

Tuesday 1st. February 1921

Today has been as fine as yesterday was miserable. It has been sunny and warm with not a cloud in the sky, except a few on the Persian mountains. These became visible on our right during the morning, perhaps 100 miles away. They are called Pusht-i-Koo and must be some thousands of feet high as the top of the range was snow covered brilliant white in the sun. Along their lower slopes clouds formed during the morning, but the sharp white summits of the range showed high above the clouds and made a fine picture in the distance - the first high ground I have seen since leaving the Persian Gulf 10 days ago. Except these distant hills the country both sides of the Tigris is as dead level as before, although the sides are a bit higher. Villages too, are becoming a more frequent sight, but the huts are more often made tent fashion of a sort of dark sail-cloth stretched up on poles and fastened by ropes to the ground. Herds of sheep are to be seen grazing along the banks, and donkeys and cattle are more numerous. This is a more pastoral land, no cultivated land being visible.

The morning being so fine, we went out on the oil-barge and had quite a good morning's exercise. One of the civilians on board, named Goodrick, tells me he knew Rice well. G. was for some time in the Ministry of Munitions. We passed the Arab village of Sheikh Saad at 2.00 o'clock, the scene of one of the fiercest battles fought against the Turks in 1916. It is situated at a very sharp bend of the River and commanded both upstream and downstream. We took it, but had very heavy losses. All along both banks are the remains of Turkish encampments and forts (all of mud) which we took and destroyed in our first advance on Kut. I took a picture of Sheikh Saad, with one of the erstwhile L.C.C. Penny Steamers discharging cargo at the River side. I also got a good snap of the Paddle Steamer H.P.5 which passed us during the morning.

In the morning we came across a number of wild ducks and geese and Barnes got out his gun and shot two. He and another Officer and the Skipper very keen on the sport all during the afternoon but although we came across quite a number, no other came near enough to get properly within range. I sat on a camp stool on the wood-barge in the sun all the afternoon and wrote.

It was nearly 5 o'clock when we arrived at the site of the battle of Aannah (possibly Hannah) fought in 191?, and here we banked in, to give the troops some chance of exercise on land. The Officers took their guns and we civilians went with them to see what sport could be had. They shot one hare and a very fine silver fox. Several other hares were turned up and one wounded but it got away. I tramped the whole distance notwithstanding my foot and thoroughly enjoyed it. The old trenches made by both sides are still in existence, with shell holes here and there, while everywhere are fragments of shells and even some unexploded ones. Goodrick collected three and brought them back with him. There were also hundreds of bones scattered about, some of which I picked up, but when I came across skulls I realised they were human bones I was carrying and threw them away. They were all bleached white, but whether of Turks or

British, I know not. It was difficult to realise from the ship that this calm desolate country had been the sight of a fierce battle, but it contained all the evidence one wanted when one came to walk over it. But for the sharp reports of our shot-guns it was now as silent as the desert. At 6 o'clock we had all returned and our ship went on again. Dinner in the evening was, as may be expected, a very merry affair, and we played bridge afterwards (5 annas a hundred) We went to bed at 11 o'clock, with the lights of Kut showing in the distance, about an hours run away. It is a splendid night, intense starlight but no moon.

Wednesday 2nd. February 1921

In the morning we awoke to find that we were moored at Kut-el- Amara (everybody calls it Kut, pronounced like "put") and after breakfast, we got some coolies, as all porters are called in this country, and got our baggage ashore. While Cairns enquired about trains, I got it loaded up on two bullock wagons, and Cairns having returned with the news that a train was at the station ready to start, off we went and as luck would have it just caught the train, for soon after we had loaded up it started to very slowly move out, 10 o'clock. It was a very full train, about a quarter of a mile long so our speed was never very great, although at one time we were doing 20 miles per hour. Nearly the whole distance of 111 miles to Baghdad the line runs by or near the Tigris and the train stopped at about 5 or 6 places en route, we getting off at each stop to stretch our legs as most passengers seemed to do. Most of the passengers were Officers or soldiers, very few civilians, but even the latter paid no fares as far as I could see. We didn't anyway, although we had no tickets or vouchers issued to us. We worried nobody and nobody worried us.

The whole route we ran through was the scene of battles, both during Townshends' advance in 1916 and Maudes' more successful one in 1917 which ended in the capture of Baghdad. Consequently remains of the old trenches could be seen everywhere and even bones of men who fell, turned up by the plough or perhaps disinterred by the jackals. The country is flat and bare as far as the eye could see, both sides, but a good portion is now being ploughed and sown with corn. There was not a great deal of outstanding interest until we got to the station of Zeur, from where we could see the great ruin of CTESIPHON with its wonderful arch, or rather the remains of it still standing. This was at 6 o'clock and having crossed the Diala River, we steamed into Hinaidi Station, the terminus, at 7o'clock. There was no transport to meet us so I remained with our baggage while Cairns took a gharri into the city to arrange for transport if possible. He returned with a motor-car at 9.30 on which we put our bedding and other necessaries and our unfortunate bearers had to remain behind on our baggage at the station where they slept the night as best they could.

We arrived at the billet where most of the other Baghdad staff are staying and had some food and I slept in McEvoy's room for the night. We had a good deal to talk about and I didn't get to sleep until after 12.

I forgot to mention that at none of the stations on the journey was there any platform and we got down at each station on to the ground at rail level. When the train was ready to start again it simply whistled and started. You can imagine the scramble there was on the part of the passengers to get on the train again! But as we started so slowly no-one got left behind.

On several occasions we passed immense flocks of birds, many hundreds in a flock, almost like a small dark cloud, which I was told were sand-grouse a bird much like our ordinary grouse, which make splendid eating.

So here I am at Baghdad at last, after having been 44 days away from home and tomorrow I report at the Audit Office at G.H.Q. for duty. It hasn't been at all a bad journey on the whole and I feel quite fit. Roll on the day when I pack up for my journey home.

