arab state straight away. The Jews say that they can get on with the Arabs, with the Mandatory regime going on, but it means our enforcing immigration."

Cunningham told me he works in that office, and tours the country often. His staff is in the house. When he desires to see anyone, Arabs, Jews or heads of departments, they come to the residence-office. Every morning he visits the Chief Secretary to get the day's summing up, in an hour and a half to two hours. He holds the Executive council once a week, and attends other committees and councils. He tries to see as much of Palestine as possible. He averages two tours a week for a year—until recently, including Jewish settlements "of course."⁵⁵ This has been slightly restricted, but not as some American journalists (there was play on the two words, as if they resembled a Malayan durian) suggested after attending one of his conferences, stopped because he is frightened. He has not been confined to the house, as some—journalists—had written, completely misinterpreting and wilfully altering the sense of what he said had. "I go round the country as I wish. There are certain dangers I have to be careful about as I am the High Commissioner, for instance, because of the recent executions. At the moment visits to Jewish settlements are not easy."⁵⁵

The day before yesterday he was visited by this and that personage, Jewish and Arab leaders. As he spoke of danger I was conscious only of the strong sun outside, kept out by the heavy bricks and mortar. I glanced about the

quiescent green decorations, the light walls, the sense of being somewhere in a mansion in the heart of Pitlochry, and expecting the Scots maid to announce that luncheon was ready. But there was no Scots maid, and there was no Lady Cunningham as hostess, and the pallid language hiding real dangers, risks, continued its relentless, inescapable course.

I asked what Cunningham did yesterday. He replied that he went to the Chief Secretary's, then received the Jewish mayor of Jewish Tel-a-viv (the racial adjectives are inserted for the benefit of the reader, were not used by the H.C.). The British Minister in Lebanon arrived from Beirut, stayed to luncheon, and, for two hours after. At 4.15 the C. in C, R.A.F., Mediterranean, Medhurst, arrived and they spoke after dinner. They had a dinner party. He has played tennis twice in the past year, is fond now only of gardening, but the grounds have suffered acutely (as did the Lifshitz strip in the Eden Hotel) because of the shortage of water. He cannot ignore the rule imposed on others, and will not set a bad example in his 60 or 70 acres. He has "surrendered about half the bedding."

There was a nostalgic reference to parties—what use is there in possessing a magnificent home unless it be for extending hospitality to one's friends and intelligent acquaintances? The H.C. put it this way, and the restraint told me all the more, "We still have a few people coming round. Arabs and their wives used to attend; certain Jews."

We spent a while speaking about the death of Dov Gruner,* whose case raised much passion throughout

Gruner, aged 33, was executed at Acre prison with three other Jews, at 4 a.m. on April 16-17, 1947. He was alleged to be one of a company of Jews who attacked a police station on April 23, 1946. He was found wounded, with an automatic weapon. Sentence of death was passed on January 1, 1947. An appeal to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on March 26, 1947, was dismissed. On April 7 the Palestine Supreme Court dismissed an application for leave to appeal against the sentence. On April 14 a petition was lodged with the Privy Council on behalf of the Mayor of Tel-a-viv.

Jewry and in Gentile sections of society. Cunningham maintained the calm detachment one might expect when a physicist describes experiments in testing the adhesiveness of natural rubber. The reason he had the British wives and children sent out of the country was to tell local folk that he meant to do what he said. He disliked to intervene, and, anyhow, the confirming officer for military cases was the GOC. He only acted where there was an appeal against the GOC's decision. There had been three instances. In the first, two Jews were involved. In the second, also two. In the third, eighteen Jews. The Arabs had shouted that he had let off, reprieved, twenty-two Jews. But what were the facts? In the first instance, the GOC did not confirm the sentence. The second case was not strong in law, and so he intervened, as High Commissioner. The third was a difficult decision. Half the fellows were under 18, and down to about 16.

The H.C. explained why he had reprieved. The room was far away from an office where mothers' sons are given the opportunity of continuing the torch of existence, or the unemotional pen coldly decrees, "Life is to end". We said little to one another for a few long moments. I ended the silence: "Some day you will face your Maker, as these Jews, and British soldiers, and Arabs, and I must—some day. If you have saved a few youths, Jews, Arabs, or pagans from premature death, I doubt whether your Maker will be particularly angry with you. Merciful acts will not count against you."

Cunningham touched his whitening moustache. He whispered, "No," smiled, took satisfying counsel with his conscience.

Dov Gruner returned to the conversation. The despatch of the women and children from Palestine meant, I think, that the H.C. had determined on 'facing it out'⁵ with the terrorists in the event of this man's execution. He had the conviction that "there was no substance *in law* for the case to go to the Privy Council in London." But he was surprised at the calm with which the execution was

greeted in Palestine.

