

Letter dated June 8th., 1925, from Baghdad.

.... I have had one or two serious semi-official chats with S/Leader B., in which I have always found him helpful. Without telling me, he has now put my case up to the Air Vice-Marshal, with the result that within a fortnight I shall be off to do a job of work as an S.S.O. (Special Service Officer)! I am to be given the Ramadi area to look after, and this means my being responsible for information up to the border (northwards) crossing the Euphrates at Abu Kamal, and of course from beyond it, and southwards nearly to Kerbala. Also of course the area extends away out on to the desert south and east. It is a very satisfactory area to start on, with lots of variety, but for the time being without special complications. I shall have my headquarters at Ramadi, where I am supplied, I believe, with a house, clerk, car, and horse; and of course I shall have my own servants as well. I shall be some seventy-five miles from Baghdad, but as the Nairn Transport and Air Mail both make this a halting place, one is by no means cut off from civilization. The tribes and local people, though some of them rather primitive, are all Sunnis and therefore less tiresome to deal with than the bigoted Shi'as I spent my language-leave amongst. Altogether most satisfactory, and I feel far more cheery than I have done for a long time. The only

thing that made Baghdad tolerable was J.'s companionship, and without that it is most uncongenial and quite useless for the sort of work I want to do. I am very fit and in spite of an increase in the temperature, still find the climate very tolerable. It makes a great difference having something to look forward to.....

.... I shall let you know as soon as possible about exact dates. At the moment I merely wait for someone to be produced to take my place in charge of the Intelligence Topographical Section.

June 21st., 1925. Baghdad. Concerning Ramadi.

Am off tomorrow at 7 a.m. to my new duties in the comparative remoteness of Ramadi. I look forward immensely to the new way of living.

Dear me ! What a muddly, messy day this has been — and so hot ! However all is packed up and arranged for now. But confusion and chaos reign now in my once secluded and reposeful quarters ! Thank goodness I always sleep on the roof !!!

All promises very well for the immediate future and I sally forth to the start of my new experiences equipped with a tourer and a tender to convey myself and kit.

BAGHDAD, FAREWELL !

The Orb of Light is sinking, and has set
Enchantment on each dome and minaret.
The yellow waste, and Persia's range beyond
To each caress of mystery respond.

The Sun is gone ! and with a purple mist
Are palms and minarets and river kist,
Veiled very subtly in the tender haze
Is each seduction of thy hidden ways.

Khayām I've read, and now I hear the tone
Of music'd wisdom which he made his own.
I know that wisdom, and I know its sin
Yet shall I choose its languid spell to win ?

Farewell thou Town ! Thy essence it would seem
Can make man's very self an empty dream.
I take thy answer; — and it may be so !
Yet Allah grant me Desert paths ! I go !