Thursday 3rd February 1921

This morning I went to the Office where I found McNeill looking very fit, and find that I have to take over his work at Baghdad, as he is going up to Mosul with some staff shortly to open an Office there. I reported myself to Mr. Toplis, the Financial Adviser, my new chief, but I did not gain a very favourable impression of him. I am told he improves greatly on acquaintance. The Office consists of some rooms in the Basement of G.H.Q., rather cold in winter but very comfortable and cool in the summer. It is, however, necessary to use the electric lights all the year round. The hours during the winter months are 8.30 to 1 and 5 to 6.30. During the morning McNeill came out with me and we had an interesting walk along the Tigris while I told him the news. We saw a big herd (50 - 100) "Water Buffaloes" enjoying themselves in the River. They go right into the water until only their heads are above the water and enjoy it hugely. Afterwards I walked up New Street, a wide street cut right through the centre of Baghdad by the Turks, under German compulsion. The Germans had long wanted a proper road suitable for moving troops and convoys, as the streets existing then were narrow and useless for the purpose, but could not get the Turks to make it. The fall of Kut, however, gave them the excuse and thousands of homes and even Mosques were pulled down in cutting this road, for the purpose of marching the Kut prisoners through Baghdad! After lunch, McEvoy took me for a walk through the Bazaars. If the Bazaar at Basra was interesting that at Baghdad is twenty times more so. Imagine these winding streets, 10ft. or so wide, arched overhead, with hundreds of little shops, one after another endlessly, none bigger than our coal shed at home, and everyone stuffed full of all manner of goods. Each trade has all its shops together, so that if you want to buy drapery goods you go to one part, if shoes another, and so on. The quarter where the coppersmiths were was a very busy one, and as all were hard at it, beating out copper utensils of every sort, the noise was deafening.

During the afternoon, Cairns went up to Hinaidi with a car and fetched our baggage and our bearers. I went up to the Serai, where I am billeted, and chose

my room and got my kit brought up into it. I shall only be here for about a fortnight as the Serai is being given up to the Arab Government, who are anxious to obtain an imposing and sufficiently spacious building for Government Offices. Consequently my room is rather bare. I have a dressing table, a cane settee, a small table and a wardrobe. I have put up my own camp bed and my chair, but the floor (of flat bricks about 11 inches square) has no covering. There are two ante-rooms, one a washing or toilet room and one for bathing in.

There are plenty of shops where goods of all sorts can be bought quite cheaply except boots, clothing, underwear etc. I bought a bottle of whisky, a tin of Huntley and Palmers biscuits, a tin of tobacco and a tin of cigarettes. Cigarettes are cheap - 100tin of "Greys" cost 1 Rupee 13 annas = 2/7d. (one only gets 40 in England for that price) There are about 50 Officers here and the big dining hall and the lounges are very comfortable. I had a good dinner and slept well.

Friday 4th February 1921

Today I started work at the Office, and find that there is plenty of work to do and very little time for me to pick it up before McNeill goes to Mosul. Orders for him and his staff to proceed may come any day, as the furniture and office equipment is on its way there.

In the evening I dined with McNeill at his Mess ("C Mess G.H.Q.) quite a swagger place and quite comfortable. There are 9 Officers and himself there and we had a very good dinner. I had a hot toddy last thing and left just after 10, having to walk the whole way to the Serai. I passed 2 big droves of camels, the first about 60, the second of 40 animals. They came swinging along, filling the whole road, and I rather got the wind up over the first as I was walking in the road at the time and could see visions of myself being trampled to death by camels! Talk about London by night. It is nothing to Baghdad by night!

Saturday 5th February 1921

This afternoon I went through the Serai Bazaar and out by the North Gate, along the Great Road which leads north to Persia, Kurdistan and Mosul. On the left is a large Mohammedan burial ground, of which I will take a photo soon, and just past that the Football ground where G.H.Q. (with several of our fellows in the team) were playing the R.A.M.C. It was a very good game, considering the heat and the blazing sun and G.H.Q. were beaten 1=0. On the way back I bargained for a teapot and cup and saucer, which I obtained for 3 Rupees 5 annas, as against 4 Rupees asked. I tried hard but could not get it lower. When I arrived at my billet there was a carpet merchant waiting with a huge bundle of carpets. All of these carpets were laid out for my inspection and many I bargained for, but the merchant would not accept my offers. Ultimately I said "finish" (which here means "I won't have or don't want anything - push off") whereat he offered a carpet for 90 Rupees which he had first asked 110 Rupees for. I offered 75 R. and after more bargaining he accepted. I paid 20 R. deposit and he agreed to take the

carpet back in a few days if I don't like it. I must make sure I haven't been done.

Sunday 6th February 1921

This morning I went to Holy Communion at 7.30 in the Garrison Church, which is in the Serai. The service was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Wigram and was beautifully carried out.

After breakfast McNeill called for me and we went for a splendid walk out into the country north of Baghdad, making our way along the Tigris until we came to the barbed wire defences erected for the defence of Baghdad during the insurrection last year. These we could not get through so had to retrace our steps to the Road, where the defences are open, and then back to the River. We passed through the big Baghdad Dairy Farm, which is a market garden as well as a dairy farm. This is a great boon to Europeans, who can get fresh milk and butter all the year round by this means. We then came to a village where the women were busy spinning cotton. They had no objection to being photographed, so I took three snaps of them. Of course this is not their Sunday, so they were all hard at work. We reached two very fine riverside villas, and then followed a very narrow road through the village, thus reaching the main road again, and so back to Baghdad. I bought 4 good oranges in the Bazaar, but they are not cheap - 1 1/2 annas each. After Tiffin I sat on my verandah in the sun and wrote and read, and after tea went up on the Serai roof where one gets a fine view of Baghdad, and of the Tigris with the two bridges of boats, the Maude Bridge and the Khota Bridge. The city extends a long way both sides of the River, Baghdad proper on the Left Bank (looking downstream) and Baghdad West on the Right Bank. The most noticeable landmarks are the beautiful Mosque domes and Minarets, of which there are many, all overlaid with brilliant glazed tiles, bright blue and yellow and other colours. The brilliancy of these in the bright sunlight is amazing. On the Right Bank and on the outskirts of the city proper, and here and there in it, are tall date palms, bright green. These add to the beauty of the picture immensely, all covered by the brilliant blue sky.

