

### **Wednesday 2nd. March 1921**

Today has been a busy one for Barkham, Wardrop and Nyilassy, for tonight they go to Mosul by the 12 midnight train. Packing has been the order of the day -none of their men can pack like my man. After dinner, their car and a 3-ton lorry arrived outside our billet door and Barkham loaded up . We then went to Nyilassy's and Wardrop's billet in Tariq-ul-Abakhana and loaded them up. Then the 4-mile run to Baghdad South, where we arrived 9,30 but on enquiring at the R.T.O. (Railway Transport Officer's Office) we found that no orders for their accommodation had been received and that there was no room for them in the train. The Transport staff refused at first to make any arrangements for them, but at last I managed to force them up to the scratch by representing that we were on the staff at G.H.Q. and that there would be a h--- of a row if something wasn't done. So two fresh trucks were put on and the luggage and bearers accommodated while Barkham went in with one Officer and Nyilassy and Wardrop with another. I got their warrant and having said goodbye came home. It is only another example of the rotten staff work in this country. Very seldom a thing is well organised and the more I see of it the more I am convinced that the Arab himself will do even worse. I was sick during the night - bilious I suppose.

### **Thursday 3rd. March 1921**

Today the Chief is away - gone to Hillah on inspections. Hillah is the station next beyond Babylon and having made that journey on Monday I cannot say I should have wanted to do it again. McEvoy and I are in charge at the office and signing for "Financial Adviser." I got through a good amount of work and came home and had a good bath and dressed for dinner. Now that I am the only civilian in the Mess I intend to dress for dinner at night. It is of course the usual thing out here and I think the Officer members expect it. It is pleasant after the heat and dust of the day to get into one's comfortable dinner clothes.

Today we received a telegram from King, our Association Secretary in London, to put in claims at once for refund of Income Tax paid

during the War in excess of military rates. We had put in a claim nearly a year ago to be charged at the lower military rate - and if the telegram means that our claim has now been allowed it will mean about £70 or £80 refund is due to me. So I have put in my claim and requested that the amount due be paid to my wife. One of the disadvantages of being out here, so far away, is that we don't know what is happening at home. I hardly ever see a newspaper - but perhaps that is not an unmixed evil, as from what I hear, news from home is not over pleasing - except that the cost of living is going down a bit.

### **Friday 4th March 1921**

Today opened as every other day has lately - a clear blue sky - not a cloud anywhere and the sun shining brilliantly. The nights are not so cold, and it is beginning to "warm up" Some people tell me blood-curdling stories about the heat to come ( and the Arabs are prophesying a hot summer this year) while others say that except for a few weeks in midsummer the weather is perfectly bearable - though the days are long. Up to now I find these beautiful sunny days are very much to my liking and there is no doubt this wonderful sunshine does help.

Tonight we had another special guest night - our guests being two Sisters from the Isolation Hospital - a Miss Mitchell who is shortly marrying an officer here, and a Miss Gunn, whom Neill (one of our Mess) is rather keen on. They came in their scarlet and grey silk uniforms ( Q.A.I.M.N.S.) and were certainly two quite nice girls. We had a real "posh" dinner starting off with "Vermouth" and finishing up with Port in the approved style. We brought down our carpets for the Mess room floor and made the place look very comfy. We played ping-pong afterwards - ours is one of the very few sets in Baghdad and everyone who comes here wants to play. One way and another we had a very enjoyable evening and the girls did not leave until 10.30, being taken home by Neill and Padre Marsh in Neills motorcar. British women are never allowed out alone.

### **Saturday 5th March 1921**

This afternoon the carpet merchant who sold me my carpet came to the billet with some more carpets. Townsend and I inspected some, and I rather liked one he asked 90 Rupees for. I told him it was no better than the one he sold to me for 75 rupees and Townsend suggested that I should exchange it. I offered to do this, viz.: to exchange my carpet for the new one if he would give me 5 rupees. He offered to make the exchange if I would give him 5 rupees, and after a deal of bargaining he agreed to the exchange - with no payment either side. I have got a much better carpet, I think. We haggled over some others and I made an offer for one, which he wouldn't accept.

The carpet merchant had rather delayed us, as Marsh, Townsend and I had arranged to go to Khadhimain, a town about 5 miles from Baghdad containing one of the most famous sacred mosques of Islam. We walked over the Tigris by the Khotah Bridge and through the long Bazaar the other side and waited for the horse Tram which runs between Baghdad and Khadhimain. It soon came along, an antiquated ramshackle green painted thing drawn by two horses. We climbed up on top by means of a ladder at the back and had a most interesting ride through a pleasant country with date groves and gardens on either side. There were many almond and apple trees in bloom and some flourishing orange groves - but the oranges are nearly over. We ran for some part of the way alongside the Tigris but towards Khadhimain we bore more into the country and presently came in sight of the wonderful golden minarets or domes of the Mosque, which is one of the most sacred in Islam and to which thousands of pilgrims come yearly from all parts of Persia, Turkestan and Arabia. The domes and minarets are said to be actually covered with sheets of pure gold, but as no European is allowed in no-one has ever been able to verify it. We stood at the beautiful entrance gate, about 100ft. high, formed of tiles and glazed bricks arranged in marvellous patterns, while just inside was the most beautiful mother-of-pearl window and further on the columns upholding the colonnade were of gold and mother-of-pearl. The magnificence of the place was almost awe-inspiring and yet just outside were squalid merchants selling the most trumpery rubbish imaginable. We had

