

December 28, 1938.

I have several times had the impulse during the last four days particularly to assemble our students on the steps of the School at about 8 p.m. and sing madly into the night especially those lines of our national anthem: "By the rockets' red glare, bombs bursting in air". In our immediate vicinity, about a hundred metres removed from our School, is a house of one of the members of the Nashashibi family. Four evenings in succession now, between 7.30 and 9 p.m. a bomb has been thrown at the house and shots fired at it. After a proper interval, the soldiers and police arrive on the scene. No casualties have occurred as yet, but one can't help wishing that the Nashashibis might become a little less persona non grata to their fellows than they are at the present. There has been, I am sorry to say, after a period of marked improvement in public security, an ominous deterioration during the last week. Our quarter, which has up till now been for the most part spared from the disturbances, seems about to be drawn into the vortex of what may be mildly called family feuds.

It has not been a cheerful Christmas season, at least outside of the School. We have set up and decorated a Christmas tree in the living-room of the School, and had the usual Christmas dinner with fixings at our house for all the members of the School. On Christmas Eve, we went in the School car to Bethlehem. In addition to the blue and brown identity and travel cards with which all of us are now provided, we were compelled to apply for special pink slips to travel the road on Christmas Eve from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. Twice going and once returning, we were stopped by soldiers who examined the passes. Arriving at the outskirts of Bethlehem, we saw three armoured Rolls Royces with lights off on the side of the road and soldiers standing by them. In Bethlehem proper it was difficult to find a parking place for our Dodge station waggon, not because of the press of tourist cars normally found at Bethlehem on Christmas Eve, but because the main approach to the Church Square was lined on both sides by military trucks and armoured cars. The courtyard of the church remains as on the occasion of our last visit, a military car-park. The square was crowded with troops and we were led into the church entrance by a soldier. Inside, the Latin celebration was going on. The congregants, however, consisted practically only of Bethlehemites, crowds of soldiers, some with and some without arms, and a few visitors from Jerusalem. The weather during Christmas week seemed to be trying to make some amends for the political conditions. It was ideal. Christmas day itself was more like a balmy day in spring than in mid-winter. Mr. West, our Two Brothers Fellow, played the role of Santa Claus at the Christmas celebrations of the Swedish School. The children had never seen a Santa Claus and were delighted beyond measure.

In as much as none of the members of the School went to Egypt as they usually have during December, the classes have been conducted regularly, a recess being called only for the Christmas and New Year week. Mr. and Mrs. E.C. Knight have arrived and propose to stay at the School for about three months. Rev. F.C. Ellermann left early in December to resume his duties at his church in Syracuse, N.Y.