The weather since Monday has been gorgeous, warm and sunny with a clear blue sky, though cold at night. The nights are wonderful. Although there is no moon it is quite light enough to see, the stars are so bright. There is no doubt that in the winter months the climate of Mesopotamia is very fine indeed - anyway I have found it up to now very enjoyable and healthy. (touch wood)

Monday 7th February 1921

This morning the weather was still brilliantly fine and McNeill and I went for a motor tour around the big Stores Depots on the other side of the Tigris, across the Maude Bridge (a bridge roadway laid on large pontoons or boats) The tour was instructive as well as enjoyable and I had plenty of appetite for tiffin. There are 3 boat bridges at Baghdad and these carry continual streams of traffic to and from both sides of the River, except during stated hours when they are closed to

traffic and opened to allow river traffic through. Previous to the British occupation there were no bridges and all traffic went over by ferry. On my way I saw a coolie carrying a fish as big as a small man - it must have weighed 1cwt. at least which had been caught in the Tigris. I am told such fish are common here and are good eating. This morning mail arrived - Oh, blessed words from home, thank God for them - and with it a message of congratulations from Sir Herbert Creedy, Secy. of the W.O., announcing my promotion to the substantive rank of 1st Class Asst. Accountant. All that this means, unfortunately, is that I mark time as regards salary for 5 years!

In the afternoon I enriched my billet with furniture and coconut matting from a billet just vacated by Col. McVittie, R.A.O.D. I could have had his billet had I so chosen but I am cosy enough in my own and didn't want the fag of moving, although McVittie's billet is almost palatial. So the other fellows have moved into it - their previous quarters were rotten.

After tea, when I went to the Office, Mr Toplis formally handed my job over to me, no doubt prompted thereto by McNeill, who is anxious to get to Mosul. I am to be responsible for the audit of all store and supply accounts of the 17th Division, the Baghdad area, and financial advice in connection therewith. There is a lot of work to do and I shall have all my work cut out to do it. The store and supply a/cs out here are in a state of chaos - anyway I've never had an easy job and I didn't expect one here.

There is one thing I am rather sorry about and that is that this arrangement may mean that I shan't go down to Basra in April, so that Rice and I, who had hoped to be together, will probably be apart the whole time. When he comes up to Baghdad I shall go down to Basra. However, I might go there yet. If so, I shall have the summer there and probably return to Baghdad some time early next year.

Thursday 10th. February 1921

So far as my official day is concerned each day has been practically the same since Monday. By car to G.H.Q. at 8.30p.m. and 5p.m. and back to the Serai at 1.0p.m. and 7p.m. It is 25 minutes walk, and New Street and the Bazaar are so crowded that it is not a comfortable walk, and it would be an impossible one in the summer. It wouldn't be so bad now, but the paths are so narrow, and the paths and roads so uneven that walking is not easy, especially with my foot still not right. Both paths and roads are of mud which dries hard as iron. The crowd in the Bazaar is indescribable - Arabs in flowing robes with the characteristic headdress, Jews and Turks in Fezzes, Persians in Black Caps, Kurds in light brown pudding basins, Russians and Turcomans in Astrakhan caps, with children and women and beggars, and in and among the crowd, horses and donkeys, and even carts pick their way, the drivers calling out "Ahlek!" Add to these the vendors of cakes, the porters carrying loads that the British working man would faint at the sight of, and the hundreds of merchants in their little six foot square shops, and

you may get an idea of the crowd, but never a picture. I don't think the person exists that could paint it.

I am finding the work at the Office very heavy and really difficult. I am afraid it will be some time before I have got into my stride.

Last night I went to dinner with Weyman and Hawton of the Supplies Directorate, Padre Webb (C.of E. Chaplain) and McNeill. It was a good dinner but unfortunately I could feel myself setting in for a rotten attack of biliousness or indigestion. Today I have been bilious right enough. It has made me feel rotten and work difficult. In the afternoon I went with Barkham to see our new billet at 2/6 New Street. I have a nice room but Barkham's is rather small. Mine is 13ft * 21ft.6ins., nothing like so good a room as I have at present. But we have to move out of the Serai, as it is being handed over to the Arab Government for Government Offices. I paid the outstanding balance of my carpet on Wednesday (55 Rupees) and the dealer maintains that it is worth 100 chips and that he ought never to have sold it to me for 75. We looked at some lovely abahs - and I wondered whether I would buy one for my wife. They were mostly blue and gold, black and gold, mauve and gold etc. It is raining tonight, though not heavily. The roads will probably be inches thick in mud tomorrow. And yet this morning they were sprinkling the roads to lay the dust.

Friday 11th. February 1921

This morning it rained a little but the afternoon was as fine as ever and after buying a few tea things at the Officers' Shop I walked down New Street to meet McNeill. The Officers' Shop is a part of the Army Ordnance Department where articles provided by the Government can be bought at Army rates plus a small percentage (13%) to cover the expense of running the shop. It is a great convenience if one wants to buy a thing at its proper value without the trouble of bargaining. Strangely enough one can often get things cheaper in the Bazaars - the Jew or Arab is content with a small profit if he can't get a big one out of the buyer.

We had a very jolly tea-table - all the Audit Staff men together - and afterwards went down to the Office by the official car. McNeill and Owen said goodbye to his colleagues in the Office and went home to get ready for his journey to Mosul. I did not see him off as the train didn't leave until 10p.m. It takes a day to get to Shergat, from whence they travel by road, making a two days journey in all. They will take pistols in case of trouble and lamps, as electric light is not yet available in their billets.

