

EPISODE XX

Thoughts at Random, Cairo - 1950/1951.

First thoughts are of India — my Mother and Father stately in a setting of the many retainers then customary in official life; I in a happy schoolroom setting with a beloved governess, our dear "Sawkins". Winter in the "plains" with my pony, my pigeons, and Trilby my dog — picnics on elephant back; later on children's parties, with my baby sister sometimes included, but I with my seven years seniority feeling almost a "grown up". Then summer at Almora in the Himalayah mountains; — the wonderful treck of four days to get there from the rail terminus, all of us in "dandies", carried by cheerful and sturdy young hillmen. There followed the idyllic sojourns in our remote hill-bungalow, around us the beloved land marks with their "pet names" — "early morning point" and so on. Happy memories are these amongst dear people and beloved places, the pervading influence my Father's, young still, athletic and handsome, but with his particular graciousness of mind and spirit, already mature. Then came the, for me, final return to England, to be welcomed in my grand-Mother's home, a dignified and fine old Lady in a handsome home, but all rather frightening. Later a much loved aunt was our guardian, in a cosy home at Walmer taken for us by my parents, though they themselves had to remain in India a while longer. Came then the attempt at school life, also

alarming, and soon brought to a close by "delicate" health — a "delicacy" quite definitely brought to a drastic end, when as an Oxford undergraduate at Christchurch, aged 18, I "joined" up" in September 1914 for the great war. Nevertheless on three later occasions doctors were so cheerful as to warn me of imminent dissolution, on one occasion predicting my death within forty-eight hours! Evidently they, like some other sorts of people in other matters, had not realized my resilience, and how much it takes to "squash" me! — I am still un-squashed!

I received my Commission in September 1914, and trained in the 6th Bn. of Prince Albert's Somerset Light Infantry — a strenuous and inspiring experience; then I transferred to the RFC, and therein went off to France early in 1915, as an "Observer". We were flying BE2Cs; — later known — as "flying coffins!" — and were equipped with Lewis guns, precariously mounted; and some pilots thought it possible also to use a rifle effectively! I was flying over the battle area during the battle of Loos — a terrific and unforgettable sight. By the end of 1915 I had been posted to Egypt, to take part in the defense of the Canal — and eventually in the advance across Sinai, driving back the Turkish army before us until eventually Gaza & then Jerusalem were captured. I took my "Wings" in 1916.

To me an interesting point in my various informal Middle Eastern contacts is that I have personally known four generations of the Hashimite Kings — the venerable but somewhat

truculent old King Hussein (who bestowed upon me the Order of Nahda); the great King Feisal, unique in his blended knowledge of European and Arab affairs, his son King Gazi, Harrow-trained, and then left perplexed on a newly established Eastern throne at an early age, whom I first saw as a boy, and with whom my final meeting was in a very human and rather pathetic private interview at his Palace in Baghdad during one of my visits there only a month or two before his tragic death. The present "baby" King Feisal II I have not seen, but I have met the latest generation in the person of the present Regent, Prince Abdul Illah, and had talks with him in Jerusalem just before his return to take leadership against Rashid Ali's rebels - a young man with much more courage and personal initiative than I had expected. I have often met him since. When I was at Rabegh in the Hedjaz during the first war, the tall and rather frail Emir Ali, father of this present Regent of Iraq, was local General in Command; and I have been personal guest of the late Emir Ali's brother, the Emir Abdullah, graciously suave and successful ruler of Trans-jordan. A memorable experience was also a visit, some years ago, to Jeddah as personal guest of King Ibn Saud, the hereditary enemy of the latter Hashimite Royal Family, in his barren oasis scattered country, ruled wisely yet rather grimly by the ancient Koranic and Mosaic code of law, - an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth! Later I was deputed, this time officially, to convey to King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, by air from Cairo, a certain formal document. On this occasion I had the pleasure of experiencing the hospitality of Sir Reader Bullard, at the British Embassy, a rather rambling but picturesque Arab type house.

Sir Reader I met again in later years in Teheran, and in particular I remember also a journey we shared from Palestine by train to Egypt. In this informal encounter we conversed at length, to my own great interest and benefit.

In Iraq, I have had many friends, including tribal chieftains such as the Bedouin, Mahrout El Hadhdhal (and his fine old father, Fahad, before him, that most stalwart of supporters of the British) and the turbulent Sheikh Abdel Wahid of the rich and fertile middle Euphrates, who seems always to have been against the Government, whatever that Government might be! On Abdel Wahid and his warriors I used to drop bombs during the 1920-21 Arab Revolt, but later I often received excellent hospitality at his tribal castles near Jaarah; and he too was often a visitor at my small house in Diwaniyah. It is some 26 years since I first met General Nouri Pasha, who is too well known to need description; he and I were jointly guests on a certain occasion at the Palace of the Emir, now King, Abdullah of Jordan, after motoring together from Beirut via Damascus and Deraa, through the terrain of Nouri's past campaigns with Laurance of Arabia. Jamil Madfai (a former Premier and also a one-time rebel leader against us) I have known for very many years, and Rashid Ali is a personal acquaintance of mine, but I have not known him well enough for special comment; he used to send me Xmas cards of greeting, however!

Last but not least there are in Iraq the Assyrians, remnants of that gallant little race of industrious Christians from Urmia and the Tiari mountains. Their hereditary Archbishop and ruler, the young Mar (Lord) Shamun, was still even up to the time of the outbreak of the recent war seeking to re-assert Assyrian rights from his exile in Cyprus where I last saw him. He still most strangely was being ignored by the Archbishops and Politicians of that England which his people had served so well both in the great war and in the first Iraq revolt, and who were afterwards left at the mercy of an ill-devised and vindictive government in Iraq which was set up by us before its due time.

He like our staunch old ally of the 1914 war, the then powerful Shah of Mohammerah (close to Abadan), a brother too in India, <sup>has</sup> ~~been~~ sacrificed long ago to "expedient" policies! Can we now be so surprised if we reap in disaster what we sowed in in-sincerity!

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of the Anizah  
tribe

now Premier of  
Iraq

Very recent impressions of mine in Italy are mainly an agreeable recollection. I spent a month there on my way to England; after an absence of 14 years, having left my homeland believing that I should be away three months at most!

By air to Sicily, I then spent a fortnight once again at Taormina; and so romantic it still appeared with its beauty of climate, & friendly people, amidst a country-side of exotic-seeming charm, only a little scarred by the evil marks of war, that my brief visit passed verily like some fleeting & seductive dream; which included hospitality at the Barlow villa, and a specially romantic Farewell evening at the villa of Daphne P., when the local villagers gathered to serenade us with music & song from out the glimmer of the moon-lit gardens!

Thence to Rome by air from Catania; & it was my first visit to Rome, though many other parts of Italy I have visited. I was more impressed even than I had expected — the thrill of its lovely & historic buildings, the pleasantness of its spacious gardens, the apparently regained prosperity, which one yet realized does in part disguise much grim poverty, — were all unforgettable. Unforgettable too is the hospitality & attraction of its people. Especially I remember the kind welcome I received at the Palazzo Sermoneta, and at the home of Baron Torella, brother of the A.D.C. of Italy's ex-Queen, — now living quietly at Alexandria, — where kindness was without stint.

The Duchess of Sermoneta, gracious, dignified, & interesting, was on several occasions my hostess; firstly at a charming luncheon party in her secluded terrace-garden, with fountains murmuring around us, and on other days at tea taken cosily in her handsome library, when she spoke movingly of her war experiences including her arrest, and her eventual plucky escape from the Gestapo, — difficult to imagine in the now returned calm of her stately home, & its dignified retainers!

We sat in armchairs whose coverings had, my hostess said, been selected for her many years ago by Lady Randolph, mother of Mr. Winston Churchill, aunt of these dear friends of mine who are his Grenfell cousins, & whose home my hostess knew well.

Of my eventual visit to my homeland, & my few months spend there, my feelings are really too profound to be expressable. I was deeply moved, as ever, by England's calm beauty, made all the more striking now by contrast with the many war scars very noticeable still.