first strolled through the Bazaar and each bought an ebony stick for 4 rupees. Mine was a real fine one, splendidly balanced. We were rather late getting home and found the Khotah Bridge shut, so we had to cross the Tigris in one of the native bellums- reaching New Street about 7.00 Having had no tea - dinner was welcome and much enjoyed.

### **Sunday 6th March**

This morning I rested on the roof for a time and then went out for a walk (Holy Communion as usual at 7.30) On my way back I looked in at the Audit staff billet and had a yarn with the boys there. After tiffin the carpet merchant came back and I had a long haggle with him over a carpet that is the real goods this time. I should think it probably lasted an hour but I got it at practically my own price and and I think I have made a good spec. I paid 112 Rupees and my stick! If only I could send it home it would probably fetch #20 in London or more than double what I gave for it. Unless I can find some means of getting it home I shan't buy another. One can always swap them or re-sell them out here, but naturally, the place where they are worth the money is England.

In the evening after dinner we all played Ping-pong with great enjoyment and I went tired and contented to bed.

### **Monday 7th March 1921**

In a fortnights time I shall have been away three months - one eighth of my service abroad - and two months in Mesopotamia. Time is beginning to move. I don't mind how soon it gets to top speed!

In the afternoon, just after tiffin, Padre Webb asked me whether I would like to go golfing. I would have liked to have said "yes" - but I had asked one of our men, Stevens, up to see my carpet and have tea, so I had to refuse. I had a rest and about 3.30 Stevens came. He was very struck with the carpet which is a Saruq and wanted to buy it from me. He knows a good deal about carpets, so it must be quite a good one for the money, and the Persian merchant was

probably right when he said it cost him 130 rupees. Two or three months ago it would have cost 200 rupees - but the export of carpets has dropped - and with it the prices out here : so the slump which is universal even affects carpets in Baghdad! It is 6ft 9 inches by 4ft 3 inches, just under 30 square feet, and of a very pleasing red ground with a good centre pattern, and border. It should be worth £20 in London.

My man had sewn up in canvas a little box in which I had packed some little Arab shoes for my little daughters, so we went to the G.P.O and registered them and sent them off. They are of red leather and are very cheap here - from 1/- to 2/6 the pair.

### **Tuesday 8th March 1921**

At tiffin, Webb, having another afternoon off, asked me if I was willing to go golfing this afternoon. I jumped at the offer, naturally, and as luck had it I had asked Imam Ali to clean my golf clubs this morning. This he had done fairly well, and so we went by gharri to the Pool Garage and got a motor car as the golf course is about two miles out of the town through the North Gate, along the fine "Marshall" Road, with farms and date - groves on either side. The golf course is, of course, rather flat and there is very little grass. The fairway is simply bare earth, hard but not stony or dusty, except here and there where the saltpetre which exists in the soil crumbles it up. The bunkers are made of earth and well placed and many of the "holes" are some length - the 1st. is 350ft., 2nd. 398ft. The green charge is 8 annas - so that if it weren't for the cost of getting out to it, golf would be cheap out here. This being my first effort at golf, I couldn't expect to do very much and as a matter of fact I took 10 strokes for the first hole and 12 for the second! But now and then I got such good shots that I have hopes that I may soon pick it up and my total was 99 for 12 holes - all we had time to do. I certainly felt that I could have done lots better but golf is devised to take the conceit out of one!

### **Wednesday 9th March**

I certainly didn't think yesterday when I had my first game of golf that I should be playing my second game today. And yet that is exactly what has happened. At breakfast, Padre Webb asked me if I would like to join him and Captain Horton and it did not take me long to accept. The car had been ordered and would call (with Horton in it) at our billet at 2.00p.m. sharp - so I got back from the office punctually at 1 p.m. and after tiffin changed into my flannels. It is so hot here in the afternoon that one would be too warm in ordinary golfing clothes - so I just wore my white flannel trousers (no pants) tennis shirt and grey flannel jacket. This gives some idea of what it will be later on, when movement of any sort in the afternoon is impossible, or I had rather say, inadvisable. That is, for Europeans - apparently the natives manage all right - and the only thing to do is to keep quiet, not do anything to raise ones temperature, wear as little as possible, and drink, drink, drink. No alcohol, mind you; that would be fatal. But mineral waters, or pure water, so as to encourage sweating, which keeps the body temperature down below that of the outside air. This doesn't have to be borne for very long, of course,- sometimes only for a week or two the heat is really bad - and most people say that they manage quite all right; you can't do much and so you can't help doing next to nothing. However all this isn't golf. The motor came punctually enough, and we motored down to the Golf Club, and soon got going. As I said yesterday, there is very little grass. Here and there is a little but I seemed to see less today than I did yesterday. The "tees" for instance, where one drives from, are simply low banks of dry earth, and the "greens" are hard, rolled earth flats, sanded over. One tees up with a little damp earth, and when one arrives at the "green" one has to be very careful in "putting" or the ball runs well past the hole.