Saturday 12th February 1921

This morning we moved our furniture and belongings from the Serai to our new billet and Barkham stayed behind to see it done. I had intended to sleep at the Serai until our cooking and dining arrangements get into full swing but in the

afternoon I changed my mind and got a coolie to carry the things that had been left down to New Street. The coolie made up a half bundle of my bed, bedding, washstand, chair, toilet things and so on and carried them on his back for 3/4 mile. I paid him a Rupee and he almost collapsed at my generosity! The remainder of my furniture is promised for Monday and when it comes I shall have a full and very comfy room I think. It is bigger than the dining room at Meadview and much higher and will have two electric lamps and a revolving fan for use during the hot weather. The back and two side walls are painted white, grey and green, thus:-

I shall have coir (or coconut) matting on the floor. The front is glass 8ft. down from the roof and wood stained brown for the lower 4ft. I found that my man had got the room tidy, but the floor was dusty, so I swept it clean. My man wanted to do it but I refused to let him as under his religion he is not allowed to sweep. Sweeping is done, and such things as cleaning lavatories, by a lower caste, in fact the lowest caste of all and a Hindu will usually not do such things for fear of losing caste. Imam Ali is proving a very willing and useful man but he knows very little English and I am trying to learn a little Hindustani so as to instruct him in what I want done the more easily. I string together my sentence in Hindustani as near as I can get it and then if he can understand it he tells me how it ought to be said. Unfortunately he adds in other or different words I can't understand! Nothing is too much for him to do. Our water supply having failed for some reason, he ran down to the Tigris and got a pail full of river water, in which I washed. He keeps all my boots and shoes out in a row and gets a wonderful shine on them. He keeps everything in perfect order, gets all my clothes ready for me when I dress or change, brings my hot water, gets my bath ready and wants no holidays! When I call him he runs and when I have finished with him I have to send him away or he would hang about for ever on the off chance of being able to do something.

Sunday 13 February 1921

I slept well last night, notwithstanding the wet paint, and cleaned my teeth, shaved and washed in Tigris water. I got up early as I was going to Sacramento, but it is very chilly the first thing. As I walked up New Street to the Garrison Church, there were numbers of cows which are taken from door to door and the person who wants milk stands by while the required quantity is milked from the cow. Most of the cows are accompanied by calves which often do some milking of their own while the cow- woman isn't looking, but some of them had black cotton muzzles or nose-bags on to stop them getting at the mother cows. Dr. Wigram again took the service. At 11 o'clock Barkham and I went for a walk into the country and watched the herd of cows of the Government Dairy Farm watering, hundreds of cows drinking at a big pond. We went through an orange grove, with all the luscious oranges hanging on the trees, and came across a party of Britishers who were picnic-ing under the palms, and playing games just like we do in the old country.

After tiffin I came back to my billet and wrote, for the English mail goes out on Monday, and was very pleased to find that my light had been fitted up. Today not being Sunday so far as the workmen are concerned, they had been hard at work since early morning fitting up wires and everybody had one light. Those who had fans could use them and a second light is to come tomorrow: also a table lamp (electric). There are several things I notice which could be done to improve matters and I must try and get them done. One thing I have already found is that everyone is anxious to fall in with the wishes of the Auditor. Many of the people here have got the "wind up", and none know when they may be dropped on for something irregular. There is no doubt that under the control of India, all did exactly as they liked. Audit of accounts was a farce, and if anything was lost or deficient, permission to "write off" the loss was given provided some sort of tale was put up. Three officers have just been courtmartialled for making away with motor-cars and all convicted, and a Sergeant for selling Government petrol to native merchants. Goodness knows what else is happening or has happened, but we are making ourselves felt, and it is certain for one thing that not so much is being "lost". How to bring things down to the proper state is, however, a big question.

Monday 14 February 1921

We are still feeding at the Serai although sleeping at 216 New Street, and I have a walk of 6 or 7 minutes from here to the Serai before I can breakfast. There is a good deal of furniture due to me for my room which has not yet come, so I went to the Camp Commandant and hurried it up. Our Mess furniture arrived today - crockery, glass, chairs and so on. We counted it in all right, but by the evening 2 chairs had gone and many other things I expect, when we come to take stock. The native workmen are still here putting up lights and fans, and painting, and repairing broken windows, and generally getting the place into a really proper state, and probably each one took something when he left at night. He would think nothing of putting a chair under his coat and then swearing by Allah, if detected, that it had stuck on to him by accident without him knowing it! The Baghdadi are the most expert thieves in IRAK, as Mesopotamia is called by the natives. Most of the Indians are honest, I think; I don't think my man would take anything of mine, but it is necessary either always to have someone on guard or else lock everything up. Otherwise you would come home one day to find all you possessed was the suit you stood up in.

Tuesday 15 February 1921

Yesterday and today the great exodus from the Serai has been taking place, and the Courts have been crowded with Transport Carts and lorries, and hundreds of coolies running backwards and forwards with furniture and other possessions of the Officers who are moving out. There were also many of the Head Quarter Staff Officers and a number of troops in the place, and these have to move as well, and it is no light job to arrange all this for the occupants of a building 1/4 mile long and 200 yards wide. This morning we had our last meal at the Serai, breakfast at

7.00a.m. They served us quite a good farewell dinner last night, also, and my bill for the 14 days was Rs.47 (=£3.10.00 about) including mineral waters etc. I don't suppose I shall live as cheaply as that for the future.

We had our first Tiffin at the new billet and a very good meal it was - better than any I have had since leaving the "Vasna" Some of our additional furniture came this afternoon, including the coir matting, so I busied myself laying that and setting out the furniture and my bedroom now looks much more comfy. I have two good electric lamps and a huge fan, which, when going at full speed, blows everything moveable about the room. I can set it at any speed I like. I am entitled to much more furniture than I have but unfortunately many of the articles are not in stock so I must do without.

We had a really good dinner tonight and we are beginning to congratulate ourselves that we have found a good cook. We pay him Rs.80 a month (=£5.10.00) which is not a bad wage for an Indian, and his food is supplied by Government. We have our bearers, a butler and a cook - 8 servants for 6 of us, so we ought not to do badly, if we can only keep them in hand.