One realized more than ever the greatness of spirit of a people which had come through such stress, & was now re-adjusting itself to such changed circumstances with such reasonableness, & in most ways with so much human cooperation. Inevitably there were some jarring aspects in the so evident changes in the English way of life, which the war to conquer Nazism has brought. Nevertheless one gained a renewed high confidence that this same English spirit is also strong enough how to overcome the subtle new menace of Stalin's brand of "communism", which often uses tactics so similar to the early Nazi tactics in getting at those sentimentalist who prefer not to see facts, & even call themselves good Christians & good citizens. In fact they are the stooges for another ruthless effort to destroy the basic decencies of British Democracy, and in the main, even when a high Church "dignitary", such as Dr. Hewlett Johnson so demeans himself, are recognized as such. Towards Dr. Hewlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury, I cannot but feel a certain particularly personal resentment for the destructive influence which he has had upon certain young friends of mine whom he has misled by his theatrical utterances and the prestige of his religious background which he so shamelessly misuses. One would like to think of him however merely as a foolish deluded old man, but his evident sense or theatre, his deliberate avoidance of facts, and his association with people tainted with the crimes of calculated murder and ruthless oppression, make of him an odious example of hypocrisy in the highest places of Christian leadership.

In the England of that wonderful sunny summer of 1949, I met my few remaining old friends, including Dick Hindle, my not very fortunate but plucky and most congenial cousin, who motored me around a great deal, for which I am grateful! Also at Sloley Hall I met again, at last, Sir Reginald Neville, well over eighty, frail, but mentally alert, and with a warm welcome for me. He has since reached his "journey's end"; & my cousin Jim Neville in the new Baronet. Not least I delighted again in the companionship of Ethel & Norman Lamplugh, in their setting so much changed by the war, yet still a gracious setting, made the more so, as ever, by their personal grace.

With them also was Helena E., charming, and gay and young, despite the passage of time, and the fact that fate has ruled that so great a portion of her days have been spent not in the easy ways of life but in serving the welfare of others. Perhaps it is not "in spite of" but in fact "because of" this, that her gaiety and youth are thus retained. Ethel now lives in a flat of her own, which her lifelong friend Edie Miller shares with her, — a dear lady with a gentle nature of unusually real goodness. During a car tour I visited Euston Hall that handsome seat of the Duke and the Duchess of Grafton but found them away. A retainer showed me a little around the house and grounds however, and I was glad to notice that the recent fire did not seem to have done much damage. Later in London I had the pleasure of being the Duchess's host at lunch at my club, and we talked pleasantly of Egypt and Australia. A special memory is of dear petite Editha Scott, like a Dresden China Lady in her daintiness, her gently blue eyes twinkling with shrewd but kindly humour. So full of fun and interest in life she seemed, that when last year the news of her death reached me, this grief came with a sense of shock; yet her years when she died were 94; a proof again indeed that it is the spirit which can achieve a particularly beautiful seeming of the permanence of youth, and that bodily age is of small account in the things that matter. Amongst my happiest intimate glimpses of the English countryside were my visits spent at Odell Manor the home of Lord and Lady Luke. Ian & Barbara Luke lead there a gracious life of Manorial duties & interests; which together with Ian's work with our Prince Philip for the Playing Fields Scheme, bring much appreciation from their tenants and fellow-men.

Now once again my thoughts are here in Cairo, where, in a busy main street of Cairo's fashionable centre stands a solitary and handsome private villa. The last remaining of its kind in that district. It looks now rather forlorn, but with dignity still; a dignity which in its interior is even more evident. When I visit there, — a not infrequent privilege, — into a "salon", a little gloomy perhaps in its old-fashioned stateliness, there comes to greet me an elegant little lady, and as soon as she appears no question of gloom in her vicinity can remain! Dainty and birdlike, she radiates spontaneous delight in living, in people, and all things of interest in human relations. The fact that she herself, now-a-days seldom mixes with the outer world, seems in no way to lessen her zest in it; and she has a fund of memories, friendships and contacts, to keep her in touch with the "haut monde" which for a while and so regretably she is renouncing. Hers too is an alert sense of humour, and I am more than "reconnaissant" for the many moods of disillusionment which she has wittily dispelled for me! Now a comment with a romantic ending; and this concerns Norman Smith, since many years a very real friend of mine, despite the fact that for a considerable period he was A&D.C. to Lord Killearn, between whom and myself sentiments were distinctly less cordial!

Norman has lived much in South Africa, and that has added a breadth of outlook to his experiences of life: These have included diplomacy and the Colonial Office, - to the idiosyncrasies of neither of which did he feel congenially drawn, any more than he was attracted by the prejudices and "racial policies" of South Africa. He has now returned to Egypt in a new independence of his own, on a job in the financial world; and in a day or two he is marrying Lady Alexandra B, a very charming young woman, just arrived by air in Cairo for this romantic purpose, and whom I met with him yesterday for the first time at a cheerful party given by young Fuad Lutfalla at his father's Palace.

Many an hour Norman and I have spent in long talks, "reforming" the ills of the world, - and I am happy indeed to congratulate him now on this his latest and excellently practical personal step in that direction! and my own hopes too are thus aroused for a similar happy outcome to my similar aspirations. Insha'Allah!

Recollection wanders back now to the period I spent as Commander of a squadron of the Boys Wing at Cranwell. This was most interesting work combining as it did some aspects of school professorship, of organiser of athletics and of a service commander. My duties included the stimulating of enthusiasm for the noble art of boxing - an enthusiasm which I may now confess did not come very spontaneously to myself. Nevertheless, for example's sake, I had to give personal leadership, and became a member (fly weight) of our team which represented the Cranwell Boys Wing at the contests for the Wakefield Cup in 1922. The medal which I earned on that occasion is still a proud possession. The lads of my squadron were amongst the earliest to be trained at Cranwell. Many have since achieved distinction and their general record has been high.

\* Note: It brings to me a pleasant memory here to include the following rather quaint boyish letter to me from one of my young lads in the Boy's Wing. He had been one of our "problems, a very nice lad, but very impetuous, and not at all appreciative of discipline ! I am glad to say he later became an excellent air man; and eventually, I believe, he achieved commissioned rank.

V 5 Dormitory,  
No.2 School of T.T.  
Cranwell  
Lincs.

Dear Sir,

I hope you will not think it impertinent of me to write to you, but I would like to say something that requires confidence. You said that you did not think it of any use talking to me like a father, but perhaps you never imagined how much I should like someone to do such, while I am away from home. To lay my troubles at someones feet and ask his advice is something that I never imagined would be so welcome to a fellow.

Before I came up here and joined the Service I could do that with only two persons, my father and the best pal ~~at~~ I ever had,

There is no other person I would confide in than you, Sir. I don't know why, but some instinct tells me I like you and there it is.

If you can spare the time at any time to have a talk, not as a superior officer but as a friend I shall be very grateful, Sir. I'll explain then, why I am such a fool, there's nobody knows that I am one more than I do.

If, on the other hand you are angry with me, I'll take all that comes to me and hope you won't bear any malice.

Yours respectfully.

W.G. Mann.

Still further back I look with romantic interest to the days in the Canal zone and Sinai in the first war. Much of those early memories is associated with Auberon Herbert, Lord Lucas, who was my Flight Commander and an inspiring and high example as friend and leader. His all too early death on service is nobly commemorated in a very fine poem by Maurice Baring. Another of my closest friends of those days was Pat Minchin - whimsical, impetuous, and with all those elusive qualities of Irish Charm. He earned high decorations; and the final expression of his restless energy was an early flight across the Atlantic - from which he never returned; he just vanished without trace into the thrill of a great adventure; an appropriate climax somehow for the strange inexpressible yearnings of his courageous spirit. Both these friends of mine were amongst those who had vivid influence upon my youthful impressiveness. It is interesting to consider how almost every contact with the varied personalities one meets on ones way through life, leaves at least some mark withing the making up of ones own personality.