As I hoped, I did much better than I had done yesterday. My drives from the tees were seldom miracles! But I got somewhere, and often I got quite a good mashie stroke. The mashie is the most frequent club one uses. One seldom uses the "brassie" or the "iron" (clubs), but now and again the niblick comes in when one is bunkered.

I got several good putts on the greens and did the full 18 holes in 125, an average of 7 per hole, which I think is not so bad for a second effort. It is extraordinary how easy it is to fozzle a shot unless one concentrates on it every time - and, take your eye off the ball you are striking, and you are done. Tennis and Golf are the great games out here. But whereas in Tennis you cannot give your partners a good game unless you are about as good as they are, in Golf it doesn't matter quite so much. You don't put your companion off his game by your weakness and he feels pleased at this inferiority. Not that I was very much inferior to Horton. He is not a good player and never will be I should say. Perhaps I shan't be either but I can say that I shall like the game and it will give me the exercise I very much need if I am to keep fit and not get fat.

We didn't finish until nearly 5 o'clock so I went straight down to the office in my flannels and met the chief (Mr. Joplis) just going in. He hasn't been very well lately and is going to stay away during the next 3 days to undergo treatment for a slight touch of dysentery. So I am to be in charge once more.

### **Thursday 10th March 1921**

There is nothing much to record for today, the few cases I had not signed I took down to the chief at 7 o'clock and talked over with him. He wasn't in bed, but is going to lay up tomorrow. In the morning I went over to the G.H.Q Tennis Courts and watched the Tennis Championships for an hour and very good tennis it was. This is the great Annual "Baghdad" Week. The Army Athletic Championships are held this week and there is some swagger horse - racing. Three of the members of my mess, Townsend - Marsh and Neill - went to the races this afternoon and did well. All won - Townsend won 300 Rupees, Marsh 55. In the evening after dinner, we had some great ping - pong games and I surprised them by giving them all some good beatings.

### **Friday 11th March 1921**

Today was as uneventful as yesterday, except that I had nearly managed to get clear - the chief being away, papers have been accumulating in his room. I have only been taking those to him which it was necessary to get off. The afternoon turned out very hot, and as Webb has asked me to go Golfing tomorrow I sat at home and cleared off some arrears of writing, but most of the others went to the Tennis Championships at G.H.Q. and saw some very good Tennis. Its nice to have a lazy afternoon now and again and I sat on our roof and wrote and enjoyed it.

In the evening after dinner we bought out our ping - pong and had some quite jolly games. We play a quick enough game to make it good exercise and one doesn't want much rocking to get off to sleep. I sleep very soundly these nights and sometimes wish they were a little longer. I quite regret the appearance of my faithful man at 7 with chota hazari.

### **Saturday 12th March 1921**

Today broke well enough but soon after breakfast a wind arose, and wind here in dry weather is the worst thing one has to contend with. The soil which churns up into the thickest mud in wet weather turns into dust when it is dry, and the result of a wind blowing over dust several inches thick can hardly be imagined except by those out here. The dust rises like a cloud and keeps in continual motion whirling along so that one can see hardly more than a few yards while one is blinded by the sandy grains and ones clothes covered. It seems to percolate right through one's clothing, down one's neck, shoes become full of it, ears, eyes, nose and hair are full of it: it gets into every nook and cranny of the house, into one's food and water: in fact it is everywhere. To be out in the desert in a dust - storm is very dangerous. You dare not stray from the beaten track and yet to go on in face of it is more than man or beast can do. And sometimes these storms will blow up for two or 3 days. Blessed be God they don't happen very often. Yesterday was the first one I had experienced and I have been in Mesopotamia 7 weeks now. And as it didn't get going until after 4 o'clock it couldn't be called a bad one.



Of course one keeps indoors when a dust storm is on, if possible, but I had gone out to the Golf club in the afternoon with Webb and Capt Horton. It was windy when we started and the others had questioned the advisability of going on but I think it was my keenness more than anything else that decided them. We could see, however, well enough at first and so we set out. The wind was certainly very troublesome. If one lifted the ball very far off the ground the wind took it right away if it were not blowing in the same direction, and putting on the "greens" was difficult, as the wind rolled the ball about so. Notwithstanding all this I enjoyed the game, especially as I played much better on the whole than I did last Wednesday - and had it not been for mucking the 1st, 2nd, 9th and 18th holes I should have managed a quite creditable score, - under an average of 6 strokes per hole. I equalled bogey once and was 1 over only 4 holes. My failure at the 18th hole was due to the dust storm and the others didn't play it. I did at least one real good drive and one real good brassie shot: and so I came home content to a ripping hot bath - a quite good dinner and some championship ping - pong afterwards after which, to bed and to sleep the sleep of the just - the tired just.

