

# MEANDERING WHERE FLOWS MEANDER

LETTERS TO AN AMERICAN FRIEND

PART I

BY DOROTHY KENNARD

*Lady Kennard, the writer of these letters which give so vivid an account of her recent visit to the Near East after an absence of some years, is the daughter of a distinguished English diplomat who represented his country at various important posts. The greater portion of her life has been spent in the East—Turkey, Persia, and Japan.—THE EDITORS.*

LONDON, October 31st, 10 P.M.

MY DEAR —: The caravan starts. Your Marconi came to-day and has just helped to switch on the current of epistolatory energy. We are off to-morrow morning. S., who goes with me, is a child of seventeen who has never traveled and who likes the idea of doing so. Her enthusiasm is an incentive to my, otherwise, possibly chimerical enjoyment of this venture!

For, you see, as far as I am concerned, we are journeying neither to Constantinople nor to Smyrna, nor are we heading definitely to any other place; unlicensed and uncalled for, this expedition spells for me the forbidden fruit of turning back the pages of the past. Constantinople framed my childhood, and east of it lay the mystery of very young illusion.

The four absurd trunks that I have just locked will actually be shunted onto the threshold from which sallied forth myself, in short skirts, and the inevitably terrible English governess of *backfisch* days; and, to the left of that same threshold of Pera's British Embassy lies the spot where, in guilty consciousness of yet another and, this time, uncondonable tear in it, I buried, at the age of nine, a muslin and real-lace petticoat. Further, the house once belonged to us. It is now some one else's property, and I am going to hate being obliged to salute it frigidly in fresh acquaintanceship.

Were it not for the arrival of your wire, which cheered me up, you would

probably never have read this, for I should not have got under way. Now you are "in for it," so beware!

November 1st.

The Channel lies behind us. We are in the Orient Express. And all the silly little comforts that I have spent days collecting are spread about this microscopic space of a double *wagon lit*, making its ten feet by four even more absurdly inadequate to the needs of two full-grown Englishwomen than they appeared before we boarded it.

Chilly depression, born of a surging sea, white-capped already in Dover Harbor, has produced almost instantaneously a reciprocal benefit society among the passengers. We are no longer two persons traveling, but six. We have acquired an English lady doctor, voyaging for mysterious purposes of her own into the Senussi country *via* Trieste; a young man from Magdalen, armed with half a dozen Foreign Office bags for Rome and Constantinople; a British mother and daughter, bound for sight-seeing and economy in the minor towns of Italy; and a couple of innocuous English officers in khaki. Of these the lady doctor, despite an unpropitious cast of countenance (which is not her fault) and an over-refined pronunciation in several languages (which is), promises to be the more enlivening traveling companion. The others have never known or sensed that spirit of adventure which is born

when twilight deepens about a train at night.

It is a wonderful discovery to find that one can type in the train far more easily than one can write. I started to christen my fountain pen and a brand new writing block, but legibility was unattainable.

France is looking just as France always manages to look—prosperous and green, despite the fast-closing autumn days. Reconstruction is the password, I suppose. I have never got over the childish wonder at the miraculous fluency with which French people talk French. They appear to savor the enunciation of every syllable of their language. Automatically, in the face of each well-turned phrase, my own fluency of thought becomes restricted in its utterance, until I finally capitulate and ask in English for things, which pleases them all exceedingly and gets me what I want much quicker than I could otherwise have obtained it.

The tragic thing is that, now that we have got to Amiens, my subconscious self wants to get out in Paris, spend a week shopping, see some good plays, and then go home again! I haven't the slightest desire to go to bed in this little box.

*November 2d.*

Went to bed last night thinking I was going to be really intelligent and reflecting that it *did* make for all-round competence to have traveled all one's life! Not every woman, journeying alone, would have remembered that there was an hour's difference of time between Paris and Lausanne! Remembered it in time, too, to change the clock before settling for the night. Unfortunately, however, I did it the wrong way round, and sauntered in, gayly, to breakfast this morning at eight o'clock, to find it was ten. S. behaved well and did not even smile unkindly, though she did murmur something regretfully about having looked forward to seeing the Lake of Geneva and early morning at

Montreux—both of which sights we naturally missed.

I sat up rather late last night discussing Arabs, ancient Egypt, Eastern wisdom, and Western blindness with the lady doctor. Apparently, she is not a lady doctor at all, but an anthropologist, so she told me. I was extremely relieved to find that my dim conception of what an anthropologist might be was the correct one! I say "discussing" because it sounds better, but, as a matter of fact, I listened while she talked exceedingly well.

We are threading a desultory course through the scattered villages of northern Italy, whose painted houses have a charm of irrational patchery entirely their own. Maggiore, bathed in sunshine, reflected itself in my beer at lunch. Somehow one always longs to get out and dream the hours away indefinitely when one sees, from the train window, that individual opalescence which marks the Italian lakes. Yet one knows perfectly well how deadly dull they are, how hot, how dusty, and how entirely overpopulated.

*Later.*

Now we are trundling through the respectable fertility of the Lombard Plain, interminable, tediously prosperous. The shaking is terrific and I am writing false lettering all the time. But wasting paper and the risk of ruining my typewriter are both preferable to contemplation of such crushing sameness. Salvation, however, has come for the machine, for you, and for me, because that beer has induced a desire for sleep!