We have covered our dining room, which is a high sub-basement place about 6 yards wide by 20 yards long, with coir matting and glazed the big windows with a sort of thick oiled paper. There is no glass in the windows or in the door, only iron gratings and we found it jolly cold and draughty at night. It will, of course, be absolutely blissful in the summer heat to sit in at night under the level of the ground, and then sleep on the roof! That I am told will be the programme. Everyone sleeps on the roof, and that is why the roofs are always flat.

Thursday 17 February 1921

Yesterday and today I have been very busy at the Office indeed, and even had to bring work home, but this afternoon Barkham and I took our golf clubs and went out into the country for a smack. I found that I could get a quite good drive - though not always quite straight. However, on one occasion I drove a ball about 250 yards! I believe that is considered good in England but here the air seems so clean and clear that it didn't seem a difficult thing. The ball went straight as a die the whole length of a football field and 100 yards beyond before it dropped. So I believe I could manage a fair game if I could only get the chance to practise - but the golf course is about 2 miles away and it is too expensive to hire motor cars every time.

We are gradually getting our billet into first class trim. I have paid 50 Rupees towards preliminary expenses and a mess suit for my man (for waiting at table) will cost 20-30Rs. at the least. So that altogether the move will cost me at least 100Rs.(£7) and the cost of living here also will be higher than it was at the Serai.

Friday 18 February 1921

Walden and Wardrop, who are waiting to go to Mosul, are having their meals except breakfast with us, not having any messing arrangements at their new billet, and as we had two guests to dinner tonight we had quite a big party. The two guests were Captain Caryer and Lieut. Macdonald of the Royal Engineers (Works Department) and it is to them that we are greatly indebted for the special work which has been put into our billet. There is no doubt that many quite unusual favours have been shown to us, so we put up a really swagger dinner for them. We dressed for dinner of course and judge of my surprise when on being introduced to Caryer I immediately recognised him as an old school chum who sat in the same form with me at Tiffins! We had not seen one another for about 24 years and yet the recognition was instantaneous on my part. These extraordinary meetings are getting quite common! We had a wonderful hors d'oeuvre dish, soup, fish, entree, joint, Swiss roll pudding covered with thick cream, dessert, coffee, liqueurs and round each successive dish the name of one of the company written in white and pink cream! After dinner Capt. Townshend for over an hour entertained us with card tricks and other sleight-of-hand. He is an extremely clever conjurer (the best card man I have ever seen) and although we were crowded round him it was impossible to see how it was done. We have a fine big mess table, and the previous night we had ping-pong until nearly 11 o'clock. I don't think we shall want for entertainment during the evenings but as a matter of fact with dinner not over until after 9 o'clock there is not much time to kill before one goes to bed. During summer, dinner will be at 8.30 so as to give time for some exercise in the evening before dinner. Exercise is a necessity if one is to keep well - that is agreed to by everyone - and in the summer exercise is impossible until the evening. I am afraid I don't take enough. I have a car which brings me home from G.H.Q. at 1 o'clock, fetches me at 5 to 5 o'clock and brings me home again at 7. The car is convenient but one loses exercise by not walking. However the car will be a necessity in the summer so that I don't want to drop it now in case it is difficult to get it again. Walking in the main street is an abomination. The paths are narrow, frightfully lumpy and crowded and there is too much traffic to walk in the road.

Saturday 19 February 1921

I had so much work in hand at the Office that I brought some home to do - but I rather think I shall take it back undone. For in the afternoon Barkham, Walden and Wardrop persuaded me to go down to tennis at the Officers Club, and as I felt that I was not getting enough exercise I borrowed a racket and went with them. We played about 7 or 8 sets altogether and for the first 4 sets I didn't do very well at all. However while we were having a rest I discovered a racket for sale at the Club House - 12 Rs. so I tried it and finding that I could do so much better with it, I bought it. The last set, which we had to leave 9 - 8 in our favour, I did quite well. The racket I bought out with me I find is not good enough to use, as the gut is so limp. We played for 2 1/2 hours, but I am sore afraid that my arm cannot stand much hard playing. The fore-arm muscles feel very sore tonight. I had a gorgeous bath on getting home and enjoyed my dinner, and afterwards put

in an hour or more making out the Store Account of the billet, which I am going to keep - as I am appointed Officer in Charge of Stores! We are all to share the work.

Sunday 20 February 1921

This morning Barkham and I went to Sacramento, at the Garrison Church, the service being taken by Major Rev. Webb, one of the members of our Mess. Ours is known as the Padre's Mess, by the way. The members are:- Capt. Rev. W. Marsh, Presbyterian chaplain, Major Rev. Webb, Senior Chaplain, Capt R.H.Townshend, R.A.P.C., Barkham, myself, and a Lieut. Neill, who has not yet joined. Webb is extremely nice and a very charming man, straight, clean and sincere. Marsh is a great lad and not a bit like a clergyman. He is Mess President. Townshend is our K?ut and a most entertaining fellow. He is expert at making money out of the exchange variations and spends a lot of time in the carpet shops. He is the handyman of the billet and has already picked the lock of my room door when I had left my key inside, and opened my big box when the lock jammed. He would have made an expert burglar. Townshend is tall but the others are my size.

Barkham and I went for a walk in the morning and roamed through palm groves and orange gardens. We rested on a grassy bank near the river where quite a number of different wild flowers were in bloom, including the humble dandelion. We came out by the Government Dairy Farm (which by the way was looted on Thursday night, and 600lbs. of butter stolen probably by Arabs) and watched the Dairy Farm cattle watering. I should say there were at least 500 cattle, including some enormous bulls, the latter led by rings thro' their noses. It is difficult to convey a picture of the scene, but it may give some idea if one imagines a space nearly as big as Twickenham Green crowded with cows.

