

The first cabin passage was inconvenient to discomfort to one used to Atlantic floating palaces. The linen was dingy and musty; the food badly cooked and carelessly served; the general debility of the milk and the sustained strength of the butter were matters of popular complaint, nothing was up to the prime standard of quality except prices. As soon as breakfast was over I betook myself to the end of the ship where was located the second-cabin, and passing through the gate, asked a ruddy young Englishman if I might have speech with my friends the missionaries. He was one of them he said pleasantly, and he had the whole band about me in a few minutes, sixteen of them, all from Great Britain, four Wesleyans, four Baptists, four from the Church of England, and four Congregationalists. My exclamation at the equal allotment of each denomination raised a laugh, and we were no longer strangers. In breeding and education the women were the superiors of those who lounged in sea chairs under the double awning amidships, and murmured languidly at the heat and length of the voyage.

The cheerful contentment of the party was to me astonishing. With one accord they overlooked discomforts until they became glaringly obtrusive, then laughed at them. When questioned, all pitched the stories of personal experience in one key. Of their own free will, and after mature deliberation, they had entered upon a course they hoped to continue while life should last, and they rejoiced and were glad in it. Six of the sixteen were veterans in the foreign field; five were the children of missionaries who had been educated in England and were going to carry on the work begun by their parents.

The peace that passed worldly understanding was not the serenity of ignorance. They knew what they were undertaking.

A young man—a first-cabin passenger—who had heard with mingled wonder and cynicism the report of my visits to the "psalm singers" one day asked to accompany me. Being a gentleman he quickly affiliated with the missionaries and made the most of our call. It was evening, and after bidding them "good night" we walked the deck for a while, he glancing at each turn, at the group seated in the moonlight within the cabin doors. By and bye he gave without prelude his solution of the mystery of the happiness of such people in such circumstances. "They must love Him," reverently raising his cap, "very much."

In six words he had furnished the key to conduct that baffles the adept in secular policy. It is a key that adjusts itself to every combination.

Through the silence succeeding the unexpected remark I seemed to hear in the rush of the south wind that blew softly and the wash of the Mediterranean waves, like the rhythm of a Gregorian chant: "For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

In Beirut, Syria, I counted my friends the missionaries by the score. Dr. Post, the head of the medical department of the Protestant College, which is, to all intents and purposes, a university, was our fellow passenger from Port Said, via Jaffa, and the first hand clasp I had after we anchored in the Beirut offing, was from Dr. Bliss the President. For ten days and more I was in hourly association with the noble body of professors and tutors, who, with their families, make up one of the most charming

social circles it was ever my privilege to enter. During one of the calls with which Dr. Bliss honored me, he said with the air of a man who celebrates a happy anniversary: "Thirty-seven years ago I left my native land for this place and work." "Have you never regretted it?" "Regretted it! In looking back to-day, my regret is that I have not in the course of nature, thirty-seven years more to devote to the same cause."

"We are sometimes spoken of as the gilt-edged mission," he continued, "but there are black edges to certain leaves of our history."

This introduced a deeply interesting abstract of the early struggles of the mission band—then a feeble folk—against half-hearted backers at home, and the apathy of the native population. I had from an eye witness the particulars of the massacre of Christians by the Druses in 1862. How every native Christian man and boy in the settlement near Beirut was killed, and the women and girls were brought down from the ruins of their homes to fill the mission house and be fed, nursed, and clothed by the missionaries and their wives. Of an alarm of peril that led to the flight by night under cover of the cactus hedges lining a lane that ran down to the pier, where lay a boat ready to convey the hunted American Christians to an English man-of-war. Babies were snatched from their beds, and borne off by their parents, everything else of value being left for the pillagers. Of Mrs. Bliss' sigh, as she sped along in the midnight at her husband's side, "If we could only escape to the mountains!" and his reply, "God is our refuge and strength, my dear. Look at the mountains, the Lebanon range, that at sunset had been as the Garden of the Lord in terraced luxuriance of vine and olive and fig trees, now lurid with the glare of burning villages." "Now we have no hardships!" was said to me so often that I inferred time and custom had reconciled them to the role of men without a country. My opinion was reversed by the events of the Thanksgiving day I passed in Beirut. I shall never participate in such another celebration of our national festival. Addresses were made, prayer was offered for the far away native land, and we all sang as clearly as aching throats and swelling hearts would allow, "My Country 'tis of Thee!"

I diverge from the main line of my theme to relate an incident of Dr. Bliss' visit to England in 1864, when the financial condition of the Beirut Mission, and the distress of the parent-land made an appeal to British Christians imperatively necessary.

At a meeting of the friends of the Mission, held in a London drawing-room, Dr. Bliss announced that he had raised \$10,000 toward the sum needed to put the College upon a stable foundation. A jeering voice called out: "In money or in Yankee greenbacks?" Without the pause of a second the reply rang out, "I shall not use one cent of the amount until every dollar of the ten thousand is worth a dollar in gold! Nor shall I have long to wait." He kept his word to the letter, and, as he had predicted, he had not long to wait.

This is the stuff of which the men are made who have set the Beirut College and Mission upon the hill commanding the harbor, the stretch of the blue Mediterranean on the left, and across an arm of the sea, the glory of Lebanon.

"You wonder at our contentment?" said one of the women missionaries to me; "I will show you a stranger thing if you will go with me a day's journey up the country." Let me take you who now read, with us.

Right in the heart of the hills in a miserable Syrian