

Jerusalem, August 27th 1939

We are in the grip of another war-scare, which, I imagine, is felt much more here than it is in America. Most of the Germans are leaving or have left the country, and several air lines and shipping lines have been or are about to be discontinued. The High Commissioner, who had left for England several weeks ago, flew back the other day.

The disturbances, which had been dampened down somewhat during the last weeks, continue with sporadic and explosive force. Two British police-officers were killed yesterday by a bomb which seems to have been set off by Jewish terrorists. Smouldering trouble between the Druzes in northern Palestine and some of the Arab gangs flared up in a battle yesterday, when one of the gangs attacked a Druze village, killed several people, and took thirteen inhabitants away with them as captives. A Jewish bus going to Tel-Aviv was shot at two days ago, and a young boy was killed and several others in the bus badly wounded. And so the sad tale goes.

I was at a dinner party the other night, when suddenly there were three loud explosions. Mr. Keith-Roach, the District Commissioner, was also one of the guests, and went to the phone as soon as the explosions were heard. He returned with the information that a gang had been attacking troops near Bethlehem, and the troops had fired back with trench-mortars. One certainly gets a sort of pre-war training in this country. Rifleshots, bursts of machine-gun fire, explosions of trench-mortars, and bombs are no longer unfamiliar sounds.

The war-scare is sending up food-prices. It is supposed to be more or less patriotic to put in some supplies, and I have not been backward so far as the School is concerned. There will be but few people resident at the School during the coming year, and I had provided for their needs before the rise in prices took place.

August 29th 1939

A three-day bank holiday was declared after the High Commissioner returned, and it expires tomorrow morning. The pound has shot down disastrously, and the School funds have suffered correspondingly. That is, if we have to pay for things whose prices are graduated to meet the change in the pound-dollar relationship.

Dr. Fisher returned from Ain Karim yesterday, and I have had several long discussions with him, dealing with all eventualities which might arise and affect the School in case I am able to leave on September 11th, and he will be in charge. Should war break out, the government might compel all foreigners living in this quarter to leave for the centre of the city. There is talk in town of the King David Hotel and the Y.M.C.A. being used as centres for British and American residents. I am having a complete inventory made of the entire School for obvious reasons.

War preparations of various kinds are being undertaken in Palestine. The Emergency Powers Act is now in force in Palestine. Meanwhile, the disturbances are still going on, and are being incited anew. I give some of the headlines in today's paper: "Soldier killed by band. A platoon of

the 2nd battalion of the Leicester Regiment came in contact with a band northeast of Acre. The bandits were engaged by aircraft from the No. 6 Squadron of the Royal Air Force, and by the troops, and casualties were inflicted upon them." "Village Elder killed by brigands. A gang of eight armed men entered Rubaya village during the night and killed an elder, Yusuf Bey Haj Khalil." "Early on Saturday morning an armed Arab gang opened fire on an Arab village in the Ramallah subdistrict, and attempted to enter the village itself. The villagers returned the fire with their licensed shotguns, and the raiders decamped."

We are carrying on with our normal work at the School. Almost all of the Tell el-Kheleifeh objects have now been drawn to scale, and the most important pieces photographed. Dr. Menschel is doing the drawing for me. My architect, ^{Mr. P. K. C. C.} returned from Italy several weeks ago, and is now working up the plans of the second season's excavations at Tell el-Kheleifeh. I must confess that engaging in archaeological work these days, even if it be indoors, seems at times much like playing the fiddle while Rome burns. I am certainly relieved that I got the Khirbet et-Tannur antiquities off to America in good time. Dr. and Mrs. Glidden are supposed to be returning from Antioch and arriving here on September 7th. I do not think they will have any difficulty in getting through.

In general, the public, despite the war-scare, seems to be very quiet. Most people are convinced that Haifa will be bombed because of its importance as a port and as the oil terminus for the Mosul pipeline, and that otherwise Palestine has little to fear from Europe. There may be serious local complications.