Mesopotamia

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P A R T I.

MELVILLE MACKENZIE'S NARRATIVE.

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Mrs F Mackenzie
Petham Lodge
Petham
Canterbury
Kent CT4 5RX

Your reference

Our reference DOC/RWAS/SB

Date 24 August 1977

MESOP 1 AMIA

Dear Mrs Mackenzie

I have pleasure in enclosing herewith a complete copy of your late husband's Mesopotamian diary. As you will see, some sections of the diary already existed in duplicate, and so I am returning the carbons of these together with photostat copies of the other papers.

I hope that this copy will be satisfactory for your purposes.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Suddaby

R W A Suddaby
Keeper of the Department of Documents

Enc

FIRST SERIES OF LETTERS.

BASRA

AN ADVENTURE IN MESOPOTAMIA
JUNE 1917 - JANUARY 1919

To face First Series of Letters.

"You are a born sanitarian and would lower the death-rate of any town."

Colonel Fremantle to
Melville Mackenzie.

I.

OFFICERS' LINES. TENT 63.

NO. 2 (CODFORD) CAMP,

SQUIRE'S GATE, BLACKPOOL.

June 19, 1917.

I arrived here about 6 o'clock. I reported at the Art Gallery and was posted to this Camp, which is about three miles from Blackpool. I came out by taxi and reported here and was assigned to a tent.....

To-morrow we get up at 6 a.m. and do Swedish drill in the Camp until 7.30 and then breakfast at 8 a.m. Parade at 9 a.m. Drill, Lecture at 11 a.m. on Tropical diseases. Dinner at 1 p.m. Drill at 2 p.m. Lecture at 4 p.m. Swedish Drill 5 p.m. to 6 p.m.

To-morrow I am to be inoculated at 10 a.m. and so shall not have to attend Parades for 48 hours. We are inoculated again in tend days.

June 20, 1917.

We are just attached to an Officers' School of Instruction and drill etc., as privates, and have lectures and courses of "Equitation"! There are seventy or eighty doctors here and this is only one camp of many more.....

June 24, 1917.

I have been rubbing up my bacteriology ready for to-morrow... I am working hard to make myself efficient, mentally and physically, for the work before me. There is much, much to learn

and I find all day occupied. It is grand to be at work and I am not going to leave a stone unturned to make myself efficient. I mean to go out as Baden Powell would have gone out. It is great to feel that one's work is for the country and not for money. It gives life to the dullest job.....

June 25, 1917.

My life during the last three years (General Practioner) has been the happiest part of my life although at times the work was too heavy. I have always wanted to get into the Army because I wanted to feel that I had offered my life for my country and whatever happens I shall be more glad than I can say that I have managed to help in this great struggle.....

This morning we went to Liverpool and worked from 10 a.m. til 5 p.m. in the bacteriological laboratories at Malaria in its different forms. To-morrow we do sleeping sickness, relapsing fever, etc. These peculiar diseases are most wonderful and interesting.....

I have not received orders yet of any kind, do not suppose I shall until this course in Liverpool is over. It is extraordinary being in such a mobile community; men leaving for Egypt, Palestine,, East Africa, India and Mesopotamia and coming in from the same places as if they were thirty or forty miles away. Several doctors have been sent to North Italy to our batteries there.

July 21, 1917.
FOLKESTONE.

Just a line before we leave at 3.15 p.m. for an unknown destination.

Then follows a series of letters giving a vivid account of the journey to Mesopotamia though the destination is unknown to

the troops. The route is overland by - the towns are unnamed in the letters - Paris, Modane, Turin, Rome, arriving on the 26th at a camp in the hills above the harbour of , where they remain for two days, living in tents and changing their clothes for the first time since leaving England. They learn they are to be drafted into the reinforcements of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force. At 1 p.m. on the 28th they receive orders to embark, and at 4 p.m. go aboard, exchanging the discomforts of fly-invested tents set in thick white dust for the luxurious comfort of one of the finest liners, cradled in a still blue sea, and the monotony of food rations for the varied menu of a first-class table.

"We have first-class two-berth cabins and six of us feed and live together - Langley, a bacteriologist, who went with me to Liverpool; Martyn, a young doctor from Nottingham; Thorpe a doctor from Lancashire; Morgan a delightful man from Wales, and a young Padré (Wesleyan), who is a real good sort. I met all my old friends at the rest camp and we are all going on together.... I manage to get some medical reading done as there is much to get through within the next few weeks. I am getting sketches but have to be very careful to make them absolutely indefinite and of course cannot send you any.

July 29, 1917.
H.M.T.

We are still in port but expect to leave to-night. I have arranged to send a cable when we get through the submarine area. I have been reading medicine.

July 31, 1917.
H.M.T.

We are still at port. I have done three pastel sketches on board which of course have been censored.. This morning I was at Drill and later I read medicine.

August 4, 1917.
H.M.T.

We are at sea again for some little time and have called at two ports. To-morrow we expect to be across the danger area, which with the utmost precaution we have been crossing during the last five or six days. The precautions taken against U-boats are most thorough.

We spend our time eating, sleeping, talking and reading medicine and bacteriology. It is difficult to write as I am not able to say anything definite.

August 5, 1917.
H.M.T.

We reached Egypt yesterday. I sent a cable from our port of call telling you of our safe arrival. We are now out of U-boat danger in all probability.

August 8, 1917.
H.M.T.

We are now at sea for three or four days - we saw the last of land last night and we expect to meet the monsoon in a few days. The heat is tremendous. One days is very much like another - rise 6.30 a.m., bath (salt), brekker, reading medicine till 12, lunch and sleep from 2 to 4 p.m. Then letter writing, medicine or chess. It is quite impossible to do much work in the middle of the day. I am awfully glad I came as it is good to be in at the job.

I have been censoring letters all morning. I must have censored hundreds since I came on board.

We are not calling at the port I hoped so I shall have to post this letter from B----, our destination in Mesopotamia.

August 16, 1917.

We are still at sea and have not touched land since my last letter (was posted) to you i.e., about a fortnight ago. We have had a roughish time in the Indian Ocean but are now well on the way to our destination. I expect to be at Leslie's (Major Leslie Dunbar etc.,) town in two or three days and shall post from there. The heat is great - 110°F in the shade to-day and 124°F in the sun.....We simply lie about in ponds of perspiration and wipe ourselves with towels. We all wear neckerchiefs tied like scouts round our necks - the angle at the back protects your spine and having something tied round your neck prevents the rivers of perspiration running down. I expect I shall arrive at Basra clothed in thought only.....We are just passing land - one of the most desolate coasts it is possible to conceive, sand and rock for miles in shimmering heat.

S U M M A R Y.

BASRA.

I MELVILLE MACKENZIE'S NARRATIVE.

BASRA BASE HOSPITAL.

1. British Wards. A Poster. Arrival at Basra. The camp. Major Leslie Dunbar. Hindustanee. The country. The inhabitants. Native life. A day's programme. Natural history. A Yorkshire store-keeper. Ancient history. The Jews. The Chaldeans. Liberation from Time. Indian soldiers. A lamplight operation. An orderly officer's day. Insect-carriers of diseases. Snakes. A mongoose. Eastern religions. A domestic day. The "Buck-Reed" Feast. Public Health. Tea and Yorkshire "parkin".

2. Contact Camp. "Contacts and carriers". Camp organisation and construction. Bacteriological examinations. The staff. Autumn weather. Birds. Mosquito pools. The Euphrates. The Persian desert. Shaiba-Zubeia. Ghurka dances. Eastern railway travel. Gratitude of the Indian soldier. A desert caravan. A walled Arab city. An Arab coffee-pot. Mohammedan reverence for Jesus. Camp made "parkin".

3. Sanitary Officer. Greetings for Christmas. Appointment as Sanitary Officer. Scope of the work. A day's programme. Horse-race meeting in the desert. Hindu festival of "Duvala". "Field-Service Kewasti". Wild-dog hunt. Cold nights. Sandfly fever. Bacillary dysentery. Inspection of vessels. Rain. Misery of the Arabs, and Indians. A winter evening in Mesopotamia. Christmas. The King's message. Loyalty of the Indians. Sanitary precautions. Evasion by the Indians. "Contact" embraces.

4. Assistant Port Health Officer. New Year 1918. Appointment as Assistant Port Health Officer. Duties. Residence at Ashar. Wild-dog hunt. Storks. English mail boat. Hospital buildings. Needs. Scouts. Life on the island. Life as Port Health Officer. Ashar at night. Native transport. The Bazaar. The desert at night. Arabic. Native languages and dialects. Persian rugs. Biblical names. Ages. Gramophones. Children at play. Arab headdresses. Seasonal diseases. Race and caste in hospital administration. Bart's men. A native doctor.

Arabs and their children. An Arab child-artist. Letters and spirital intercourse. Hindus and the soul. "Tipperary". Value of a command of languages. British rule and native bribery. Specimens of Arab crafts. Colour on the Tigris. Arab boy-scouts. Salmon fishing in the Euphrates. Major Dunbar. Fleas. Summer clothing. A donkey grazes in the Bazaar. The Arab and his drinking water. Inspection of troop ships. Importance of correct and rapid diagnosis of diseases. Rats, plague and cargoes. Vaccinations. Delousing. Tribute to the Indian troops. Lessons in Arabic. Arabs, English, Christians. An Arab story-teller. Arabic examination.success. Hospital gifts from Huddersfield. Indians as nurses. Fertility of soil. Visits to Arab communities. Snakes, sharks, wolves and primitive fear. A desert dentist's surgery. Arrival of English mail-steamer.Six thousand bags of letters. Simplicity of present life. Inoculations. Turkish v. Arabic laguage. Moral training: basis of reliability, trustworthiness. Riding. Reading. A visit to an Arab sheik. A privat executioner. Sergeant Perkins.

5. <u>29th Sanitary Section: Ma' Gill Camp</u>. Rank of captain. Appointment as O.C. 29th Sanitary Section. Duties: their wide scope. The country: its space and stillness. A camp night-scene. Variety and significance of the work. Officers' mess. Details of work. The poets. A lady visitor at the Base. From 118 F. to -5 F. Mid-day rest. Dry desert air. Sanitary inspections. Building operations. Own designer, architect, contractor, builder. Motor repairs in the desert. Heat pests. Plans for disinfecting station. Sun-bakes bricks. Anthrax, smallpox infections. Animal pets. Sharks. River-bathing.fatalities. An ox in a pit. The Two Rivers. Heat strokes. Mental control of disease. An Indian holiday. Indian service-cloth. A Ghurka pipe-band. A patient from home. Tent-pegging. A coal-period forest. Scorpions. The Shammal. Staff officers' tabs. No female society. A delousing train. Interest of preventive medicine. Insect-born disease. Distribution of breeding-places. Other diseases. Mesopotamia in fifteen words. Disinfection and preventive experiments. Sharks. A T.-B. case. The Glamour of the East. Reports. The Colonel of the Section. The East and its philosophy. Animal history written in the

sand. Occupants of the ceiling. "Notes from a Medical Officer's Diary in Mesopotamia". An Indian regiment on the march. Plague, cholera, typhus seasons. An M.O.'s house. Mesopotamia held by sanitation. Strength of the powers of the Sanitary officers. An afflicted Arab village. British Tommies. Gifts. Types of Indians. Laguages and dialects. A chain of interpreters. Popular tunes. Ur of the Chaldees. Monotony of Mesopotamia. An experiment in disinfection: a private disinfecting railway train. The ruins of Ur. Chaldean remains. Colonel Fremantle and Parliament. Advice on D.P.H. Armistice night. Offer of a post as M.O. Design for new disinfecting station: capacity 2,000 men and kits daily. Death of his father. Leave of absence. Sails for England. [illegible] Suez.

V.

29th Sanitary Section: Mesopotamian Camp.

18.6.18. Our only excitement lately has been two fires. We managed to burn down a barn used as a church and also one of the bazaars, the latter bordering on our billet, so that at 3 a.m. the O.C. had to get all the papers and money sent away and all was ready for us to abandon the premises. However, the fire stopped next door.

I have just read "The Loom of Youth" by a school-boy of seventeen, a book describing the advantages and drawbacks of the Public School system. It is wonderful work for seventeen years of age, but I think if the young man had played more football and cricket, and read less Byron and Swinburne, he would have made a better man! But then, I fear I have no time for poets; with few exceptions, they are such depressed people. I think there is enough sorrow in the world without writing about unrequited love and other morbidities! Of course, there are "some as don't agree with me". [redacted]!!

LATER. Leslie has just rung me up on the telephone to congratulate me on my first job as Commanding Officer! It appears orders have come through for me to take over the command of a combined British and Indian Sanitary Section. I also become a Captain to-morrow. [redacted] I will tell you more about the work later. It is a heavy and responsible job, but it is only for two months while the proper Commanding Officer goes on leave. It will mean harder work than I have had just yet, but intensely inter-

esting. There are three such officers in the Base and between us we advise and superintend the Medical Officers attached to camps and regiments at the Base.

26. 6. 18. I have just got my first command! A combined British and Indian Sanitary Section. I am responsible to the Medical Officer in command of the Base for all sanitary improvements, new building, etc., in my area. The area is about eight miles from Isolation and lies out in the desert. Every camp has its own Medical Officer who is responsible to me for the sanitation of the camp, etc., and I have forty-two different camps under my charge, in addition to several Arab villages, etc. My work consists largely of inspecting these camps; recommending new cookhouses, wash-houses, slaughter-houses and buildings of every kind connected with camps, designing them and supervising their construction; tracing of the cause of every case of infectious disease within the area; taking every precaution against the spread of infectious disease; taking every measure to protect the units and troops from disease in food, water, flies, etc.; the destruction and prevention of fly-breeding and mosquito-breeding places. It is the most interesting work possible and I will tell you more about it as it proceeds. It is, as you know, only for the period the officer in charge is on leave, but I am very fortunate to have got it. Leslie says I am a very lucky man and it is the first rung of the ladder! It was given me partly because I could speak Hindustanee and Arabic; partly, because of my knowledge of infect-

tious disease, especially plague. It is hard and a big thing to take over suddenly. I am out at 6 a.m. and work steadily till 7 30 p.m., with breaks for meals. I have a Douglas Motor-Cycle and a horse to get about with and my section consists of twenty British - all trained Sanitary Inspectors and about one hundred and twenty Indians. I live now in a little reed, wood and mud bungalow in the centre of the camps and am very comfortable, but it is getting very hot and the dust is a bad business.

It is the work I like, but any way, whether I like it or not it is the work I shall be kept at now that I know something about it!

3. 7. 18. My new work is out "in the blue" - far out from Ashar in the desert, where there are one or two white dusty palms, but otherwise all is infinite dust, dust and sand. Here and there are pools of water of the deepest of deep blues lying in yellow and shimmering white basins of sand, and above is the blue sky, with a sun that is nearly vertical. As one rides over this infinite space, thoughts of you all and of the greatness of Nature crowd in. The only sound is the song of the desert lark - a bird very like our own lark, but larger and with a fine crested head. He sings incessantly, rising and falling far above in the blue. Otherwise all is still and intensely quiet. A group of white donkeys, loaded with melons led by quaint little donkey boys, ambles along with a tinkle of bells, coming in from an oasis twelve miles away - or a caravan from the far unexplored

interior whence no white man has ever returned, swings slowly by ~~the~~ to the rhythmic singing of the Bedouin Arabs, who make a part of it.

PICTURE.

As the sun sinks, the deep shadows creep out far over the desert. For a few moments the sky is golden and the whole earth alive with fire. Then the deep blue sky of the starry night. It is very beautiful, but awesome, especially when you pass a few heaps of bricks, which was once a town, with busy streets, children and happiness and now - scattered ruins, a camel's skeleton and desert sand. As the sun goes down, frogs and lizards appear, and one returns to the camp. It is a cheery sight, lighted by its hurricane lamps and camp fires. Each white tent has its lamp inside, and round each cooking fire is a circle of Indians or Arabs and the flames illumine their faces as with intent eyes they watch their steaming and sizzling food-pot and inhale its delicious savour. When the meal is cooked, everyone sits round a large, open copper dish of rice, peas and stewed meat and helps himself. When all the feeders have licked their hands and faces clean, tom-toms are produced and the most extraordinary raucous voices break the quietude of the desert. Later, all is still and in darkness, save for an isolated lamp and the flicker of the flame of a dying fire on the bayonet of a tall, dark figure in shorts, shirt and turban, whose occasional, "Halt! Who goes there?" assures us of a guarded night. How like a scout camp it is?

The camp fires and the happy, happy Indian troops, who are only children and like boys at play.

I often fear lest you should think the East will exert a claiming influence over me, when you read my accounts of people and things. NEVER! Life here is full of interest and one is incessantly gaining new knowledge that alters one's outlook upon Nature, mankind and religion. The simple life one leads, the direct good that we can see following upon one's work make one happy, but I do not want to stay in the East a day longer than is my duty. Some men are quite happy to settle down in India or Africa to live their lives out in the artificial life of a British Officer in the East. To me, it would be impossible. The open-air life, the touch with Nature, the simplicity are ideal. But I miss the touch of humanity, I miss the children, who are afraid of you here because you are a strange conqueror and they run away from you, crying instinctively. I miss the dogs, my violin. Above all, I miss my home. I am happy as can be, but it is because I am out to help the war and doing work that I love. You can always be assured that home and England are first in my thoughts and my desires and though I shall be very sorry to leave the charm of the East, I look forward to the day of my return to England. Meanwhile I shall learn all I can about life here, make as much as possible of it, then - its home I fain would be.

10. 7. 18. My world has changed from quaint old Arab streets and

houses to the desert and tents. We might be anywhere and no longer in Arabia were it not for an occasional palm-tree. Instead of the old town, with its interests, its swarms of Arabs and Arab children, old bazaar, old-fashioned harbour and boats, the old Arab houses and billets we lived in, we are in a canvas town, rows of white tents, washouses, incinerators. Except for an occasional passer-by, we see no Arabs, only troops, a dark Indian population. Each has its own interests and charms. The settling down of an Indian camp for the night is very fine and the lines of humped bullocks, the dying camp fires, the lights popping out in the tents, the starry sky, the neighing and pawing of the horses and above all the bugle sounding the call that has been played over the grave of so many, the Last Post - and some of these Indian buglers are A.1. Then later another call and afterwards the absolute silence of the desert.

My work is tremendously interesting and I am learning a great deal. You will be surprised at my movements from unit to unit, but this work combines together all the work I have done before. At Isolation I was, in succession, in charge of all the various diseases and learned them all thoroughly. On the ships I learned the practical preventive side and now I ~~can~~ combine ~~live~~ the two: tracing out the cases and finding out the causes. It is all one piece of work. It may be summed up thus: knowledge of an infectious disease; discovery of its cause; prevention of the cause.

You will be disappointed in my letters now. There are no interesting things to describe to you. There is nothing but

heat, sand, tents!

LATER. Leslie sails for India to-morrow. After Bombay, Calcutta, he will go up to the hills in the north India. He goes from a temperature of 116° in the shade here, to green mountains, trees and snow. It will do him no end of good.

I am messing here with three other officers: a Major of an Indian regiment, a Captain of Indian cavalry and a subaltern from a British regiment. It is the first time in my life I have lived amongst a group of people and have been the only doctor. At Epsom, at Barts and at home and all the time in the Army, I have been living with at least one doctor. Here the talk is all of fighting, strategy, history of past fights and privations and we no longer discuss bronchitis or the appearances of plague. I miss the "shop". Medicine is so intensely interesting that if one spent one's whole life talking about it one would be quite happy, especially preventive medicine.

My work is incessant, atarting at 5 a.m. But I get an hour or two's sleep in the afternoon. To-day at 5 p.m., I am going to investigate an outbreak of infectious disease in a camp a mile or two away. After that I am making a house-to-house inspection of an Arab village to see if any infectious disease is being hidden. To-morrow morning at 6 a.m., I am going up the river to arrange for the Sanitation (cook-houses, water, disposal of waste, etc.) of a new camp on an island in the Euphrates. At 9 a.m. I shall be doing office work and at

11 a.m. I am going to examine specimens of barley, cheese and rum, which have been declared unfit for human consumption by the Medical Officers of units and, if necessary, condemn them to destruction. In the evening I shall be inspecting two large camps and also investigating the cause of a case of infectious disease that has cropped up. The day after I shall be following up further cases of a different disease; finding the cause, seeing that all protective and disinfective methods have been taken. This is typical of my life at present.

Infectious diseases are most interesting from an evolutionary point of view; why are some disease infectious and others not; why, when many are exposed to the same infection do some get the disease and others escape and so forth.

I have come across one or two little efforts by Shelley, Leigh Hunt and Robert Southey. I find that there is more in these men than I once thought and that they have reached the same conclusions that scientists have, reached only by a different road. I think inferior poets are always writing about Death and so on, because it is easy to treat of a subject that affects all. The greater men make facts hitherto unnoticed into subjects of wonder.

A lady, a Colonel's wife, has arrived out in Basra from India to have something to do with feeding and getting food, or something. Our official correspondence has, therefore, brightened up, as no woman is a respecter of persons - generals and subalterns are all treated alike! Our correspondence has been enlivened by post-scripts at the end of memos! No Army memo

ever had a post-script before!! Also you get a breezy, intelligent letter instead of the usual cut-and-dried reply. Even such a thing as the form of "number of returned empty Kerosene-oil tins" is enlivened by various explanatory post-scripts and little notes and messages. One was: "P.S. Thanks so much for sending down a cart for these tins." - to a General!!!!! The good lady of the post-scripts and her friend came out to dinner two nights ago. Great excitament! I had not spoken to a woman for a month. Then it had been to a Sister. Before that I don't know when it was. What a life!

22. 7. 18. It is distinctly warm as I write, about 118 in the shade and yet I have just been in a room at 5 below zero! I have been inspecting the refrigerating barges for meat, etc. You step through a trap-door from 118 in the shade to 5 of frost. Your perspiration freezes directly you enter andyou become white. I don't think I ever felt cold so much. As I stepped through the trap-door it was as if an ice-hand gripped me and I was glad to step out from the lines of frozen carcasses into the boiling sun - 123 change in a second!!