### **Sunday 13th March 1921**

Today, although windy in the morning, has been an improvement on yesterday. I went to sacramento in the morning and after breakfast walked down to the Audit Staff Billet and called for McEvoy. We went for a walk along the river bank to Karradah, where the Tigris narrows and there is a Bridge of Boats. The Mehelas sailing down stream were sailing at a great pace with a good following wind, but those travelling up stream the crews were towing, 8 to 12 men pulling each by ropes, walking along the foreshore. It was even then very hard work and they made perhaps 2 miles per hour. The banks are very high on the left bank of the Tigris (going downstream) and in most places up to 15 or 20 feet above water level just now. Soon the snows in Armenia, Kurdistan and N.W. Persia will melt and the river will rise 10 - 15 feet.

In the evening I went to Church (Garrison Church in the Serai) and after dinner, at which Irvine, one of the Audit Staff, was a guest, we all played ping - pong, but I can't beat Padre Webb, although I can defeat all the others. We are having another table made, 5ft by 11ft, the proper ping - pong size, and when that arrives we ought to have some good sport for the evenings.

### **Monday 14th March 1921**

Today a great Ceremonial Parade and Presentation of Decorations won during the war was to have been held, but it turned out wet, and in Mesopotamia rain stops everything as the roads and parade ground became mud, so that it was cancelled, or rather postponed. It is very much colder today and I have had to put on my thick underclothing again. Mesopotamia is warm enough when the sun is shining, but it is just as cold as England when the sky is overcast. On such wet days no - one walks out who isn't obliged to - but even Baghdad is improving and the city authorities immediately start scraping up the mud on the roads, which they put down again as the road begins to dry. Roads are the problem out here. There is no gravel or stones, and every stone has to be bought down from Mosul, hundreds of miles. They have used a lot of stones in making some of the principal roads, but the cost of brining them makes them rather expensive, and the children use them as playthings (they are so rare !) and I see numbers of children sitting on the path as I walk to the office in the morning playing a sort of game like "dabs".

### **Tuesday 15th March 1921**

Today, although it wasn't wet, it still was cloudy and quite cool. The chief came back to the office but he is still quite shaky.

In the evening I went to Col. Lane's lecture at the Garrison Church Room on Babylon, given to the members of the party that went with him on 28th February. He is an interesting old man, obsessed with the idea that we are the lost tribes, God's chosen people, and that we are to rule the Earth ! He made the prophecy that Mesopotamia was to be the centre of a new Great Empire of the Middle East, and

that the present Prince of Wales was to be crowned King of Jerusalem, King David II !

After the lecture we all went over to the Serai Nursing Home, where Miss Emuss had provided refreshments, and exhibited one another's photographs taken on the day of the trip. It is a low two storied building round a big spacious garden courtyard, and would be a delightfully cool place in summer, when it is most in demand. Having passed votes of thanks and made a resolution to have another Babylon day, we broke up and went home to bed.

### **Wednesday 16th March 1921**

Today was held the postponed Ceremonial Parade, it being better weather and the Parade Ground dry. McEvoy and I went up to the ground in an R.A.F. motorcar, which as a rule are a good bit better than ours, and found that the huge parade ground, about half a mile square, was lined by Indian troops, and that the regiments to take part were already in position. The officers enclosure, where we sat, was full, including about half-a-dozen ladies, while outside there was a crowd of Baghdadis. We were just beside the Saluting Point and the march past ( which took place after the presentation was over ) accordingly viewed at its best position. Several members of the Arab Levies received Medals, as well as British and Indian Officers and men. The High Commissioner, Sir Peter Cox, and the G.O.C. in C., General Ironside, are at Cairo conferring with Winston Churchill, so the Parade was taken by the acting G.O.C. in C., General Fraser. The troops marching past were 7th Dragoon Guards, Indian Lancers, Indian Sappers and miners, British Infantry, Indian Infantry, British Artillery, 18-pounders, 4.5"howitzers and Pack horse Artillery, ending up with an Armoured Car Company, all inside their Iron Cars. After they had gone off, the great show of the day came on, viz.: the R.A.F. There were 30 planes in the air, 3 abreast, we could see them, and hear them, coming in the distance and as they came to the Saluting Point they swooped down and flew just a few yards off the ground. It was a very pretty and a thrilling spectacle; one machine which came down rather put the wind up me, as it was only a few yards over my head ! This salute of the Planes was a most

effective piece of work. The speed with which they tore up and then at a given point each flight of three dipped at the same moment straightened and rose again was clear evidence of the command the flying man now has over his machine. After this the crowd dispersed and we came home in our car and did an hour's work before Tiffin. While indoors it unfortunately came on to rain again, so golf was off - and I employed the afternoon in checking our equipment and writing my ledger up to date. The last four or five days - from Saturday till today - have been bad weather - or rather, bad for Mesopotamia. One misses the sun very much on the days it is dull - and yearns for the sun again. Yet in a few months time everyone will be cursing the sun and hoping that a little rain or a cloud might come - when a cain chair is a blessing - because then the sweat can drip through instead of making a pool on the seat !

