

February 23, 1939

They finally got one of the Nashashibis who lives across the way. He was badly wounded yesterday morning, walking between Herod's Gate and his house. Who "they" are, is probably impossible to prove, but is commonly suspected. As a result, another 48-hour curfew has been imposed upon this district. This is the second 48-hour curfew this week, which has been a particularly hectic one. Last Saturday, the servants came rushing to me, saying that soldiers were at our front gate, and would let no one in or out. Putting on my coat, - it was raining - , I went out and saw that they were right. A squad of soldiers ^{was} standing on the other side of the street in front of our gate, with a machine gun set up and facing directly our entrance. I asked the soldiers if they thought we were harbouring criminals in our house, and why the machine gun was pointed in our direction. They laughed and said merely that they had orders to set it up. Meanwhile, I noticed that the entire street was being patrolled by squads of soldiers, and I was informed that our quarter was under a 48-hour curfew. A Russian Christian carpenter, who has worked at the American Colony for many years, had been shot by Arab assailants immediately in front of St. George's cathedral. He was fortunately only wounded in the arm. The assailants escaped. The next two nights, there was enough shooting in our immediate vicinity to keep several members of the School awake most of the night. The patrols of British police and troops have been increased around this neighbourhood. Whole squads can be met with at all hours of the day and night, and military cars 'scoot' by regularly. To cross the compounds in front of our School during this week has been like going through a no-man's land. There is not a soul to be seen. Several times I have walked across and been challenged by patrols. Having a permanent curfew pass, however, I can go wherever and whenever I please. It is not, however, a particularly pleasant feeling to walk about in this section of the town during the curfew periods, when it appears to be completely depopulated. The ordinary difficulties increase. The tradespeople are no longer allowed to use bicycles for some reason or other, according to the most recent military command, in this neighbourhood. We have constantly to devise new schemes for securing supplies for the School during the curfew intervals. I have finally secured permission from the General Commanding Jerusalem to obtain permanent curfew passes for all members of the School, and hope to get them now in a few days. The flaring-up and intensification of the troubles during the last two months, the shootings and murders which seem to be directed against persons of all nationalities and races and creeds, and ~~emanating from one more or less controlled source~~, are succeeding in bringing ordinary life almost to a standstill in some sections of Jerusalem and in many districts of the country. One lives in the hope that this intensification of the troubles may be but the prelude to quieter and more peaceful times. Meanwhile, we at the School pursue our own affairs quietly. It is amazing how rapidly one becomes accustomed to the abnormal. The members of the School always inform me before leaving the premises. I usually have a pretty good idea when it is all right to go to certain quarters of the city and with whom.

We are all well at the School, but I fear that Sir Flinders Petrie is rapidly weakening. He is 87 years old now, and it is becoming rather difficult for him to move about. His mind, however, is absolutely clear, and if one broaches controversial subjects, his tongue still very sharp. He sits in his study all day long, and reads and writes as if he were in the prime of his life. He is a magnificent person, and it is a pleasure to see him around.

I am happy to say that Mr. A.S. Kirkbride, at present District Commissioner in Galilee, and formerly the Assistant British Resident at Amman, has just been appointed British Resident at Amman. We at the School are particularly delighted because of our friendly association with Kirkbride, and because of his deep interest in archaeology, in which during his spare time he himself engages. Kirkbride has discovered the prehistoric stations in the Wadi Dhobai about 40 kilometres east of Amman, has written on Nabataean coins, and has helped classify the Jerash coins before they were sent to America. The School will find in him a warm supporter of its activities in Transjordan.

Professor Latourette has been kind enough to send to us two volumes of his great History of the Expansion of Christianity. We shall look forward to the publication of the other volumes of this work. Dr. W.C. Lowdermilk, Chief of the Soil Conservation Research of the U.S. Department of Agriculture arrived in Jerusalem the day before yesterday with his family. They had driven up in their own car without convoy from Cairo, evidently not knowing that it was supposed to be a dangerous trip. We had them over for tea, together with the Chief Forester of the Palestine Government and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. A. Grasovsky, whom Dr. Lowdermilk had wanted to meet. Dr. Lowdermilk and his family only remained in Jerusalem overnight, departing the next day for Syria. They plan to return to Jerusalem several weeks from now, and will take up residence here at the School. Dr. Lowdermilk is very much interested in taking a trip through Transjordan, and I have promised to be his guide on a trip either to or from Aqabah.

We have been in correspondence with the Chief of the Economics and Statistics Branch of the Bureau of Mines of the U.S. Government. He has most kindly offered to make analyses of the ore specimens found in our excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh, and I am sending a specimen collection to him within the next few days.

Doctors M. Evenari, Schwadron and Hareubeni of the Hebrew University have most kindly taken students of the School around their various departments, and shown them their interesting collections. Dr. S. Reich has given a lecture to our students on the famous Ralph Harari collection of Islamic bronzes in Cairo.