There is an order out that no one in the Force is to do any work between 10.30 a.m. and 3 p.m., but it is hard for a North countryman to obey. However, I generally sleep from 2 to 4 p.m., which is the worst part of the day. I hate having to get into pyjamas at 11 a.m. and sleeping till 3 p.m. or 4 p.m. Of course, we are up very early and get in four

hours before breakfast. You know it only feels comfortably, not really hot and the heat brings disease to a standstill, except for a few heat strokes. There is really no proper hardship to be faced here and anyone who says so is exaggerating. We are all very fit and never suffer from bronchitis, colds or rheumatism, as you do in England. An hour or two in this white desert with the sunshine and the cool north wind would drive away all those diseases bred by rain, mist and smoke.

Last night I was out in the desert, choosing a site for an Arab village, which I have to plan and lay out in company with an engineer. This morning I visited and overhauled a fat-recovery scheme, for obtaining waste fat from soapy water and then visited the disinfecting and delousing cntre. My work next took me to a large camp slaughter-house, where I examined the carcasses for tubercle, etc. Then I was at the water chlorination centre with the R.E. in charge of water, and finally finished up by investigating the causes of a small outbreak of cholera in a camp. The day before yesterday, I was busy investigating the different kinds of rice and flour issued to the Indian troops as a series of cases of Beri-beri had occurred. In the evening I dealt with a soda water selling place where they had a case of typhoid fever and after that went to investigate a case of plague in an Arab village. The day before that, I made a house-to-house examination of the whole of the inhabitants of two Arab villages, looking for cholera, plague and small-pox. I found two children running about with small-

pox on them but nothing else

This is my life, searching for cases and preventing the spread of diseases But I also design!!! - slaughter-houses, wash-houses (say for five hundred soldiers), grease-traps, kitchens, etc. How the old days at Bedford Row with Kenneth come back! I never then thought I should have to design a hut or a kitchen. When I recommend a building for a unit and it is sanctioned by the authorities, the message comes back: "If materials are supplied, are you able to carry out the work?" I reply in the affirmative. Then I design my building, and a draughtsman draws it out for me. I indent for my bricks, cement, pipes, etc., and carry on. It is the business. I should like to see Annette at work in one of my kitchens and Mabel in a wash-house. When I come back, we must "develop the land", as father puts it and construct a model wash-house (for, perhaps, six hundred men), and a cook-house (for, say, eight hundred men)!!!

I have only another month here now, much to my regret. I hope I get a similar job, only up the line if possible. There is plenty of sanitary work to be done anywhere in the Army, but I do feel we ought to be under fire, at least once!! However, I shall not decide. That is not the way out here. You are told what to do. And there is no appeal.

To-day, my old motor-bike broke down out in the blue, in the desert. So I had to set to work as I have done so often on the hills about home and tinker away at it. As I worked,

I thought how often I had done it at home and under what different circumstances I was doing it now, and always the same old things that go wrong - plugs, magneto, carburretor. Only at home it does not matter whether you get it going or not, but out in the desert you must. You can't telephone for Earnshaw.

Our friends of the hot weather beset us - scorpions in our huts. Land-crabs, tortoises, lizards and frogs take their walks abroad in the evening. They stand or sit about in little groups, evidently talking about things, just as our little human groups of Indians, British and Chinese do. I found the nest of a tortoise yesterday evening hidden away in the dry mud, with two long, white eggs in it, like sausages. The sun is so hot that in the shallow water of the marshes, hundreds of fish are dying. At mid-day the water is so hot, that if you put a baby in it, it is burnt and cries. I have not personally tried the experiment, but I am told that it is a fact.

PICTURE.

The earliest inhabitants of Mesopotamia waiting for civilisation.

29. 7. 18. This week I had a message to say: "Please submit a plan for a disinfecting station, stating materials required and specification for the different buildings". At first it seemed beyond me, but ~~from~~ what I learned from Kenneth and Redfern stood me in stead and I forwarded a plan and specification to Headquarters. It deals with eight hundred men a day and their kits.

Then two days ago, I designed a cook-house to cook for two hundred Indians, with ration-store and washing-up places and sent in specifications for my materials. To-morrow I commence building operations on kitchens in my own camp to convert the present fires ~~with~~ into oil-fuel consumers, which entails the rebuilding of the whole range. I mean to add a good oven and hot-water apparatus. This concludes my building operations for the week. The rest of the time I have been after the breeding places of mosquitoes and infectious diseases and have inspected one or two camps. By the way, I have started making my own sun-burnt bricks from the mud of the river and chopped straw. I imagine others, years ago, made bricks in the same way on the banks of the Tigris, so I do not claim this as my own invention!!

It is about mid-day and I have had a busy morning. At 6.30 a.m. I was on a board to condemn cheese, fruits, etc., and at 7.15 a.m. went to inspect a drainage scheme, at a large camp of several thousands men. Then a case of cholera had to be investigated and precautions taken. Then breakfast, Then I went to take specimens from two sheep that had possibly died from anthrax, then back to my office, where I have been busy since with every kind of detail regarding food, sanitation and disease.

This afternoon I hear some Bedouins are building a new reed village in my area, and I must try to get them to conform to European standards of sanitation. I must have a look too at their children to see how many are running about with small-pox!

It is quite common to meet children riding in carts with the disease fully upon them. No one worries. It is the will of Allah. After that I shall visit a camp of Turkish prisoners and then to the laboratory to see the result of the investigations upon my dead sheep. Then dinner, a smoke ad bed. This is typical of my days. I fear to bore you with these details, but there is little else to tell you of beyond my work.

Do you remember Langley and Martin, two men I saw a good deal of at Blackpool and who came out here with me? Martin got dysentery on the way out and was only landed in Basra to go to Hospital, where he remained for three months, then was transferred to India, where he is trying to pick up. It is a hard case. He left a large practice and a family during the year he was mayor of his little town to join the R.A.M.C. and has never been able to do a stroke of work out here. Langley is well and is (or was) in a laboratory which he successfully set on fire the other night and burnt to the ground, incidentally nearly burning a hospital down with it at the same time!

Otherwise all is as it was last week. The desert is still limitless.

We have a great collection of pets in this Sanitary Section: a boar hound, a fox-hound, a fox-terrier, an airedale pup, a tame goat (the Indians' pet), a cat, three tame horses, two monkeys, two white rabbits and a tame cow and calf, which

lie on my threshold every night and breathe deeply and heavily as only cows can and disturb me - all on the strength of the section. If we move we shall appear like second Robinson Crusoes. The monkeys are extraordinarily tame and so is the humped Indian cow. One man found a nest of rats and kept one young one as a pet! He said it was to decoy plague rats into traps!! In addition, we have numerous birds - hen, pigeons, bul-buls. Where they all come from no one knows. But the first thing a Tommy does when he enters a camp is to pin up little pictures of home, cigarette cards and pieces of coloured advertisements round his bed-boards and then hunt round for a pet! He then settles down to wait for orders to move on or to stay, with the air of a man who has accomplished a piece of work and is ready for anything. The Indian soldiers too are never content till they get a pet but they go in for such big pets - cows, sheep, lambs, goats or a donkey. Sheep, cows and goats get to know individual men just like dogs and follow them about out in the road and nestle up to them in camp and behave just like dogs. The first time I saw a tall Indian followed by a full grown sheep walking down the road, I was amazed.

We have just had a sad accident here. Two men foolishly bathed in the river, the Euphrates, close to my hut and a shark took off the leg of one at the thigh, so that the remainder had to be amputated, but the man died the same night. The other man was badly mauled on the side of the chest. The river is

full of these beasts now, as the water in the Persian Gulf is too hot for them to stay down there and drives them up into the cooler river. The Indians catch them in the following way: they get a lump of meat on a hook, which they fix to the under surface of a large, empty, sealed kerosene tin. They tie a light rope to the top of the tin, which they throw into the river. The shark bites at the bait, swallows the hook and tries to get away, but the empty tin pulls him up to the surface, and the further he swims trying to pull down the tin the more exhausted he becomes, until finally he gives in and the tin rises permanently to the surface, the shark with it, and, amidst great excitement, he is pulled ashore.

Last night, two large draught bullocks fell into a deep hole, about ten feet deep, and containing water. They were packed as close as sardines. I was entertained by the way they were rescued. The cart, which was loaded with kits, had fallen in on top of them. This was first unloaded and dragged out and then ropes were attached to the bullocks' horns and about twenty or thirty naked, gesticulating Indians took hold of the ropes, whilst another group got hold of the beasts' tails. Then with great shouts and pullings the huge animal was literally lifted out by pulling on its head as a dead weight. I expected its neck to go every minute, but no! it stood the test! The bullock is sacred and I have never seen the Indians work to save anything like they worked for these creatures. They managed to pull both out, and, apparently, none the worse!! Fancy

lifting a bullock ten feet by its head!!! This was at ten o'clock at night and done by lamp light only.

By the way, the junction of the Euphrates and Tigris is in my area. When I see the two joining, I often think of the hundreds of little hands in school in England, drawing that junction. It seems impossible to be gazing at the reality. The deep, dark, green Euphrates with its sharks and terrible disease: Bilharzia, and the yellow, shallow Tigris.

I often wonder at the strength of the sun. A minute or two without a hat is sufficient to kill you and yet it looks and seems only like a very hot day in England. It does not trouble me at all. Yet in the fights out here many, many men die not from wounds but, because when they are hit their helmets roll off, and they cannot replace it, either because they are unable to reach it, or are unconscious.

I continue my researches among the major poets! I wish there were more than twenty-four hours in the day or that, here, you could do anything for more than eight hours! All is of interest and there is so much to learn and read. We are indeed inheritors of a great heritage in literature, science and civilisation.

1. 3. 18. I begin to realise very deeply how a cheerful mind keeps away disease and age. Out here, I see so plainly the effect of the mind over the body. Men come out terrified of the heat, the dysentery etc., and down they go with it at once. Others of us feel we cannot be ill and we remain well. Life is a

glorious thing, but we need the love of others.

I believe I shall be sent on leave, if I care to go to India. A friend of mine here (a major) is keen for me to go with him to the Tiger and Elephant country and shoot there. The Indian Government would pay my fare to any town in India, and I am told the tea-planters are hospitality itself to any men on leave from Mesopotamia. It would mean living out in the jungle with a couple of tents and shooting the food we eat. He says it is wonderful beyond words - tigers, wild elephants, panthers, peacocks, monkeys, every kind of gazelle and buck and every sort of animal and all the natural history of the wild jungle of Mysore. There would be one month in India and a week's sea trip each way to Bombay and back. I should revel in it - tracking big game and seeing their native haunts. I adore Nature untouched - hundreds of miles of virgin jungle with its strange life, its huge tigers and elephants and the small insects. This Major friend knows many planters and he can get as much shooting as we want of every kind. You leave all civilisation behind you and move on from place to place in the jungle. I feel very drawn to it. I have not had a day off since I came out. Sundays are just like other days, and I some how feel it is a pity to refuse to go, as the chance will never occur again, but while I am so anxious about many things, I shall not push the matter. I keep in mind your kind urging of me to go to India, but I feel so well that, somehow, leave seems unnecessary!

4. 8. 18. I have had to suspend Turkish temporarily, for particular reasons and am now working in my spare time at what is supposed to be the most beautiful language in the East - Persian It is a second Arabic, but quite different, though a few words are in common. These languages interest me, I think the means of holding converse that have been evolved through the ages is bound to interest intensely any evolutionist.

I got a new uniform the other day - tunic and cord breeches in Indian service cloth, a ripping grey-green drill which you never see in England. English khaki is only seen here among new comers and British officers. We all wear shorts, shirts and tunics of a very light grey-green khaki. As we are paid by India, we are entitled to wear Indian service cloth.

The other night I was asked to dinner with a neighbouring unit and just as we sat down out in the open amongst palms under the full moon, hurricane-lamps suspended on posts round the table, casting shadows, I heard three big beats, three paces on the side drums and then - "Hey, Johnnie Cope are you waking yet?" on the pipes. A Gurrka pipe-band had been lent for the occasion: all little short Gurrkas, no Britisher among them, with pipes from London and Glasgow. The pipe-major, who walked with the swing of Scots Guard piper, could not speak a word of English, nor could any of his band! The pipers are bullock drivers for the Transport, who have clubbed together and made a first-class band, eight pipers with big drum and side drums. They wear helmets, shorts, shirts and puttees in

khaki drill and are devoted to their instruments and full of pride in the band. We had "Bonnie Charlie's noo awa'", "Bonnets of Bonnie Dundee", "O, gin I were", "Lass of Gowrie", and others. Where they learned I know not. Officially bullock drivers, unofficially they have been in contact with some pipers, or perhaps been in regiments with pipe-bands. They swing along, full of life and energy and the time is perfect. They would have played all night. They are just like boys. They are happy and full of fun. They are fine with a kukri. I saw one cut off a sheep's head in a flash, no effort.

I was inspecting eight hundred Arabs for small-pox the other night with a sergeant standing by. Suddenly he said, "Good evening, doctor." He was a patient from Springdale Street. It was good to hear Yorkshire again "as it is spoke". As you would expect, Captain and Sergeant vanished, and we were doctor and patient once more. These new Army Yorkshiremen will not learn discipline, and difference in rank which is our be-all and end-all in the Army does not exist for them. After a long talk, instead of the sharp "Good-night, sir", my friend said, "Well, I'm right glad to have seen you doctor and heard how your father was. He was a grand doctor, and my wife thinks the world of 'im; he and she had some tough dos together." So father's praises, tell him, are sung even as far as the banks of the Euphrates, amongst the palms, in the hot sunshine, with Arabs standing around.

I am going to have a shot at tent-pegging this week, on the desert. I have secured a lance and have a nice, fast horse, quite a good beast. It is ripping to watch Indian cavalry practising tent-pegging, in khaki uniform, turbans, steel chains and shoulder pads, galloping at full speed, leaning right over on one side, to see the flash and swing round of the lance as they take the peg. Nearly all the Indian cavalry supply their own harness, uniforms and horses, each individual his own outfit, a survival of feudal days when each district sent so many fully armed and equipped horsemen.

7. 8. 18. I am still busy here, but I shall finish in about a fortnight and then I do not know what I shall be sent to. The man I am working for will then return from leave. I hope I am kept at infectious disease and its prevention.

The summer is not too bad this year. There are bad days, but speaking generally the temperatures are much lower than last year. I long for the cold weather, even the fogs and rains of London! The heat exhausts one and makes one feel slack and stupid and I have the enforced idleness in the middle of the day. However, one more month and we shall be cooling down at nights! Sandflies are not worrying us so much this year and altogether we are very fit and well, and have no hardships of any kind to put with.

I am at present busy reading a good book on a journey through the Hudson Bay country by two Englishmen. In the heat, here, it is pleasant to read about snow-shoes, ice and skating.

How primitive these palm jungles are! The palms themselves, the primitive palm flowers, the entire absence of all undergrowth, the low type of insects which never reach to moths or butterflies. The palms are a forest of straight pillars, separated by stretches of fine sand or lagoons, swarming with low reptilian life. It is simply a living coal period forest. As one watches the sun rise through a group of palm trees and sees the myriads of small flying creatures that materialise out of the lagoons, one feels one is being granted a revelation of the dawn of the world, permitted a view of the product of millions of years of evolution. If one simply turns one's back on it, one sees a busy camp, with sanitation, buildings, motors and wireless station - the evolution of another million years. And one wonders what a few more millions of years will take us to, when our present civilisation will be regarded as a primitive thing. But it gives one confidence to go ahead when we know we are evolving to something as incomprehensibly greater and nobler than our present selves as moths and butterflies are than the jungle insects. There is too, another as-pect of the picture. When you wander, alone, through a palm jungle at night, especially if there is a moon, the never ending vista of straight tall stems, bare of undergrowth, meeting over head in a dome of pal fronds, you receive the impression of a huge cathdral with endless Norman arches. Durham cathedral always comes to my mind. I wonder if the Norman decoration was based upon pine

or palm stem markings. The hatchet-work on Norman pillars is so like them.

The sea originally reached beyond Baghdad, and the whole of Mesopotamia is old sea bed of fine, fine dust, hundreds of miles of it. Forty miles out from here is a small hill where we are quarrying for stone - the only stone for a hundred miles. It is a perfect specimen of an outcrop of volcanic rock and must at one time have boiled up and burst under the sea. For miles and miles it is visible rising up from the flat surrounding desert.

I had to break off here to kill a scorpion that I observed scurrying across the floor of my bedroom! They are nasty beasts. This is the third I have killed in my bedroom in three days. I call it a bedroom, but "sleeping-quarters" would more accurately describe it.

15. 8. 18. The cold wind from the northern desert has started to blow quite suddenly and now the intense heat is over. We wait for this wind, known as the Shammal, through the dead stillness of summer and now it comes in gales, blowing up clouds of dust, dust everywhere, making your eyes ache and smart, making everything white and shutting out all view with a thick fog of dust. This wind will blow off and on until the rains start in November, and we wonder whether the heat or the dust is the worst! Which-ever we have, we long for the other!

You will be amused to hear I am now a Staff Officer and wear the usual tabs on my tunic and round my hat. This is

because I am on the staff of the Area Commandant and to-day I received orders to wear tabs, so these things adorn my tunic instead of my R.A.M.C. badges. I wear red and blue as Sanitary Advisor.

The absolute lack of female society out here is extraordinary. We see Sisters from hospitals occasionally, but not to speak to. Otherwise women and children are washed out from our lives. As you will know, I miss the latter much more than the former!

21. 8. 18. The man whose work I am doing has come back from leave with appendicitis, so I suppose I shall be carrying on here for some months at any rate.

You will be amused to know that I have a railway train, complete with engine of my own. Amongst my other work is that of delousing coolies for Typhus and Relapsing Fever and the train is for this purpose. It consists of two coaches into which steam is pumped from the engine. The clothing is put into three carriages and disinfected by the steam. I can move my train from place to place so as to call on any of my family of coolies who require its attention.

I am finding preventive medicine most trhillingly interesting. I am responsible for a population, more than half that of Huddersfield. I have six doctors working under me in the areas. If you knew the amount of disease prevalent in this neighbourhood, you would realise the amount of preventive work that can be done. Most of the tropical diseases can be pre-

vented by proper methods and the reduction of disease in this country by sanitation is wonderful. When one watches the steady fall in disease incidence and in the death rate through preventive medicine, it seems to me to indicate that the acme of medicine is to prevent rather than to cure. I feel this is where doctors save lives, in the greatest number; surgery saves a small number of lives; medicine a large number, but if by preventive medicine you reduce the death rate by two per thousand in a town the size of Huddersfield you save two hundred lives in one year. Preventive medicine combines the interest of pure medicine with the practical side of life saving. Your chemical medicine, bacteriology, pathology become living helps to you in your work and not, as if often the case, facts you know, information you possess, which you cannot in any way apply directly as aids to treatment. One gets plenty of opportunity here for the study of the cause and spread of epidemics. Six cases of malaria (first attack) were reported to me this week from a hospital, all in the same camp. I sent out parties of British and Indians with nets to search all the creeks and pools and waterways around the camp. This morning, they report they have found the malaria mosquito breeding in three places close to this camp. These breeding places will be destroyed and the malaria in the camp will stop. A small epidemic of a bowel parasite (anchylostomiasis) was reported this week, twenty-two cases from one camp. The cause and the breeding place of the insects were found by me and the cases will stop. A case of cholera occurs. We search for the

cause and remove it. Similarly with plague, dysentery, small-pox, cerebro-spinal fever and other infectious diseases.

I am having a veritable revel in my professional work. It is ripping to be on a job, where exact knowledge counts and is essential. <u>This is</u> medicine.

Nor are we occupied only with tropical diseases, by any means. Tuberculosis, diptheria, anaemia, general sickness incidence, all concern us. Our object is to keep our population healthy and to reduce our death rate, which is already extraordinarily low for the tropics. Anything that affects the health of troops or Army followers affects us and we treat with it.

I was sorry to hear about the case of nasal haemorrhage, but I know the nose is a perfect safety-valve for the head. I often feel the old method of "bleeding" was a most excellent treatment for these cases and know it often helped patients greatly. Apart from this, haemorrhage from the nose is the next best thing. There is never any need for anxiety about such haemorrhages. They stop directly the blood pressure falls to a safe height and are Nature's cure for blood pressure.

11. 9. 18. at 6 a.m. It is cold, clear, bright sunlight and is like a perfect spring day in the home land. In an hour or two it will be Mesopotamia again, hot and dusty.

I hear a Tommy wrote home the other day describing Mesopotamia to his wife as "miles and miles and miles and miles of damn-all with a river running through it"!!. A fairly accurate

description! Tommy has no romance. He thinks neither of the land's past or future, but just what he actually sees in it, in the present: clouds of dust, hot sun and miles and miles of it.

This week I have been working chiefly at malaria and have found sixteen breeding places of the worst malaria mosquito, which were dealt with. Patches of my area are marshy with weeds and reeds in amongst palm trees and these are the places for malignant malaria. We are steadily reducing these areas by oiling, filling in with earth, draining, clearing weeds, etc., and it is most interesting to see the gradual fall of malaria incidence amongst the troops.

This morning at 9 a.m. I am doing a series of disinfecting experiments with a train, which is to be sent all over the country, if successful. We have two large metal vans connected with the locomotive by copper pipes into which steam can be turned at a pressure of 20 lbs to the square inch. We test the efficacy by potatoes, eggs, lice, nits, bacilli, etc., wrapped up in two, four, six and ~~the~~ ten layers of blankets. If the potatoes are boiled, the eggs hard-boiled, and the lice and nits and dysentery bacilli killed in ten layers of blankets we consider the disinfection effective.

You will be interested to hear that a design of mine has been accepted by Base Headquarters and both plans and the actual thing has been sent to the Front and are being supplied to the Divisions there. It is an unromantic subject: a design for a portable latrine to be carried on a bullock cart!

These pieces of work with two reports on two small epidemics that occurred in the area, and the usual routine work of examination into the cause of particular cases of infectious disease have constituted my work for the past few days. Of course, we are always at malaria. Like the poor, it is always with us, but this week has been a specially successful one in our searches.