### **Thursday 17th March 1921**

It was still cold today but the weather is now improving. When I say cold I don't mean that an overcoat is wanted, not even in early morning or night, but there is a cold wind which gets through the warmth of the sun. I had intended to go golfing in the afternoon but Horton had cried off. So I did nothing beyond worry round all the morning as to why my letters hadn't come from home. The English mail had arrived on Wednesday and my letter, re-addressed from Basrah, should have turned up the next day. In the afternoon I wrote, and in the evening we had three guests to dinner, Major Caryer, Capt. MacDonald from the works Directorate, and Lieut. Davis, who is joining the Farms Directorate. Our new cook put up quite a good dinner. I had forgotten to record the fact that our good cook was a bad man and came home absolutely "blotto" one night just before dinner. He was sick all over the kitchen and quite incapable of cooking any dinner. So we gave him a good hiding and next day turned him out, after having deducted 30 Rupees from his wages for being drunk. We then tried a Persian cook, who nearly poisoned us, and then our present one, who is an Indian, and can't speak a word of English. He is what might be called a good plain cook and he hasn't poisoned us yet! We had a very merry dinner. MacDonald is going home and was as a consequence very light

hearted. I was as merry as the rest on ginger-beer! We played ping-pong, as usual, defeating our guests, and Townsend finished the evening by giving some very good conjuring.

### **Friday 18th March 1921**

In the evening just as we were finishing dinner, the Principal Chaplain, Col. Hales, and another Chaplain, named Jaques, came in to see us, and we prevailed on them to stay, although we had intended to hold a mess meeting, as Marsh is going to Basrah on Sunday. As always, we bought out our ping-pong, in order to show the P.C. what wonders we were! Jaques, of course, we asked to play, intending to show how easy it was to beat a novice 20 to love - but to our great surprise, he beat the lot of us! We couldn't believe our eyes, when point after point we lost, but it was a fact that he came in and beat us at our own game. He hadn't played for 4 years, but he told us that he used to be very good at it then. We believed him!

### **Saturday 19th March 1921**

This morning I got off a good deal of my work, and being nearly clear, went home very pleased with myself.

At 2 o'clock Horton called and he, Webb and I went up to the Golf Club. I should say, rather, to the Baghdad Sporting Club, where there is all that is necessary for sport, including the 18 hole Golf Course, and a proper professional. There is a very nice club house with big lounges and tea-rooms, bath rooms, gym, and so on. I felt that I could do a bit better than I did last Saturday and I went round in 109 for 17 holes. I had to pick up at one hole as I couldn't find my ball for some time and people were waiting behind me. I did one hole in bogey, and about 5 or 6 in 1 over bogey. I had several bad holes, but managed to beat Horton 10 holes to 6 halving 2. When we got home (after having a good wash and a tea at the Club) we found Padre Marsh in bed with a bad cold and saying that he was in for an attack of flu. He has cancelled his trip to Basrah, but I hope very much he hasn't got flu; as a cold is a very bad thing to get out

here and a difficult thing to get rid of so they say. Went to bed feeling very tired.

### **Sunday 20th March 1921**

Today completes my third month away from home. It seems years since I left and yet it seems only the other day that I said goodbye. I suppose it is because the events of that goodbye day are so fresh in my mind. Roll on the next two years.

I went to Holy Communion in the morning and unfortunately lost my little red prayer book somewhere. I hope it may turn up. After breakfast I called for McEvoy and we went over Maude Bridge, finding the Tigris running very swiftly and muddier than ever, having risen several feet during the last 2 or 3 days. We walked as far as the Tomb of Zobeide, the favourite wife of Caliph Haroum Alrasahid, the Caliph of the Arabian Nights. On the way back through the Bazaar we collected a small crowd of Arab children and treated them to sweets. To have these little Barbarians, some with jewelled rings through their noses and eyes painted black around the lids, was strange enough especially as I don't know how many Arabs collected round to see the fun!

In the evening I went to Church at the Serai again and Padre Webb preached a good sermon on the entry of Christ into Jerusalem - today being Palm Sunday our Church was decorated with real Palm branches.

### **Monday 21st March 1921**

The first day of my fourth month away from home. The weather is good again: so in the afternoon Horton called for me and we drove to the Sporting Club and played Golf until 4.30. I started horribly badly - so much so that I picked up my ball half way when playing the first hole. I improved afterwards but on the whole I hardly think I quite came up to Saturday's effort. Horton played badly too, and out of the 15 holes we played, I won 7, Horton 4, and we halved 4. I improved on my driving, I think, but not on the mashie shots. This

evening Marsh went away to Basra so that we are now only three in mess. We had quite a good dinner and were very merry, afterwards seeing Marsh off in his motorcar. He has handed over all the mess accounts to me and I am going to do my best to run the mess while he is away. I am afraid, however, that it will be very difficult to run it on economical lines. The expenses are nearly the same and among 3 men only are likely to average out rather high! MacDonald, Caryer and several others called for Marsh after he had gone. They were very merry!