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In more recent years in Cairo the influence of my beloved Mother while she was with me, was a gracious one, despite our inevitable divergeant outlook in some matters.

In the course of her long lifetime, my Mother had a number of episodes of difficulty and danger to face, and all were met with quiet courage.

It was so in Cairo on a day when the ~~was~~ bomb of an extremist burst just below her window killing or wounding some 30 of our service lads and lassies as they sat in a garden.

It was so on that other Cairo occasion when the streets were full of a seething mass of rioters.

From my Mother's balcony we looked down on a howling mob; further along the street two houses, one of them a small hotel for Officers' families were in flames; smoke was rising from the direction of our Cathedral which in fact had been set on fire while the Bishop's house was pillaged. It was an obvious likelihood that the building we were in might be the next to be attacked; but as there was no action one could take, the little Lady, calm and unagitated, continued to read a book, only occasionally voicing a dignified exasperation at the mobs unseemly noises.

Most of all I am grateful to my Mother for her brave loyalty to me, when she stood by me with encouragement and comfort throughout that "passage-of-arms" of mine with Lord Killearn. I had apparently, all unawares, earned his rabid hostility because as an ordinary private person I yet had intimate contacts with most aspects of Middle East Affairs, and the friendship of many wellknown people. He used all means for my destruction,— foul I am afraid one must admit, as well as fair,— but without the effect he wished! which was fortunate for me, for he seemed, in this at least, to have none of those scrupules of conduct one might have taken for granted!

He has done me no real harm in anything that matters, but the ugly encounter undoubtedly left scars in my spirit, and, more unpardonably, also in that of my Mother. There are other persons in Cairo for whom I shall always retain a specially grateful memory, both British and Egyptian.

A British friend John Hamilton C.M.G. was originally in the Sudan Civil Service and then an Oriental Secretary at our Embassy. His career though distinguished has not been in quite a usual stereotyped plan. John H. has all the discretion and official punctiliousness inevitable to one of his formal background, and yet withall he has maintained his humanity, and despite his respect for official observance, has yet not permitted formal policies to disrupt his sense of proportion, or to undermine his feeling of loyalty to normal relationships with his fellow beings.

The two aspects of his nature sometimes clash of course, and it is interesting to watch the conflict! John has much quiet personal prestige, and his influence in his present informal capacity these days is perhaps the soundest and most honest at our Embassy. It is unlikely however that he will officially hold any post of high authority; he has not any need or wish for this.

Bill Havers,— Air Vice-Marshal Sir William Havers,— is another of those whose friendship is an honour and an inspiration.

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Though on the retired list of the R.A.F., he has had important special work here in Egypt. His cheerful nature, absolute integrity, and bluff common sense, under which is a real fineness of wisdom and goodwill, have earned him wide respect amongst a varied range of people in Egypt. Lady Havers, his very charming wife, was also a much appreciated friend of ours. Brigadier and Mrs. Hackett are another pair of memorable friends; in many ways very different from the Havers, yet in those basic Service qualities of integrity, good humour and sound sense, of just the same excellence. An old Egyptian friend of mine is Hussein Husni Pasha, private secretary of Egypt's King. We have known each other in varied circumstances through many years and in him again it is his sense of loyalty to his ideals and his quietly consistent spirit of humanity which I have grown to admire and respect. Husni Pasha, and also Commander Iwwedin Atif, till recently the King's Naval A.D.C., each in his own distinct way, are to my personal thinking, amongst those who have unobtrusively done exceptional service for Egypt, her King, and Anglo-Egyptian goodwill.

In quite another sphere of life gratitude will always remain in my mind in remembering Awad and Mohi and the other Arab servants of my own households. There too, it is that old grace of mutual loyalty, — which seems to grow less in these modern times, — by which one's appreciation is aroused.

One's house here is organised still rather on the ancient patriarchal plan. In Arab tradition he who serves need not be considered as of less status than him who is served, so the relationship is of mutual respect which makes the house the more a happy place for all in it. I remember in like sort a young Egyptian Mohamed Aziz a very junior civil servant, who has the same attitude to life with the rare subconscious realisation that the only real satisfaction in living is in helping others. To meet such people is to gain memories of permanent refreshment to one's spirit.

One of my most grievous disappointments has been in my friendship with Abdel Kader el Gaylani, long Iraqi Chargé d'Affaires in Cairo. Always professing, and seeming to act in conformity with sincere good will to the British, he yet linked himself with his cousin, Rashid Ali, in the recent treachery of the Army revolt in Iraq. Perhaps some day I shall meet him again — I wonder what he will say! Was he misled? or perhaps intimidated?

Within this brief spate of memories one cannot leave unsaid a tribute to two great English figures on this Eastern stage, Lawrence and Gertrude Bell.

In the Lawrence days, I was too remote a junior to do more than note him from afar, but I did at least have the privilege of serving briefly as a small cog in his great wheel of achievement,

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and may even claim a place in that unique document "The seven Pillars of Wisdom" to the modest extent that the little detachment of flying men, in which I was "second-in-command" is mentioned. We were an odd party enough, living, when off duty, somewhat romantically on board the old "Al Kahira" since scrapped "dust to dust", but then riding even jauntily at anchor in an exotic lagoon full of coral and coloured fish. My admiration of Lawrence was great at that time and has grown even greater since, despite the smugly mean fashion of belittlement with which a few later upstarts have seen fit to reward Lawrence.

Gertrude Bell is a very vivid memory, and especially that first time when I was taken to meet her and we all went to eat an Arab dinner off the roof of the house of Hadji Waji just outside Baghdad. Slight, vivacious, a little intolerant sometimes, always fearless, this great little Lady paid a strange penalty for her sincerity; and the annoyance aroused in certain circles against this unique Oriental Secretary, who refused to change her convictions to serve new policies, led, some think, to an undercurrent of unhappiness, which helped much to lessen her health, already undermined by her devotion to duty. She died at length suddenly and rather pitifully, but those who knew her will never forget that forthright character - that gracious trim figure in her well chosen sweeping dresses appropriate to her Eastern setting; and I well remember the words of a great desert chieftain "If even the women of England can be as great as this, then indeed how noble is the land of the English". She did us a great service and the vast crowd of weeping Arab people of all grades who lined the route of her funeral in Baghdad showed that the people in one country at least did well appreciate the greatness and the humanity of this noble spirit which had passed from amongst them.

More recently in Cairo we have had another brave little Lady with us. In many ways she reminds one of her great predecessor, in her humanity, her courage and her quick perception, though in individual force of character, it would be difficult for Gertrude Bell to have an equal. Her successor, Freya Stark, is an authoress whose books are, like Gertrude Bell's, an inspiration to read, but with a special gift, all her own, in sympathetic and vivid description, and a beauty of phrase which is sometimes sheer music. May she long retain her sincerity and her eloquence, stimulated by the gentle wine of sympathetic human perception, and may neither become dulled by the hashish of diplomatic "policies"!

In Palestine I have been most acquainted with the nationalist Awni Bey Abdel Hadi and his chief rival Ragheb Bey Nashashibi; the first clever, but a little too clever, the second, frank, but too impetuous, and both of them most interesting. The Mufti I have never met, and do not want to! though I have been so invited more than once. He seems these days greatly to have lost prestige even in the Arab world.

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The late George Antonius, that pro-Arab "leader", basically so unarab in race and religion, brilliant, slightly cynical, and the author of an admirable book on Arab Affairs (my copy of which he kindly signed) I have had pleasant talks with when as an "exile" from Palestine he visited Cairo; and in Syria I had the honour of long friendship with Dr. Shahbandar, the Nationalist patriot, who after twice escaping after being condemned to death, - by Turks, then French - was finally assassinated some years ago by an Arab faction, German instigated. It was a typical Nazi murder, treacherously carried out while the Doctor was treating patients at his clinic. Faisal, son of the Doctor, then led his father's Party, in his place, gallantly and dangerously, but is now retired quietly as a lawyer.