We came home through the Bazaars, which are all crowded today, and all the shops open, except those of the Christians. I bargained for a pair of brass jugs, which the dealer wanted 16 Rupees for. Eventually he came down to 10 Rupees, but I did not buy. In the afternoon I went with Townshend to a Persian Carpet Merchant's, and saw some lovely carpets. T. conducted a long and persuasive bargaining operation with the merchant for a Kashan carpet but I left him at it as I had to get home and do my writing. Some of the carpet merchants have carpets to the value of tens of thousands of pounds, but their shops are the most miserable hovels one could imagine.

Monday 21 February 1921

This afternoon Padre Webb offered to take me for a tour around the Bazaars. So after I had been th the Tailor who is making my bearers suit to see how it was progressing and to Victors, the photographers for the photographs he is printing for me, we turned into the Bazaar. We stopped at many shops in the part where fancy goods and antiques are sold and bargained for a number of things. If the

merchant has an interior to his shop, which very rarely happens, you go in and the merchant will place a special carpet for you to sit on (this happened 2 or 3 times as Webb is well known) and will offer you tea and cigarettes, which you consume with every indication of relish while he shows the goods he thinks will please you. One bargains but rarely buys. If you make a definite offer he will take it that you want the article and will expect you to buy; so that you say "Will you take so much?" This does not bind you. I bought 6 small brass cups, for which the merchant at first wanted 2 rupees each, and eventually accepted 6 for the lot. At another shop we found a merchant who would accept 12 annas each for similar cups so I went back to the first merchant and demanded some money back. He actually gave me 1 rupee! Webb told me that that was a very unusual thing. I also bought 4 Japanese mats for the wall for which I paid 1 rupee each, although the merchant demanded 1 1/2 rupees each. We came home through the Coppersmiths Bazaar, where I priced a copper tray - a real heavy one with fluted edges, made by hand - 8 rupees, but I didn't buy.

In the evening we played ping-pong and afterwards I sat up late making out the equipment ledger for our Mess property, so that we may keep a watch on things, which we suspect are disappearing. The only way to keep a check on this sort of thing is to enter them all in a ledger, and make out a list of the things in charge of different men. Make them understand that they are responsible for the articles, frequently check them, and make them pay for deficiencies.

Tuesday 22 February 1921

This afternoon I counted all our property in company with Thomas, our butler, and so far as I can see we have a lot of articles missing. Who has taken them I don't know but I have reason to suspect one or two of the bearers. Not my man, who I am certain is honest, nor in fact any of the Mahommedans, but one or two of the Christians, of whom we have 5.

Yesterday our sixth member, a Lieutenant of the Mechanical Transport joined. He is a Scot named Neill, rather quiet at first, but he is warming up and will I think be an acquisition to the Mess, I am very pleased with it myself and I think it is a decent, manly clean-living little crowd.

Wednesday 23 February 1921

This morning I went with one of my assistants named Stevens, to the big Main Supply Depot at Hinaidi, it having reached our ears that the accounts there were in a bad state. I found that the man in charge of accounts was Lieut. Coborn, whom I had come over with on the "Huntsgreen". He had just taken over charge and knowing the a/cs were wrong had complained accordingly. The a/cs were also much in arrear but he had just succeeded in bringing them up to date. I found several things to criticise rather severely, and in the end ordered a complete stocktaking of all the supplies to be made forthwith, so that the March a/c should start correct. The irregularities which are apparent can then be

investigated at leisure.

In the afternoon I recounted the stores in our Mess, and found that our shortages include:- 12 Napkins, 1 Tablecloth, many spoons, crockery and glass. Marsh and I sat up late discussing what could be done to spot the thief and in the end he decided to hold a proper enquiry tomorrow and have the servants boxes searched, if necessary.

This evening Mr. Toplis told me that he had it in his mind that I should return to Basra and asked my opinion on a list of proposed changes which he had prepared. He half gave me to understand that I needn't go if I wished not to. I should be glad to be with Rice again, but I should be leaving what I feel is going to prove very interesting work here in Baghdad. Also Baghdad is ten times as congenial as Basra, the climate is better, and I would have preferred to have served my first summer at Baghdad from that point of view than at Basra. I have just joined and helped to form a new Mess and the fellows are so nice that I feel that I shall suffer a personal loss if I have to leave them.

Thursday 24 February 1921

This morning I had a long interview with the Director of Remounts (Colonel Kaye) whose animal a/cs are also in an unsatisfactory state. He was an extremely nice man - in fact all these Officers are very nice to the Auditor out here - they are mortally afraid of him.

Yesterday my man's Mess suit came for him and very smart he looks in it today, it being his turn to wait at table. He is a handsome little man, notwithstanding his beard and quite a good waiter.

This afternoon we had the grand inquisition re the lost articles. When the bearers were assembled in the courtyard, one was missing, Souza, who was found in his room saying his prayers! Marsh gave them an opportunity of owning up, but none did so. We had two military policemen present and they then searched the boxes of the bearers, starting with Souza. In his box were found 3 spoons belonging to the Mess, 4 books and 2 pairs of socks belonging to Marsh and about 10 cigarettes belonging to me (I had left my tin of cigs in the Mess one night and missed some) He had also 4 tins of jam and other stuff which we suspect was stolen, but although all the other boxes were searched nothing more was found. Souza was taken away to Prison by the policemen. Our opinion is that he also took the napkins and tablecloth and sold them outside.

In the evening we had a thoroughly good dinner and afterwards three officers came in, and we had a very jolly time playing a ping-pong tournament. I was beaten but played miles below my form. Afterwards I pulled up my socks and played some quite good games.

Friday 25 February 1921

Today Padre Marsh took a party of friends to Babylon. They had 5 or 6 cars and there were 20 in the party. Early in the morning it poured, but nevertheless they went - and had a rotten time. There had been no rain at all in the desert, but a high wind came up and the tourists had a 7 hour dust storm. It was cold and they came home mostly miserable with their faces smarting and sore and their lips swollen.

In the morning the chief spoke to me again about the proposed moves, and later on told me that he had decided to keep me at Baghdad this year. I am sorry that I am not going down to Rice, but there is still a hope that he may come up to Baghdad. Baghdad is very much to be preferred to Basra and there is a distinct chance that I may go to Mosul when McNeill goes home. So I should escape Basra altogether. However, as God wills it.