We had another shark tragedy this week. A man fell into the river and before he could be got out, his leg at the thigh and his arm just below the shoulder were bitten off. He died of course. These sharks are terrible creatures: six feet long, perhaps; with enormous mouths and rows of saw-like teeth. This week, too, an officer from the Mess, who had not been feeling well and had had a cough for some time, went to hospital on my advice and was found to have tubercle of the lung, bowels and kidney and is to be discharged from the Army. It is a particularly pathetic case, as he lives in a very lonely part of South Africa. He fought all the way up from Basra to Baghdad with the Indian cavalry in the early, terrible days of this campaign. He was a particularly nice man and a keen soldier and our small mess - there are only four of us - feels his loss. He had just become engaged to a girl in England. The engagement has had to be cancelled and he goes back to his lonely cabin in Zululand.

I shall be glad to leave the East. Its claims are tremendous, but the intense heat and constant service make one

slack and unlike one's own self. I want some cold, energising moorland winds. In the morning, when it is cold, one feels absolutely fit and well then at midday one becomes slack and drowsy and sleeps till 5 p'm. One only has the early morning and evening. I like a country where you can be at work or play all day, from getting up to going to bed. I have no time to sit about in a stupified state, puffing at cigarettes, as is the way of living in the East. But for colour, charm and mystery, it is wonderful and thrilling, and gives one furiously to think. In temperatment, ideals, outlook, everything , these Easterners might be people from another planet. ~~I often wonder how much Uncle George of Crimean fame and grandfather are influencing us. I think grandfather would, perhaps, be with a sanitary section or in a laboratory. I can picture him hunting for mosquitoes, learning Arabic and doing new things for the prevention of disease. How he would have revelled out here~~!

24. 9. 18. I have had a hard week of work. I have been busy with reports of the work done against malaria during the last three months; on the cause and prevention of typhoid in my area; on two outbreaks of food poisoning (bacteriology, etc.); on experiments with disinfectors; on modifications in the chlorination of the water-supply; on work in connection with the destruction of typhus bearing lice with boiling water: six reports. I am now busy with a seventh: a full report on the duties that would and should be undertaken by a sanitary sec-

tion: thirteen headings!

The work is incessant, but enthralling. This really is medicine, and I long to do it at home. The colonel who is in charge of the sanitation of a very large section of the Force and under whom I work is going home shortly to enter Parliament and will become a Minister in the new Health Ministry. He has offered me work at home as inspector under the Local Government Board directly I hold a D.P.H. He said, "When you finish here come to see me in London and I will get you whatever you want in Public Health or children's work." He is most keen that I should stay at Public Health work with him under the Government at home. He said, "You are a born sanitarian and would lower the death-rate of any town. We must not let you leave preventive medicine. Whatever you want when you come back to England I will see you get. Any authorities will be very glad to have you, especially when they hear what I have to say about your work." I tell you this not, as you know, in boastfulness, but to let you know there is a living to be made in Preventive Medicine.

Out here, the tendency is for one to become a philosopher. Money and time, which are of such moment in England, cease to exist as things of import. One feels the world is so marvellous that a small income with plenty of opportunity to read and to observe the life around is the greatest desideratum. One learns that it is not money that can give you life. One must have food and shelter, but beyond these, the greatest

pleasures are the simplest. Around one everywhere is the immensity and quietude of Nature and God. To me, to feel one has been so busy all one's life that one is unable to learn all there is around one to learn is far worse than poverty. I was away out in the desert: white sand for miles and a fine, cloudy sunset. On the sand were scattered tufts of vivid green and bright yellow camel-thorn and the shadows were long and blue. Not a thing was in sight, but on the sand were the tracks of all kinds of living creatures. The history of a little world of Nature was written there, like writing on a slate.

PICTURE.

Mrs. Mongoose had been out walking with her young family frolicking about her. Mr. Jackall's tracks showed he had been investigating Mrs. Mongoose's movements. Nearby there had been a congress of lizards, whilst Mr. Geroba (a kind of small desert kangaroo) had been leaping in great bounds over all. There were the little traps of the Ant- King, with the owner sitting at the bottom, waiting for whatever fell to him, while a neighbour of his was busily repairing his damaged trap. Everywhere desert larks and sand grouse had been padding about. A whole world, but it was in hiding from us. How I should love to lie out one night unseen, and watch them live their little lives.

As I write in my little mud room, Mr. Rat is sitting up behind my boots and watching me.

PICTURE.

How I love these wild creatures! Though as Plague Officer I ought to catch and kill him, I never trouble to, nor a little mouse who watched me shave to-day from behind my wash-bowl. The roofs of our huts are made of mud supported on reeds and under this again is a layer of grass matting, forming the ceiling. In the space between the two is a home of a menagerie. Occasionally these ceiling mats give way and deposit the dirt of centuries and all their other contents upon your bed or dinner table!! Centipedes, scorpions, Mrs. Snake and family, rats and mice all share their happy homes and are, when the matting gives way, deposited upon you beneath. You do not worry, but kill the snakes, scorpions and centipedes, clean up and have a new ceiling cloth put up! I notice mine is bulging in several places and I can hear incessant hurrying and scampering of little feet, so I gather Mrs. Rat has recently been confined. Probably it is the happy father who is watching me from behind the boots. I hope the weight of its contents does not prove too much for the ceiling mat. I often wish the inhabitants would move more gently as not only do they risk breaking the mat, but they also disturb the boarder sleeping below (that's me!). A boarder you are, as you have to share your house with the older inhabitants. No man is the sole occupant of a house in Mesopotamie! You have many companions!!

Yes - I wish you would compile a book about Mesopotamia. Such a book would be of interest to people who had sons out here; "Notes from a Medical Officer's Diary in Mesopotamia"!!!

1. 10. 18. My latest acquisition is a little desert gazelle about as large as Scamp, who wandered into camp one night. She is light brown, white underneath, a most beautiful creature as she lies in the bright sunlight, with the desert all around her and the blue sky beyond. She is full of curiosity, most affectionate and getting very tame. I have constructed a mud house to protect her from jackals and wild dogs at night.

This morning was a fine cold morning, and I wakened with the sound of pipes and drums ringing in my ears - "My Native Highland Home". I opened the door of my little mud hut and peered out to see a crack Indian regiment in scarlet turbans, khaki shirts and shorts swinging down the white, dusty road. Pipes appeal strongly to the Indians, and the great majority of Indian bands out here are pipe bands. They put some life into the tunes too. If Scott could but hear his Jacobite tunes under these conditions!

We are just starting the plague, cholera and typhus seasons, so shall be very busy for six months, and we are getting our old friend influenza out here, but rather a bad type, and it is a serious illness always. I have escaped.

I shall be sorry to leave the East. There is no doubt of its fascination, but it is not an exhilarating fascination, rather that of a prolonged contented lethargy. All is bright, happy, contented, beautiful, but there is no energetic movement, no vigour in life. One could soon become slack and, after twenty years of it, utterly unmanned. The constant heat, the number of servants and assistants begin to have their effect

in about ten years. But there is a fascination, a mystery, a romance, that cannot be found in the West. Death here is not such and end-all. The relation between the spiritual and the material are altogether different here from in England. I long for our cold moorland airs, but the thing I shall regret leaving is my work. Still the fortunes of life may determine I do Preventive Medicine at home. God knows, there is enough to do with children in Huddersfield alone. After the war, baby clinics, school clinics, tuberculosis work and all preventive medicine will receive a tremendous impetus: the state of housing, food supply, sanitation in the slums, etc., is appalling in a country that will have triumphed over the world. Look at Victoria Street and Castlegate, I have seen no poverty, mental, moral and physical degeneracy out here comparable to what I have seen in my own town at home. Once Parliament gives more power to Medical Officers of Health, Education progresses and transport to country districts becomes cheapened, what a difference will be seen!

~~I feel I inherit my love of this work from you. Your work at school; with the R.S.P.C.C.; the baby work, the crêche and day nursery are pure Public Health Work.~~

9. 10. 18. I am sitting writing in my little grey home, about ten feet square, a brick floor, matting and mud walls and a matting roof. My furniture is a table, a wooden chair, my camp bed, a cupboard for my clothes and one or two boxes. On the

walls hang my haversack, water-bottle, belt, spurs, revolver; my tin-box, valise and kit-bag complete the decorations. That is all. I like a simple, plain, clean room and a simple life.

I am reading a book by Cornish on "Wild Life at the Zoo", an interesting study in the pleasures of animals in different kinds of sound, scent, etc. Here, my animals are mosquitoes, which beset me.

By the way, I have been advised my a very Senior Officer here to write a book on my work with a Sanitary Section in Mesopotamia and to set to to collect photographs illustrating it and the conditions under which infectious diseases are tackled. If I had time I should be very glad to record the ficulties we encounter and how we combat them. He told hat if ever I did Health Work at home such a book would f great interest. Certainly! Here the Army lives in tation. By Sanitation I mean the prevention of infectious ase, including malaria. We could not hold the place if it not for the incessant work of the R.A.M.C. It would be econd West African coast. In consequence, we four Sanitary Officers are given very strong powers - really enormously strong powers of permission and refusal. It is a great responsibility. Our recommendation go direct to the General in command here, each week and he issues them in orders through his staff. It is 1.30 a.m. and all is very quiet. I must go to bed.

Next Day: Midnight. Here I am again, writing late! My days are full

but what a pleasure! I have not had a day off yet for fourteen months!

I am busy making a collection of photographs illustrating the work of a Sanitary Section in Mesopotamia - the sites of plague and cholera; huts; communities of people; villages affected, which should be of great interest professionally. I am also collecting specimens of types of soil to show the characters of saltness, absorption power, etc.

I have just come in from visiting an afflicted Arab village. I got a pathetic message from the headman that disease had broken out and making an appeal for help. Furnished with bottles and a measure, I went down to an outlying village and found things in a bad way. Four deaths the previous night had rather frightened the people. I was met by the headman and a small boy, who was deputed to carry the bottle of medicine and the measure and was very proud of his job.

The Arab villages are collections of mud-walled huts with matting roofs, and are built in the form of a square. In the square is a fire, with, generally, a coffee pot on it and round it men, women and children are sitting. The rest of the square is occupied by goats, sheep, horses and buffaloes, who wander about indiscriminately among the inhabitants. In the square, too, are large heaps of straw, manure, palm leaves, etc., etc., very picturesque, but very insanitary and a paradise for my old enemy, the plague rat! We went from house to house visiting

the sick and ministering to them by means of the small boy with the bottle, who delighted to pour out the doses and to watch the effect the bitter quinine produced upon the patient. It was a weird round of visits, but medicine is medicine all the world over. It helps the sick if they see a doctor. Unfortunately, with so many of these diseases we can do little. But we can and we do <u>prevent</u> them. The Arab villages are difficult propositions of the cholera and the plague problems. They swarm with rats and have the most primitive drinking water supplies and sanitary arrangements.

23. 10. 18. I must tell you two remarks from the men. I was photographing some Chinamen near a hut and when I had finished a Tommy said, "There's a nice little picture for you, Sir," pointing to another Tommy leaning against a tent. I said, "I am only photographing different types and races of men and I have one of the British." He replied in Yorkshire, "Well, I shall be a funny type if I stay out in this b----y country much longer"!! On the other occasion I was discussing America's Army with a man. He said, "I hear there are four divisions of Americans in France." I said, "Yes, and, of course, the Americans have very large divisions, twice as large as ours." He responded, "Well, Sir, they should 'ave big divisions. They've been long enough about getting 'em."! No smile on his face.

It is bitterly cold, now at nights. Last night it got down to 65° F. Awful! Nearly as cold as an average room

in England! Even now, in the middle of the day, it is quite cool at 85° in the shade. So we measure warmth out here! I love the cold, though, and shall be keen enough to face a snow-storm on West Nab. The East has not yet made me "nesh".

This week I received a very handsome gift from the Red Cross: a package of twenty pairs of sheets from the British Ladies, Kobe, Japan, twenty pairs of pyjamas and twenty shirts from the Shanghai British Ladies' Association, and a parcel of books, magazines, two cricket balls, a bat, a football, cards, draughts and chessmen from a civilian. The letter, evidently that of an old man, accompanying it wished good to whoever received his parcel of books, some of which he said were "home-made". I have written to him on behalf of the men, enclosing a few photographs of the men and describing them and their work. He is "John Edwards, Heswall, near Chester". I can picture him collecting the books, packing them, carefully writing his letter - slow, deliberate though tremulous writing, ~~[illegible]~~'s - his kind wishes and thoughts, his pleasure when the package was despatched: a deliberate, kindly piece of work and, somehow, I feel emanating from a kindly soul I thought he would be interested in hearing who got his parcel and what was their particular job. So I told him we were out to detect and prevent diseases like plague, cholera, malaria, etc., and the pictures showed him the recipients themselves and some of my Indians.

The Indians in the section come from all parts of India: huge Rajputs with bushy, black beards and strong kindly faces from the Rajputana desert; little Gurrkas, fine soldiers, good police and sanitarians from Nepal; Sikhs, tall and bearded with very large turbans from the north of India; Pathans from Kabul and the Khyber Pass; Bengalees from Calcutta; black Madrasees from Madras and Palamcotta; twenty Persians from the Persian Hills; Arabs from the Euphrates. These, with my twenty British Tommies, most of whom have been Sanitary Inspectors at home, together with our animal pets, enumerated elsewhere - monkeys, goats, sheep, dogs, horses, pigeons, gazelle, etc., all live in one camp and this weird group gathered together from all over the earth composes the 29th Sanitary Section of the Basra Base Isolation Hospital and with it, we carry on.

The number of languages and dialects spoken in my camp - not counting the monkeys, dogs, cows, gazelle, etc., all of whom have a language of their own - must be over twenty, amongst out hundred and twenty men - a veritable Babel. Fortunately, we some of us know three languages, and as these three languages vary we can hold intercourse when necessary with any of our brethren, though, generally, we need two interpreters. The Madrasee makes his remark in Tamil to a man who knows Tamil and Teligoo. Then this man says it in Teligoo to a man who knows Teligoo and Hindustanee. Then we employ a man who knows Hindustanee and English and we now get the purport of our friend's original remark! When you have to hold

long conversations to hear grievances or to investigate cases in order to mete out justice, the amount of jabbering and interpreting is appalling. You say, "Ask him why he was not here last night." Jabber, jabber goes the Hindustanee; to be changed by the next interpreter into Teligoo; and then by the next into Tamil. The man replies, and back comes his answer through Tamil, Teligoo, Hindustanee into English! How you would enjoy the fun! Part of the charm lies in the variety of the character of the languages. The stolid, deliberate English is enriched with gesticulations as it passes into strong, hard Hindustanee and issues as a series of long and short coughs in the almost uninflected Teligoo to glide with soft and lazy speech in Tamil. Each language represents the character of the millions who speak it: hard and strong in the cold climates of England and northern India; gentle and soft in the enervating heat of the south. Sometimes we travel northward in tongues. An Indian from north India wishes to speak to a Turk. Suppose his own language is Gurrkalee. He needs a man who knows Gurrkalee and Hindustanee; next a man who knows Hindustanee and English; then one knowing English and Arabic; then one knowing Arabic and Turkish. If he is fortunate, he may be able to find a man who knows, say, English and Turkish and so can cut out one language, but these short cuts are rare and generally, we labour through a chain of interpreters. For instance, an Indian accuses a Turk of a crime. When I act as one of the

chain, which is pretty often, I can take it direct from Hindustanee in Arabic and so avoid ever putting it into English. It is great sport!

We have a very happy little Mess, four of us, and the arrival of a gramophone is the "business". You will be pleased to hear that at breakfast, this morning, we agreed, we preferred to hear a good tune like Pack Up Your Troubles In An Old Kit-Bag played on the merry-go-rounds by little steam trumpets, with little brass men striking bells spasmodically to listening to a concert in Queen's Hall. Also we enjoy a copy of Comic Cuts much more than the Literary Review. So you see what my tastes are in Music and Literature!! I may add that although I was the supporters of the steam trumpet music, I was not the originator of the motion - that was passed - condemning Queen's Hall and extolling the Merry-Go-Round!!! The dreadful thing is that I fear it is true! Drums, pipes, bugles, steam trumpets, gramophones have a stronger appeal than their softer and more refined musical relatives the organ, the cello, the violin. It is really pitiable, but there it is!

29. 10. 18. Five days ago, the order came through, appointing me definitely to the command of my Unit, the appointment to date from 29th June, 1918. So I suppose I shall be here some little time. This work is mine, and is an unique experience in infectious disease work. I have applied several times to be sent up the line, but have been answered that when I am re-

quired I shall be informed! Unfortunately you have to go where you are sent, not where you want to go!! I enclose photographs of my camp. You will think all photographs of Mesopotamia are alike. They are. Mesopotamia is just palms, desert and a river. For miles beyond Baghdad there is nothing else and your first view of the country is the only one you ever see, however long you stay and wherever you travel. For utter monotony of scene and life, Mesopotamia would be hard to beat. The people, Arab towns and colour constitute its chief charm. Otherwise it feels very like a coalfield before it becomes fossilized.

Here are, also, the two tail feathers of a sand grouse, which I shot twenty miles away out in the Arabian desert - for a little variety in our Mess. The feathers cross like a pair of scissors. They are like the feathers of a black grouse that pipers wear in their bonnets.

I should like to send Miss Millar a present: I could send her sand, or a palm frond or a little choleraic river water. I caught a scorpion in my bed the other night and thought of having it made into a ring for her. I have also a good line in plague fleas and sandflies in assorted sizes, also a large stock of secondhand mosquitoes. But none of these appears suitable, and I have nothing else!

8. 10. 18. 6. 30 p.m.

Orders have just come through for me to see the A.D.M.S. and he has asked me to go to a place one hundred and thirty

miles away to make some experiments in connexion with the prevention of Typhus and Relapsing Fever. The name of the place I am going to is UR, close to Ur of the Chaldees. When I remember Ur of the Chaldees and Nippur, my old schoolroom days crowd on me again. I believe there are some fine ruins there, especially of an early Sumerian temple. I shall be away about six days, away out in the trackless desert, then back here again. Isn't it wonderful seeing these places? I rang up Leslie to-day and said, "I am off to Ur to-morrow." He said, "Not Ur of the Chaldees that John read about in church?"!! "Yes,"! I called back. There are still bitumen wells there, and the bitumen is used, as it has been ever since early Sumerian days, as the only covering for river boats and canoes. I will tell you all about it next mail.

I enclose four photographs: No. 1 is the headman of the village I visited in connexion with an outbreak of smallpox; the small boy is his son, the same who carried my drugs on that occasion and with them is the Arab guide. No. 2 is a scene in a village bazaar in my area. No. 3 is a group outside a typical Mesopotamian hut, built of woven reeds and swarming with rats!! No . 4 is a road watering-cart used for keeping down the dust to lessen the dysentery incidence. The rate of movement of this apparatus is unthinkable, I could not have believed it possible for anything to travel so slowly.

7. 11. 18. I am just back from Ur of the Chaldees. I took up a train for an experiment in disinfection on a large scale. The principle is to use the steam from a locomotive at a pressure of a hundred and twenty pounds to the square inch as a disinfecting agent. I had already tested its efficiency on lice and the bacilli of certain diseases. As a consequence of my report in these, I was instructed to take the train out to Ur and to disinfect a large camp there and to report on its efficiency with regard to numbers treated; shrinkage of different types of material and garments; maintenance of steam-pressure, etc. The clothing, kits and blankets are stacked into two large closed vans and the steam passes from the engine through them while their owners are being bathed in a mixture of cresol and paraffin. An engine and two railway vans were passed over to me and I had to convert these into a complete disinfecting and bathing train that could disinfect one thousand men, their kits and two thousand blankets in six hours. I took my own British and Indian staff and had the pleasure of going to the station and <u>ordering</u> my train! It is not often that one orders a train, is it? I had coaches attached for the men, waggons for the baths and a sleeping saloon, in which I lived, fed and slept, for myself. We left here at 10 p.m., slept and when we awoke in the early morning, were racing over the Arabian desert - sand and camel-thorn, with at intervals a large herd of camels grazing under the eye of their Bedouin owners. After hours

of this kind of travel, we reached our destination - a large camp in the open desert, on the first day I disinfected 1063 men, their kits and blankets. I was away for five days, and after the first day, the work was finished very early. I got good shooting, any number of sand grouse. What interested me most was my visit to the ruins, which were about a mile away from the camp. The Ziggurat, the Tower of the of the Temple of the Moon God, still stands on its three tiers of red and white bricks, and from its summit you get a fine view of the ruins. The walls might only have been built a few days ago; They are still complete, every brick intact in its place, set in bitumen. Scattered everywhere about are cuneiform bricks covered with writing, precisely like the writing about which you used to tell us, also large lumps of bitumen. I dug about and found any number of pieces of pots and vases of the typical Chaldean shape. It is really wonderful. It seems quite untouched, as if the inhabitants had only just left it. I only wish I knew more about it.

I also visited a pretty little Arab town on the Euphrates, where the river is crossed by a bridge carried over a long line of boats. The Euphrates is a deep blue and the bridge is grey and Arabs, robed in white and bright colours, bearing water jars, cross and recross it, accompanied by their goats and oxen. The little town of square white houses is set amongst the richest of pomegranate trees and fruit gardens and encircled by palms. It is so beautiful.

It was a delightful trip and made a break in the routine of my work.

Colonel Fremantle, who is in charge of the whole of the Base Sector is leaving to-morrow for England to stand for Parliament at the forthcoming election. He is a temporary officer and in civilian life, Medical Officer of Health to the Hertfordshire County Council, and a brother of Admiral Fremantle. He had very high ideas of the future of the profession, and especially of the all-importance of preventive medicine. I hope he gets into Parliament, as he will, I know, work for the broad benefit of humanity.

My chief is anxious for me to take the D.P.H. when I come home and tells me that my work here would count as time put in in the place of lectures, so that I should be eligible to sit

for the D.P.H. at any time. On his instructions I have written a summary of the work I have done and made two copies of it for him to sign. One I am to retain, and the other is to be sent to England. So I am enclosing one copy for you to take care of, together with my certificate for Arabic.

