

December 14th 1938 .

News-Letter No. 9.

The country is still under military control, but conditions have improved materially during the last few weeks. The measures taken by the army have been energetic and although they cause the ordinary resident considerable inconvenience, seem to have brought about, at least for the present, the desired results. The country is however by no means pacified, and unless a way out of the present impasse can be found, will never be. It is still inconvenient to travel about. There are as yet practically no Arab cars or trucks on the roads, because the Arab drivers are not in possession of the necessary travel permits and identity cards. I believe this situation may improve within the next couple of weeks.

The work of the School, long since settled to its normal routine, proceeds apace. Lectures, map-making, pottery repairing and drawing, photography of archaeological objects, and assigned subjects for individual research, provide the students of the School with much occupation. They have by now seen practically as much of Jerusalem as they would have even under normal circumstances.

I am glad to say that the wave of anti-American feeling which made itself apparent here for a short time, did not extend itself generally nor prevail for long. None of our Arab friends severed their connections with the School or with any of its members. They continue to make use of our Library, and to foregather with us socially as before. If anything, during the period of the disturbances, there has been a marked falling off of Jewish visitors to the School, not because of any lessened regard for it, but because of what are considered the difficulties of getting to our quarter which is an almost completely Arab one. It is easy to understand, if sometimes difficult to cope with, the feelings that grip various parts of the population of Jerusalem and the country.

On November 26th the School travelled to Galilee. I drove, because as yet our chauffeur, Ylias Tutunjian, has not ~~obtained~~ the proper cards of identification. Not far from our place, a few hundred metres from the American Colony, the road leading northward out of Jerusalem, is blocked by massive cement barricades, forcing all cars to halt and then twist through the narrow openings left in them. A detail of soldiers or police is stationed at this barricade, and all male passengers are required to show the proper papers. Our car, being well known, was not stopped at this place, but between here and Tabghah and back, within two days, we were stopped no less than 30 times by the military in order to identify ourselves. On every strategic hill-top British military posts are visible. Troops man barricades set up at the entrance and exit of every town along the road as far as Tabghah. Military patrols pull up in fast armoured cars in between these

barricaded roadstops, and ask for travel papers. For any group except our own travelling under these conditions would be more than an annoyance. My purpose, however, on this trip was to have the students see central Palestine and part of Galilee. It made no difference to us how many times we were stopped, because it permitted the members of the party to photograph to their hearts' content. As a matter of fact, we stopped at least as many times of our own volition for purposes of photography as we were halted by the military. On one occasion we stopped in order to enable the students to photograph some fellahin ploughing. They were using simple wooden iron-tipped ploughs, that have changed but little throughout the centuries, dragged in some instances by oxen, and in others by the "forbidden" combination of a donkey and an ox. I repeat a conversation that I had with one of the fellahin who approached the car, because it is not uncharacteristic of the present temper of the country. He demanded bakheesh, whereupon I asked him: "don't you ever do anything for the sake of politeness?"; his answer was: "no, politeness is dead in the land today". I assured him that that could not be so, that either we would photograph in the name of common courtesy or not at all. We photographed. We continued to photograph in Nablus, Jenin, Nazareth, Afuleh, Tiberias and Tabghah. In Afuleh we dropped in for a second to see Dr. Bergman, our former Thayer Fellow, who is now District Officer there, and Mrs. Bergman, formerly the secretary of the School. I am glad to say that he seems to have recovered fully from the harrowing experience he went through some months ago, when his car was blown up by a landmine, and several of its occupants killed. It was impossible to get to Capernaum, because that place has been wired off by the military, and the priest in charge, who happened to be at Tabghah when we arrived there, said it would be impossible for us to get in. I could possibly have arranged it by getting on the phone to Jerusalem, but it takes hours during these days to make a long-distance call even if the wires happen not to be torn down. We travelled up on a Saturday, and came back the next day via Mt. Tabor. We found a scene of humming activity when we got on top of the mountain, because a large new wing is being added to one of the buildings there. The church was opened up for us and we were conducted through it by an American priest. We returned early in the afternoon of the second day to Jerusalem in time for tea. I trust that those who read this letter will not regard our trip as having been unnecessarily dangerous. I made careful inquiries before I started out from competent authorities, who saw no objection to our undertaking the trip.

With the kind permission of the Director of the Department of Antiquities, the master photographer of the Museum, Mr. S.J. Schweig is giving a course of lectures to our students on archaeological photography. They are exceedingly instructive lectures. On December 7th, the Director addressed the Palestine Economic Council on the subject of Palestine as an Ancient Trade Centre. Mr. Battershill, the Chief Secretary of the Government of Palestine, presided at the meeting. On December 19th, the Director will give the opening lecture of the year to the Palestine Oriental Society. [redacted] will be an illustrated lecture on Ezion-geber.

With [redacted] gratitude that we have been able to weather the storms of the year now almost gone, and looking forward with [redacted] hope to the year at hand for peace to come and [redacted] work to be accomplished, all of us at the School send our best greetings to the School's friends and supporters.