This evening I went with Capt. Grey, of 'A' Branch G.H.Q., by car to Karradah, about 20 - 30 minutes run, and impounded the ledgers and vouchers of the officer in charge of Coal and Oil stores, and of the Store Depot, Karradah. The Baghdad Police have found several native contractors in possession of Government Stores and found that they had been obtained from this Depot and the purchase money handed to the Officer in charge of Stores. The stores thus obtained were 18 tons of Oil, 9000 Bamboo Poles, and 2500 wooden Scaffold Poles. I went down to seize the books and conducted the preliminary investigation. The case is under enquiry and I was not allowed to make any charge but the officer, a Lieut. Campbell, made many obviously untrue replies to my questions and got himself into a tangle several times. I gained the impression that he was trying to mislead me, and I shouldn't be surprised if we have caught another rogue who has sold about 4000 Rupees worth of Government Stores. Three officers who had stolen motorcars were tried by Court Marshal recently and cashiered. Two received 12 months imprisonment each, which in Mesopotamia, I should think, is nasty.

## **Tuesday 22nd March 1921**

As the result of my investigation yesterday it was decided, if the Police enquiries had progressed far enough, to place Lieut. Campbell under arrest.

When I arrived to Tiffin I found that another Padre, Reverent Capt. Allrander, had joined the mess. He is a Presbyterian Chaplain and a rum bird altogether. He had met Rice and Pickard at Basra.

Apparently they liked him but I don't think he is much of an acquisition here. After Tiffin I made him as comfortable as I could with the furniture I am keeping for Pickard, and then took him up to the Supply Depot to get rations for his bearer and himself. He is apparently a man who likes things done for him. In the evening we tried to teach him ping-pong but he was such a fool at it that we had to give it up. He has an Armanian Refugee for a bearer, who can't speak a word of Hindustani and hardly a word of English. I took Alexander through the Bazaar - and he was greatly struck with the interest of the place. He said he would be quite content if he could stay in Baghdad for ever!

### **Wednesday 23 March 1921**

Marsh being gone much of my time this week has been occupied with attending to matters connected with our billet. I have arranged for the furniture for Alexander: also for the additional items to furnish Pickards room for him when he comes up. I am also closely watching the rations when they arrive daily and their utilisation to the best advantage so that as little as possible is wasted and to secure that our cook doesn't buy things we can do without and charges the proper price for those things he does buy. There is no doubt that our cook in addition to being a drunkard was also a thief. Most people say all cooks are the same, but if we can only keep an eye on this one of ours for a bit, we might get him to understand that he can't play the fool. We believe he is an opium smoker or eater - it is sometimes almost impossible to wake him. My bearer, Iman Ali, is an ardent apostle of economy and watches the milk, jam, bread, butter and so on very keenly. He fancies himself over it, too, as this was always done before by Webbs' bearer, Thomas, and these men love any job which they think is important especially if they can do some other bearer out of it. I am trying to manage on three rations for 4 people. We pay the cook about 5 Rupees a day for extra things not included in rations and manage pretty well. I am gradually picking up Hindustani and can now converse to some degree with the Indians - especially with my own man who takes great delight in trying to teach me and beams all over his face when I attempt to speak to him - whether from delight or amusement I do not know!



As a matter of fact, the other Indians also grin when I speak Hindustani to them - so perhaps amusement is the most like reason - but they answer me in Hindustani and I can understand much of what they say. It is not a very difficult language to speak; but to write it I shall never attempt - it has special characters of its own. This for instance is "The Lord's Prayer" in Hindustani:-

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(written backwards)

Something like shorthand, only not so short! These are the numerals 1 - 10:-

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so I think that if I can learn to speak , it will be enough, for the present!

### **Thursday 24 March 1921**

The weather just now, when we are three days in Spring, is so much like July weather in England when it is fine. One knows it is not going to rain; one never wears an overcoat (unless motoring) and never needs an umbrella. But ones boots and trousers get muddy because unless water is continually scattered over the roads and paths, thereby making them muddy and binding them the continual traffic would soon break them up into dust. The British have improved some sort of sanitary laws on the city which never existed before they came. As a consequence, the risk of illness by filthy dust has greatly decreased. Notwithstanding the wonderful stories of its magnificence, I imagine that the Baghdad of The Arabian Nights was very probably a very unsavoury city. Its roads were very narrow; its houses of mud bricks for the most part; its police a byword; its sanitary organisation - rich. But many of the customs now prevailing have probably existed for centuries. For instance the roads are watered for the most part by men who carry goatskins full of water slung on their backs and scatter the water very deftly by a right to left jerk of the neck of the skin, in front of them. Other men are

employed who fill 4 gallon petrol tins with water which they scatter - and for the rest cylindrical water tank carts drawn by bullocks are used. There is no drainage system and all washing water is brought out from houses and scattered on the paths. So that one gets muddy even in this dry weather.