19. 11. 18. As I described in my last letter (missing) we had a good time on Armistice Night, but generally speaking it was quiet and I think the feeling amongst both officers and men was more of the deepest thankfulness than of wild rejoicing. As one officer put it, more people said prayers that night than got drunk and many of these had not said prayers for years. We do indeed have the deepest cause for thankfulness that the War is over. The whole of one's feelings at present are thankfulness for Victory, for Peace. All else seems to matter very little. These thoughts run incessantly through one's mind and return again and again. Our duty is done, and I am ready to return home as soon as I am released. I have had an official offer of £1200 a year to stay out here for five years to do Preventive work for one of the large towns here. By Jove! It would take more than £1200 a year to keep me away from you all and from England for five years! In fact there is no sum would keep me from England. There are, of course, things I shall be very sorry to leave, but the chief one - the work I have been doing - I hope to get eventually in England. My time out here has been an unceasing professional revel. Perhaps I can do the same work at home. My heart

and soul are in Preventive Medicine and Public Health. Out here, Medicine has been a new joy. During five years of hard practice, patching people up, nine-tenths of whom ought never to have needed it, one began to forget research and progress, and Medicine had not its full meaning, but here I have had opportunities to follow up diseases, to read and understand the vast possibilities of organised medicine. The potential results of preventive work are enormous. We must prevent weeds growing up into sickly men and women. We must detect early tuberculosis, early anaemia, early rickets, early heart disease. Drinking medicine is good only when the disease has been established. Let us devote limitless energy to the prevention of disease - either mental or physical - becoming established. If my life leads to my taking up this work, I should take my D.P.H. in four months, as my work out here counts for three-quarters of the time, and I could take my D.T.M. (Diploma in Tropical Medicine) at the same time.

I am very busy at present arranging for the prevention of Typhus and Relapsing Fever, which will be with us for a month or two. I think I have prepared a hot reception for them! I am busy designing a large, new disinfecting station which is to disinfect and bathe two thousand men daily! I have to design the building, draw everything, down to electric irons and tea-urns, and to organise and administer a staff of one hundred and twenty or so. This in addition, to my ordinary work. Yesterday I took into my charge £300 worth of material for the new building.

To-day is a bright, sunny day, cold but with a warm wind - perfect weather and we are all in great form.

On ? his father died at Huddersfield and the tidings is transmitted to him by cable through Major Dunbar.

5. 12. 18.

directly I heard, I applied for one month's leave in England, through the Colonel in command of Medical Services. He was kindness itself and sent my application forward and personally went to the trouble of taking it to the General himself. The General regretted that for the present he could not spare me. This is the cause of the delay in writing after I received the news. Now, my Colonel tells me the General has decided to reconsider the application

as he (the Colonel) interviewed him again, and this time, he may grant it. I shall hear in a day or two. You will not be able to understand how good it is of the Colonel to make these two applications on my behalf, especially the second, after the General had refused the first. It is deeply good of him, as only we in the Army know. If I get leave, I shall cable you at once. If I do not get it, it will be a further sacrifice we must make for our country. If I get leave I shall be home about the end of January. I am doing everything possible, but although the War is over, disease and especially infectious disease is always busy here and only a few men have done the kind of work that enables them to tackle it. Our enemy out here is not the Turk, but disease and my special knowledge along certain lines, especially plague and cholera work do make it difficult for me to be sent home until we have got a certain number of British troops safely away. We must await the General's decision. He will look at it from my point of view and from the point of view of the British boys out here, and if he does not grant me leave, it will be because he cannot do so without increasing the risks to the sons and husbands of our own people.

5. 1. 19. I am now at Suez on my way home and shall probably reach you before this letter, but to be on the safe side, in case I am delayed in Egypt or elsewhere, I write to tell you I have got twenty-eight days leave from the day of landing in England. This is owing to the kindness and help of my senior officer

who has also given me a note to the War Office, saying he does not need me back in Mesopotamia when my leave is expired. You will understand his goodness and how much I am indebted to him. When he gave me the note, he said how deeply he sympathised with you and as I had worked hard for him, he was very glad to help you in any way possible. What will happen to me I do not know. I may be demobilised or sent to some other front or else stationed in England. Meanwhile I shall be with you early in February.

I must now write several official letters to Mesopotamia. One's responsibilities follow one, even upon the seas.

We are in the Red Sea, which is keeping up its reputation for heat.

ASSISTANT PORT-OFFICER, BASRA.

2. 1. 18. We secured a goose and some plum-pudding and had a most delightful little dinner of 31. 12. 17. We saw the New Year in at midnight. All the steamers in the river sounded their sirens, fire alarms rang out, and all over the camp bugles were blown and rockets fired.

You will, I know, be surprised to hear that I am leaving this hospital and am packed up and under orders. Since coming out here I have been thoroughly trained in the pathology, treatment and bacteriology and prevention of Tropical Infectious Diseases by being in charge of different sections and wards and now I have been appointed assistant Port Health Officer. Two of us, a Captain Finch, who is Port Health Officer and I, meet all steamers coming into Basra, either up or down the river from all over the world and inspect the crews and troops or passengers (if any) for infectious disease. It is responsible work, as our job is to prevent any infectious cases getting ashore and thus starting epidemics. As ships come here from every possible country, you can understand, that there is great risk of their importing disease. We inspect the crews, the troops, the sanitation ~~and~~ etc., of the ships; disinfect ships when necessary; destroy rats ~~and~~ etc., and generally prevent the spread of disease. It is work I am very interested in and I am very fortunate to have got the appoint-

ment without having a D.P.H. (Diploma of Public Health). Every ship that comes to Basra runs up a yellow flag and we receive a telegram to say when it has passed the lighthouse at the bar. We then go off in a tug or a launch to meet the ship and inspect the whole crew, all the troops on board, to hear of any illness, etc., during the voyage, and, if necessary, to see the food and test the water in the tanks. A great many large steamers come in each day, so we shall be very busy. I leave here any day to start the work. I shall live in a funny old Arab house at Ashar, a village across the river from here. So, if you decide to come out to Mesopotamia, I shall be the first person you meet out here, as I board every ship before any one is allowed to land. I expect, if I manage the work, I shall be kept at this job for some time, and may I again say you have no need to worry about me. I have too great a respect for my promise to you, for my ability to work for my country and for the tremendous interest of the work to run any risk unnecessarily of being laid up and not able to carry on.

This week I have had some good sport, shooting. The wild dogs have formed into packs for hunting and I have been out shooting the packs, and hunting them up and down the jungle. It is instructive to watch how the pack always follows and obeys the pack leader. If only scouts obeyed their patrol leaders as wild creatures who are in packs follow their chosen leader - what troops we should have! I shot a pack leader yesterday - a magnificent animal - and his skin is being preserved. A cor-

poral, a sergeant and myself went out armed with a sporting gun, a mauser rifle and my revolver and we have had several days arduous, but very good sport, and are gradually driving the packs from the farther hospital into the deep jungle. A pack of hungry dogs will attack a man and as many of them have rabies, we do not want them about my camp. So far I have accounted for six and one leader.

How you would love to watch the storks here! Yesterday, as I lay, in the sun, waiting for a shot at a wild dog, two storks with long red beaks and red legs were hunting for frogs close beside me. Round about on the ground lizards were running and in a patch of long grass a hundred yards away, I could see the ears and snout of old Mr. Jackal watching the proceedings!! PICTURE.

This is a wonderful, wonderful country. The days are too short. I could fill every one several times over. Yet whenever it is my turn to come back to England, I shall be very glad. Life is a splendid thing wherever you are.

9. 1. 18. The English mail came up the river yesterday. You can picture the scene: a wide river (as wide as the Forth) lined on each side with masses of palm trees and behind them the open desert, sky and water crimson with the sunset, and making its steady way through the glow a large grey steamer, from its masthead flying the flag we all look for so eagerly - a long, white pennon with the workds "Royal Mail". The mail bags are taken ashore in barges by gangs of Persian coolies, then the

mails are sent down the river again in a launch to our island home. I am still on the island, but leave any day for my Port Health work. I shall still be attached to this hospital and shall only be on "detached duty".

I will reply to some of the points in your letters.

OUR DWELLINGS: the officers' quarters are in an old Arab house, built of brick and mud. The ground floor is used for the Hospital Administration Offices. The roof is flat. On a great part of it there are old Turkish rooms opening into a central court and overlooking the river. These are our bedrooms. At present I am living in a tent with my section, about a quarter of a mile from the hospital.

THE HOSPITAL: This is apart from the officers' quarters. The hospital consists of a large number of huts and tents, all separate, scattered through the date-palm forest; a separate hut or tent for each disease, and, of course, for kitchen and personnel. Our mess is apart from the patients.

NEEDS: Books on the history, natural history, religions and travel in this part of the world are the only things we want. Leslie and I both feel we are missing a great deal of the interest of the place by not knowing more about it and its people; The Arabs and Indian races from an ethnological point of view, also about Mohammedanism, Brahmanism and the other Indian religions.

MY SCOUTS: Socials and concerts do indeed seem to be empty things for scouts to be engaged in. When you have lived

out here on an island and have had to make all you want both for amusement and physical requirements you realise the joys of true scouting and what Baden Powell meant and tried to give to English boys (as far as our home conditions allow), when he wrote "Scouting for Boys". True Scouting is what constitutes the essence of the movement and I know if I get to work among boys again we shall be much more of backwoodsmen than we were, and there will be less of socials and concerts. You realise out here what "honour" and "trustworthiness" mean. A man who can be trusted absolutely to do his job is worth anything. A man you cannot trust in every detail is a danger to the community and really would be better shot than alive. Whether it is the sterilisation of our water supply (with bleaching powder!), the routine of sterilization of one's hands and garments after being with an infectious case, or guarding our stores against Arabs and other gentlemen, if a man does not do his work honestly, it may mean that, as a consequence, the whole community either lose heavily in disease, or have no - or what is worse - dangerous food or water. We soon find out the men "whose honour is to be trusted" and the others are either imprisoned or sent back to India for disposal - or shot. We have absolutely no use for them here. I know now what Baden Powell meant by the first Scout law and now he realised that the only way to make the men who are absolutely essential to England is to get hold of them as boys. I cannot too much emphasise how we want the true Scout spirit.

Thank God most soldiers have it put into them by their officers and N.C.O.s, or we could never carry on. Don't be afraid to put discipline well to the ~~scout~~ front with my scouts. The world cannot carry on without discipline and the more absolute it is the happier every one is, whatever the so-called Socialists say.

We rarely leave the island, often not for a month, and then only to get our hair cut. We have plenty of absorbing work and we live almost entirely on our rations, We shoot, paddle canoes on the river, read books, chiefly medical, in our spare time. Money and time cease to be of importance. We spend no money and no one, least of all the natives, seems to worry about time. All days are alike. You just work or enjoy yourself while the sun shines and, then when it is dark, you go to sleep like all the world around you - the birds, beasts and flowers. <u>But</u> we LIVE and enjoy a true, simple, life. We do not dispense with sleep at midday in the summer - Mr. Sun will not allow it!! In winter, of course, we work all day, just as in England.

for a regiment". Is he not like his father? So there the matter stops. I cannot move from here, unless he recommends me for a transfer.

16. 1. 13. I am now living at Ashar to act as Assistant Port Health Officer. I am still on the strength of the Isolation Hospital, but have been temporarily lent for this work. As the Chief Port Health Officer is away, I am in charge to-day. It is the most health-giving work one could do. I practically live on the river, running up and down, meeting ships, seeing sick people, killing rats (for plague) and watching the shipping generally. I have two launches. I do not know how long I shall be kept at this work, but it is very interesting and useful. I am becoming absolutely black and if I get much more of this salt air and sunshine I shall be too exhilirated to live.

A Chinese boat has just been cabled as having passed the bar. I am going on the launch about five or six miles down to meet it. As the boat slows down, I scramble up the rope ladder with the pilot in the approved method and go to the bridge and see the Captain. I then come up the river on the steamer to her berth, the launch following. Picture a river as wide as the Forth, dotted with funny old Arab sailing-boats, palm trees lining each bank and the steamer slowly coming up with the sunset. You have the whole scene.

As the ships coming here are largely from infected Eastern ports, the man who is doing this work must be thoroughly con-

versant with all Tropical Diseases, especially infectious. You can understand the importance of preventing epidemics. But I could not be ill while at this job, which blows away all the "bugs" which sit about in Isolation!! I regard it just as a holiday for a few weeks or months, then expect to be returned to my old and much enjoyed work in hospital.

We have a most comfortable Mess in a large barracks and I sleep in a little room adjoining the office. It is about the size of our bathroom and as I lie in bed, I can look out of the window up the little old street. All the houses are white, with little wooden barred and trellised windows, nearly meeting across the street. The street is lit at night by lanterns, and occasionally one sees an Arab, in his long flowing robe, and carrying a lantern, wander down the street.

PICTURE.

It is extraordinary how transport is carried on here. As I came into my billet just now, the road was blocked by an Indian bullock cart, two loaded camels, sundry white Arab donkeys, with a fine white Arab horse in the midst. All these creatures were inextricably tied together and all were trying to get through the narrow street at once and all completely and successfully blocking up the entrance to my billet. The camels have such extraordinary supercilious, superior and utterly bored expressions, that I often laugh at them. They are animals with a very strong individuality, but above all they are haughty. The donkeys, on the other hand, are patient, kindly, humble creatures and when you see camels and donkeys struggling for the

right of way in a street, it is ironic.

PICTURE.

20. 1. 18. The book is thrillingly interesting: it is absolutely what I wanted to see and read. It is of tremendous interest to read about things you have seen and are seeing being done every day.

My new work is more health-giving than arduous; in fact I have plenty of time for reading. Tell Miss Miller I could tackle four Thursdays one after the other easily, and probably cure all the "chronics", I feel so "strong". We are having frost every night, with ice, and often thick yellow fog everywhere in the morning. And then at midday we are grilled alive!!

29. 1. 18. I am busy and everything is of great interest. Each day, on my way to or from the river, I pass through the Bazaar four times. It is the usual type of Eastern Bazaar, little shops in narrow little, quaint streets, the whole covered over with palm leaves or matting to keep off the sun. To-day I saw an Arab dosing with a large bundle of palm leaves (probably for the roofing of a house)on his shoulder, while Mr. Camel with his usual supercilious air was quietly munching up the palm leaves without disturbing the somnolent gentleman. Farther on a child of three, brightly coloured but dirty, was stroking a resplendent cock, imitating its crowing and chuckling with delight. It was dipping its fingers into the feathers on the cock's back and child and cock were crowing together in mutual happiness. A step or two beyond was the litte meat-kitchen,

where about a dozen small cubes of meat are strung on a skewer and eight or ten skewers hung over a charcoal fire. You pay one anna for a small cube; for a few annas you get all the cubes on the skewer. Farther still was a coffee-house, where dozens of Arabs were sipping coffee and listening to a gramophone which was playing selections by a pipe-band. Here our old favourite tunes, Glendarnel, Highlanders and Margins of Huntleys, Highland Fling, were enthralling another wild and untamed race, just as years ago they charmed the wild mountaineers of Scotland. The Arabs were obviously thrilled by the rhythm and beat of the music and drums. Roundabout were little Arab boys playing the universal game of "Pig" - striking a spindle-shaped piece of wood with another long piece and hitting it as it jumps up, just as we do at home. Next we met a water-carrier with two sheeps'-skins full of water and two richly dressed Arab merchants. Then a camel lying down, because he had got tired of standing where he had been left, blocked the whole road and the world had to go round him. Veiled Mohammedan or Arab women were buying food for the family. Old Arab or Jewish gentlemen, most richly apparelled, were smoking pipes and watching everything. The little shops are just recesses in the walls. The shopkeeper squats inside his shop, surrounded on all sides and in front by his wares - fruit, clothes, beads, rice, copper vessels and rugs, in fact anything and everything. The shopkeeper is often asleep and the would-be purchaser has to waken him up; if he is awake, he is incessantly smoking his

hookah and puffs at it all the time he is weighing the articles. White donkeys, often bestrid by little Arab boys, wander about; perhaps an English officer or a brightly coloured group of Arab horsemen ride through. The whole place is packed with people and in places where the matting roof has given way and a spear of sunlight shoots through, the brilliancy of the colour is beyond words. Outside the Bazaar, as I go down to my work on the river, I pass the busy little creek of Ashar, crowded with painted canoes and large and small boats of every shape with sails of every form, sunlight over all. When I come back in the evening it is dark; each boat has its oil light and on the deck or in the bottom of each boat is a wood with a picturesque pot suspended over each one and a group of Arabs and children sitting round. I go up through the Bazaar again and here too all is in darkness, except for the little oil lamps which half light up each shopkeeper and his wares.

Once or twice lately I have had a horse and have gone in the evening for an hour's gallop into the desert just as the sun was setting. The sunset, the light on the sand and the scattered palm trees on the fringe of the desert, the little pools of water in the marshes gleaming crimson; then later the moon and clouds and the absolute deathly silence except for the occasional weird call of a stray jackal! The desert has impressed me more, I think, than anything out here. It is more awe-inspiring than the sea and feels infinitely greater and more lonely.

The road of the desert caravan routes goes by my mess and caravans of camels coming in from or going out to Central Arabia are continually passing.

I love the East, but I should not want to live here for years on end. It is too enervating. But I do love the simplicity of life in which one can pause and think and one does not rush through the months as one does in England. Life is as simple at present as it well can be; a base, a room, a bed, a bath, a table, rations, one's uniform and one's work and there you have all one needs. It is ripping.

I am busy now learning Arabic. I can talk as much as is necessary for my work in Hindustanee and we have been asked to learn Arabic. The Army offers a prize of £20 to every man (officer or private) who learns sufficient Arabic to carry on a conversation on any subject set by the examiner with an Arab for fifteen minutes. It is a great stroke of policy because, though few learn sufficient to pass the test, a great many spend some of their spare time learning a certain amount of the language. I should, however, hope to pass the test after a few months' work. If you learn to write in Arabic and read Arabic you get an additional £20 and privates get so much a week added to their pay. I consider it a splendid idea from a political point of view. It helps us to learn about and to sympathise with the aims and mode of life of those who were our enemies and this makes for a new spirit between us. You feel so absolutely shut off from a foreigner's life if you cannot speak his language.

I think from what I hear that I shall be kept at this work at any rate during the hot weather as owing to heat stroke that is when we are busiest. I do not know, nor do I mind, as long as I am doing useful work to end this war. That is all I care about, but, of course, if one gets good professional experience on a line one likes so much the better. However, if they get busy at Isolation , I shall be sent back there.

8. 2. 18. "H.M.H.T."--- with the English mails has passed F.A.O." with this telegram I was woken yesterday and after a hurried breakfast I went down the river to meet the ship and give her a cleam bill of health. I think you would get torn limb from limb if the English mail were kept waiting - so keen are we on its arrival.

Arabic as far as I have got is a collection of gargles, splutterings and choking sounds and the first thing to learn is to speak one word intelligible to any Arab. The grammar seems to have no regularity of any kind. Hindustanee has one or two words that are like Greek or Latin but so far I have not met an Arabic word that resembles any word in any known tongue. Nevertheless, it has very beautiful metaphors and the courteousness and statliness of the salutations are very charming. For instance you ask not for the "owner of the house", but for the "shepherd of the house"; the "owner of the boat" is the "father of the boat", and so forth. All the metaphors are drawn from nomadic desert life. Where we say "he began to work", the Arabs say "he rose up and worked". The reason is that the Arab

is normally sitting in the sun and before he can do anything he must get up. You know how often it says in the Bible: "they rose up and went".

I get a horse when I want one for two or three hours exercise in the evening. We have been busy lately, but last night I had a topping ride. I rode out of the village and through the palm jungle fringing the river and then turning suddenly round a corner - the Arabian desert! In the foreground a collection of old clay, brick towers, the remains of some old town, with a pool of water and a few palms; beyond, the yellow of the desert fading into deep purple in every direction as far as one could see, the sun just setting behind the desert horizon in a golden and scarlet sky. I turned my horse on to the open desert and galloped over the sand towards the sunset. A cool breeze was blowing and I galloped and trotted for some miles out and back. The effect of the colour and silence on one is extraordinary. It felt freedom and Life itself. A horse, open desert, a sunset - the acme of life!

Do you want a nice Persian carpet or rug? I have seen some beauties - unfortunately not for sale - carpets brought in after a week's journey up the Gulf, after a twenty-four days' camel journey from Persia, where they are made! No one knows the value of a rug or a carpet better than an Arab does!! and no one is more difficult to bargain with, especially when you are weak in Arabic!!! The difficult is that every one, of course, is trying to buy them, consequently the prices have gone up accordingly.

The days are beginning to warm up already for the summer, but there is still frost at night - last night, thunder, lightening and pouring rain and to-day seas of mud.

15. 2. 18. I have had my busiest week this week since I started this work and there has been very little pause. However, the weather is topping though we are beginning to walk on the shady side of the street and to wear our sun-helmets.

One is continually struck out here by the Biblical character of the names. It is startling when you ask a child his name and he looks up and says: "Eesah" (Jesus) or "Ishmael". To-day I heard a man call out to another for a ferry, "Barabbas! Barabbas!" It is strange to hear living people called Barabbas. Another delightful trait here is that no one knows his age. I asked a small boy the other day how old he was and he said he did not know. I mentioned the fact to officers who know the Arabs and they tell me no one ever knows his age. No one keeps any record at all. A person is as old as he appears and that is sufficient. We, English, come along and make notifications of death and age at death compulsory, and the Registrar tells me he often gets such ages as a hundred and sixty, or a hundred and thirty-five. He had one return of a hundred and ninety years of age! They just make a rough guess and send that in. It is typical of the Arab and I think it is splendid. You just live quietly on until the end and keep no record of hours and days, much less of years. Just imagine wiping out all record and markings of the passage of time and

picture the ripping state of contentment and happiness you reach!

I work on with my Arabic. It is a hard language, but many words ~~are~~ have an intense interest in their derivation and connection with other words one knows. Thus the word Jesus in Arabic means a scout, a watcher. The word "a scout" is the meaning given in my dictionary.

This week the river has looked very like the Mersey or the Thames - greeny-yellow with fog, mist and driving rain. I have felt much more as if I were rolling about in the Mersey in Canada Dock than in Mesopotamia as we know it.

As I write in my room which is as Oriental and as Arabic as it well can be, a gramophone from the sergeants' mess in the opposite billets winds out a typical music-hall song sung by a woman with a voice of the typical music-hall type. So East meets West and somehow they are so different that very often the contrast is revolting, as at present. I could say best in Hindustanee what I should like to do to the gramophone! It is a bad invention! Last night I heard a band playing "Turn ye to me" with one or two other Scotch songs. It sounded ripping coming down the lane in the dark and brought back home vividly. I also yesterday, for the first time, heard the pipes in the distance - last time I heard them was the last parade of the pipe band at home!