Barkham is going to Mosul and Walden to Basrah. McNeill telegraphed today that he reached Mosul on the 24th - 13 days after starting, having been held up at Shergat, the railhead, owing to the roads being impassable. No furniture had been received up to then and the other Mosul men are still waiting here until they get the "all clear" from McNeill to proceed.

I often pass the sweetmeat shops here and feel a great inclination to purchase - altho' many people warn one not to. Today I succumbed and bought a 2 1/4 kilo box of Turkish Delight (Rs3 Ans8) and it is the most delicious T.D. I have ever tasted. I also feel a desire for some of the quite tasty looking cakes and biscuits at the pastry cook's. All the wonderful confections are made at Baghdad and are very highly thought of by the Baghdadi, who are very fond of sweetmeats.

Saturday 26 February 1921

After having had a very hard morning at the office and umpteen interruptions, I succumbed to the persuasions of the others and had an afternoons tennis at the G.H.Q.Courts. We had about 6 sets and I improved considerably on my first efforts. I find that my new racket, having a thick handle suits me rather, as my right fore-finger is stiff. Anyway I was good enough to win a love game when it was my service on one occasion. We came back in a local gharri and had a perfectly good tea. After tea we played ping-pong and again after dinner, when we had a proper tournament but I played very poorly.

I have bought some white cotton crepe with black spots the size of farthings for curtains for my room (6 Rs for 8 yards) I asked my man if he knew a tailor who would make them up for me. He said he didn't and shook his head. "Tailor make them, sahib" he said "plenty chips" - "me make them - no chips" (chips are rupees) So he has set to and started to make them and two are up already. He sews on my buttons and does any little mending. He always watches my socks for holes and I think he intends to darn them if holes appear.

Sunday 27 February 1921

This morning to church as usual at 7.30, our padre officiating. After breakfast I put in two hours at the Office, my work being so much in arrear. At 11.15 Barkham called for me and we went for a walk south of Baghdad, and came across a herd of Buffaloes watering. They go to the riverside and walk in, immersing themselves sometimes until only their heads are showing. Some are enormous animals, bigger than our bullocks in England, and always black. After tiffin I wrote and at tea-time Padre Webb asked me if I would like to come with him to Babylon tomorrow. I accepted readily, of course, and at 5.00 went down to the Office again and put in another 2 hours work, calling in at "E" Mess GHQ and obtaining the Chiefs' permission for my absence tomorrow. I have also arranged for a car to call for me at 6.30 tomorrow morning to take me to Baghdad West Station.

I did my writing on the flat roof of our house. It is made of a thick layer of the clayey mud of Mesopotamia and surrounded by a wall 4ft. high. It is 20 yards square and in the centre is the open well looking down on our courtyard - which is about 10 yards square. This is covered by a zinc over-roof to keep the rain off the courtyard. In the summer we shall sleep on the roof, as everyone does which is why the roofs are flat.

Monday 28th February 1921

Imam Ali, to be quite sure that he woke me early enough, brought me my Chota hazari at 4.30 this morning. I had it but sent him back to bed and told him to wake me again at 5.30. At the appointed time he reappeared with my hot water and I dressed and had my breakfast. Barkham and I left our billet by motor-car at 6.45 and arrived at Baghdad Station at 7.00, crossing the Tigris by the Kotah Bridge of Boats. We were the first on the scene, but the others soon came, and eventually we got away at 8.00a.m. Our "train" consisted of 2 motor trolleys, run by petrol, and each holding about 10 persons. They ran on the ordinary railway line. The one that I travelled in was the more comfortable one and started first. Our company was:- Colonel Hales, the Principal Chaplain, Colonel Lane, I.M.S., Capt. Hawton, Barkham, Me, Miss. Emus, Miss Rollo and a Tommy named Atkinson. The two ladies were Nursing Sisters. The second car had Major Webb, Capt. Hutchings, Goodrick, and 6 others and started 5 minutes after ours. In addition there were 2 Indian drivers and 2 other Indians. We were soon out into the desert, but it was not long before our car started to backfire and twice we had to stop to put this right, but this didn't take long and we spun along at about 20 miles an hour. This would have got us to Babylon at about 11.00 o'clock had all gone well. When we had got about halfway, however, an incident which had the most extraordinary effect on our day occurred. We had been running through desert country where hardly any human beings were seen except the gangs of Arab workmen who are employed keeping the permanent way in good repair. As we came up each gang lined up and saluted us as we passed. Every mile there was a blockhouse built of sand-bags and protected by a thick fence of barbed wire, built for the protection of the line in times of trouble. Gradually the line ran

through perfectly flat country but now and again we ran through a shallow cutting, where the line crossed a low ridge of sand, not more than 5 or 6 feet high. It was in one of these small cuttings that the accident happened. We could see from a distance that there was a flock of sheep in the cutting. They can't have been feeding because there was no grass, but there they were and although our driver hooted loudly no-one came to drive them away. They ran off the line, some one side and some the other and we were nearly through when two sheep and a lamb ran across the rails. Our trolley ran into them and killed all three running over two, and unfortunately one hit our water tank and all our water ran away, while the chain wheel broke. The Arab shepherd now appeared and raised a tremendous hullabaloo, crying out like a child, tearing his clothes and beating his chest, and throwing dust over his head to express his sorrow. We paid him 15 Rupees but this didn't pacify him and he went away still weeping and mourning loudly. Neither did it mend our trolley and after tinkering about with it for some time we hitched the other trolley on behind (which had come up in the meantime) and that pushed us to Babylon although at a slower pace. We halted at two stations en route where the Station Masters (Indians) wanted to detain our car but we insisted on continuing our journey and arrived at Babylon at 1.00 p.m. over 2 hours late. At once we detrained and proceeded to the Rest House. Arab coolies carrying our baskets and rugs. Arrived at the Rest House which is prettily situated in a Date Palm Grove on the banks of the Euphrates River. We set out our food and had a fine meal of chicken, potatoes, bread, butter, cheese and oranges, washed down by ginger beer. This was the house built by Dr. Koldewey, the German who did practically all the excavations which laid Babylon bare. He has gone now, of course. At 2.00 we started for the Ruins. They have all been laid bare by digging away the sand of the huge mound by which in the course of time they had become covered. All the buildings are of brick, there being no stone in the country and only those below