We had received during the last few days three lettuces without hearts. One of these I took down in the afternoon to the Garrison Supply Depot and showed it to the Supply Officer Capt. Stephenson. Together we went to the Fresh Vegetable Section and arrived just as the lettuces for tomorrow had been delivered by the Arab contractor. I never saw such a lot of rubbish as these were and said so. Capt. Stevenson agreed and said he would reject half of them as a lesson to the contractor. But if the Arab has been selling stuff like these in the past to us he has been making a good thing out of it and must think the British Army is run by a lot of fools. No self respecting native would think of eating such rubbish and yet it is accepted as good enough for the British Sahib. I suspect somebody is making a bit of graft out of it.

### **Good Friday 25 March 1921**

We are supposed to have from today until Monday next as Easter Holiday. But I put in three hours at the Office this morning - partly to get clear of my arrear of work and partly to get the audit of the I.W.T. ledgers completed. After tiffin I went to the "3 hours Devotion", arriving at 1.30 and staying until 3. Padre Webb took the whole service and the half I was present at was well done and greatly interesting. There was quite a big congregation all men excepting one woman, a nurse I think. I made enquiries after the service but there is no trace of the Prayer Book (my red one) I lost last Sunday.

In the evening I went to the 7 o'clock service. There was a full choir and another surprising attendance. We had the "Story of the Cross" (sung kneeling) and notwithstanding his long 3 hour address in the afternoon Padre Webb sang the Priests part at the altar very well. He must have had a very stiff day and from what I can see a

Padre's life here is a very strenuous one when he likes to make it so. Webb is very enthusiastic and extraordinarily well liked. I am very fortunate to have made such friends with him.

### **Saturday 26 March 1921**

Today I went to the Office in the morning very fortunately as it happened - for the C.I.D. man came for the purpose of taking evidence regarding the Officer I mentioned in my Diary on Monday. It appeared that one of the Indian clerks at his office had turned informer and given the whole show away. The trial will come off soon and I should say he will get a years imprisonment with hard labour. We will wake some more of them before the year is out.

In the afternoon Horton called for me and we went to the Sporting Club for Golf. I played badly and well by turns. One hole I did in 3 - one under bogey - but I had too many 8's. I went out in 58 and home in 61 - horrible, I know: I ought to be able to do it in 100 or thereabouts. Bogey is 73 for the 18 holes. It was very hot in the afternoon (not that I felt uncomfortably hot at all) but I got pretty thirsty and the tea we had on the Club verandah overlooking the gardens in which cloves, cornflowers, roses and sweet peas etc. were in bloom was very refreshing. And then the drive home in the comfortable Vauxhall makes one feel that Mesopotamia is not so very bad in the Spring months. If only it didn't get hotter!

### **Sunday 27 March 1921**

Today - Easter Sunday - has been a lovely day. Hot in the morning but not too hot, and cooler in the afternoon, when it came over a bit cloudy, and I sat on the roof and wrote.

I went to the 8 o'clock Communion Service and was surprised at the number present - over 50 - including quite a large proportion of civilians and their wives. The little church was very prettily decorated and the altar had quantities of flowers. There were any number of green palm branches, just like those our Lord walked on, on his Entry into Jerusalem, of course for the palm tree is everywhere around

Baghdad. In the morning I went for a walk by myself and in the afternoon Weyman of the Supplies Directorate G.H.Q. wanted to take me out to play Golf - but I couldn't put off my letters for that! In the evening I achieved something extraordinary. I got Townshend to come to Church! As he hasn't been to Church since 1914 it was about time he broke that record. We had another visitor to tea, Colonel Kage of Remounts, a great carpet man. And we had a good dinner and went contented to bed.

### **Monday 28 March 1921**

It often fills me with a certain amount of surprise to notice how fond some of the native Arabs and Jews are of their children. Yesterday I saw an Arab run up to a little child, kiss it, hold it high up in the air, and then hug it and kiss it again and again. Another stooped down and sitting on his haunches, as so many of the natives do, picked up his little baby and kissed it again and again. I am told, however, that it is only a male child that an Arab treats like this, never a girl child. He often can be seen carrying his baby boy; he is very proud of his boys. I have been told that such is the anxiety of some Arab women to bear their husbands male children, that many of them go quite long distances, when they are with child, to rub themselves against an old Bronze Turkish cannon in the city, which has gained the reputation of being efficacious in that respect. On the other hand, I have seen two or three acts of cruelty, each time against a boy of about 8 or 10. On the whole, however, I am gradually getting a better opinion of the Arab. I must say that I have found them very polite and kind: eager to talk if possible: and very ready to work at their trades while I looked on, smiling with pleasure often at my attention.