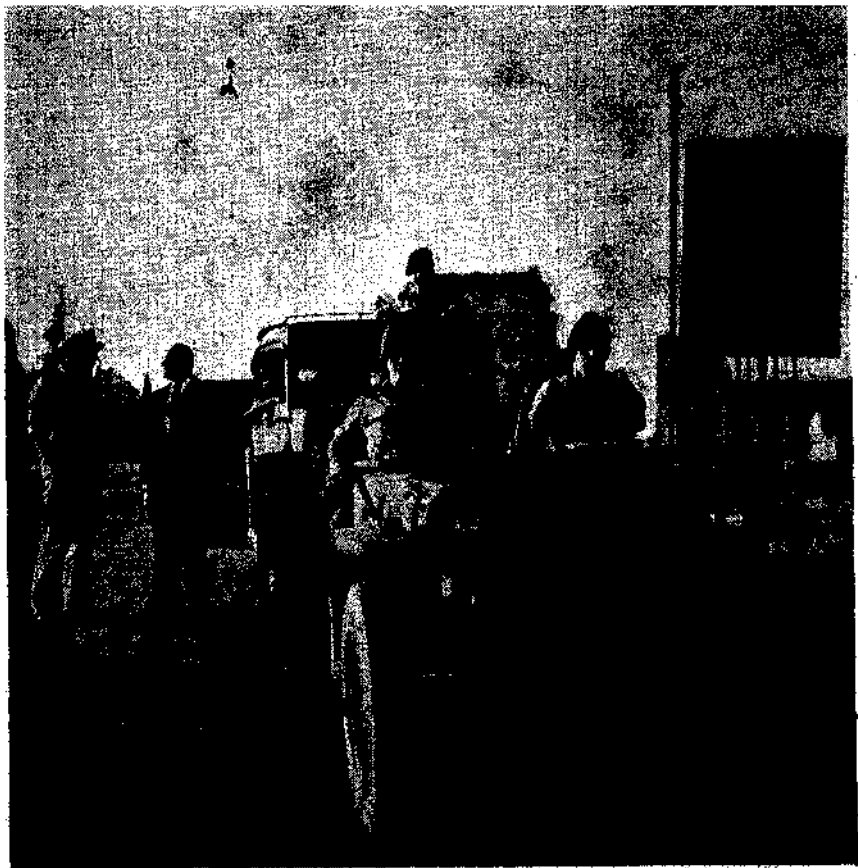
For years the name of Cunningham has been featured in every newspaper in the world. In every literate Jewish and Arab home, and there are millions, the name has been blessed or criticised, praised, reviled. Yet he is a frail, kindly human, who has striven to steer the ship that affects the world's peace, our Civilisation's destiny, without any compass. For that the blame goes higher up, back to London. What a commentary on so-called democracy and this feigned 'rule by the people.' It simply means going for medicine to people who speak well, going to have a tooth extracted by a glib operator, rather than a modest, silent, trained technician.

I left the room of a lonely man.

We walked to the back of the residence where Sergeant S. A. S. Shrimpton, of Croydon, the army photographer, kept the H.C., his private secretary, and Simba and Punch (respectively their dachshunds) busy. The H.C. posed easily.

Bishop now provided an Arab guide. We drove out of Government House towards the Wailing Wall, but we had to walk most of the way. Through the Zion Gate we observed desolate Mount Zion. We approached the ancient Mosque of Omar, and little Jewish children whom Shrimpton, in mufti, gently requested to stop that they might be photographed, ran away. The youngsters looked terrified of being kidnapped. They had been spoken to first by the guide, and then, in sign language, by the sergeant.

A British and Arab policeman guarded the entrance to the Wailing Wall, part of the enclosure of the Third Herod's Temple. Both told Shrimpton that, on Fridays and Saturdays it is forbidden to take pictures of worshippers by the wall. The sergeant tactfully said, "Can you please move away for a few moments." They did, at the same time showing him with a significant gesture, various places where the pictures might be taken. He understood the helpful policeman, and took the photographs without annoying anyone, quietly, modestly.



"EVERYWHERE IN PALESTINE I WAS ACCOMPANIED ON THE
ROADS BY ESCORT OF FOUR ARMED SOLDIERS AND P.R.O."



SACRED WAILING WALL IN JERUSALEM'S HEART
Saturday picture with Jews praying.