H.I.H. Prince Mahmud Shevket Seifeddin also is in this "picture". He is a grandson of that Turkish Sultan Abdel Aziz whose visit to Egypt is historically recorded for its splendour, but this Prince now lives modestly on a small property here, and I have known him well - an interesting, but rather restless, young man, and perhaps not without Royalist ambitions in some parts of the Middle East.

Here in Cairo, my recent setting was, during some five years, as an informal Liaison Officer between the R.A.F., Navy, Army, Embassy, etc., throughout the Middle East. Then there were various later happenings, including in 1940 my vigorous disaccord with Lord Killearn, our then Ambassador; and the accident in the same year when, knocked down and crushed by a British Army car, I spent several months of disability in hospital.

Of the many Egyptians I have come to know here, the great Nationalist, Nahas Pasha, with his peasant origin, whom I used so often to visit in his Heliopolis house, where his discourses to me became sometimes almost alarmingly emphatic, "as though" to use Queen Victoria's simile, "I were a public assembly"; and H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Ali, typical representative of a fine type of old Aristocracy, have been amongst the most "personal" contacts, and both I have found most interesting in very different ways, and both have been most gracious and kindly to me. Other personalities such as Ali Maher Pasha and Abdel Rahman Azzam Pasha I have also met, the former first while he was Prime Minister, at his personal invitation - a polite man with strange chill eyes - the latter I have met frequently, but he never seems to give any real response, and he is; I think, a fanatic at heart in spite of his progressive veneer; but a likeable fanatic all the same who has fought bravely for his cause. The eminent religious leader Sheikh Al Sharkawi I found most gracious when I was a guest in his stately home at Nag Hammadi; and the somewhat notorious Ahmed Hussein I knew very well at one time, a rather violent and emotional young nationalist of whom I could not approve, but whom personally I could not dislike either. Today he is still active, now as a "socialist" leader.

The late Hassanein Pasha I used to meet frequently both in his official capacity at the Royal Palace and elsewhere, but he has seemed to me now too complete a courtier for it to be possible ever quite to forget "formalities". His days of free and easy adventure, including the famous desert explorations with Rosita Forbes seemed alas to have lost some of their franker influences. His graciousness and charm, however, remained, and his basic kindness of heart. His death was a great loss to his friends and to Anglo-Egyptian goodwill. Official circumstances for some time made it impossible for me fully to study King Farouk, and I regretted this at the time. Since then when I became an unofficial nobody, this has been rectified, and I have come to know him well, both informally and formally. I will always remember the gracious consideration extended personally to my dear Mother, already then a Lady of advanced years, and to myself, by this young man, who has been such a controversial figure in Egyptian Affairs. His has been a difficult fate indeed, launched so young and inexperienced into so great a role, and at a time of a special world complication. Whatever the pros and cons of the formal aspect, I think no one knowing this young man informally, his geniality, his sense of humour, his sensitive perceptions — and his loneliness, — can fail to have for him an affectionate respect and sympathy blending warmly with any criticism one may have to add. Had he encountered in official quarters at his time of greatest difficulties, more human sympathy, and less cold blooded criticism, who knows how many complications need never have arisen either in the recent Anglo-Egyptian background, or in some aspects of Egypt's internal relationships.

Linked with all this one cannot forget the name of Sir Miles Lampson, now Lord Killearn, for long our Ambassador in Cairo, and most noted for his fine achievement of the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936. I am in no position to comment on his qualities as a diplomat, but in some ways obviously they were brilliant. Yet to the ordinary student of even the simpler aspects of human nature, that brilliance cannot but seem dulled by a certain lack of human understanding and unegoistic vision. With these qualities added how great a man indeed he could have been. Very recently, on his way now to Saudi Arabia there came to visit me in Cairo, Major Count Arthur Bentnick, a friend of some years. Wounded severely in Abyssinia even before the first great war, wounded again during that war, then in spite of his disabilities becoming a personality as an officer in the Iraq levies, he has been sheer force of individuality, carried out further strenuous service in Aden and Abyssinia even in the recent war. He then went off by air to a remote part of the Far East where he was to undertake strange missions, of which one was not then allowed to know very much. A charming character, in spite of a certain quickness of temper, when has, however, never prevented him from proving a peacemaker between rival factions. His family, have strange ramifications, with branches that are English, German, and Dutch. He himself started his career in our Guards Brigade.

\* Note:

In Abyssinia Arthur Bentinck was awarded a D.S.O. On the same occasion his Arab Servant, who had been with him for years, earned a British decoration also for gallant conduct. Quite a romantic incident.

I have always enjoyed my visits to the Sudan; particularly I like the friendly yet non-subservient Sudanese people. Many sorts of Sudanese I have met, amongst them notables of Khartoum, a few of them restless now with a sense of Nationalism, of sound promise, but as yet precocious. I have met also when "on tour" with my friend Guy Moore or other officials the primitive — & often sturdily naked! — but apparently flourishing tribesmen in outlying areas; and in Dafur province I was pleasantly entertained by the Sultan of Dar Masalet in his rambling white-walled "palace". On parting he presented me with interesting gifts — two python skins, some handsome leather cushions, & leopard skin shoes. Of the "European" Sudanese, the British Government official is the unquestioned chief! Official life, in it's clubs of exactly graded social status, & it's rigid code of precedence shows a less than worthy aspect of what is otherwise one of the finest government services ever established; That almost morbid stress on formality would be a matter for minor ridicule, if it had not also led to much petty social malice, and to a certain amount of even far-reaching damage to that excellence of Service tradition which is one of England's finest achievements.

\* Note: My other friends amongst Sudan Officials besides Douglas Newbold (Civil Secretary), included one young man, John Hanbury - Tracy, who gained local distinction of an unusual sort ! Having with some brilliance gained his entry into the very exclusive setting of the Sudan Civil Service, he then voluntarily after a few months took the unique decision of handing in his resignation -- "because he was bored" ! Later he distinguished himself as an explorer in Thibet & South America, and became also an artist of some note. He is at the moment (August 1951) on some sort of adventure on India's northern frontiers. He has written to say he hopes to visit me in Egypt later on !

I went Westward as far as Al Fasher by air and toured by car to the frontier near Al Genaina. I also on one occasion did the distance of over 500 miles between Juba and Kampala (in Uganda) by car. Much of the time we passed through elephant country, quite primitive forests, which yet had a curiously park-like appearance. We did not see elephant — only their traces. It was later on in Kenya that I grew accustomed to seeing wild beasts of all sorts quite close to the road, and unperturbed by the approach of a car.

Of present "Royal exiles", Prince Paul of Yugoslavia was up at the "House" with me at Oxford and had rooms immediately above me. With us were also Prince Serge Obolensky, of Russia, who used to give me useful fencing hints, — an exercise into which my father had initiated me, — and young Baron Von Bieberstein a German Ambassador's son, with whom I shared river enthusiasms. Fate scattered us widely in the war of 1914.

When Prince Paul and his family passed through Cairo during the last War I used to visit them at a house in Heliopolis which was lent to him. They were all most pleasant though his wife Princess Olga looked tragic and weary. We did not; of course, discuss too much "politics" which might have become embarrassing, but I gathered that their feelings against Hitler were strong and very bitter, but with a certain bitterness towards the British Government also. Eventually I saw them safely into an aeroplane bound for Nairobi. Some time after our Cairo encounter I again met Paul and Princess Olga as guest in their house close to Lake Naivasha in Kenya. The house was agreeable, but most remotely situated, with wild beasts of many sorts, including hyppopotami from the Lake, liable to stroll near it. This was a great delight to little Princess

Elizabeth but less so to her parents! Her two nice young brothers were just then away at boarding school elsewhere in Kenya. My host was charming and democratic as ever in manner, and I had the interesting privilege of hearing some of his side of the story of the tragic war happenings in Yougoslavia.

~~##~~ Note: This is the letter which Paul of Yugoslavia sent  
to me soon after he went to Kenya from Cairo.