The first striking item was one of the great Black Granite Lions, of which there were many when Babylon was a city. It represents a lion standing triumphant over a fallen man and it is said to have represented Babylon triumphant over Egypt. This lion was discovered intact and was set again by Koldewey. A piece broken out of the side has been repaired - and the story is that this was done by Arabs who, having seen a French conjurer producing gold coins from the mouth of the lion for the entertainment of his friends who were seeing the ruins, determined to get the rest of the gold which they supposed was in the lion's body! From there we passed to the ruins of the Ishtar Gate, the best preserved of all, with figures of lions, horses and all manner of strange animals on the walls of the houses. These were tall houses and one could imagine what a fine and imposing city Babylon must have been 3,000 years ago. Ishtar was the Goddess of Love, so it was appropriate that the next place we came to should be the ruins of the Temple of Mani Mekh, the Goddess of Motherhood. From here we walked across the ruins of the famous "Hanging Gardens", which originally covered a wide area and were gardens made on the tops of high columns and arches and planted with trees and flowers and creepers, with ponds and fountains playing

day and night. Now only the lower parts of the columns and arches remain. From here it was not far to Nebuchadnezzars' Palace, or rather the place where it used to be. Now only the floor remains, but we saw the alcove where the King sat and the great room where Belshazzar sat on the night when the moving hand wrote the writing on the wall. Mene, Mene, Tekel, Mene. I collected three pieces of bricks which were part of his great palace - one with the old cuneiform writing on, one with blue glaze and one with green glaze. I could only carry small pieces but on many of the bricks the old glaze of 3,000 or more years ago is still as bright as ever. Parts of the great alabaster were still lying about but these were a bit too big to take away! Here the party split - part going back to the Rest House for the things we had left there, while I went on with Col. Lane, Col. Hales and the two ladies. We sat down on the side of the open air Greek Theatre (built B.C. 325) and ate some oranges. Little of the ruins of the Theatre now remain but we could easily see the size it had once been - about 8 times the size of the Albert Hall!

Our two trolleys were waiting on the line and when the others came up we got on board and started away at 4.30 - the sound trolley pulling ours, which was still hors de combat. In order to make sure of getting home before 8.00 o'clock we had not stopped for tea at Babylon; but as luck had it, there was a train waiting at Khan Haswah Station, about 3 miles on, and we got some hot water from the engine. 7 miles further on we stopped for tea, and had quite a decent feed - which we enjoyed. On attempting to restart after tea, however, the engine refused to function. It would run on being wound up, but as soon as the driver slipped in the clutch to make it start pulling, it stopped. For three solid hours the drivers tried their hardest to put the engine right, but to no avail. They adjusted magnets, carburettor, petrol feed, sparking plugs and so on, they emptied all the petrol out of the tank and put new petrol in, they fitted new washers: but no luck. The car would not start. It was now nearly dark and having two women with us and being, as we thought nearly 10 miles from a station it was evident that we should have to stay here for the night, unless rescue came. A little further on was the 45 mile Blockhouse, so there we pushed the trolleys, and examined the place. We found the usual sand bag enclosure about 20 feet square, and just by the dug out, a cosy room underground. Here we found 4 Arabs and having turned them out made our ladies comfortable for the night. They wanted to sleep in the car but this the Officers of the party would not agree to in view of the danger (our party was only accorded permission to make the trip on condition that at least 8 men were armed) The rest of us lay down in the Blockhouse on the ground, but I for one, couldn't sleep, it got so cold. There is no roof to the Blockhouse - it so seldom rains that roofs are unnecessary and would of course hide the view.

The Blockhouse was shaped something like this but this gives a rather meagre idea as there were sunken paths and thick barbed wire fences all around. It was arranged that 2 men at a time should stand guard with loaded rifles. My turn was at 2.00a.m. At about 8 o'clock a motor car with 3 Arabs in, had passed near by travelling over the flat desert. We stopped it and made them take a letter to the Station Master at Khan Haswah, telling him our predicament and asking him to

arrange for our rescue. At about 10.45 the sentry reported a light in the distance and on further inspection I made the statement that it was a trolley moving towards us - as I could hear the sound. This cheered us up, as we were all beginning to feel the cold and we knew that it got colder in the morning: so nobody was very enthusiastic about spending the night there. Sure enough, at 11.00 the trolley appeared and soon left with the 2 Colonels and the 2 ladies, while we decided to make the best of a bad job and to push the trolleys back to Khan Haswah Station 7 miles away. We had one mishap on the journey. We came to a bridge over a stream, and one of our party, in the dark, fell in and was soaked to the skin. He fell in one side of the bridge and was pulled out the other. The shock so upset him that he had not recovered at 9.30 the next morning. I had a miraculous escape. Just before we came to the bridge I had commenced to walk on the left hand rail as I had rubber soles to my boots and to push the car from behind. Although I had no notice when we came to the Bridge, yet I walked over all right on the rail, but I felt very windy as I did it, for there were 3 feet between every sleeper and the black water was rushing underneath. We had several halts on the way - as we began to get very tired and at the 6th mile an Officer and about 30 men of the 89th Punjabis met us and brought the trolleys along for the last mile. We had been holding up the train which starts from Hillah at 8.00 p.m. and which had been standing in Khan Haswah since 9. It was now after 2.00a.m. but we soon got up on the train on which a 3rd class compartment had been reserved for us, and started for Baghdad. Notwithstanding the cold I slept, and at 7.30 we pulled into Baghdad West. We walked home and had breakfast and were in the office again at 10!