This week work has kept me from reading much. When I am not searching for dead rats on steamers I am doing Arabic.

There is a test in April and I must have a shot at it.

21. 2. 18. To-day is a typical English day. The sky is grey, rain pours down, we stagger about in mud, slipping, as one captain of a ship put it: " You feel as if your port engine were going ahead whilst your starboard engine is going full astern". That expresses well the way one leg goes forward whilst the other slips back.

I have been out on the river all day and have just got in. As I came up the Bazaar Alley, I saw an amusing sight. An Arab was walking along with about fourteen hens tied by their legs, thrown over his shoulder, apparently a stock of dead hens going to the boiling-pot. I happened to look round as he passed and instead of heads hanging down , the whole lot were looking round and cackling. They were all alive! He strode along and the hens looked round at a world upside down!

The expression on the camels' faces most clearly betokens what they think about the mud and rain. They grunt & grouse to themselves and are simply "bored to death".

Some English Tommy has introduced the Arab boy to the catapult and life has taken on a new joy to them. They use little lumps of clay, baked in the sun, as ammunition with the most thrilling effects. The dog and children world is quite a different world from ours - there is universal, world-wide socialism. Like our own at home, dogs and children here each goes his own way; the dogs walk about with business of their own on hand, the children play. A great game is playing at

buffaloes. The buffaloes live in the river edge and in the hot weather, they slither into the river and lie with only their noses showing above the water. The children rub themselves all over with grey mud to be more like the buffaloes, then slide down the ripping slimy mud into the river and lie covered with water, blowing through their mouths and grunting just like the creatures do.

I meant to tell you about our headdresses here. Everyone is distinguished by his hat or turban. We wear helmets with our regimental badge. Highland troops wear their Glengarries or Balmorals. Indians wear turbans of different styles - for south Indian, Central Indian, North Indian, Mohammedan, Hindu, etc., - made of khaki. The natives wear: Arabs of the desert, a coloured cloth with a ring of rope to keep it on the head; Arabs, who are descendants of Mohammed in the direct line, bright green and gold turbans; Arab pilots, white turbans interlaced with gold. Persians wear close fitting little skull-caps and Armenians, red fezes or little black Astrakhan caps. A man is known by his headdress!

We have had a very busy week this week. A steamer brought plague into the river and it has kept me very hard at it. It is the plague and small-pox season at present, so we have to be very careful. The Port Health Officer has been doing locum at a hospital for an officer who is ill and so for the last three weeks I have been "on my own" and shall be for the next three weeks. There really is a great deal of work, but we have not

had much disease lately, compared with some years.

X [redacted]

Leslie badly wants a rest. He is very nervously worried His hospital is a most difficult one to administer and supervise, as each disease has to be kept separate and at different times of the year, different diseases preponderate. Then he has to cater for every race and type of patient: Chinamen, Turks, Persians, Arabs, Indians of all kinds, English officers, "Tommies", Hindus, Mohammedans, etc. I hope he will get leave to India this spring or summer.

1. 3. 18. I got five shillings (two half-crowns) the other day, a Christmas remembrance from Rashcliffe Church. It was most good of them and it was a great pleasure to see English money again. Leslie was standing by me when I opened the letter, so we each took one half-crown for luck. I was delighted to hear you were on the Committee of the L.S.A. It is a magnificent work and I am glad that you should be helping. How much we shall want scouts and the scout spirit in the next few years, I think only soldiers, or perhaps only officers know. It is a great work to make as many boys as possible know the Scout Law. England must have that type of man, if she is to succeed.

A good many Barts men are out here. My house physician asked me to dinner a week ago in their mess. He is the pathologist to an Indian General Hospital and I have seen a good many men who are junior to me in hospital.

This afternoon I am taking a General Staff Colonel out for a joy ride in my launch. He has just come out here and wanted to have a look round before going up the river to Baghdad. So I was detailed to take him!! It is rather a trial as he is very military, rather the Gilbert and Sullivan type of martial colonel - very loud-voiced, etc. But I must not criticise senior officers.

I have ceased to worry personally. All four of us are only doing our duty and what we considered was the highest duty and we cannot but feel that whatever the future has in store, we can have no regrets. We did our duty. So just carry on and keep smiling. A scout smiles and whistles under difficulties and I find that every one can be divided into two classes: those who are helping England and those who are not. The former class, probably unknowingly, keep the Scout Laws. The latter cannot realise things, but get depressed, grouse and want things that they cannot have - generally things we all want, such as leave in Blighty!

6. 3. 18. Descriptions of six photographs to be inserted here, if the prints are available.

The local practioner sits in the little lane adjoining my billet and there carries on a large and flourishing practice.

Beside him are his wares - pills, medicines, incenses, etc., and all kinds of charms. I often try to have a word with the old doctor. He is kindness personified, but very dignified. As my Arabic progresses, our conversations get longer, but he cannot, of course, understand a word of English. Here is another man who has devoted himself to the relief of suffering and pain and though he has not had our opportunities of scientific work, he does allay a great deal of suffering and has the confidence of many, and so we hail him as a brother and always salaam as we pass. Amongst his stock in trade are keys, bits of wire, padlocks, broken bits of clocks, etc., very much the same set of instruments and drugs, with which I used to treat my patients in the garden. He sits in the sun and moves away when the sun goes down and so, I presume, he has no night work. Life for him is sunny and happy.

The Arabs are tremendously fond of their children and if one dies their grief is often terrible. I do not think I have seen any other race so universally devoted to children and who spend so much time playing in the sun with their children - when they really ought to be working.

Here are some drawings by a small Arab boy who is attached to my office. He cannot read nor write in Arabic and he does not know a word of English. He is teaching me Arabic and I teach him English. He is from a village on the edge of the desert and is a real little desert Arab. I gave him a pencil and paper and it was the first time he had tried to put

anything down on paper or ever used a pencil. The first drawing is an Arab, then a camel, then a snake, then a donkey, then a palm tree in the desert. He has absolutely caught the supercilious expression of the camel, the depressed attitude of the donkey and the quick movement of the snake. He has just the same ability as Kenneth had as a little boy in drawing - he catches something that others miss.

14. 3. 18. For days after your letters come, I still feel the pleasure of the mental visit home. What an extraordinary power it is that traverses the huge distance between us and when your letters arrive takes me back, in the first two or three words, and puts me down on the hearth between you. In spirit I am really in Lockwood, see you all and Scamp, and if anyone disturbs me when I am reading, I return suddenly to Mesopotamia. One's body is in Basra, but one's mind and spirit is in England.

learns of other religions and sees one's own religion of Christianity in its native setting, one's ideas become greatly altered. As you know, the Hindus believe that everything animate and inanimate has a soul, as the thing which holds it perishes, passes a step higher. Hence a stone or a tree has a soul and when its substance perishes, its soul goes into, say, a creeping creature and so up the scale till its gets a low-caste man's body, then a high-caste body, in each case having new experiences and becoming cleansed until it is ready for final salvation. Because of this some Hindu sects (Jairs) take every care where they put their foot in walking, lest they crush anything with a soul in it. They are kindly, very learned, high-caste men, but naturally they are no good as soldiers, so we leave them alone in India.

As I came through the Bazaar, on my way up from the river, a little Arab child, who, of course, knows not one word of English, came paddling along in the mud, a cackling hen under one arm, a stick in the other hand, singing at the top of her voice, "It's a long, long way to Tipperary, but my heart's right there". It took me by surprise, especially as she knew the tune and the whole of the chorus, <u>but no other word of English</u>. Some Tommy has spent time teaching her, probably a man with children six thousand miles away in England. All the Arabs think this song is our National Anthem and always make a point of playing the tune on any band they have. The Arab band consists of a big drum, a side drum and about eight large

brass instruments and it reminds me of the Fire Brigade Band at home on Christmas Eve. It is very noise and the music very wild and martial. This little child is the first Arab who could sing the English words.

Friday, 15. 3. 18. It is becoming possible now for me to talk to Arabs. My Arabic can just about stand an ordinary conversation, so I spend much time in the little alleys of the Bazaar, talking to the stall-keepers and children, and try to get peeps behind the curtain that cuts one off so absolutely from Eastern thought until one knows the language. It is a great joy to me to be able to go down to the Bazaar, and by means of a talk, see, from their own point of view, the life that thousands of human beings live out here. Also, unofficially, I do a little doctoring of children. I have one kiddy coming to-morrow to see me and occasionally an Arab, who knows that I understand Arabic, brings his child for consultation. Needless to say, the treatment is honorary and my only hope is that it may help the child and also help to give the Arab a good impression of his new conquerors. We want the Arabs to prefer us to the Turks, spontaneously. We want a second loyal India here, and every little helps. It also makes a little variety in one's life and I love treating children, black, brown or white!! At present, the Arab is suffering from great confusion of mind about his new conquerors. They are Christians, so he dislikes them. But he also finds that when they buy a thing, they expect to pay for it and he is learning too - a hard lesson -

that bribery is useless, that justice cannot be bought or sold even in the smallest matter. He cannot understand a country whose officials refuse to take money as a bribe when they have such excellent opportunities!!

I get tired of pessimism about England. Englishmen have splendid points, every Tommy has them. Why, already the Arabs have been taught to police the towns here themselves. This is the acme of civilisation.

A custom, out here, shows the spirit of our men and officers. No wounded man ever wears his gold wounded-stripe - much to the surprise of all comers from France or England, who soon realise that it is not the thing and take down their stripe. The reason is that here so many men die from sickness or are completely invalided and yet get no stripe, although they have gone through as much as the others, that, by common consent, no one here ever wears a wounded-stripe. I think it a really fine thought. This reason does not apply to France. Here disease is a different matter, and the disease incidence in proportion to wounded is bound to be very different from that in France.

29. 3. 18. This week I have been busy - small-pox; so it has been one continual round of inspections, vaccinations, fumigations! The inspection of passenger ships takes a lot of time. It is already beginning to get hot. The first <u>sandfly</u> was seen yesterday and killed! So soon we shall be in the thick of steamy heat and innumerable insects. How I hate that intense heat!

There has been a lot of rain this so-called "winter", and so we expect a cool summer, but, as Leslie says, once the thermoter is over 120° in the shade, a few degrees one way or the other do not matter much.

If the day looks kinder gloomy
And the chances kinder thin,
If the situation's puzzlin'
And the prospects awful grim,
And perplexities keep pressin'
Till all hope is nearly gone,
Jest bristle up and grit your teeth
And keep on keepin' on.

24. 3. 18. Herewith are a few interesting "mementoes", as our friends the Americans say.

A little of the famous incense of Arabia. If you just burn a little on the flame of a lamp you will be able to imagine yourself transported here in thought. I have told you already about the Arab coffee-pot from Zubeir, the market town of the Bedouins.

The Arab water-pot is, I think, the most picturesque thing in Mesopotamia. It is a really old Arab thing which, I fear, is dying out as people now use such unromantic articles as empty kerosene tins to carry water in; they are lighter than the old copper ones.

The gold tassels explain themselves. The thread ones are made from woven camels' hair and are such as John the Baptist is reputed to have worn.

The Arab headdress is worn as shown in pictures. The cloth and rope are woven entirely from camels' hair and are

made at Zubeir.

The little piece of wooden carving was done for me by a small Arab boy as a gift and for a handle to a walking stick he had made me. The duck's head is most realistic and it is of interest, because the boy is a Mohammedan and Mohammedans are forbidden to make a carving of any kind of creature, so this had to be done in the dark and out of sight of the boy's father. I consider that for a boy of thirteen, working with a penknife, the work is exceedingly good and it is hard that distinct ability like this should be crushed out of existence by religion. He was very delighted with the result of his work.

An Arab flute - one can play almost any tune on it and it is a source of great pleasure to us out here.

I saw a perfect picture in colour not half-an-hour ago. A large mail steamer was coming up the Tigris. The bridge deck and roof was white and leaning against the white post of the bridge was a dark brown Indian sailor, wearing a deep blue flowing robe and in his arms a large bundle of brilliantly coloured red, yellow, white and blue signal flags. Beyond him and his multicoloured bundle was the deep blue of the river; further beyond was the yellow sand, and further beyond still the blue sky.

Easter Sunday, March 31, '18.

This week as I was going through the Bazaar I saw two Arab boys meeting one another, and as they met they gave the scout salute with their hands!!! I made enquiries from an Arab,

who speaks English, and he told me they belong to a troop of Baden-Powell scouts that had been going three years in Basra. They wear the scout dress like our own scouts, learn Scout Law, knot-tying, signalling, first-aid and cooking, etc. They are little Mohammedan Arab boys and the whole thing is done in Arabic. The troop is run by an American who was here for some years before the war and still is here. It is extraordinary how Baden-Powell's movement has spread. Here, where murder and robbery are condoned by the Arab, are scouts making the same scout sign as we do and learning the same law and promise - little Bedouin scouts. They are wild little fellows but well able to look after themselves.

I was out fishing with Leslie the other day, just where the Euphrates joins the Tigris, about three miles from here and we caught a salmon weighing twenty-five pounds - it was sifficient for dinner for the three Messes. There are plenty of salmon in the Euphrates and a little fresh salmon is always welcomed after tinned rabbit and bully-beef. Leslie is well and wants me to go with him on leave to Ceylon or India in June or July. He is entitled to leave in India. I am NOT until I have done another summer out here, but Leslie is such an important man at the Base, that he has only to say what he wishes - that is sufficient!! If he wishes to take me to India, I shall have to be given leave to fall in with his wishes!!! He has been longest at the Base of anyone in the whole force and is, as it were, the father of us all and a very good father he makes too! He runs the hospital just as John

Dunbar ran his annual bazaar. If for the church-wardens you substitute officers; for the stall-holderns, sergeants and corporals of the wards; and for the congregation the patients, you see a replica of the annual bazaar. He is an autocrat but is always ready to give a hand to work. He is more like J.D. than I can say in every way. But often the old Leslie, the maker, crops up. He takes a chisel and hammer from an Indian joiner and shows him exactly what he wishes done. He mixes some paint to show how think he wants it. The whole time he is superintending trades of every kind, far remote from medical work. He is a most capable officer. As I see him using a plane, or sawing a piece of wood, surrounded by Indians, Chinese, etc.,it takes me back at once to the old attic at the Vicarage, where he worked, and I expect to hear Miss Dean's voice call out, "Leslie, have you planted those rose trees for your father yet?"

I heard this at a Divisional Concert:

"Butterflies have wings of lace,
Fireflies wings of flame,
Little fleas have none of these,
But they get there, all the same."

Annette will, I know, agree with it.

It is getting hot. In the middle of the day it is d---d hot, a taste of what is coming, but it is still coolish at nights.

6. 4. 18. Everything here - scenery, people, outlook on life - is more removed from our own world than I can describe. Children

and their games, water and the sky seem to me the only things we have in common. I should love you to see everything, yet I honestly think that the country that has impressed me most is Italy. I think south Italy is glorious. On the way out here, we were the first British troops to pass through and amongst other things we saw the mobilization of their Boy Scouts - fine young fellows of fifteen or sixteen years, dressed like our own boys, only wearing daggers, were drawn up to meet our train and to go away on it to join the regiments to which they were attached. As our train came in, they cheered and we cheered, and then they picked up their kit-bags and great coats and joined the train. As they were leaving their little villages and towns, they were seen off by the women and old men and often it was a very affecting scene that took place as the Rome Express slowed down at some little country station to take up twelve or fourteen boys.

The thermometer creeps up little by little and only too soon we shall be back at 120° in the shade. This week I have been supplementing my summer clothing and have had three tunics, two tunic shirts with pockets, etc , and two pairs of shorts, for a total cost, including material, of £2! The heat does not allow heavy cloth, so these garments have been made from the cloth Indians use for their turbans, which is excellent for the purpose. An Arab is making me a pair of boots, so I shall be complete. My Arabic comes in useful! The exam: is on the 23th. It is the most difficult language I have yet struck,

like trying to learn Welsh!

As I passed through the Bazaar to-day, I noticed an Arab greengrocer, surrounded by his wares asleep, of course, expecting any would-be purchaser to wake him up. A donkey apparently wandering through the Bazaar on his own, stopped and proceeded to eat, a couple of onions here, a bunch of lettuce there. No one interfered or bothered. It was too hot and in the East, no one ever bothers about other people's business in the heat of the day. I watched the donkey and after he had eaten as much as he wanted, he wandered down the Bazaar, mixed with the crowd, much like a human being. I expect he was en route to his stable and had merely stopped for a minute or so on the way. This is absolutely the attitude of life and the whole influence of the East "Laissez faire! Laissez faire!" It is really a most delightful motto, but unfortunately does not make for advancement.

I was going round Basra to-day with the officer, who is looking after the health conditions of civilians, a sort of Medical Officer of Health. We saw the water-carriers, old Arabs with goat-skin water-bags filling their bags in the stream of fouled muddy water - this in spite of the fact that our engineers have put up fifteen taps in the village, from which sterilized, filtered water can be drawn. They prefer the old way of taking drinking water in their filthy old skin-bottles from a creek, which is really the village sewer. Our new taps and sterilized water are left untouched.

In the Arab mind, it is simply another sign of the madness of the English. They cannot understand us nor we them. But we get on very well together. Each goes his own way and neither criticises, nor hinders. Sanitary work here is often very amusing!

I have just heard that the tailor who made my clothes has died of plague. So I must proceed to sterilize my new garments!

16. 4. 18. Yesterday morning my overcoat arrived. Temperature 120° in the sun at the time I unpacked it! Still it will do for next winter here, or in France. With it were two little liquid brown paper parcels - quite liquid so that I could pour out the contents. On examination, I found these had once been sweets - gelantines which I love and which I had not tasted for nearly a year. They had fermented a little, but I drank the sweets and enjoyed them thoroughly!!

You ask for particulars of my work. I meet every ship coming into Basra from foreigh ports - China, Japan, India, England, etc., and examine the crews and passengers (troops) for plague, small-pox, spotted fever, etc.; give an opinion on doubtful cases, remove the cases, inoculate or take other precautions for the remaining passengers or crew; destroy the bedding, fumigate the ship, etc. It sounds simple but when you realise that if you hold up a troopship, it costs about £900 for each day, you will know one has to understand one's work in order to give an opinion. If you release the ship and

are wrong you may infect endless numbers on shore. If you keep several thousand soldiers in quarantine, it means there are that number short up in the trenches - that loss in addition to the £900 a day expense. You MUST KNOW infectious diseases, especially small-pox. Also we have to work upon the ~~dis~~ extinction of plague-infected rats in cargoes, so as to keep our own rat community on shore uninfected with plague. This means a great deal of work: unloading all the cargo with lighters in the river; isolating the coolies working the cargoes; dumping the cargo away out on the desert where the plague rats, held in it, cannot escape and mingle with our other rats; sulphur fumigation of the ship; quarantine of the crew with steam sterilization of their bedding and clothing for plague fleas; bathing of their bodies in cresol, etc. Some-times, you may have 1400 people to vaccinate on one ship. (This would soon fill the vaccination register and keep Miss Miller busy.) We did 1400 in one ship yesterday!! In the cholera seasons we are very busy, too, removing and treating cases, isolating suspects and carriers; destroying bedding and clothing, examining large bodies of coolies for early symptoms, etc. As you know, typhus and relapsing fever are carried by lice - now is the season, so we are very busy superintending delousing expeditions and so forth.

I wish everyone in England could know that India is supplying her four expeditionary forces (Palestine, East Africa, Aden & Mesopotamia) on the voluntary system and that every

Indian soldier is a volunteer. There is NO conscription in India. So far, there has been no need. There are plenty of volunteers and they are a splendid lot of soldiers.

I fear the rumour you heard ——→ is not the usual experience. I am, of course, on for the duration of the war and I am quite unable to say when I shall be home. Shipping is very limited and, of course, when the war is finished, they will naturally removed men from France first and later, as more shipping is available, they will send us home, ——→ Let us wait, do our duty and trust in our God. All will turn out well - only we must be patient.

I have just had an hour-and-a-half's talk in Arabic. I pay an Arab a rupee an hour to come and talk Arabic with me three times a week, as I am interested in the language and mean to master it. The world out here widens enormously when you can converse with anyone you meet in the street, but I fear Arabs and Christians are terribly far apart. They hate us because we are Christians and often one hears abuse of officers as we walk along the streets, but as very few English understand Arabic no one notices and the old Arab goes on with his

abuse, the Englishman unwitting of it as he passes by. They hate us, but they fear us and we are certainly on top of them here at present.

I am reading parts of the Koran and finding the teaching absolutely like our own Bible in essentials.

24. 4. 18. I have just had a delightful time. After tiffan I had an Arab up - one of the bellumchis, i.e., boatmen - who knew some tales from the Arabian Nights. He came into my billet - brick floor, whitewashed walls, little latticed windows - and sat on a little stool in the middle of the room. Another officer and I lay on couches in the usual recumbent positions and smoked cigarettes. Our Arab, dressed in the usual white robe, blue headdress with camel's hair rings, smoked too. He told us a long story of the times of haroun-al-Raschid, which his mother had taught him. He could not speak a work of English, thus we had the privilege of hearing one of the Arabian tales in Arabic from an Arab!! We could follow fairly well, but he summed up things very aptly when he remarked, at the end; "The better you understand Arabic, the more you would enjoy my story", which was rather one for us!!! It <u>is</u> a hard language.

To-morrow I am ordered: "To report for an examination in spoken Arabic at 9 a.m." A political officer and an Arab conduct the examination. The Arab and I talk about the war; his work; my work; the times when the Turks were here, etc., for about fifteen minutes. Then the examiner decides.

My Chief has just gone to Hospital - so I am in charge of the department and am Port Health Officer. He will be away for two months, so my leave in India is a "wash-out". Leslie will have to go alone, and we are both disappointed. Each day the mercury creeps up and up and we shall soon be liquidating ourselves.

I met a friend of Uncle James at Mess the other day, called Williams. He knew all at Burton. As he seemed to be at a loose end with some Bibles, I bought one from him for eighteenpence, pour encourager les autres, and to start a good circulation of his books! He feels he has arrived in time just to save Jackson and myself from slipping down hill and so I also bought a Bible for Jackson, as I explained to Padré Williams that he certainly needed it!