My Dear Hindle James.

I feel quite ashamed not to have written before to thank you for all the arrangements you made for our journey and also for your very kind letter. The trip went off beautifully thanks to you and the "Mascots" which the children loved. So far our luggage hasn't appeared yet but I trust that it will turn up some day. We are having very cool weather. I know that you will envy us! Many messages from all my family. It was so nice seeing you again after all these years.

Yours very Sincerely.

Paul

Princess Olga — who is of course an elder sister of our Princess Marina — was charming also, yet with a somewhat regal dignity. I remember how beautiful was H.R.H.'s appearance in a lovely gown she wore at dinner. A strange and pleasant memory is my long informal connection with our Prince of Wales (now Duke of Windsor) for whose energetic humanity and courage I have the deepest possible respect. H.R.H. was up at Magdalen College when I was at the "House" (my first "intimate" contact was a collision in a punt on the river "Cher"), but it was not until after my invaliding from the Royal Air Force, when I became organizer in schemes on behalf of unemployed men, that I had the privilege of getting to know him in a very personal way, and that privilege has been the greatest possible inspiration ever since; as has also the kindness still extended to me by that great and lovely Lady, Queen Mary.

It has been a peculiar experience during latter years since I was invalided from the Service, and in fact for a year or two before that invaliding, without any real leanings towards professional diplomacy or political intrigue yet to be so oddly involved in both. By now I have been in demi-official contacts with many Ambassadors and senior diplomats with some of whom my contacts were slight, yet with all of whom they were definite and most interesting. I look back with mixed feelings, and these certainly include an insistent sense that diplomacy, well-founded perhaps in the past, yet suffers today from grave and even disastrous anachronisms. Some diplomats seem to be trying to live in a rarified atmosphere unwholesome to the ordinary man, and stifling to constructive good fellowship, or world understanding. Of late (July 1951) strange things have been happening in our Diplomatic circles, including the mysterious disappearance of a man till recently in a senior diplomatic position in Cairo. Many rumours are current including a suggestion that he and his simultaneously vanished friend have gone over to Communist Russia. Some reports, specially in American papers, suggest that it is some personal moral unusualness which is at the root of this mystery; adding that this is proof again that the homosexual instinct though enormously prevalent, they allege, in Government circles, yet makes a man a bad investment for any Government Service, implying that they become exposed to blackmail including blackmail from Soviet Agents. On the whole that seems a silly story. Such special prevalence is unlikely, or if indeed it is true then the cart is being put before the horse, and the remedy is to place such people out of the range of blackmailers by admitting, — as Doctors and psychologists do anyhow — that this sexual outlook needs treatment on a practical scientific and medical basis, and not a criminal basis at all.

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Generations of witch-hunting in the Middle Ages caused fearful suffering to countless innocent people, but could not really create a crime of something that did not in fact exist. Similarly these people cannot commit a crime through an instinct if in fact that instinct is not criminal. Alas! even yet the law can be an ass!; it can also be the unconstructive agent of mere biased malice.

From another angle of the purity of official morals, another interesting achievement is to be recorded in our local official world! Some years ago the wife of a foreign diplomat here wrote a scandalous book, which was in the main an, apparently not inaccurate, record of her own amorous adventures with certain wellknown Englishmen here, and of other little excentricities of theirs. A Knighthood recently conferred has brought it about, as an Embassy friend of mine pointed out to me, that each one of the "gentlemen" mentioned in that book has now, by diplomatic recommendation received the Accolade! Quite a whimsical story! It is of course an accomplished and not unreasonable fact in most circles. Now-a-days, that divorce need incur no stigma. This is clearly accepted in Cairo's Diplomatic world; yet the extent to which even the most excentric matrimonial exchanges have been officially tolerated seems less than an asset to British prestige. So much for the trained insight of traditional diplomacy, which whatever it has gained for itself, seems at the moment to have lost for England her Empire, and rapidly to be losing for Englishmen the respect of the world; however much it may blame — and perhaps with some justification, — this Labour Government of ours, yet self complacency is as dangerous for diplomats as for ordinary mortals. Arrogant licence for itself and lack of sympathy for people in general, may certainly have helped to play into the hands of certain subversive elements including the watchful communists.

Of old time diplomats I have however a particularly agreeable recollection of the kindness and hospitality of Sir Francis Lindley, and of his Lady, at Lisbon, & of the dignified yet cordial atmosphere at his Embassy. The Duchess of Norfolk and her two daughters were at that moment guests also at the Embassy, and I remember that I with the young people of both families used to have an occasional "flutter" at the old fashioned Casino at Mont Estoril, — having first received careful parental admonitions as to caution in our play! In fact our loss or gain never amounted to more than the value of a few shillings. I remember other happy occasions centered upon the Gurney family at our Tangier Legation, which included the presence of charming cousins of our great war leader Winston Churchill, who were, and are, very dear friends of mine. In the latter days of the present Duke's father, I stayed at Blenheim Palace, the family's historic home. This is to me a poignant memory, for Blenheim Palace was then still organized in traditional and most handsome style, — now, for better or worse, a style very much of the past.

In Cairo, my slight contacts with Richard Casey, then Minister of State were pleasant. Later in Australia, a much closer acquaintanceship came about, for my Australian brother-in-law's family and the Caseys had for many years been closely associated. A very nice man is Dick Casey of sensitive yet sound mentality. He has distinctly "English" manner, and his world-wide experience made him the object of some strangely narrow minded criticism from a certain sort of Australian. This however his personality has overcome. He maintains keen interest in Egypt, and we often talked of the possibility of Australia-Egyptian exchange of diplomatic or consular representation. In Egypt I also have had interesting personal talks upon this subject with H.M. King Farouk, with Sir Ronald Campbell, and at the Egyptian Foreign Office, where young Aly Hadad had given me a pleasant introduction to a friend of his who was head of the Foreign Section there at that time. This representation has now been initiated. Sir Ronald Campbell; always spoken of by Egyptians as a "real gentleman", is indeed aptly described by this term, including even perhaps the tendency to rigidity which it sometimes connotes. Nevertheless his has been a respected leadership of our British community when to maintain our prestige is essential but not easy.

My visits to Teheran have been two in number, one in summer heat, one in winter snow, a vast contrast. On my return by air from Teheran to Baghdad on this latter visit, I remember that weather conditions forced us unexpectedly up to over 17,000 feet. It was exceedingly cold, and the atmosphere so rarified that we were somewhat alarmed for the welfare of that gallant and inveterate piece of time and wartime explorer, D. Arcy Whetherby who was with us. He then had the rank of Major, was doing fine special work, and was well over 70 years of age. I met many of the leading diplomats personally, and amongst the memories most notable to me are a private visit to the old Palace of the Shahs, with its old world Persian garden, its Peacock Throne, and air of Romance; and then tea taken at the very modernistic new Palace of the Present Young Emperor at the personal invitation of H.E. the Minister of Court, Monsieur Intizam. After tea I experienced the privilege of having the "Golden Book" brought to me to add my signature thereto. Later I stayed at the mountain Hotel at Darband, a fine building and a show place dating from Riza Shah's Regime. I remember it was expensive, - and the cost of a round of drinks in the bar startled me much. Finally I was deputed to take back with me to Cairo a handsome gift of Caviare from the Empress of Iran to her Mother Queen Nazli.

My visits to my brother, District Commissioner in Uganda were inspiring episodes - a lovely fertile country, a moderate climate and an attractive and flourishing native people. All these people, seemed at that time anyhow, to be most happy, and well disposed towards the British Protectorate Government. My brother's life seemed full of variety, including

big game shooting, and talented water-colour painting as contrasted "hobbies"! He sometimes missed his horses however - made almost impossible in certain districts by "Tsetai" fly - for he is a good horseman, and hunts regularly on his home leaves. I am not a good horseman, -- though for a brief period in my early youth I had the privilege of hunting with the Belvoir and the Blankney. In those days I owned a horse, my dear "Paddy", afterwards bought by my brother when I left England.