This afternoon Padre Webb and I went up to the Sporting Club for an afternoon's golf. It is a bit expensive but I find that exercise is an absolute necessity for me and I have been ever so much better since I have taken up golf (or it may be that the new cook suits me, or I have got over the effects of Baghdad water) or it may be all combined. Although I started shakily I did the best round I have ever done. I took 56 out and 52 home, which considering it is only

my third week of golf is not so very bad. I actually beat Padre Webb by 4 holes, but he didn't play very well. He was feeling the effects of his strenuous Easter week. I am driving better and rarely make a miss now. After the game we have a refreshing wash (a bath, if one likes) and then tea on the Club verandah. That is one of the best hours of the afternoon to take it easy afterwards and then go home in a comfortable motorcar at 6.30.

We had three guests to dinner tonight two Padres and a Mr. Wilson, of the Mesopotamia Pension Corporation. I had made the arrangements with Cook in the afternoon and my menu was quite a success. Considering that our Cook knows no English I must be getting on with my Hindustani to order a complete menu of seven courses and describe how I wanted some of them cooked. The other servants also know I am learning Hindustani and all seem keen to have a few words with me. After dinner we had some great games of ping-pong and among other achievements defeated several times Padre Jaques who defeated us the first time he came. The great thing here is to offer your guests plenty to drink. We have in our cupboard French Vermouth, Italian Vermouth, Kummel, Curacao, Gin, Brandy, Port, Sherry, and Whisky - Lemonade, Soda water and Ginger beer. But I have found it best to keep off drink and the only bottle of Whisky I have had in Baghdad was the bottle I bought at the N.A.C.B. on 2nd February. To wind up Townsend displayed some card tricks which had our visitors absolutely guessing and we broke up at 11 o'clock.

I went to the office for a short time in the morning, so Easter hasn't been a proper holiday for me. It was just as well as two officers who are implicated in the I.W.T. (Inland Water Transport) fraud case turned up for advice. Also the Chief is trying to get his work squared up as he is going down to Basrah tomorrow.

## **Tuesday 29th March 1921**

As a result of my day off yesterday I find my table is piled high with work. With the chief being away it means a certain amount of extra work for me, and I could see that unless I could pull up my arrears I

should have a worrying week. So I walked up to the office in the afternoon (my car not having turned up) at 2.30 and worked right on until 7 pm. But I was very tired at 7 and that is a feeling that I really haven't had since I left the W.O. The afternoon is the period when one's brain is least active and to force myself to work during this time makes the work hard work and so one gets tired at 7. But with the afternoon free, it is quite easy to work from 5-7 and therefore I think our present hours are good winter hours. With the summer coming on, however, when one must lie down during the afternoon and take exercise in the evening it is necessary to do all one's work in the morning - so when the chief comes back from Basrah I am going to suggest to him that our summer hours shall be 7.30 to 1 and then "finish". That will be some improvement on home hours when I used to leave home soon after 7.30 and get home about 7.30 at night. One just couldn't do that here, of course, the afternoons are so hot. However - a good dinner and to bed tired.

### **Wednesday 30th March 1921**

Awful realisation this morning - that the Chief has gone off to Basrah and forgotten to leave us the cheque for our monthly pay. And with having to supply the necessary funds for keeping our mess going while Marsh is away, I shall be absolutely bust after this morning. However, McEvoy has been up to the Eastern Bank who are the Local Auditors Bankers and prevailed upon them to issue the money on trust.

I kept my car at tiffin today and after our meal Padre Webb and I and Padre Jaques went up to the Sporting Club. Jaques was our guest for golf and we played a three-some, one against the other. I didn't do quite so well as on Monday ( I don't think a three- some is a good plan) but managed to do one hole in bogey and many other pretty good holes. It was quite windy, and although that tends to spoil one's golf, the cool wind makes things delightful out on the course. It is beginning to "warm up" now and I expect that the sun temperature was 150 degrees and the shade temperature over 90 this afternoon. Anyway it was very nice out there and one leaves it with regret to come back to the office. However, it is a nice and

comfortable drive back in our car - there is a great deal of truth in the statement an officer made to me the other day that "without the motorcar life in Mesopotamia for the Englishman would be impossible."

### **Thursday 31 March 1921**

It has been a gorgeous day today, although the wind (what there was) was a warm wind, and so having managed to keep my work down well I accepted Horton's invitation to go golfing again today. He called for me at 2pm and we got on to the course at 2.30, long before any other people were out. I got a very good caddy named Daud or Dawad, which I think is Arabic for David. Horton's caddy was one called Ibrahim, Arabic for Abraham. The head caddy is named Yusef, Arabic for Joseph. The old Biblical names are very popular among the Arabs - perhaps the old Jewish names were as a matter of fact borrowed from the Arabs and Egyptians, who, originally idolatrous, are now Mohammedan. There are always plenty of caddies to chose from, swarthy little kids ranging from 8 to 14 years old, who walk all round the course with you, over scrub, sand, thorn and everywhere, barefooted. They have very keen eyes, which are a necessity in a caddy, and seldom lose a ball. I lost my first ball today but I had driven the ball quite 250 yards (!) and it is difficult to follow at that distance. I did fairly well, easily beating Horton, and going round in 55 out 54 home. I didn't play as well as I ought to have done and had several very bad holes. I did two holes in bogey.