

LETTER FROM DR. WEBSTER.

BEYROUT, Syria, Dec. 12, 1892.

MY DEAR J. MCP.,—We have now been a little over a week in Beyrout, and are already feeling quite at home in this far-away land. I cannot tell you how thankful we were to reach our sailing destination and have our long journeyings ended.

I wrote you last from Malta. We had a two hours' run through Valetta, Malta's capital. We visited one place of interest, the Church of St. John, where, in one of the chapels, a number of Michael Angelo's pictures are preserved. Among the collection is one of his most famous, the beheading of John the Baptist, a really wonderful picture.

We left Malta, Saturday noon, Nov. 5th, and took our course for Syria, in the Aegean sea, which was to be our next point.

On Monday morning about four o'clock, we passed Cape Matapan on the south of Greece, and two hours later Malea, off the same coast. We were within a few hundred yards of Malea to have a glimpse of the old hermit who lives there in a cave. But evidently he was not up early that morning for he did not appear as he usually does to salute passing vessels.

We were up early that morning to see the shores of old Greece, and saw one of the sights of the whole voyage, a sunrise in the Aegean sea. It was something of extraordinary beauty. O, the colors, the variety and beauty and mellowness of them in these Eastern lands are very striking. I could understand how Homer used to write so much about the sunrising and prettily name it "the rosy finger'd daughter of morn."

All day long we were among the islands of the Aegean archipelago. We sighted Crete, and passed quite close to others of no less fame in history. We are sailing in the most classic and most beautiful of all seas.

In the evening we reach Syria and anchor for the night. We are told that we cannot go ashore since we have not yet been 15 days out from Liverpool, so we spend the day and a half pleasantly on board fishing, and watching these strange Easterners at work unloading the steamer.

Two men, Greeks, were placed on board our steamer to watch that none of us broke the quarantine. They seemed innocent, decent fellows, and the captain kindly supplied them with food and shelter, while they were on duty. They rewarded him by stealing the fish he had just purchased to supply the table till we reached next port.

We left Syria on Wednesday, Nov. 9, and early next forenoon were at Smyrna, the seat of one of the seven churches of Revelation. This old city is an important shipping port, and steamers flying the flags of all Eastern nations are moored in the harbor. The water front of the city is a very fine one. A broad street over two miles in length faces the bay and is crowded with men and women, donkeys, camels and dogs, while Turks sit about in the cafés, smoking their nargilehs or drinking coffee.

After lunch we went to visit the Scotch mission to the Jews, where Rev. Mr. Murray and a band of lady assistants are carrying on a splendid work among the Jewish children.

Then we went to visit the Ladies' school in connection with the American Board, and then went to see Mr. McLaughlin whom you remember was at first connected with the Tarsus mission. He is a Torontonian. He is now in charge of a school for boys and young men in Smyrna,

and has made the beginning of what will be, I have no doubt, in the near future, a complete university.

Away up in the hill above the city are the ruins of the ancient citadel, and close by a tall cypress marks the place of Polycarp's martyrdom.

We left Smyrna, Friday evening, Nov. 11th and on Saturday morning early we entered the Dardanelles. Off to the right, only a few miles away, the plains of Troy were plainly seen, where Hector and Achilles once pranced about in armor of war.

We were soon through the Dardanelles and into the Sea of Marmora. Saturday night we drew up in front of Rodosto, where we spent Sunday, and early on Monday morning steamed into the harbor of the Golden Horn and were at last in Constantinople.

As soon as we got settled in a hotel I started right away to make arrangements for getting out my Turkish permit to practice. I made good use of my letters of introduction, found the missionaries ready to help, and they opened up the way beautifully for me so that I had very little difficulty in securing my Turkish diploma.

I had to pass an oral examination before six Turkish doctors. The questions put to me were fair, sensible and practical, and upon paying my fees and complying with the necessary formulae and regulations, I was granted my diploma, and the whole performance was through in eleven days. The missionaries there gave us a hearty welcome. They were so kind and made us feel at home among them.

Leaving on Friday evening, Nov. 25th, on Saturday evening we reached the old city of Mitylene, thence down to Smyrna again, thence out between Chios and the coast. Chios! the reputed birth place of Homer; down past the site of old Ephesus, past Samos, Trogyllium, Patmos, Cnidus, Rhodes, down to Cyprus, and thence across to the Syrian coast, and on Thursday morning, Dec. 1st, landed safely at Beyrout. All the way down from Troas we were following Paul in his journeyings over this same course.

Since arriving here we have had most delightful weather; bright sunny days and moonlight nights. Just think of us sitting in our room in December with doors and windows all open, without fire, and even no place to put one, and the warm air coming in perfumed with the scent of orange groves and flower gardens below us, roses and lilies and heliotropes in full bloom, and the days as warm and balmy and fresh as June at home! It is just wonderful; day and night radiant, and all day long over the Lebanon mountains to the right and left of the city hangs a purple haze so dreamy and soft in hue. We can scarcely imagine anything finer than the scenery around Beyrout.

The missionaries here are mostly of the American Presbyterian Church. They are a strong, able, and influential band, and have done and are doing a great work. They have given us a most cordial welcome and offered to help in every way, and have been most generous and kind in their hospitality. We have not yet felt that we are strangers in a strange land, for here we are surrounded by the kindest and most thoughtful of friends. We are in a private boarding house, almost the only one in Beyrout.

Our plans for the winter are pretty well determined. We shall make Beyrout our home till our Palestine mission is definitely located. As soon as our boxes arrive and I have seen them through the Custom House, if the weather permit, I shall make a tour down into Palestine to look out a site for our mission. In the meantime we are hard at the language, Arabic, the spoken language of Palestine.