Australia is for me a sombre memory, dominated as it is by the death of my Mother almost upon our arrival there, after all her gallant determination to go to that land to see again her daughter and her grand children. A brave ending none the less for a Lady whose gentle and retiring nature had been fated to become involved in the visiting of many far lands in facing circumstances of drastic variety.

\* Note: Soon after our Mother's death I was also myself twice seriously ill. It is not true that these human losses of those we dearly love are any the less a shock because they are inevitable; nor is it true that time necessarily brings healing to that sense of loss; but equally it is an unwise in life impetuously to encourage reunion between individuals long-separated, unless the urge for this is truly mutual beyond all reasonable doubt.

\*\* Note: As well as many townships in Victoria State I visited Sidney, Adelaide, Perth, and Fremantle. All are fine cities, each seeming to have its own very individual characteristics and way of life. The four days run by car between Melbourne and Sydney, staying at a different township each night, is particularly memorable. The country is mountainous, with lovely glimpses of the sea; and often through forests of huge trees, many over one hundred feet high, and with semi-tropical ferns and undergrowth. It was during this run that I saw my first wild Kangaroos; a platypus I had already seen in a stream at my sister's estate.

There are happy memories too; my affection for my sister and her family, which on leaving Australia I realise is as real as ever. There was the interest too of their fine cattle estate, — and my own initiation into Australian life — I; as a volunteer fireman even helped to combat a bush fire, a terrific experience! I was also made an hon. member of the Citizen's Band, — a notable privilege! in the nearby township; and I took to piloting an aircraft again under the instruction of an Australian friend of mine whose property the aircraft was. I have also the stately remembrance of being admitted as an hon. member of the Melbourne Club, and of Sydney's Union Club, — last strongholds of a dignified element in past days. Australians impress me as a stirring people marred a little by excessive "touchiness".

Remembrance of my wandering on tramp ships is pleasantly vivid. I can make no claim to expert knowledge, but at one period I spent several months on board certain cargo vessels, British and foreign upon which I was subsequently allowed to render a report in official quarters. Two aspects in particular of my all too brief experiences I shall always remember in these voyages around the Mediterranean and Black Sea, and these are the good comradeship of my shipmates, and the stalwart efficiency of their attitude to their work — an arduous routine indeed, the hardships of which neither begin nor end with war, and upon which our island welfare depends so much. Only thrice before had I felt, as stirred at my circumstances, — when I did my first solo flight; when I found myself actually en route for active Service in France at the beginning of 1915; and when, lying wounded, in a shell-hole at night in "No Man's Land", an excellent Italian rescued me. It was while a "deck hand" in an Italian "tramp" that the Bolsheviks, after being amiable to me at Odessa then arrested me at Batoum!

I was for 48 hours in the keeping of two fine young Russian soldiers, their 6 foot stature enhanced by fixed bayonets! My own stature is much less than 6 feet — and even they saw the joke! But when I was "examined" by their "Commissars" it was not so funny; especially when one of them who came twice, stared at me fixedly for over an hour, and then left without saying a word. I found it a sinister experience! My kit was minutely searched — but at last I was released. My comrades on the ship seemed to think I had had a narrow shave from doing one of those "disappearing acts" so prevalent in Russia, and gave me a hearty welcome to freedom!

A sad recollection now arises - of that charming Austrian Lady, on a philanthropic mission, whom I met at Istanbul; who with all her family was wiped out when the Nazis entered Vienna. I shall never forget her pathetic last letter from her home.

For a moment my thoughts drift Eastward again - to Koweit - before the oil! It was then the very picture of romance - a walled, white, arab city with its picturesque pearly fleet, its friendly fishermen and its stately notables with their ceremonial hospitality of coffee-drinking and the spraying of incense and rose-water. I wonder what the influx of oil and its mechanical complications has done to them all now! The dignified old ruler Ahmed Sabah, whom I knew well, has anyhow been made an enormously rich man.

Still in the East, a memorable experience for me was my time as a departmental head in British Airways. This involved wide touring again, including a mission to neutral Turkey during the war. It was strange indeed suddenly to find one's self in a place where Germans could be met in the streets, and where in a hotel I could find myself at a table next to German Officers! It was at this moment that Rommel was advancing apparently victoriously on Cairo, and the reactions in my Turkish surroundings to the daily rumours were curious to note. I returned from this visit by the Taurus Express to Aleppo, by car to Tripoli, Haifa, and Jerusalem, and then back to Cairo by air, gaining a very varied set of war impressions.

The next episode was my retirement for one and a half years to a country house which I rented on the estate of a Pasha on the banks of the Nile near Benha. My house was actually the pavilion or guest house of the large, then empty, mansion on another part of the estate. The position was amongst fruit groves and vine trellaces, - rather remote and very attractive. Here I had a wonderful opportunity for close contacts with the life of the fellaheen, with whom I was soon on most amiable terms. I also became much interested in a rest centre for troops of Allied Forces which I obtained permission to establish in the nearby country town which was also a railway junction. Very soon, <sup>we</sup> were dealing with hundreds of soldiers of both sexes, all ranks and many nationalities. I found it a most inspiring occupation; and it was all a most interesting contrast to my town life in Cairo, my tribal and desert wanderings in Iraq, and my solitary work amongst the Oases of Egypt's Western desert.

To H.H. Prince Michel Lutfallah I owe a pleasant debt of gratitude for he was one of those who supported my candidature for the Mohamed Aly Club's exclusive membership which initially had been put forward informally for me by H.R.H. Prince Mohamed Aly. Michel Lutfallah, though a christian of Syrian origin, is also an Emir of the Hedjaz, his family having been accorded princely rank by King Hussein many years ago. Prince Habib, Michel's elder brother, and an interesting personality was King Hussein's Ambassador in various foreign countries including Russia. The Lutfallah family are now the owners of the vast Gezira Palace, which was the residence which the then Khedive placed at the disposal of Empress Eugenie at the time of the Suez Canal opening. Its magnificent interior still contains

much of the impressive furnishings of that date. Prince Michel, who is a millionaire and more has entertained many foreign Royal personages at his home, -- and also my humble self enjoys his frequent kind hospitality. He is a charming host. As his title is not Egyptian, Michel on formal occasions here prefers to use his Egyptian rank of Bey.

Another debt of gratitude is to Commandatore Vittorio Gianotti, first for his courtesy and consideration to my Mother, and secondly for the very handsome donation he made on my behalf to the C.M.S. Hospital. He too even now after Italy's war disasters is still a millionaire. During the war, when he was a very sick man, and in internment here, I was able to intervene for him with our Minister of State in Cairo; and so we remain mutually and amiably d'accord.

Quite lately, since the end of 1950, a new interest has come my way, -- the Arab refugees of South Palestine; and in fact it is to one of them that I owe gratitude for the helpful typing of these notes of mine! I have spent two periods in the Gaza area informally under the auspices of the United Nations Organisation. A grim yet humanly interesting experience, which while arousing all one's instincts to help, yet also overpowers one sometimes by a sense of the seeming helplessness of human goodwill against the exigencies of fate, and the blind egoism even of suffering humanity itself. Of course one has sympathy for all sorts of refugees which the tragic world conditions have created, not least for Jews now in Israel, most of whom in the past have faced shocking cruelty and injustice with a courage which can only have world-wide respect. Nevertheless two wrongs cannot produce a right, and to encroach upon the land of others, to seize without compensation the homes, the funds, and personal property of hundreds of thousands of Arabs who have in no way harmed them, and to have spread terror and ruthlessness amongst them is an action no less shocking in Palestine to the conscience of humanity than is any other similar outrage elsewhere. It is a challenge again to the conscience of humanity, and must be judged by the merits of right and wrong not merely by those of expediency. Even in present grim times our conscience must not lose its capacity to be shocked. This is a direct responsibility of all United Nations Leaders, and involves the basic principles of human dignity and the sanctity of individual rights, an essential part of the very foundations of civilized recovery.