Approaches to the Wall rob it of the impressiveness of a giant hotel set in Americania. The poorly, shabbily-/dressed women, who weep as they rest their worn prayer books in tiny cracks in the wall, do not rob this heritage of millions of the faithful in all parts of the world, of significance. The young men, with odd, flat, wide-brimmed, black silk hats, who march up and down past the wall, as if it were a passage to something more important, rob the Wall of a little magnetism. Nonetheless, the Wall remains moving in its bland simplicity.

The millions who have placed their lips near it, and cried to their Maker, have left part of their emotional selves along those well-worn slabs. The Wall is so long that, individual cries of the women, mostly, the men seemed to be few, do not reach the casual passer-by. I was fascinated near the Wall, gripped by the age-long, ardent, desperate, racing prayer of elderly women and young, for help in a personal crisis, guidance in a personal undertaking, mercy in a personal problem. There was no mistaking the size of the crisis, the undertaking, the problem—if diverted, filled eyes be any criterion of passionate emotion and fear. I wondered whether most of the women prayed to be saved from destruction and death, prayed that their menfolk be restored to them, for the return of peace.

I was more moved than on the occasion of my visit to the French Church in Leicester Square on July 14, 1940, soon after the grand humiliation of France, following Petain's armistice with Hitler. On the faces of all the Frenchwomen I had seen tears. Here I also saw tears, railing on reddened skin. There was no suggestion of real hope in the eyes of the Wailers. Perhaps they thought they knew their destiny, knew their end as citizens of the ailing state, knew their prayers could not be for salvation, but merely amelioration of a specific fate. Was there not war round the corner, morning, noon and night? How far had this vaunted civilisation progressed in the twentieth century, when so little personal, physical safety could be

guaranteed to peace-loving creatures, with no ambitions outside the desire to eat, work and reside under a dry roof? It seemed so frail, modest a prayer. Yet these women, by their pitiful facial contortions, wringing of hands, beating of breasts, spoke to Someone, who if He were in Heaven, had to listen.

Tired, lined hands turned over the leaves in the prayer book with urgency here, with slow deliberate gentility there, or with rash speed, or with anger. Some prayed almost silently, to themselves, in a mood of confidence in their understanding Maker; others rolled their heads as if merely beseeching some unknown Power behind the cold stone wall. Occasionally a man or woman glanced at the sky, moved the hat to recover from the flow of perspiration. What infectious concentration.

I stepped back for a minute and felt grateful to 'Bimbo* Dempsey, for insisting during dinner that I visit Palestine, even for a day. I had been to the Wailing Wall, and felt invigorated, refreshed. Perhaps I was also reassured, with Toynbee and Spengler, that the 26th identifiable civilisation is bound to go the way of the lost 25, since modern Man has shown so little cause for its survival.

The sun that was baking the Arabian desert, making life pleasant on the white beaches of Southern France, helping the folk near Dubrovnik to smile despite their difficulties and political isolation, was my friendly neighbour. I stood near the praying men and women, scarcely able to move. My eyes rested on these eddying remnants of a great and powerful race, who called on their Creator to make real the dream that cannot come true, for the good fortune that is to most of us the ever-lengthening shadow.

Back to earth, and I stepped into the nearest synagogue, a few minutes walk from the Wall. The sole official left on the premises was shocked at my unofficial entry, but calmed outwardly when I said I merely wished to look, and would remain only a minute or two. He went outside and returned even more terrified, for there he noticed my

courteous Arab guide, and the photographer, I sensed, that he rightly dreaded being outnumbered, for in the jungle of Jerusalem that might mean anything.

It is conventional to venerate that which is—ancient rather than what is attractive. (Did Shelley not say, "Nought may endure but mutability?") Viewing some of the slummishness in Jerusalem, I wondered how far convention is wise. Looking later at abominations put up here by the modernists, with experience solely of the New World, I thought this too was unfortunate in a country whose history goes back to the Stone Age. Is there about people, some of whose ancestors lived here four and five thousand years ago, evidence of decadence or nobility and higher intellectual equipment than amongst newer strains? At a glance the reply could be that, in the eyes, there are signs of quicker reaction, greater nervousness, but in the body plenty of suggestion of decline.

I went into shops to buy mementoes in cedar wood, drove back to Information Office GHQ., where I examined fresh files on security of personnel. The latest is dated April 30, 1947, specifies where the copies are to go and orders that previous instructions on the subject, dated April 2, April, 15 and April 18, 'will be destroyed.'³ There are three grades of security, 'A,' 'B'⁵ and 'C.'⁵ Inside 'the cantonment area'⁵ all ranks must move in not less than twos by day, fours at night; 'the curfew area' is 'out of bounds to all ranks at all times/ with certain exceptions; outside the 'cantonment area,' it is stated, 'all ranks will move in not less than fours, and only on essential duty.' Outside the nunicipal boundary (abbreviated in the orders, a little too lightly, as 'bdy') 'vehicles will on no account travel singly.'