We have a charming little monkey in the Mess, and also a tame mongoose and often these two strange creatures meets and examine each other closely. A mongoose is always inquisitive and you know what a monkey is like. When they meet Mr. Mongoose bristles up his tail and the monkey sits and scratches and watches him from a convenient height.

NEXT DAY. I have just got in from my Exam., and have passed as "very good", so shall draw 300 rupees and get a certificate from the Political and Military Headquarters. I had a talk with a most interesting old Arab - just like one of the old men in Holman Hunt's picture of "Christ in the Temple" - for about

a quarter-of-an-houraand that constituted the whole examination. He sat cross-legged on a little round cane chair and his appearance, headdress and the whole thing was precisely like the picture. Afterwards I went out some miles to see some cases and then back by car - a very delightful run. I was asked officially, as an infectious disease expert, to go out and decide about a case!! So I have had an interesting and profitable morning.

We are having a full moon and blue, blue night skies. The little roads and alleys, dark in the shadow or lit with oil lamps, and the lights in the trellised windows are most beautiful. But I long for a glimpse of mountains and hills, with heather, gorse and mist. We can only carry on. I am thankful I was given the opportunity of serving England, or rather India, out here - escpecially in Preventive Medicine. This is a great, great principle that we are out for and we can and will stick it out, whatever the cost. It is costing men's lives, happiness, health and everything they hold dear - one man is killed; another crippled with disease; another has given up all to do his duty, often a monotonous one under terribly trying conditions of climate. We must and will remember this when we are tempted to sum up the costs too early. We must play the game to the end. How many of us will see the end, we must not reckon. We must only think that having decided that the principles we are out for are the greatest possible we must fight for them whatever be the cost in order that

others and other generations to come may live, that evolution may proceed by right triumphing over might, so that the future of the human race may be more advanced than the past. When I come back, I shall be ready to put my hand to whatever there is going and shall be happy and contented.

3. 5. 18. 1. 30 p.m. Work here seems like my old scout days, only with it the seriousness of life and death that before one only had in one's work. Life here is like a scout camp with everything real; it is as if instead of just meeting the wounded as we used to, the troop had taken over Royds Hospital and were running it. I am back helping at Isolation Hospital as the Second in Command is away. After a fortnight my river chief goes on leave and so I shall have to take charge of the Port Work. As one goes round the wards here, one sees the things that the patient workers in Huddersfield have sent out, doing duty. The green mosquito head-nets, the sheets, the pillow-slips, etc., that arrived here from the Bureau are in full use. I should like to photograph the scene for the workers to see it. The bright sunshine, wind, and palms and sand. A shade from the sun and an Indian patient lying in a spotlessly white bed, white sheets, pillows, coverlets. Around him stand a Medical Officer (M.D.M.) operating and his helpers, fine strong Indians and Gurrkas. An Indian, dressed in white, with a mask over his face as the case is infectious, gives the chloroform and his bronzed face and black hair are caught by the evening sun. He is the strong, fine type of young Indian.

Grouped round the bed are the orderlies; a Gurrka, (the best nurses we have - always happy, willing and capable) assists me. A tall Sikh (a fighting race from north India) wearing a long beard, which is never cut, stands towering six feet behind the bed. All are lit with the sunset. This is the picture you see and you marvel and think furiously of why we are all there: the East learning from the West, the full and and childlike confidence of the Indians in whatever the Medical Office prescribes; one white man to show and all the rest done by the Indians, not trained nurses, but men lent from Indian regiments, men of the fighting races of the Indians, who joined the Army to fight, but who, as nurses, are unequalled.

And so time passes. The work I am doing for this fortnight entails a good deal of operation work. It is infectious disease, but we can generally help matters with an operation. I think if the workers at the Huddersfield Bureau could see their work doing service, their cool sheets and pillow cases, their green nets keeping the flies off our unconscious, drowsy plague and cerebrospinal fever patients, they would feel glad they had helped our Indians, who joined up voluntarily and who often make the supreme sacrifice from disease, glad they had helped to ease the suffering and the terrible torment of the flies. I often think of Ramsden Street and its great work as I walk round my wards.

I can now converse fairly satisfactorily with any Arab I meet and can act as interpreter for other officers. I am now

busy learning Turkish. Ifeel it is up to one to make one-self as efficient an officer as one can and for those of us who have the ability to learn languages to do so. I wander about the villages and bazaars and the outlying little groups of Arab tents and reed huts, talking with the Arabs. You get to know them, their ways and customs and it all is or may be of immense value.

This is a rich country. The soil is gloriously fertile, if only it could be irrigated scientifically. All around us now are growing wheat, barley, pomegranates, apricots; vines are in full bloom and the date trees are in flower with their curious little white blooms. If we step outside the Hospital grounds, we follow little footpaths winding in and out amongst the golden brown wheat. Above us the date palm tree fronds meet and form a complete celling in mid air and supported by their trunks is a vast network of vines, whilst scattered amongst the wheat are pomegranate, fig and apricot trees. The ground is carpeted with wild flowers. There are bushes of mimosa, flashing dragonflies and blue kingfishers. This will all be over in a fortnight's time when the heat arrives and the gardens of nature extending hundreds of miles through the jungle will disappear. Nothing will remain but sand, dust, palm trees and heat. At present it is beautiful beyond words. Later, it is also beyond words!! In the evening everywhere one sees Arabs cutting their wheat and barley with their sickles and when the sun sets gathering it up, swinging it over their shoulders and returning home rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. In a week, this harvest will be over; then we wait through the long hot months for the ~~date~~ grape harvest and with it the date and pomegranate harvests in early September. I enclose a little pressed pomegranate flower in remembrance of the High Priest of the Ark, who wore them round the bottom of his clothing!

Do you remember? The tree, which bore this blossom, grows outside the Plague Ward. It is one of [redacted] to make the hospital beautiful with flowers and flowering trees, to make his patients happier when they are well enough to go outside. A soil that can grow wheat below, vines in mid air and palms above is indeed some soil. We could do with a tone or two in our rock garden.

16. 5. 18. I am working pretty hard, but on alternate evenings. I get out in a little dug-out canoe with another officer and we paddle miles up and down the river, up creeks to the desert. We call at the little Arab villages and my Arabic helps greatly and makes out visits very interesting. We wear our shorts, shirts, ~~puttees~~, helmets, like two Indian chiefs. The creeks run off the main river and vary in width from eighty to a hundred yards and are often two or three miles long. All kinds of little tributary creeks form an intricate system of waterways, extending on both sides of the river for as far as four miles inland, the banks lined with reeds and long grasses. They meander through the palm jungles, past little villages, and where they end in the edge of the desert, cultivations ceases. When we land the leading Arab, the headman of the village meets us and we are invited into the village club - a little reed and bamboo hut in which incense is burning and Arabs are squatting about puffing hookahs and talking. We enter and smoke Arab cigarettes and drink coffee and after a short

conversation the village come down to see us off and we paddle back to the hospital. It is a delightful experience but only possible if you speak Arabic. The creeks make an ideal place for canoeing, but you have to be careful not to upset you canoe as sharks abound and will quickly deal with you.

Yesterday we killed the biggest snake Leslie has seen in Mesopotamia; it was about five feet long and was crawling up some wire netting in one of the huts. It is an entirely new experience living in a country where man still fears wild creatures, such as sharks, snakes, wolves. At home it seemed a romantic thing, but when you are face to face with it, you are conscious of a primitive weakness. There is the same sense of the smallness of man that you get when you are in a big thunder-storm. The difference lies in being <u>interested</u> in Nature (or God), or <u>fearing</u> her. At home, we are interested in Nature, but we have no cause to fear her. Here, we fear Nature, her heat, her sandstorms, her diseases, her wild life. It is this new sense of fear, which is so striking.

[redacted] Vide Script.

I have just been to the dentist. I borrowed a car and had a grand run over the desert to an outlying hospital, where the dentist carries on his nefarious career. What a difference from the usual visits. A run over the desert, meeting camels, Indians and every type of traveller and soldier.

Then a little hut with mad sides, with inside the usual appliances: a regular chair, a drill, a gas-apparatus: all stuck away on the Arabian desert!

I am reading a most interesting book, "From the Gulf to Ararat", J.E. Hubbard, Blackwood & Sons. The writer was on the Commission the year before the war, fixing the boundary between Turkey and Persia. Do try to get hold of the book. It absolutely describes the people and their customs.

I saw a piece of stone - STONE - the other day: the first piece of any kind I have seen, since I came out!

22. 5. 18. As I write, I can see the English mail-steamer's masts slipping up the river, the masts standing out above the dense forest of palms as she slowly steams up stream. At her foremast is the red pennant with three white crosses which signifies that she has our home letters on board. The whole picture is like a theatre scene - the blue sky, green palms and blue-yellow river dotted with little native boats, with their picturesque sails and gaily dressed Arab sailors and the large grey steamer with her spotless decks; white awnings and brightly coloured bunting flying. All steamers fly their name in signal flags and it looks fine. Crowding the decks are masses of troops - brown, bronzed English Tommies in their helmets, shorts and rolled sleeves, and dark Indian cavalry men in their turbans and long tunics. As the steamer sounds her siren, the escaping white steam from the funnel gives the last little touch of white to the picture. Even now, a motley

group of native boats, tugs and motor launches follow in her wake like little street boys after a band. They go to take off the mails. The blue river is cut up and churned in every direction and as the steamer slows down and drops anchor - such shouting, tooting of horns, blowing of tugs' sirens. Within fifteen minutes of the anchor being dropped the first mail bags are over the side into the queer little native craft that take them to the Field Post Office. There are generally six thousand bags of letters on board! It takes a day or two to sort them!!

What a queer, simple life we live out here! It is nearly a year now since I had a bath or saw a real bathroom - like the old advertisement for Pear's Soap! The last train I saw was in Italy last August. A tram seems a thing I knew in childhood. Leslie and I often say that when we come home, the first thing we shall do will be to ride on top of a tram; then have a bath in a bath with hot and cold water taps, and later go to bed in a real bed! In nearly a year now we have slept in camp-beds or on bed-boards without mattresses!! But the life has its charms, and I for one never miss in any way the impedimenta of civilisation. Tinned food is quite as good as any other kind of food! Lime juice and soda, bully beef, biscuits and tinned apricots form a lunch not to be beaten. It is like a long continuous picnic - <u>if</u> there were no other side!

It is impossible to describe this intense heat. It is a

most extraordinary thing. It is not really bad, nothing like as uncomfortable as you would imagine from the accounts of it. Of course, whilst you are well, you can stand and really enjoy any amount of sunshine and heat, but for the sick and wounded it is a different matter. It is 107 in the shade as I write, but if you had not a thermometer you would only feel that it was a very hot day - yet I have taken two "heat-strokes" into hospital to-day!

I have just been inoculated for another disease. This makes my sixth inoculation against various ailments! I am now fully prepared to meet small-pox, plague, cholera, typhoid, paratyphoid A and paratyphoid B. These now no longer have the same power over one as they have over the uninoculated. It is rather amusing collecting all these things in your blood whether they do you any good or not. So in deference to my promise to you to take <u>every</u> care, whenever there is inoculation going, I am a candidate! Whether it helps or not, I don't know, but I do know that the only illness I have had since I reached this country (except dysentery and sandfly fever) have been after inoculation for diseases which never came to me!

I am getting on with Turkish slowly. It is not nearly so hard as Arabic, much more like a European language with conjugations, declensions and regular inflexions. Arabic has none of these things. Each word has to be learnt separately. There is no rule for the plural or for the feminine or for verb conjugations. They are all different <u>words</u>. There is no future

tense. There are no infinitives. It is not a language but an accumulation of gurgles and expectorations!!

In Arabic the owner of anything is the father of the thing. Some of these metaphors are amusing to us. Thus the snipe (bird) is Âbu Rhashn, "the father of noses", a particularly appropriate name for the long beaked snipe. A stout man is called, "the father of bellies", and the Arab who looks after bodies in the cemetery is called Âbu jinarjiz, "the father of corpses".

To me, the meskena, the copper water-pot is the most beautiful thing I have seen out here. Every time I see it carried, the beauty of the encircling arm strikes me anew. Are any more wanted? There are still a few good ones I could hold of. But I fear so to introduce copper work into anyone's house, without asking first, as it means so much more toil for the housekeeper.

There is really little of beauty apart from its use and setting to send home. Nothing looks so appalling as oriental paraphenalia in our English drawing rooms - too depressing for words.

23. 5. 18. This letter is only a supplement to yesterday's. The mail, whose arrival I described, brought us sad news. Price was a splendid fellow, a real scout and a good chum. Though these men's bodies die, their spirit lives for our example of sacrifice and inspires our country to do more and more nobly. England can never replace her scouts who are dying each day. Every time I hear of friends passing, I wonder how the country will replace them, how are the boys of the present time to learn without a teacher? Then I feel deeply thankful to know that you and willing workers are building up for England her future men. Wipe away from the minds of our boys the clogging thoughts of selfishness and ease. If you get them early enough, you can and will make of them "men for the country and for others", instead of their growing up to be "men of the world". It is my

most earnest wish on behalf of the country that you should continue to secure men for England from the boys of Rashcliffe. They have good stuff in them and they only require to be shown. I fear many of my older scouts will have to go through it somewhere in France or other fronts and I know they will not fail but will be reliable soldiers with high ideals. Keep up the supply; get hold of the new recruits and send each year a set of trained boys for the country to carry on the work of our fallen soldiers. In spite of everything, keep up our supply of reliable men The importance in the Army of honesty or reliability of one man is enormous - far more than I could ever explain. One man you can trust is worth any number of others.

It is a terrible time. We feel for you at home. The strain must be awful. As our patients pass on to another life and we have to write the letters to the parents or wife of young officers and men, we feel and to some extent understand the anxiety and distress at home. But we must be brave. [redacted] Strength to bear and happiness at home are what we must have - we must be always happy to encourage others and brave and strong to carry on. We must shut our eyes to all else and forge doggedly ahead to victory and freedom. Encourage others and train us boys for the Army - <u>not</u> litte automatons in uniform but real pukka scouts. Remember [redacted] we owe our duty to those who have

fallen. I believe all these watch us in our time of tests and trials. Let us do as they have done and while doing be patient and happy to help others.

It is late now. All are in bed. There is a full bright moon and all is quiet. The litte streets are deserted save for the deep dark shadows of the overhanging doors and windows cast by the moon. All seems at peace.

Good-night [redacted]

6. 6. 18. One is very isolated here. Even cables vary enormously in the time they take. Some-times they are through and in London in sixty minutes (one hour) after leaving here and sometimes they take seven or eight days. Anxiety is here as everywhere. The sacrifices demanded are more than most of us realised. Meanwhile, we must all carry on keenly and patiently in our little places and leave it to other to direct us. We must "Be Prepared". There seems little one can do beyond one's work.

I can talk Hindustanee and Arabic and am getting on with Turkish (the exam. is next month), hoping that both prefessionally and linguistically I may be prepared for anything. Also as I am doing a course of riding I am getting very fit and accustomed to long hours in the saddle. I get out for two or three hours hard riding a day. I am reading Army Sanitation and Public Health, also history and travel of these parts. One feels so anxious to be doing more, but one can only make oneself prepared. What a fine motto "Be Prepared" is. I do not mean

to leave anything undone to make me more useful to the country and to win the war. I tell you this, because you often ask me what I do in my spare time.

Last Sunday I called with Jackson on one of the leading Arabs here, a cousin of the Sheik of Mohommerah, and for the first time in my life was waited on by real slaves - tall negroes, dressed in white, with white skull caps. They have fine, ebony black faces. They receive no payment and their lives are their master's. He can kill them if he wants to, but they are very happy. They marry and have their families in his house and many of them have been born in the house and have always lived there. They have comfortable quarters, food and extras and are quite contented. It seemed extraordinary to see real slaves in the flesh, but very strong, well, and happy they looked. I told the Arab chief it was just like the Arabian Nights to see black slaves carrying about lamps and dishes. Jokingly I asked him if he had an executioner. To my surprise, he answered: "Certainly. I will send for him." A few minutes later the absolute picture of a typical Arabian Nights executioner appeared: an immense negro and one of the strongest men I have seen. His master told me this man had executed between three hundred and four hundred people before the English came, but now it was not allowed!! Before we arrived, this Arab, who was the leading man in Basra, could execute people when and where he liked. It was done in his presence with a large, curved scimitar. Perfect Arabian Nights!

In the days of Turkish rule, this Arab went about with a personal guard of forty men, and even now, when he came down to the boat to see us off, in addition to his slaves, six or seven Arabs walked down with him. Ahead of us walked a slave, dressed in white, carrying an old-fashioned lamp and the scene, the procession down the street where the old houses nearly met overhead, lit up by the light thrown from the slave's lamp, was most charming. Most of this information about our host, I gathered from an Armenian who had lived here before the war. But to be waited upon by real slaves and to look upon a negro executioner, who wielded a scimitar, was a strartling experience.

Yesterday Leslie was telling me about the man who looks after the issue of rations at Isolation, who speaks very broad Yorkshire and runs his little show more like a grocer's shop than a quarter-master's store and has difficulty is using the Army lingo. I have mentioned him to you before. He is Sergeant Perkins, but he prefers to be called Mr. Perkins. He told Leslie yeaterday with reference to an Indian soldier, Chirak Dene, who has just come back from a month's leave in India: "I think Mr. Chirrag Dean looks all the better after his little holiday". Poor Leslie! A leave being called a holiday. and the universal use of Mr. instead of Private!! The sergeant told Leslie the other day: "You know I ration these 'ere Indians for four days and after two days they 'ave etten it all oop and they coon runnin' oop to me and say, "Oh!

Out here, we think it is likely they must ask for R.A.M.C. volunteers for France, but I am not sure they would let me leave here, as I know Arabic.

COME TO MESOPOTAMIA.

Plenty of Sunshine - No Rainfall.

Recreations for all - Build mud huts.
Catch sharks.
Shoot wild dogs.
Learn tongue twisting languages.

No street noises - No income tax man.

Plenty of life of all kinds.

Flies - plenty of interest for Naturalists.

Murders - plenty of interest for Coroners.

Thefts - Judges welcomed.

Healthy and Salubrious Climate.

1.

British Lords.

21. 8. 17.

(A sketch of a hut among palm trees.)

This is my little Grey Home in the East, where I am living at present. My bed is just inside the door and with the rats in the roof I share my hut with other officers.

110 in the shade
22. 8. 17.

We arrived at Basra two days ago. We came up the river for ninety miles, a wide sandy river with thick dark palm forests on each side and little Arab encampments under the trees. Unfortunately these Arabs are a very wild race and hostile, so we view them from our boat, at a distance. They live in huts, which they construct in a few minutes from the reeds which line the water's edge. In front of each encampment is a long dug-out canoe, which they paddle along and fish and hunt from. Around and in the shelter are a few sheep and goats and often some fine horses. They lead a gipsy life - eating dates, hunting and fishing. They generally keep a wolf dog which only stays with them for about a year and then clears off and joins the wolves and jackals.

We had a comfortable steamer journey up. We reached Basra about 8 p.m. - dark, with moon and stars - and were met by motor ambulances, which drove us for some miles through date forests to our camp. It is a most primitive place, but most comfortable. We live in huts. Each consists of a framework of wood, sides of plaited river reeds, and roof of mats made of leaves of date-palms woven together. The whole camp lies far away in the middle of a

date-palm forest. At night, when we arrived, the huts were outlined with the palms against the sky. The Arabs had lit their fires and the light of the fires on the dark Arab faces, the fronts of the huts and the date-palms was wonderfully weird. We settled down in the huts and next morning went over to see Leslie.

I am posted to his hospital for duty and am going over there to-day to begin work. I am very glad to get the chance of being there for some months as the experience in infectious diseases is most important and interesting.

In addition I have started to learn Hindustanee so that I shall be available for duty with the Indian native Field Ambulances The language is most interesting but difficult. As we have at the Hospital native troops as well as British men and officers I shall get good oportunities of learning their language. Also I hope to have more experience in Sanitation, especially hospital and field sanitation, and experience in the different types of food for different native regiments - a most important point if one intends to apply for work among native troops.

The country is just white clay-sand, inches deep in dust and covered everywhere with date-palms. At intervals creeks from the river intersect the forest and break it up into islands. Here and there are little native villages of two types. In one, the larger houses are built of clay-bricks baked in the sun and covered with mud; the smaller houses are built simply of mud. In the other
ENQUIRE. (the sedentery Arabs) the huts are built of reeds, and the roofs of matting made from date-palm leaves. The third type of dwelling that of the Marsh Arab, the one we saw first on our arrival, I have already described. Finally we see the desert Arabs or Bedouins.

The life of the Bible is being lived here every day by the population. In the bazaar, you can see the disciples sitting round teachers and philosophers, questioning and listening. The boats are just like Noah's Arks with high carved poops behind. They closely resemble the boats of Elizabethan times.

We move from place to place in dug-out canoes with two Arabs, who paddle us along. Generally there are only two Arabs, but you often see fully manned canoes.

Please remember me to the Surgery Tap. I often think of its cool, clear water when we are drinking our muddy warm liquid from the Tigris, saturated with chlorine. 110 in the shade!

(Sketch of Surgery Tap.)

THE BASE ISOLATION HOSPITAL,
BASRA, MESOPOTAMIA.

Thursday,
28. 8. 17.
1.30 p.m.

This hospital is on one of the many islands in the Tigris and I am settled here for a time. I am in charge of the British Wards here, but at present we have not got a great deal in, just sufficient to keep us busy.

My room is in the old home of the Turkish Admiral at Basra. It is a typical oriental building of tiles with a flat roof. My bedroom is about the size of our bathroom, with walls two feet thick and barred windows with no glass but merely shutters. The floor is roughly tiled with square clay tiles; the walls are rough brick and the roof of wood and matting. In it I have my camp bed, a writing table and chair and a shelf for my things. I share this

with rats, lizards, sandflies and mosquitoes, and later, when the weather suits them, with lice and fleas! The rats don't trouble one, and we don't trouble them. Lizards I love to see running about on the floor and walls and we encourage them as they catch mosquitoes. Sandflies are appalling. Fleas are not in it with them. They set on you as you lie in bed and bite you all over. At present I am like a case of confluent small-pox, with bites all over my body!!