I have attended conferences, worked amongst the refugees,  
and written articles, the latest I am told about to be published in  
the "20th Century" Journal; for which I am most grateful to Monty  
Woodhouse -- the Hon. C.M. Woodhouse who is an influential person  
in the background of that Journal.

I have had the



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\* Note: Below are references to our efforts for the Arab refugees at Gaza.

All Saint's Cathedral  
Cairo.

Feb. 23rd 1951.

My dear Hindle James,

I have read with great interest your report on the distribution of the Clothing. It is excellent. Thank you for all you did.

Yours sincerely,

Geoffrey Allen,

Bishop in Egypt.

Extract from Egyptian Gazette February 15th 1952.

A sum of L.E. 100 for the funds of the United Arab Refugees Appeal has been handed by the British Embassy to Squadron Leader Hindle James on his departure today by U.N. aircraft for Gaza, where he is assisting at the distribution of clothing and supplies recently collected for the Arab Refugees in the Gaza area through the United Appeal. This Appeal had had the high patronage of H.R.H. Princess Fawzia, and the support of the Arab Superior Council for the Relief of Arab Refugees in Palestine. U.N.R.W.A. and the Egyptian and foreign communities in Egypt.

Letters which I wrote personally to our Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, received from him helpful and considerate replies.

Richard Casey, Australia's Minister for External Affairs was also actively interested and when he passed through Cairo at the end of Oct<sup>r</sup> 1951 was kind enough to find time to call on me in my flat, when we had an interesting talk.

So far however (July 1952) there has been no improvement in the condition of the unfortunate Arab Refugees; a deplorable slur on the reputation of "United" Nations co-operation.

The first of the two letters which follow is in reply to my letter to Anthony Eden on the Arab Refugee question, the second is a note from Sir Louis Greig referring to the same subject:-

"Foreign Office,  
19th November, 1951.

Dear Mr. Hindle James,

The Foreign Secretary has read with interest the memorandum on Arab refugees which you were so good as to send him with your letter of the 29th October and for which he has asked me to thank you.

Mr. Eden fully shares your view on the importance of settling this problem as quickly as possible.

The need for clothing is particularly urgent and we were interested to learn of the efforts being made in this respect by the Committee formed in Egypt representing both Egyptians and foreign communities. As you may know, the British Red Cross last year issued an appeal for clothing in this country. The response was remarkable and not less than 23,000 parcels were received. A further appeal will be issued shortly.

The problem of Arab refugees will be re-examined by the General Assembly of United Nations at its present session and it is hoped that, with the full co-operation of the governments of the countries in which the refugees found refuge and of the governments who are contributing to their relief and resettlement, substantial progress will be possible

Yours sincerely,

Michael Wilford."

"Thatched House Lodge,  
Richmond Park,  
Richmond, Surrey.  
12th June, 1951.

Dear Hindle James,

Thank you for your letter of the 8th June, 1951.

I lunched with Amr Pasha the other day to introduce Captain Peachey, R.N., who is going as one of Stevenson's Private Secretaries. He told me of the possible visit of H.E. Dr. Hussein Pasha. I will certainly try and get in touch with him when he arrives.

Thank you for letting me see the copies of the papers. Your article on the refugee problem was very interesting.

All good luck to you,

Yours sincerely,

Louis Greig"

I have had the privilege of letters on this subject from Marlborough House, expressing the personal interest of Queen Mary, and this has been a great encouragement, as has also the fact that in token of Her Majesty's kindly regard, a specially bound book of some of my own verses which I ventured to send for Queen Mary's birthday, has been graciously accepted by her. These are for me permanently happy memories in the so often less than happy circumstances of present times.

Her Majesty's letter about my verses is inset  
into one small book which I have called  
"Brushing of Wings".

In the course of these experiences I also owe much to the constructive sympathy of Colonel Ismail Cherine, brother-in-law of H.M. King Farouk. Cherine Bey is Senior Liaison Officer to the Egyptian occupation forces at Gaza and our mutual interests there have xxxx brought us together in a pleasant friendship. Usually I have met him "in the field," or at his Cairo Headquarters; but my latest encounter was at a magnificent social function, -- a soiree to celebrate the marriage of a well-known pasha's daughter. The setting was beautiful, in a handsome modern mansion by the Nile. The grounds were exquisitely illuminated and decorated, all in a manner of grandiose elegance quite amazing. The food and drink, -- if caviar, champagne and such may be described in these vulgar terms -- were excellent! The ladies were mostly wearing the fashionable billowing style of dress; and their display of jewellery was truly impressive. As these beautiful creatures drifted about the white terraces and broad stairways, the whole affair seemed reminiscent of historic Versailles, Marie-Antoinette and all that -- especially when at the climax of the affair lovely girls carrying baskets moved among the guests scattering gold coins as souvenirs!

When one adds that at the gates of the mansion crowds of Cairo's very poor were gathered, and that from vantage points outside other poverty stricken people were

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watching avidly,— the Marie-Antoinette atmosphere seemed disquietingly real. May Allah protect that elegant community if the sequence of events ever goes the same way! Our host and hostess were themselves a most gracious pair and all Cairo's elite were present including our Ambassador and his Lady. A charming happy crowd, apparently quite unaware that they could be doing anything wrong, or that such lavishness with abject poverty just outside could be incongruous! Not they indeed, but their Government really are responsible for this obtuseness; a Government willfully blind to the "writing on the wall". Egyptian leaders of all parties fail in their vaunted patriotism for personal or party reasons, not warning but misleading the people, not gaining for Egypt the maximum of world friendship she so much needs, but causing needless enmity. There are strikes, official scandals, deliberate failure to make the necessary compromise in the face of facts. Sad indeed for loyal Egyptians to see and for all those who love Egypt. One can only pray that Providence will raise for them a true leadership in these most omenous times. As for our own leadership in Cairo, often being, not long ago, unnecessarily forceful, often against the wrong individuals now it seems grotesquely & pointlessly lenient towards an egoistically extremist Government as a whole, which only misinterprets this restraint as weakness, to be used for "party" rather than patriotic ends.

And this Cairo of Ours! in a way so non-descript, yet with a personality all its own to those who know it well. Its mixture of people is almost as incongruous as its mixture of architectural styles; and now the modernistic sky-scraper blocks have appeared and are still arising in all directions. One of the first of these ponderous modernisms arose on the site of a dignified old building first known to me in 1915 as the Turf Club and which before that was the abode of the well known and beneficent Sir Alexander Baird; and also for a time the residence of Lord Cromer, before the present Embassy (originally Residency) was built. I am afraid one must admit that the foreign community here seems really too full of prejudices to form coherent units even within itself; and in this the British community with its curious predilection for cliques still shows a less than admirable prominence. Yet there is much of real kindness here, mainly amongst the native people of Egypt, and of these mostly amongst the less prominent and less affluent sort. Amongst the wealthy Egyptians — and in Egypt riches are still possible on an incredible scale of affluence — and the socially well placed, there is still also much hospitality and some very genuine kindness, although, sad to say, there too they are beginning to think it fashionable to assume some of the snobbisms in which the European in Cairo often so deplorably excels. However I have always found, and still find, enough spontaneous warm-heartedness for me to continue very gratefully appreciative of my Cairene setting. Thinking of Cairo hospitality, the names of Major Wise Bey and Mrs Wise spring to the mind. In their spacious house there is always a warm welcome, and frequent charming parties,

not for the socially "elect" only, though these are included, but also for the lonely and less known. During the war hundreds of our Service boys and girls came to consider that house their own. Indeed this a bountiful example to some in high places here, not least to some amongst our clergy, whose "come unto me" seems discretely reserved for the "best people", of officialdom, though no doubt there are souls to be saved there, if that in fact, in the case of the clergy, is the objective!

One of my happiest local contacts has been with the British C.M.S. Hospital and its admirable staff. Their work is mainly on behalf of the poorer class of Egyptian, amongst whom they have an unique reputation not only for skill but also for human kindness. I wish one could state a similar reputation for Egyptian Hospitals in general but alas this is not yet possible. I have had the privilege of long association with the C.M.S. hospital, and of working on its behalf to such modest extent as has been possible for me.