Riding is arbitrarily permitted, in the area of the menage immediately east of Allenby Bks (barracks) on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 6.15 a.m. till 7.30 a.m., from 2 p.m. till 4 p.m.; on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 4 p.m. till 6 p.m. and on Sundays from 8.30 a.m. till noon.

Arab cafes, cinemas, restaurants, and places of entertainment outside the cantonment areas are in bounds between, 6 a.m. and n p.m., according to an order dated April 18, but, all Jewish bars and cafes are 'out of bounds at all times.'

Soldiers at the control posts solemnly examined the papers of military policemen in jeeps, but there is nothing humorous about the situation that compels the precaution. We drove fast to Lydda airport where the photographer had a sad experience with an officer, who made gratuitous observations, continued to sit on a table, hands in pockets, his hat resting on a pile of papers. I spoke to the officer in terms suitable for the occasion, and Major Bishop, in more blistering words, called on him to behave himself. Steps were taken to have the officer's conduct noted by authority. I apologised to Sergeant Shrimp ton, a courteous and capable artist (as readers may note in the accompanying pictures from Palestine), for the experience. The aircraft was filled with senior and junior officers, including anti-austerity women in last year's tunics. We reached Fayid in a little over an hour. Tom Laister took me for tea to his quarters, in a splendid German car. Mrs. Laister has transformed the living-bedroom into a home, helped by the ingenuity of their servant, a good looking young German p.o.w. with original notions on carpentry. The Laisters have delightful white rugs, bought in one of the north African colonies which he has to visit on duty. A product of Fleet Street, Laister worked years ago on the Press Association and later on the 'Daily Herald.' He speaks shrewdly, is not given to the rashness of so many people of his age. In magnificent moonlight we drove along the side of this vulnerable canal. The lone, distant palms recalled 'Civis Romanus Sum' Palmerston's criticism of Suez, spoken on June 1, 1858,

"The most charitable view lean take of the scheme . . . is . . . that it is the greatest bubble ever imposed upon the credulity and simplicity of il:, people of this country"*

The Canal was opened in 1869, cost £12,000,000 and cuts the distance from England to India from 11,379 to 7,628 miles. At the moment it poisons Anglo-Egyptian relations.

We watched dozens of British military vehicles in Ismailia, almost a British town, with military notices only in English. An Egyptian appeared here and there with his donkey cart, or a small car. We sat about the lounge in the crowded French club, having parked the car on the pavement. We may soon leave Ismailia. The French may soon leave the club. The Laisters may soon leave the Fayid home. I was soon leaving the country. The atmosphere reflected these facts.

In the restaurant car on the train to Cairo there was comfort and cosiness, and good food well served by a Russian long resident in Egypt, who spoke samples of French, English and German. But some of the visitors were more interesting. They were Iraqi, Palestine and Syrian boy scouts of all ages. One acts as a post office clerk in Haifa. They are to attend an Arab function in Egypt. The entire discussion centred about Palestine, Jews.

I asked the post office lad, who had faultless manners, and looked Scandinavian, to enquire candidly of the 'boy* scout opposite me, why he glowered the whole time. This gentleman, also from Haifa, aged about 30, said, "I thought the gentleman was upset at my being given a seat opposite him, as I am a third class passenger, and he did not speak to me."⁵⁵ When it was explained that the gentleman did not speak because, unfortunately, he knows no Arabic, and that he was happy to find so frank a companion, the conversation proceeded minus 'glares.' But the moderation in speech and tone of the post office boy could not be fairly quoted about the others. When some of them heard of a British writer being near them, they said, or implied, that he *must* be "anti-Arab." The Haifa interpreter pointed out that I had had the honour of being a guest of Ibn Saud's. Wondering, I suppose, if that were true, they asked me the name of

Ibn Saud's emissary in Britain. When I told them that tie was my friend, arid showed them a snapshot of him, the situation eased. Then a photograph taken with the Grand Mufti produced real joy, and after that I was cross-examined cordially on London, Britain, food, politics—by a host of admirably behaved citizens of the world. Two snapshots equal: Metamorphosis.

Sunday, May 4th.

It was past midnight when I returned to Shepherds Hotel. I found awaiting me a note from an efficient member of the British Embassy staff, saying that she had reserved a seat in the BOAG machine leaving within seven hours. In a burst of energy I wrote letters, telegrams, cancelling attractive appointments made with "high quarters" for later this week.