Specimen of my fore-arm as I lie in bed. (Drawing.)

The flies are small, but I am sure they have very malevolent looking little faces! The mosquitoes put in a bite where the flies leave any space clear for them.

This country is positively alive with things jumping, crawling, creeping, flying, running and swimming - mostly small, from the size of ants to moths. The table-cloth at meals is grey with various specimens and if you put your glass down, half the world jumps to avoid it!! Out of the bars of my windows, on one side I overlook the Tigris; on the other, a date-palm, with masses of dates, obstructs the view.

We are all well, but the heat is tremendous - 116 in the shade..

Last night in company with an Indian doctor I explored a part of the island we are on. It is about fifteen miles long and six miles wide. We found, first, a huge field of rice growing. Further on, we wandered through a jungle of date-palms where we met Arabs Drawing who (as we are visitors in the district at present) are friendly. We came to an Arab village of little reed-huts - with a reed stockade built round it - containing Arabs, children, donkeys and hens. In clearings in the woods around the village, were plantations of cucum-

cumbers, watermelons, bananas and rice. After an hour or two's walk we returned, disturbing numerous tortoises, who were wandering about taking their evening strolls, big tortoises and little tortoises. PICTURE.

It is interesting to see how Mr. Tortoise behaves if you turn him on his back. He puts out his head and tail suddenly, making a bow of his body, and shoots himself into his usual position. PICTURE.

As we walked home the moon came out; the tortoises and flying things, especially bats, increased, and all the nocturnal animals and insects appeared. I shall go again to-night and explore another direction.

I am working each morning before breakfast at my Hindustanee. I write and exercise which Leslie corrects. Hum Bhar jartar hei. (I am going out.) We get up early; I generally do some Hindustanee; bath; brekker (porridge, eggs, bacon, jam); Wards until lunch (various Indian dishes) at 12.30; rest, write or read until 4 p.m. and then Wards or bacteriology. After that we go for a walk or read until dinner at 8 p.m. and so to bed. The heat makes one want a lot of sleep, but I feel as fit as a sandfly and full of beans. We very rarely leave the island, so our life is limited - very different from home!

Outside our palm trees is the open Arabian desert - sand for ever in every direction, apparently. The date harvest is in full swing. The fruit is beautiful, in large golden brown clusters among the grey-green of the palms. The Arabs have a great way of climbing up for the dates. They tie a piece of cloth loosely round the tree trunk and sit in it and them keep pushing themselves

distinguished from the Arabs. You remember of the building of the Tower of Babel it is recorded, "For stones they use bricks and for mortar slime". Any day you can see the Arabs or Chaldeans using slime as mortar with their bricks. We use the slime from the river bed, mixed with straw or rushes, to make the walls to keep back the floods. Moreover, Leslie tells me that higher up the river the bricks are cuneiform and he has seen houses built of old cuneiform bricks which have been excavated.

20. 9. 17. The weather here has become cold at nights. We need two blankets. In the day time it is still hot.

[redacted]. It is extraordinary how Time ceases to be of any importance. Time, which makes our life in England, disappears here. You do not make any appointments and nobody has a watch. A gun is fired at midday. Other-

up with their feet and lifting the cloth higher, alternately.

PICTURE.

When they are at the top, they throw down the fruit, which is gathered by little bronze, curly-haired children. In the river the black oxen lie with only the tops of their backs and noses showing. At feeding and milking time, the Arab children, armed with sticks, come hurrying down from the reed huts and jump into the river (heedless of sharks with which the river abounds) and swim out to the bullocks and cows. The bullocks don't wish to leave the cool of the river for the heat of the desert and the greatest game of hide-and-seek ensues - the little bronze figures swimming and splashing about amongst the slowly moving bullocks, who keep slipping past them into the river again. The noise and shouting and splashing go on for a long time until animals and children are thoroughly exhausted and both come ashore!

PICTURE.

You would be interested to see the mode of raising water from the Tigris for irrigation and other purposes.

PICTURE.

A man pushes up the weight at one end, which causes the pail to dip under the water at the other end; then the weight falling at this end pulls up the bucket of water.

The colour here is beyond dreams and is an incessant joy.

I am enjoying the life and it is most interesting, but, of course, there is another side to it which makes one in constant need of Law.

As this letter describes my life, I term it "The Entomological Letter". I shall be glad if you will tell me if you receive this safely.

5. 9. 17. We get up here about 4.30 a.m. and have breakfast and work until 11.30 a.m. when everyone-Arabs, Indians, British soldiers and officers-stop work for lunch, We get into our night things and the whole Hospital goes to bed until 5 p.m., when we have tea, get up and return to our labours until sunset. If you don't, you probably get sunstroke. I think of you in St. Andrew's now. When the War is over, I shall come to St. Andrews and sit in the Step Rock until I feel really cold and like myself again. One gets, in this atmosphere, to become more and more like a reptile but so far I have not discovered any scales on my body. One does not walk, one slowly drags one's length over the ground like those huge snakes one sees in the Zoo. I am sure if I lived here I should be a crocodile or a water snake before I knew where I was!

The natural history of this part of the world is enormously varied - hundreds of varieties of dragon-flies (orange, green, blue-enamel, etc.) and the blue-green tropical kingfisher of which, I believe, there are fifty or sixty varieties. In addition we have pelicans, flamingoes and last but not least the common English house-sparrows. I hear the robin is here in the winter also.

The Yorkshire soldier who keeps our stores here affords us much amusement in his dealings with the Indian troops and their rations. He is very solemn and devoid of smiles. He was explaining to Leslie (Major Dunbar) yesterday - "Oop they coom reg'lar as a clock and say: 'Sahib, sahib, we've eaten all us rashuns'". If you saw the tall, fine Indians, you would know how amusing it is to hear their speech turned into the vernacular. As a matter of fact, very few of them can speak a work of English.

10. 9. 17. We carry on as usal. We are not busy at present.

We are also close to "Ur of the Chaldees". The boats, which I have told you are absolutely Noah's Arks, with lids on, are built of mulberry wood and are taken up the river to Hit to be painted all over with bitumen. Then if an Arab is "flitting" he puts his sheep, goats, poultry, horses and family on to one of these boats and sails to wherever he wishes to go. There are very frequently floods and the Arabs then continue to live in their boats until the floods subside. The rain lasts for forty days and on the forty-first day a wind springs up from the desert and the rain stops and the waters begin to abate. You can see how historically accurate the tale of Noah is and how it is enacted here every year.

Some miles to the East of us is Shush where Daniel did his "stunts".

In the bazaars you can meet the Jews who have been here since the Captivity. They are quite distinct. Moreover, you meet commonly Chaldeans (the builders of Babylon) who again are easily

wise, you get up; work until you feel hungry; get something to eat when you feel you want it; work or read until you feel hungry again and so on. There is no dividing the day into little portions and keeping appointments. If you feel inclined you just sit in the sun for a couple of hours and watch others doing the same!! This liberation from Time is a glorious emancipation, and we seem to get through a fair amount of work. Yesterday morning I was busy dredging in the Tigris for a part of the motor launch engine that had fallen overboard. Then at 9 a.m. I went round my Wards; next I censored about two hundred letters; then read a monograph on Cholera; in the evening I went into the question of forming a drum and fife band amongst the Indian troops to help them on marches. So you see, life is far from monotonous.

I am having a tunic and slacks made from khaki drill; total cost, including cloth and making, £1!

The system of presents among the Indians amuses me. If a man wants to go on leave, and Leslie cannot give him leave, he goes off and brings a conciliatory gift of sweets or cakes and then profers his request again. It is so difficult to explain to them what discipline means. They think you want more gifts. I am getting very fond of them. Many of the older men have most magnificent heads and faces.

I was operating last night and the scene struck me as most romantic. The patient was an Arab, who was lying on a rough bed in a wooden hut. An Indian in a turban was giving chloroform, two tall Sikh Indians in turbans and khaki uniforms were acting as nursing orderlies. As the case was infectious, we

were all wearing masks. I was in a white operating gown, and the whole was illuminated by a hurricane paraffin lamp. An Indian bacteriologist stood at the foot of the bed. The light on the dark bearded faces above the khaki uniforms, the mingling of the primitive East with the most modern civilization in the shape of chloroform and sterilization were extraordinary. The heads of the old Indians are bearded and like those of the most kindly Biblical characters.

26. 9. 17. To-day I will tell you of my day's work - an average day. At breakfast I fed my mongoose on milk and egg. Then I went round the new buildings and the hospital generally with Leslie to see all things. Next we inspected our poultry, etc. At 10 a.m. I went to my wards and was there until 11 a.m., when I inspected the meat potatoes, milk, etc. At 11.15 a.m. I went to the bacteriological laboratory and was working there until lunch. After lunch I am writing to you instead of joining in the general sleep, in which all indulge. At 4 p.m. I shall have tea and at 4.15 I take charge of a fatigue party of Indian troops to clear up tins, etc., and destroy all malaria breeding places. At 5.30 p.m. the launch bringing our new cases from the other hospital and ships, etc', will be in and I shall be in the receiving room to diagnose the cases and send each to his own ward; see they are bathed and their clothing disinfected. At 6 p.m. I shall make a round of the washing places, lavatories, cook-houses and wards of the whole hospital and report on any irregularities. These are my duties as orderly officer, which

occurs every fourth day.

Work keeps us fairly busy, but, by its nature, makes it desirable to keep outside of doors as much as possible. This I am jolly glad to do. I am absolutely fit and well and feeling in priceless form. The dangers, I can truthfully tell you, of our work can be almost entirely eliminated by the very careful methods we adopt. We take every care, wearing masks and overalls amongst serious cases, [illegible] I get plenty of exercise, take good care of myself and need not cause you one moment of anxiety.

It is weird how the diseases we have in depend on the presence of certain insects and it is only when the insects are alive that you get these diseases; e.g., from May to September we have sandflies and mosquitoes (it is too hot for other insects) and we get sandfly fever and cholera; later house-flies come and we get the diseases carried by house-flies; later, with the cold weather, come lice and we then get lice-carried diseases, and later still come fleas with flea-carried diseases. Health absolutely depends on Entomology and insects get to play a more important part in one's life than ever before!

Yesterday we caught a snake alive and showed him to my pet mongoose. The mongoose is very young, so we did not let them have a real fight, but we shall get another snake when he is a little older and have a fight. The snake won't get a look-in. Yesterday the mongoose bristled up and got wildly

excited. He is a ripping pet and lives in my tunic pocket and up my sleeve. He feeds on meat, eggs and milk and we are great friends. Yesterday I tried a little snake-charming with my chanter - I played a good deal but the snake refused to be charmed!! He simply lay coiled up and would not sway with the music. I must get another to have another try - there are plenty of them about. You would be amused with the position the mongoose takes up at breakfast time or tea time. He hangs over the spout of the tea-pot with his head and fore legs on one side and his hind legs on the other to keep warm.

PICTURE.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday next there is a big Mahommedan Festival which the Indians and Arabs will keep and, of course, our Indians and Arabs will be encouraged to keep it in the island. As you know, the Koran is very like the Old Testament and this festival is to commemorate the occasion when Abraham was going to sacrifice his son and God sent the ram which was "caught in the thicket by its horns". So on Friday we shall eat certain special food, which the Indian cooks (who work for the Indian troops (300) and Indian patients) will send across to us, and we shall then take seats before upon a stage on which various plays will be enacted. I see the stage is erected and ready for the performances on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. I wonder if the Jews have a feast to commemorate Abraham's sacrifice.

Last night (Tuesday) the head Chaplain came over and we had a service. It was held in the wooden hut, which is our

receiving room, The altar was a table covered with a Union Jack and lit by a hurricane lamp. I sat by Leslie. It was weird singing the old well-known hymns. How often we have sung them together at home!

It is curious how we all stick to our own religion. We (Christians) hold our service once a week; others pray each day on their little mats; and others have their festivals at intervals and worship their own gods. We all worship something. Surely the things worshipped must really all be the same God, only differently manifested

The effect of the mists as they rise from the river is most weird. They lie in white and blue bands, one above the other all along the river and creeks, and gradually join up. It is a most strange and beautiful sight.

3. 10. 17
Wednesday
3 p.m.

Please excuse the smears of ink. Mr. Mongoose is running about on the table and over me.

Yesterday was a domestic day. After a morning in the Bacteriological Laboratory I came up to my room about 1 p.m. I dusted and bee-waxed my little bed table made of teak; dusted my books and kit; washed through and darned a pair of trousers, which was torn; made two button-holes, which I worked in a shirt for my badges of rank; darned two pairs of socks and marked two shirts. The little hussif is most <u>useful</u> and I use it a great deal. How I love a life in which you do all for yourself and do not rely on others! The day before yesterday Leslie and I measured a new drill tunic for me. We

tried it on and fitted it just like Mr. Wilson does!!

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday we were the guests of the Mahommedans and Arabs, for the occasion of the "Buck Reed" - the feast to commemorate Abraham's sacrifice. Our dinner was provided by the Indians connected with the hospital and consisted of differentiated forms of spiced rice and meats; delicious! I am getting the recipes signed by the cook, who is direct from the jungle!! After dinner we were taken to a part of the island where, surrounded by palm trees, the stage had been set up. The play was partly comic, partly tragic, and there were interludes of dancing, including a wonderful snake-charmer's dance and a wild mountain dance of the Ghurkas. The Indians are marvellous actors and though all was in Hindustanee and a great deal of it one could not follow, it was wonderfully interesting. On Saturday we were the guests of the Indian carpenters employed in the hospital and had a similar dinner and further elaborate plays. During the performance; drinks, chocolates, coffee and cigarettes were handed round. Everyone wore white turbans and white robes, thrown over one shoulder like a toga. You can imagine the scene: the stage in the centre surrounded by a mass of Indians in white, enclosed by palm trees and at the back the old Arab palace in which we live, and over the whole a bright full moon. On November 15th the Hindus have their great feast, and we give them a stunt at Christmas.

Last Sunday we had a very impressive little communion at 7

a.m., which I attended. These things are very delightful on Active Service and I thought of you all.

The heat has gone and given place to cold weather, especially at night; the sunshine is wonderfully bright and I have not seen a drop of rain since I left England nearly three months ago. Every day is bright, warm sunshine and no one ever thinks of wet or fog or cloudy skies. We are pretty busy in hospital and an epidemic is requiring a lot of bacteriological work to control it. [redacted] I have always been tremendously keen on Public Health work, more than any branch of medicine and here I am getting sanitation, plenty of infectious diseases and plenty of bacteriology. I am sure the future lies with Public Health in England. [redacted]. Of course, the diseases we are dealing with here are quite different from any we get commonly in England and only occur in England in isolated cases, one or two a year.

I have just had a topping tea which my Indian servant has brought in; tea and toast with thick Army dripping and salt on it - a feast for a king! I hope Mrs. Holroyd is well. I can hear her cheery laugh and smell her new made scones ready for tea. I have a lecture to give to my nursing orderlies on sanitation. After that I shall go to my old friend, the Bacteriological Laboratory, then mess; then a meeting about football,

I am getting up for them, and so to bed.

The mongoose and I are as fit as fleas. I can get anything I want out here, so please do not trouble to send anything, unless Annette has some such trifle as a pound of parkin. We cannot get parkin!!

I have not heard anything more about going up the line, but as the hospital is always busiest in winter I expect I shall be kept here for the winter.

C O N T A C T C A M P.

INDIAN SECTION OF BASE HOSPITAL,

October 1917, BASRA.

11. 10. 17. I have been put to a most interesting job: the Sanitary Control of the Indian section of the Hospital. I have sole charge of a large Contact Camp, which consists of men who have been exposed to various diseases and my work is to determine:

(1) the importance and danger of contact to the disease;

(2) whether so called "Carriers" are any danger to the community;

(3) how many contacts and carriers develop the disease

It is a definite piece of work undertaken by order of the Assistant-Director of Medical Services (A.D.M.S.). The camp is attached to the Isolation Hospital, but is a quarter of a mile away in a clearing in the palm trees, alongside a creek. I have organized and made it; laid out and built kitchens, washing-places, etc.; arranged incinerators; appointed my own cooks, orderlies, washing men - all Indians. I am the only Britisher in camp. I have about 220 in camp now, men who have been in contact with infectious diseases of all kinds and so I hope for some good useful experience. My work is to separate the men into:-

(1) those who have the disease;

(2) those who carry the disease without actually having it;

(3) those who are merely contacts.

This entails the bacteriological examination of hundreds of swabs of throats, noses, bowels, etc., and will keep me very busy. I have my own little laboratory, off the main laboratory attached to the hospital and the A.D.M.S. has got me the necessary apparatus.

This morning I bathed my Persian gentlemen, who were louse-infected. One poor old gentleman was quite overcome at the sight of soap!! I am in my element and enjoy the work and feel it is very useful. We have a very keen four men on the staff at present: one from Shetland; one Indian, who is a professor of bacteriology in Madras University, a delightful man; a medical officer of health, who used to be assistant Port Medical Officer for Liverpool and is now in Monmouth (Harries); Leslie and myself. The work is pure bacteriology and most interesting. It will be of great value to me if I ever do civil Public Health work. I have always felt that the great importance of medicine was Preventive Medicine rather than Curative Medicine.

How you would love the organization out here! We plan and put up our own buildings; construct huts from reeds and mud; design and make the furniture for the wards - beds, tables, etc.; destroy mosquito breeding pools and live an absolute scouts' life in the open air and sunshine. We often go to bed at 8.15 p.m. and get up at 5 or 5.30 a.m., directly it is light.

for the present

It will be good to see England again, but [redacted] ". Those two things will make me always long for England, but apart from them, give me a gun, a canoe, a few sheep and horses, a nice Bedouin goatskin tent! - and a microscope!!

My mongoose is well and happy and wishes to be remembered to you. If the war ends soon, he will come back with me to England.

17. 10. 17. I find the weather most pleasant here now, but very hot for about four hours in the middle of the day. We had a few drops of rain three days ago, the first I have seen since leaving England and the first in Mesopotamia since March. It lasted five minutes; then we wait for one or two months for another shower!! The sun is a joy. Every day there is bright clear sunshine with, often, a nice cool wind - though, I may add, sometimes there is a day of burning hot sun, with a dry, hot parching, sand-laden wind from the Arabian desert, but never rain, fog or mist, except the night mists on the creeks and marshes.

The birds are wonderful in colour; every kind of kingfisher of every hue; eagles, hawks, jays, and the colour of the insects is gorgeous. Part of my work in connection with the sanitation of my camp is to examine all the pools and creeks for mosquito larvae, and whilst engaged in this work I have excellent opportunity for watching birds and insects. We have many bulbuls in

the "grounds" and many little pied wagtails, swarms of sparrows, and in the winter occasional robins. The other evening I was up the Euphrates and we landed on a lovely part of the shore and found two large storks just like those in Japanese pictures. We got quite close up to them, within fifteen yards, when they rose slowly and flew off. We have, too, flamingoes and large flocks of pelicans. I have not yet seen a flamingo.

To-morrow I am to have a motor run in the Persian desert. We are going fifteen miles to a village known as Shaiba, where there was a big fight a year ago, and from there fifteen miles to Zubeia, a lovely Arab town, the birth-place of Sinbad the Sailor. Then fifteen miles over the desert, home. We are taking tea in the car. Zubeia is a great place for handmade silk and worsted Persian carpets, but I fear I cannot bring you one in my kit!! My movements are too indefinite for me to begin collecting carpets!! However, as the Hospital is rapidly filling and one M.O. was sent up the line to a regiment this week and as my work is undertaken at the special request of the Director of Medical Services, I think I shall be here for some months anyway. When you know the diseases I am working at, you will understand the supreme importance of getting to learn all we can about it and, if possible, to stamp it out of the Force. It is splendid having a definite piece of work, my own laboratory, and for the work to have been undertaken by order of the A.D.M.S.

My Hindustanee goes on apace. It is weird turning from "Put out your tongue" to "Geet Nikkarlo" and "He fair pumps up

his food same as fire-engine" to "woo oolka bhote hei". I am very fond of the Indians and when we understand each other's language we get on famously. It is essential to know Hindustanee to some extent as only occasionally can they speak a few words of English. You would be devoted to the Indians and Arabs, the sunlight and the colours. There are other things you would not like!!

24. 10. 17. To-day has been busy as one of the M.O.s is ill and in addition to treating him, I have had to look after his wards.

This is a great place for learning new facts and new diseases and an excellent training school for Public Health Work. In addition to our cases being all infectious diseases, we have a great deal of purely sanitary and a fair amount of administrative work. If I get a chance, I shall try to keep in touch always with the Sanitary and Infectious Disease prevention side of any work rather than with surgery. However, we need to learn to turn our hands to anything.

Last night the Ghurrkas attached to the hospital gave us some of their ~~natural~~ national dances. As you know, the Ghurrkas come from Nepal (a very cold mountainous country) and a certain number are lent each year to the British Government on condition that no European ever enters Ghurrka territory. Picture the scene here: a starry sky above a clearing, the palm trees; crowds of Indians and Arabs sitting around in a circle lighted up by hurricane lamps and torches. On one side, eight to ten Ghurrkas, who chant the song and two tom-tom players and in the

centre four dancers. They gave us various war and religious dances, very like reels, the dancers moving in and out and across each other, but much faster than in a reel, far more wild and fiery. The men wore their national dress, a short white kilt and looked very fine. After some time, the Sikhs asked to give one of their national dances and a national song; then the Punjaubees, theirs, until one group after another performed. Finally, we decided, as things were looking as if we might have to spend the night in the Ghurrka camp, to allot one night for Ghurrkas, another for Sikh dances another for Punjaubees, another for Arabs, another for Burmese, etc. And so we shall see all. The songs, dances and music are entirely different in each case.