Indeed I have had at least one practical expression of kind appreciation. In July 1948, just after my return from Australia there was a grim situation in Cairo, with rioting in the streets and a number of Europeans killed or wounded. I had been warned not to go out, but did so. In Kasr-el-Nil street a threatening crowd gathered around me; but at what seemed a critical moment a young cripple whom I had once sent for treatment to the C.M.S. Hospital, forced his way to me, and explained loudly that I was not really such a bad sort of infidel, and described me with kindly exaggeration as "aboul massakeen" that is "a father of the poor"! The incident ended in handshaking and amiable laughter to my no small relief!

Another fine work is that of the children's Health Centre established out near the Pyramids, which form a romantic background to the settlement. This is now going ahead gallantly in its work for the rescue of children. It was founded through the really brave and persistent efforts of a little group of Egyptian "Society" ladies. As quite young girls, against much initial opposition from their shocked families and disapproving officials they have won their way to the sound establishment of this large and ever growing home for children; and have now achieved full Government backing and the personal encouragement and help of Egypt's Royal Family.

I have the honour at the moment to be the only Englishman permitted to consider myself an Hon. Member of this Association.



Note:

The following letter is from a leading member of the Committee of the W.H.I.A. It is a letter for which I am grateful and is interesting as a record of goodwill; - especially in view of the later atmosphere of anti-British malice which unscrupulous political people succeeded in arousing in Cairo, which eventually did much to disrupt even this humanitarian work of ours for the children, and which led eventually to discord and tragedy in Cairo

Women's Health Improvement  
Association,  
26, Midan Abdine, Cairo.  
April 8th, 1951.

Dear Squadron Leader Hindle James,

Your two letters came to me both at the same time, and I am sorry that they weren't answered before. I don't know how to thank you for all the interest you show in the Medina and all the trouble you go to for the children. You've been such a wonderful help.

First I must apologise about those books from the Library. I am making full enquiries about them. As for the cinema shows from the Embassy, we would be really grateful if you would ask them to continue their shows at the Medina, and it seems a lovely idea to give the children a weekly show, as you suggested. Could you let the Embassy know?

And now about this lovely idea of giving the children at the Medina an afternoon's outing in a British Airways Bus. They do need a change sometimes, and we're always hoped to be able to buy a bus for the Medina so that we can take them out on trips and picnics sometimes. It would be really sweet of you if you could encourage the idea, and let us know what they have decided about it.

Again I must repeat how grateful we all are for all you're doing and have done for our Association, and I hope you'll always feel the same interest for the children at the Medina.

Gratefully yours,  
Aida Alluba.

This is a pleasant enough letter, and so it is distressing to have to record that later on even this ladies committee, of which Aida was an active member, did nothing to prevent a campaign of particularly virulent anti-British propaganda amongst the personnel and the children at the Association, with very ugly results. Now (Aug. 1952) the whole atmosphere at the Medina has deteriorated to the great disadvantage of the children's welfare. This is a sad disillusionment indeed; but we hope for reconstruction again.

I stay frequently in the settlement and sometimes small parties of these young folk - boys and girls of all ages between a few months up to about 16 years - come to my small residence to spend the afternoon and have tea. It is a fine thing to note the rapid mental as well as physical betterment of these youngsters, many of whom originate from a background of the grimmest aspects of poverty. They respond amazingly to the new atmosphere of kindness and good order, and with very few exceptions are a happy and attractive-natured community. One may not here omit to mention the fine influence which three European ladies have had upon the work; one a Norwegian lady, in its very early days; the second a Swedish lady, of German birth, who is still a guiding spirit working quietly within it; and the third it's English-born President. The Egyptian Ladies of the Committee always warmly voice their debt of gratitude to these valued friends of this great undertaking whose example is mirrored in the whole enheartening

endeavour. One sees amongst these young people much reasonable and helpful mutual companionship which would indeed be an advantageous example even to many youthful British people with far greater original advantages. It is a happiness and privilege to have their friendly confidence, and re-inspires constantly the urge to bring such opportunities within reach of ever greater numbers of Egypt's children.

European interests in this remarkable effort for child welfare was strangely slow in being aroused; but, perhaps typically, it is interesting to recall that my first mention of it to the recently appointed Minister for Australia, Claude Massey, caused his immediate attention and a personal visit forthwith to the settlement. Massey is indeed an inspiring new element in the Cairo Diplomatic world. To a shrewd yet broad-minded approach to official affairs, he adds a fine presence and evident goodwill; and these together are stirring much approval and comment in Egypt.

Truly this is a remarkable work these Egyptian Ladies are doing and typical of the outlook of a growing number of the educated womenfolk of Egypt. One feels nowadays that it is indeed Egypt's young women, even more than Egypt's young men, who have the future good progress of their country in their keeping. Not the over fashionable Egyptian woman but of the more common sense middle class. The former is inclined indiscriminately to ape outward European ways and fashions following a foreign lead or the lead of a certain of resident foreign ladies here, whose dress, for instance — and even more whose "undress" in evening or bathing modes outrages even today the opinions of ordinary oriental people. Inexperienced foreign ladies should be warned or controlled by their Consular representatives in this matter; and if they refuse reasonable advice, they can have no complaint if local sentiment tends to consider them as harlots, and if in times of stress they even tend to treat them as such.

But to return to the sensible-minded modern Egyptian girl, their upbringing makes them less selfish in outlook than their brothers, in whose early days there is still liable to be too much of the traditional hero-worship of the male child which is so unhelpful to balanced mental development. However Egypt as a whole is certainly more humanely self-conscious than ever before and a desire for betterment and indignation at social abuses is in general becoming more and more healthily active.

To suggest that British influence has brought no benefit to Egypt is merely to be wilfully blind; yet when British critics speak a little harshly of present conditions in Egypt, do they not perhaps rather conveniently omit the memory that British administration up till recently predominated in Egypt during a period of some seventy years. Had we given to social service, schools, and hospitals, some of the same energetic priorities that were given to Cotton, the Canal, and commerce, might we not now be reaping a far greater and more beneficent harvest in the gratitude of the Egyptian people, and their basic soundness for facing the world as our allies.

Writing like this, memories come flooding back too readily, and must be held in check; my earliest boyhood's friend, at a Tutor's and at Christchurch with me, who as an officer in the Coldstream was killed early in the last war. He seems to me still a lad, for he died so young, giving his happy life and fine inheritance for the welfare of his fellow men; many others as young as he are in that Company, and each is forgotten. Thus died that young poet who was my friend, his songs of happiness or of lament all ended in one vivid burst of flame when he died terribly in his burning plane; and Bobby J.S. dear friend of many, shared years and adventures, has given his life too—

all his restless spiritual seeking, his impatience of all meanness, and his many talents, silenced and lost for ever, drowned in the sea, in an aircraft lost at night. God rest them, and all those others too, and may their sacrifice not be in vain.

I think vividly too of those days in the latter war when I was exiled here in grimly threatened, once gay Cairo; strangely isolated but with a clash of war all around us, the town full of refugees and soldiers, and the threat of internal treachery. The sound of anguish from broken towns and cities was already in our ears; and always in our thoughts was the gallant tragedy of our England, steadfast and sure, amidst such a grim and lonely testing as few people have ever had to face. We of the former war must not look back too often, lest this renewal of senseless destruction sicken our heart too much. Let us rather use our grim experiences to prevent the gallant young people of today from fresh disillusionment, and to keep before them, even in these newly threatening times the energetic hope of reconstruction and world peace.

H.H.J.

Cairo, July 1951.

Till Journey's End.

Although they pass, there's something yet that stays;  
Like to the clinging fragrance, true & real,  
Of scents crushed from rich herbs whose verdant days  
Are past. Just so the influence and fire  
Of deep experience and brave Ideal,  
Live on within each heart that they inspire.

H.H.J.