At tea time our Dakota touched down in the crowded George Cross island of Malta, where people live on 'top of one another,'⁵ for houses can be seen the whole time in the most 'rural' corners. That, incidentally, is why I am never deeply enamoured of Jersey, or Guernsey, or Belgium, or Holland. My fellow humans there are not as far away as in Finland's north, or even in 'matey* Devon, in mild St. Anthony, in Yorkshire's dales, or by Pitlochry's gentle green slopes.

Passengers were taken by car to the top of a road, and walked down steep hillsides to the Osborne Hotel, only one of the five principal hotels in Valletta to survive the Italian bombardments during tie Hitler war. The proprietor, Mr. John Bonello, finally agreed that I should have a room to myself, a privilege not extended to the majority of the aircraft passengers. I had, moreover, a private bathroom. But the curiously built nooks and staircases intrigued, leading here and there and everywhere, so that out of the bathroom one could look into a corner of the adjoining sitting room. Mr. Bonello told me that the Phoenicia, hotel with 200 bedrooms, 200 bath-

rooms (thank goodness) and 200 telephones, is being completed at a cost of £300,000. There are 15,000 workers in the naval dockyards, the main island measures 17 miles by nine, has an area of 91 square miles and (adjoining isles included) a population of 240,000. Malta's sufferings, following Italy's three-year long stab in the back, begun in June 1940, include 27,978 houses destroyed, 432 members of the garrison and 1,494 civilians killed.

Legend has it that Malta, now strongly Roman Catholic Was converted after the shipwreck of St. Paul in A.D.58. In the Dark Ages it was held by the Moors, and used for piratical expeditions. It returned to Christianity in 1090, and came under the Knights of St. John in 1530. The Turks failed, and Napoleon triumphed in 1798. The Maltese rose in 1800, and with the aid of British and Neapolitan soldiers, forced a surrender. Malta became British by its own wish. Maltese is of Semitic origin, and is said to be derived from Carthaginian and Phoenician. Perhaps that is why almost nobody outside the indigenous residents understands Maltese, which since 1934 has been substituted for Italian in the law courts.

I did not stay long enough to discover how many wine shops there are in Valletta, but the total must be prodigious. In all of them it is possible to buy unlimited quantities of any variety of British whisky, French brandy, (23/- for Three Star), liqueurs from every state in the world.

A Walthamstow-born dockyard worker, married locally, told me that he was earning £7 15s. od. a week, and if he helped Saturdays and Sundays, as he chose to do sometimes, the total was £12 to £13. I stood admiring his spotlessly clean family, three youngsters. He said, "My wife is cleaner in her household than any woman I knew at home."

Mabel Strickland's newspaper, 'The Times of Malta' is obviously alert. One of its brightest reporters honoured me with his presence at supper in the hotel, and said

that it is not accurate to declare that 'all Malta⁵ has been destroyed. Plenty of the leading buildings, historic and attractive, have survived bombardments.

Crowds marched up and down the streets, waiting to go into a cinema showing a particularly obnoxious American gangster film. (These are "fairly usual," the commissionaire explained to English friends). I saw young priests parading arm in arm with young friends.

At four a.m. we were called, breakfasted, rose in the air, and landed at Marseilles about 11 a.m. I lunched with our skipper, the Queen's cousin, Capt. G. F. Bowes-Lyon, who does not-'apparently receive invitations to the palace.

The customs gentlemen at London Airport were concerned about my self-winding watch, and the Arab dress given by Ibn Saud. Would I pay about £120 in purchase tax and customs duty, or leave them safely locked up while negotiating (successfully) with the authorities? Meanwhile I noticed that an Egyptian bey, guest of a British Government department at that night's banquet was still waiting at six p.m., in day dress. The officials we met "could do nothing" to hurry him through the medical, currency and customs barriers. I summoned a medical officer and requested him to ignore red tape. I said, "Please see that a guest of the government, invited here to produce goodwill, is honoured." Within five minutes the Egyptian was on his way to Grosvenor House, in a specially chartered car.

I studied the furtive, tired, weary faces of indigenous companions, the miserable little samples of Northolt cake, the tragic, tepid cups of so-called tea. Shepherds Hotel, and the airport near Cairo, were now a dream of another world.

The superior, gross, fat-bellied official on the tarmac shouted wearily to a motorist, "Where do you think you are going," as if he had committed a smash and grab raid. The motorist had erred and passed by a few yards a tiny notice directing him to travel this and not that way.

The beery path-keeper lectured loudly, "What do you think the notices are for? Can't you read them? What's the hurry?" I said, "Officer, remember, this gentleman has not had your education."

THE END.