I have been given an interesting account of the difference between East and West in railway travel. In the West we look up time-tables, telephone to the station and fix up the time of the train. An Indian, who wishes to go a train journey, packs up his goods and goes to the station to wait for the train. He may have to wait eight hours or twelve hours. He settles down on the platform and goes to sleep until the train comes. If he is awake when the train comes, well and good! He goes on it. If not, he just sleeps and rests until next day, when again he may be asleep or awake at the time the train passes through. In this way Leslie tells me, they often wait at a station five or six days before they happen to be awake at the time the train comes in. A few days is neither here nor there with them. They have their worldy goods with them; and a

little rice , sufficient to keep off hunger. Is it not a glorious contrast to our own method of rushing through life and packing our days with appointments? The Indians are absolutely happy. Each night they sing and dance in their camp; in every way they are like little children. They have the most childlike faith in their officers and in us as doctors. You could do anything with them when they are in hospital. If they get well: "it is the doctor Sahib who has made them better:" if they die: "it is the will of Allah". In either case they are happy and contented. Another thing that strikes the Englishman here is the unimportance that is attached to life. Life and Death seem much more mingled and little moment seems to be attached to death except as a stage in one's evolution. I think they are right. They are the most contented and happy people I have met, just like a group of happy children. They sing at their work, and dance and sing when they are free. No performance, dance or fête of any kind is complete without a pair of the most absurd clowns dressed as fakirs or as stout old Indians. They are so amusing and clown-like, they keep me ill with laughter. Next day, when you meet the clowns on duty or in the wards, or elsewhere, they salute stiffly and not a sign of humour is seen on their solemn oriental faces. I am getting absolutely devoted to Indians, when I consider how every man is a volunteer - there is no form of conscription of any kind in India - and I see old men of seventy and boys of thirteen and fourteen helping, side by side, in the wards. We asked one old gentle-

man of seventy-five why he was here. He answered in Hindustanee: "We wish to help our government". I wish we could find more of that spirit in England. The difference between a grousing Yorkshire carpenter and a happy, singing Sikh carpenter is the difference between sour milk and sweet cream. One feels it is an honour to attend such men and one is willing to run risks for them. They, on their side, cannot understand why the "doctor sahibs" take such trouble with them. So no wonder a great affection has sprung up between us.

31. 10. 17. I must tell you about my visit to Zubeia, a little town fourteen miles out in the Arabian desert. The effect of the desert is most awe-inspiring - miles of flat sand in every direction for the fourteen miles we covered. At intervals we passed caravans either just starting on their long journey into Central Arabia or just returning - ten or twelve camels in line, laden with merchandise, tall white-robed Arabs walking alongside and deep blue shadows lying in the sand. All around was yellow and white sand and hot burning sunshine. We crossed an old battle-field and saw the remains of the fight, then beyond a little hill, Zabeir came into view. It is a walled city, built of mud and bricks. We saw it, like Jerusalem, on a little raised hill, with the sunset behind it, a group of flat roofed square houses, towers and minarets, rising above its walls.

PICTURE.

We entefed in by the main gate and after wandering through many little narrow streets populated by the most gorgeously

PICTURE.

dressed Arabs and Arab children, we found ourselves in the Market Square and bazaar. I cannot picture to you the glorious blend of colour and oriental life. A great caravan had just come in and the whole of the square was filled with well over eighty camels and dromedaries, all crouching down on the white sand, being unladen by the Arabs in scarlet, yellow, blue and gold, attended by little boys garbed like butterflies. The trappings and harness of the camels, the carpets, dates and bales of merchandise they were unloading, added to the gorgeous colours. In and out wandered white Arab donkeys and old men. At intervals, with much shouting and greeting, eight or ten animals got up and a small caravan started off across the desert. Surrounding the Square was the bazaar, which was contained in little square houses of mud, with open fronts. You know the colour and picturesqueness of any oriental bazaar - the bright robed merchants, the shops without fronts, the coffee, fruit and dates, metal-work, carpets, the old men smoking their hookahs! We were the only Europeans there. It is rarely visited as it is impossible to cross the fourteen miles of desert except in a motor car. We had a glorious run back, the desert white under the moon.

I got a nice old coffee pot for you. I saw an old Arab with it in the street and just bought it from him. It was in a filthy condition. It is made of copper with a brass lid, but the most valuable thing about it is that in the tall handle in the middle of the lid, there is a rattle, so that you cannot open the coffe-pot without making a noise. The object of this

is to prevent your friend putting poison into your coffee when your back is turned!! Poisoning is common amongst the Arabs, so all these old coffee-pots have these rattles.

PICTURE.

I have had it cleaned by my servant and it looks "the business".

I am reading a good book upon Mohammedanism. I have interested myself in the subject, because of the Mohammedan Indians here. They all acknowledge Jesus as one of God's prophets, just as Mohammed was. They call him the "Great Prophet Iswi" and always add the words, "on whom be peace", salaam alicum. They acknowledge him as a great prophet, but do not believe he died on the cross, but think he came eastward and preached peace and love to all men and finally died in Afghanistan. Iswi (Jesus), Daoud (David) are common names among the Arabs and Arab children here. Mohammed's mother was, of course, a Jew. The men in Afghanistan, who give our troops so much bother in Northern India, are Jews in feature and are descendants of the tribes of Dan and Manasseh. All these facts are recorded in this book, which relates the most recent researches into Mohammedan belief. When any Mohammedan acknowledges Jesus as a prophet ("on whom be peace") just as they revere Mohammed as a prophet and just as Brahmins acknowledge Brahma as a prophet and teacher, one feels it presumption to send missionaries out here to teach Jesus only. All creeds here acknowledge one great God over all but they vary in the

teacher they follow, whether he be Brahma, Mohammed or Jesus. How much Professor Cheyne would have enjoyed meeting these men face to face! They are so willing to talk about their religion and do not hide it up or decline to discuss it as I fear some Christians do.

It is a glorious privilege to live in another world as one does in the East. I revel in the new colours and the new thoughts it suggests.

We have succeeded in securing some oatmeal, dripping and molasses and have made some most glorious parkin.

PICTURE.

The brown succulence of the paste of oatmeal and treacle is glorious and is much enjoyed in mess and in mass.

I hope Annette is well - please remember me to her if she has not forgotten me. If she has forgotten me, ask her if she remembers the little boy who used to look after the practice and go out with noisy dirty little boys!!!

The black brethren in Mesopotamia salute you!

PICTURE.

SANITARY OFFICER TO THE BASE HOSPITAL, BASRA.

NOVEMBER, 1917.

4. 11. 17. My very sincerest wishes for a bright Christmas for you both. I hope the thoughts of our Prophet Jesus' birth will strengthen you as it is doing so many in this terrible time of war. Here we feel so much the fact of the Bible and feel to understand the writers' point of view so fully. We see the picture of the Babe's birth so often; the stalls for the cattle, the rich men and the gold, frankincense and myrrh, the glorious stars, the little children. We see, too, the flight of many other mothers with a baby, on an ass and accompanied by an old, venerable Arab. Snow and cold seem out of place and we shall this year see a real Christmas of hot, bright sunshine. Our early Christmas morning will be clear, deep blue sky. The stars here look so much brighter than at home and seem to be suspended from the sky, hanging down like lamps. We know life fully as Jesus knew it - the leper, the epileptic, the fig-tree are all familiar.

I have this week been appointed Sanitary Officer to the Hospital. This, as you know, covers the ground I am most interested in. My work consists chiefly of the prevention of the spread of disease; disinfection of rooms, tents, etc.; isolation of contacts and of units with disease; investigations of origins of infectious diseases; supervision of the purifying

and sterilizing of the water-supply; the extermination of rats, mosquitoes and other disease carrying vermin; inspection of food, milk, etc., and its bacteriology; burning, incineration and general disposal of all the rubbish of the camp and hospital. I have charge of the Contact Camps and am the officer in charge of all British cases with infectious diseases admitted to the hospital. I have, too, the general supervision of the whole of the sanitation of the hospital and the quarantine of the different diseases. It keeps me very busy, but I have fortunately a splendid staff of helpers, especially my two corporals, one Indian, the other British (wounded four times in France).

My rough programme is:-

7.30-8.30 a.m. Inspectiong camps, water-supply, food, etc.

8.30 a.m. Brekker.

9 a.m. till midday, Wards.

12 a.m. Lunch (tiffan)

12.30-1 p.m. Arrange work for afternoon.

1p.m.-3p.m, Read Tropical Diseases on my bed.

3 p.m. Supervision of work, e.g., hut-building, disinfection, digging, etc.

5 p.m.-6 p,m. Evening round of Wards.

6 p.m.-7.30 p.m. Working in Bacteriological Laboratory.

7.30 p.m. Dinner

8.30-9 p.m. Bed.

The above is only the roughest outline of my work, which I

revel in. Sundays are absolutely like other days. Occasionally I take an evening off from 5 p.m.

As there are between six hundred and seven beds here and only four M.O.s we get very wrapped up in our work. As one sees the cases brought in, and then each day numbers discharged fit and ready to go to the Front, and knows of the isolation of the contacts, the work of the microscope, etc., in forming protective rings round each case and thus to prevent an outbreak, one feels that our work is of great value.

I am as fit as a mosquito, bronzed like a tea-planter with big brown knees and feel like nothing else on earth!! If you could only see me for a minute you would know what I mean. I am absolutely strong and well. The life suits me, as I am always at a variety of jobs, from putting up barbed wire entanglements for Turkish prisoners to laying a drain-pipe or making a bacteriological examination. I wish I could be sent up the Line, though I could not be doing more work than I am doing here, nor could I, I think, be doing more valuable work for the Army - but I want to get to the Front. I am sure I shall not for some months. At any rate, not until summer, as they will not remove me from here. This clinical work is so important.

We had a very nice, quiet, little Communion Service yesterday (Saturday) at 6.45 a.m., about twelve of us.

I feel this letter is too much about myself, but I feel I should like you to know exactly what I am doing.

14. 11. 17. This week I saw the most impressive sight I have yet seen in Mesopotamia. In order to encourage horse-breeding among the Arabs and to show sympathy with the Arab's greatest love - his horse - the Political Officers here arranged a Race Meeting out on the desert. In addition to certain races open to Cavalry and Officers' horses, several races were only open to Arabs and Arab horses, i.e., desert horses. The competitors insisted on these being two miles in length, although the prearranged distance was only one mile.

(Cheers! My servant has just brought me in tea and hot buttered toast, six pieces. Splendid fellow!)

The Arabs rode in their headdresses and long, flowing robes; many without saddles, others with handsome trappings. They carry a long stick which they flourish in the air, and they shout as they race. Picture a cloud of dust and out of it emerging the wild brown horsemen brandishing their sticks, and shouting as they rush past, standing up in their saddles in their excitement. The wildest of Valkyrie rides! Group after group appeared out of one cloud of dust, swept past to disappear into another, sometimes seventy or eighty Arabs in one race. They were delighted with the Meeting and much discussion took place. Is it not a fine English gesture to spend

money and time arranging and catering for the interests of a previously hostile community? It is because we do these things that we have colonies and that India is now fighting for us. The Government of India gave the prizes. It was a great idea.

I saw the Arabs getting on their horses before the race. The whole family helped in the mounting. The eldest son often rode; the father helped the boy up, arranged his stirrups, reins, tec., and gave final instructions; while in some cases five or six younger brothers and sisters patted the horse and stroked it, the horse nosing in among them. It was the family horse and as it walked away to the starting- point, the whole family headed by father and ending in little toddlers followed. Love exists throughout the world and it is a great joy to meet it, especially in children and animals. How strong the family tie is in Indian, Arabs, Chinese and every nationality we meet here. The Indians adore their little children. The other day one soldier showed me a letter from his little daughter, aged six years. She goes to a school and this was her first letter in English, "Do you think me? I am always thinking you"!!

To-day is the great Hindoo festival of Duvalas and we are invited to a mingled Religious and Dramatic ceremony at 7.30 till 10.30 on each night for three nights. Out of the river mud many models of gods have been made, painted with green, white, red and decorated with silver paper. One man showed me: "this is my God; there is his wife; there is his servant; there his padré and there his counsellor", pointing to the little clay figures ~~about~~ around a big God riding on a peacock. They do not worship

the images, but they worship the "great God", whose image they try to make in clay.

I am fit and well, brown and healthy and busy. I am tremendously interested in my work and more and more drawn to Public Health Work, which I feel is of such value to the nation.

20. 11. 17. This week has been most interesting, as it was the great "Duvala" feast of the Hindus: Duv- a light; wala- a line; so a line of lights. It is their Feast of Lights, and everywhere were lines of little candles, all lit up at night. We were privileged (Leslie and I) by being invited to a Hindu service in a large tent to take Communion with the great unknown God (Ramah). We went into a tent - a large square marquée - and at the entrance, we took off our boots and puttees and went in barefoot. All over the floor were spread red hospital blankets and all round the sides of the tent blankets were hung and a large white sheet formed a roof over all. At one end was a little room, shut off from the rest by palm leaves and banana leaves, entered by two arches of banana leaves. Inside this room was a little altar, covered with white linen and on the top was a golden cloth on which was placed the Holy Book, which was covered with a red cloth. All around the altar were the gifts of the worshippers - bananas, rock-melons, pomegranates, flour, sweets, sugars, scents, rose-water - all offered as thank-offering for the gift of "seeing" and "light". The room was decorated with wild flowers and a little brazier of incense was burning. We sat down cross-legged with the Indians. The priest

first read and expounded from the Hindu Holy Book and explained in Hindustanee that Hindus, Christians, Mussulmen, Mohammedans were all worshipping God, but all in different ways. He preached the necessity of good will towards each other, and most of the ordinary Christian truths. He then sang a song of worship and burnt small pieces of the flour, sugar, fruit, scent, and etc., on a little brass tray in front of the altar. Then some of the gifts were brought round and all were invited to partake of them, while the remainder were sent to the patients or to the Indians who could not be at the service. The service lasted about an hour and we were very fortunate to be allowed to be present and to be particularly asked to take "Pessad", that is consecrated food. All the rest were Hindus, who are very strict in the observances of their religion. The whole thing was very like our Harvest Festival Communion Service. When we came out in the evening, candles were everywhere. I think it is a beautiful idea to thank God for sight and light. During the service we were all sprinkled with rose-water and various scents. It was explained to us that things would have been better but for "Field Service", which prevented the full ceremonies. The Indians are splendid. When anything is difficult, or disagreeable or dangerous they just say: "Field Service, Kewasti", i.e., "Because we are on Field Service". And that is sufficient reason. There is no grousing. If they are cold at night; if the food is short, if they have to do a night duty, if they cannot hold their full religious festivals, the feeling is "Field Service Kewasti". I wish that feeling could permeate all the people

in England. Men here, if I could tell you of them, are making great sacrifices of their dearest possessions in order to keep off the enemy - and it is a hard enemy we are up against. We are trying out here to put aside sentiment and personal feeling to put our back into beating him. I do not feel sentiment counts now. It is time to wash it out and to put every ounce we can, each into our own work. The things you see in the Army make you feel like that.

Hindustanee goes on apace and I can now hold all my consultations and give orders in it. It is an interesting language and typical of many others. [redacted] Nature, insects, work, language, everything of tremendous interest. To-night I am going out to shoot wild dogs - these animals are like very big dogs, a great deal larger and stronger than Scamp and they breed with the jackals. I have seen many of them about lately, and hydrophobia is rampant amongst them. If they are hungry they attack men, going about between the camps. If they bite, there is much risk of hydrophobia. So to-night Corporal Dicks and I are going on the warpath to reduce their numbers and to drive them to other parts of the island which are uninhabited. They hunt three, four or five in a pack, but, for the most part are cowardly, unless they are hungry.

It is now very cold at nights but gloriously hot during the day - no rain yet since leaving England. Here, I may add, I am fit and well. I had sandfly fever, and just before that Bacillary Dysentery, but it is so long since that I have forgotten all about

it and I only tell you that you may know that I am unable to get either again for a year. I am absolutely well in every way, eating like a farmer and sleeping from 9 p.m. till 6 a.m. and am now "immune" (i.e., is protected from) sandfly and dysentery for another year so you need have no worry at all about me ~~for another year~~. I am very busy as there is an enormous amount of work, most intensely interesting in nature and of great use to the country.

I feel these letters are too lengthy, but I do so long for you to be able to picture things Eastern and to enjoy to some extent the mental pleasures I am enjoying.

"Field Service Kewasti".

29. 11. 17. This week I have had an additional duty added to my work: to assist another officer in meeting ships when they come to Basra, in order to give them a clean bill of health. We receive a telephone message that the boat is in the river and we then go out to it to inspect the passengers, etc., for infectious diseases of all kinds. The officer I assist used to be the assistant Medical Officer for the Port of Liverpool and inspected all ships coming into Liverpool. This work is, of course, in addition to my Sanitary and Bacteriological work. I can never feel that I have not enough work to do as I was half afraid might be the case. There is any amount of work, tons of it, I am very fortunate in being at this hospital as I am seeing so much of Tropical Infectious Diseases and getting a thorough knowledge of their appearance, treatment and preven-

tion and I am more glad than I can say that I am at a place where the work is so purely that of Public Health and am with a group of such keen Medical Officers———.

I am enclosing this in a parcel of a few things I am sending. I shot the bird and preserved the skin. There are hundreds flitting about in the palms and reeds and you can imagine the dash of colour they give against the grey dusty palms. The bird is the "blue bird of happiness".

5. 12. 17. This week has been uneventful as regards things I am allowed to write about. It is things I cannot mention that have made it one of the busiest weeks I remember. I am tremendously busy, quite comparable with my life at Lockwood - morning, noon and night. It is cold and sunny, the "absolute business". I am very fit, full of energy and happy. I wish you could see my work. I think you would feel glad that you had a boy to do the work I am at and to do so much for the country.

12. 12. 17. It is bitterly cold. There was ice everywhere this morning and a temperature of 30 F. Five months ago at this time of day it was 122 F in the shade. How we miss the sun! Grey rainy days with thunder-storms with cold biting winds and deep, deep mud are now our portion. The poor Arabs, their cotton garments soaked through, shiver in their canoes in the pouring rain. The Indians shake and look utterly miserable. Roofs, built for sun only, leak in bucket fulls; open-air cook-houses are heaps of thick mud and we wander about in gum-boots and heavy French

macintoshes seeking our old, and until now too constant friend, the sun. The whole thing has the air of a Fancy Dress Garden Party that has been spoiled by the rain. After all the glorious sunshine for months on end, we hate this wet and grey. Every one lives, normally, in reed huts with a light grass cover to keep out the sun; cooks in open-air mud kitchens, and never dreams of rain, and of protecting things against it. Then suddenly it comes, with cold and lightning. It is a funny place. Two months ago, we had fans running, wherever we could fix one and ~~one~~ we grilled to death and full of sunstrokes. Now we wear great-coats, and sit out in our great-coats, when there is a gleam of sunshine for warmth!! Snakes, sandflies and mongeese have left us, and frogs, lice and fleas have come instead. Only our old friends, the mosquitoes, are always with us. The place is becoming rapidly a muddy marsh, simply swarming with every type of frog; the noise round my tent at night is incredible. Rats, also, find the outside too wet and seek the comfort of our huts and mud houses.

A new M.O. has come to the hospital so I have gone to live and sleep at the scene of my work about a quarter of a mile from the hospital. I live in a tent. As I lay there last night, the sight from the door was the weirdest possible. Up to the tent door stretched a marsh with reed and grass huts and about a quarter of a mile away the palm jungle started. Pitch darkness, pouring rain, myriads of frogs croaking, jackals howling, wild dogs barking, lightning lighting up the whole. There you have a winter evening in Mesopotamia. I fastened up my tent,

lit up my lamp, got into bed and enjoyed Roger's Treatise on Cholera.

However! The colder and wetter the weather, the healthier does one feel and the cheerier does one get. I love this country. I love the sun; the cold weather, hard and interesting work and feeling as fit as possible. Bed each night at 9.30 and up at 6 a.m.

By the way, my Hindustanee has stood me in good stead as in one of my wards, no one can speak a word of English: orderlies, servants, patients and assistants: also the staff of the section I am running all speak only Hindustanee. I should never have been given this most interesting work if I had not spent some time at the language.

27. 12. 17. I must tell you about Christmas here. We (the officers) have not kept ours, but were very busy having as good a time as possible for the staff and patients. Picture - a wet, cold, misty morning, palms dripping, mud everywhere; then the sun coming out lighting everything up with a most wonderful light; an hour or two of hot sunshine in the afternoon, a glorious crimson sunset, then full moon, frost and ice!! We gave a Christmas dinner and presents to every soul in the hospital, each to his own liking, partly supplied by the officers, partly by various organisations. The British had chicken, plum pudding and cigarettes. The Indians had every kind of spiced dishes of rice and mutton, hookahs, knitted vests and comforters,

Indian sweets, five hundred souls all told. I took round some crackers to the Indians, who were delighted with the pull, the crack and then the little paper hats. They pulled off their puggares and put on their paper hats, sick and convalescent alike. Later, we received the enclosed telegram from the King.

(Copy of Telegram here)

I went round every ward and read it out, first in English, then (by an interpreter) in Hindustanee, in Tamil, in Teligou so that all could understand. I think it is a beautiful message and I wish you could have seen the scene as a group of officers with lamps, went round the hospital in the frosty night, a full moon shining over the dark buildings, the marsh and the encompassing jungle. As the message was read out, all the patients, British and Indian, were assured that people in England, headed by the King, were thinking of them and wishing well for them. The message was received with cheers and the greatest excitement by the Indians in my wards. They asked me to take back their salaams to the King; shouted that the British Government was the best to be under and that they knew England would win: "For are we not the Government's children"! What a debt England owes to the Indians is, I fear, only partly realised at home. Afterwards we went into the tents and to the bedsides and read it very quietly to all the very sick and dangerously ill.

It was thoughtful of the King to send it and such thoughts are a pleasure to all.

Sanitary precautions are difficult here!!! This section is absolutely isolated by fences and barbed wire and sentries.

Yet, to-day, round a ward corner, I found two old Indian gentlemen embracing each other violently. One was a ward orderly in this section, the other a ward orderly in the main hospital, who had somehow or other got past the sentry and through the barbed wire. Both Indians had been told they had been recommended for a month's leave in India and here they were embracing and kissing each other - and incidentally spreading the disease! Prolonged embraces and kisses, even to celebrate such an event as leave, are not allowed, but I fear I rather sympathised with them and did not send the old gentleman back as ferociously as I ought to have done.

As I write, the cook (Indian) has just told me that as he was straining the soup for the officer patients he found a rat in it; very well cooked (bhote puchata), he remarked with a grin, holding up the rat (a young one) by its tail. He has sent the soup to the wards before reporting the fact so I shall say nothing! in the interest of the patients!!