*Later.*

You were right, you know, when you said once that, when one started to write, there was nothing one could not write about. But it is a handicap not knowing at all what are the kinds of things you will be interested to hear.

To-morrow is enticing: so many people have done this part of the journey so

often. But the very names of Jugo-Slavia and Czecho-Slovakia spell modernity, transition, change resulting directly from the war. I am curious to see whether the quondam deterioration in the status of one's fellow-travelers, that struck one always so forcibly in pre-war days as one crossed the demarcation line of eastern and western Europe, will still obtrude. I haven't seen a single seedy individual, not even a properly "dagoish" dago, yet! Practically all the people on this train are English, and dull English at that. Not a doubtful character among them.

*November 3d.*

We woke up in the ravines of the Carpathians, a crisp, clear morning of promise. And we have risen to grandeur in the night, for a lot of passengers have gone, and our friendly conductor told us that if we made ourselves polite to the *chef de train* at breakfast he would give us a compartment each to ourselves for the rest of the journey. It is difficult to be ingratiating in Jugo-Slav—and that was, obviously, the nationality of the two officials I promptly addressed—but we did our best, and now behold us each with a little kingdom.

This is an exceedingly energetic train! Washing this morning was like a twenty minutes' bout with a punching ball—a singularly resilient one, moreover—but with this difference, here one's person was the ball and received the punching.

We are traveling through one of those happy districts where goats, chickens, and children herd indiscriminately with adults, under thatch and clambering vines. But the people are not picturesque! Vanished are the pleated petticoats of the Croats. Instead, they sport engaitered fustians and Viennese fur-lined shooting jackets, stuffy, but, presumably, a practical reminder of an administration that left behind few other helpful legacies to commemorate it.

It is a lovely bit of country, fertile and pre-eminently peaceful. The soil flaunts

reminiscent streaks and patches of the black-earth country in its well-tended ridge and furrow. We meander along the Drava, in and out of gently wooded ravines, spreading into little vistas of cultivation and plaster cottages. It is such a relief not to see the Austrian uniforms swaggering on all these station platforms—not to hear the Vienna twang.

Most of yesterday's passengers have left this train. Only the khaki remains faithful, and the Foreign Office bag. But we have acquired some novelties such as I have been expecting hourly—couples of which the women are handsome, the men greasy and plain; solitary Jews traveling the Lord knows whither; a mother of two children whose sex it is impossible to determine for the fact that the boy (if it is a boy) has long hair, and the girl (if it is a girl) wears trousers. In fact, we are entering the zone where every man stares to the point of insult and every woman is insignificant, except she bear upon her, and unmistakably, the stamp of triumphantly survived maternity.

I have come to the conclusion, however, that traveling was more interesting before the war. I suppose all this part of the world has been indulging in such an orgy of disorganization, on paper, during the last three years, that it has managed to settle down, in actuality, almost without noticing that it has become well ordered! In such a hypothesis, at any rate, lies for me the only explanation of the evidence not only of industrial prosperity, but of *organized* enterprise which I have seen on every side since we crossed the frontier this morning. Perhaps it is only stupendous ignorance that had created in my mind the fiction that the terms "Jugo-Slavia," "chaos," and "Czecho-Slovakia" were synonymous! True, the latter state is still but a name and does not take shape for us until to-morrow; consequently I may yet realize my confident British hopes of being harrowed, feed my inherent British vainglorious-

ness upon the spectacle of yet another unfortunate country worse off than is my own.

But here, *dans le Royaume des Serbes et des Croates*, are peace, plenty, and contentment, in such proportion, at least, as a passer-by is enabled to appraise from a train window. Not a peasant but is well clothed, not a beast but is well covered, not a house but is well roofed. There are riches of timber, produce, and agricultural land. Where timber lies felled it has been neatly stacked in yards, the tree trunks are numbered and protected from the damp. Where there are brick kilns they are well-ordered brick kilns, and one would hesitate to steal thereof or disarrange a single brick, so meticulously are the angles of their piling noted in numbered chalk! System has closed a mailed and sanely controlled hand over the whole country. The question remains to be answered, whose is this system? No peasant mind is responsible for such organization—yet it exists undoubtedly. For the fact to have struck a *woman* proves that, since it takes an exaggeration to impress my sex, which does not like being obliged to recognize that system is very potent and salutary!

There's so much I want to know. Either I have been most tragically ignorant about this part of the world for years, or it has all happened very suddenly. Certainly, when we used to journey regularly through these regions fourteen years ago things were very different. Perhaps all that is the matter with me is that I have clung obstinately to a picture which I, myself, had made, and that what I am noticing now is merely the discrepancy between youthful and maturer judgment, plus normal passage of time? Tell me.

Dinner has been a meal full of incident. The train has filled itself once more. Guessing at the nationalities of the new arrivals alone might have kept one busy! But one lady brought in a parrot to share her meal, and that monopolized a considerable amount of

attention. She was, I fancy, a very young French bride, being brought home in pride by an opulent and devoted Balkan who appeared undecided as to whether to appear shocked or approving of her ostentatious mannerisms and undeniable attractions. Finally, in a sort of ecstasy of coquetry, she threw a piece of bread at her husband, causing him to become suddenly authoritative.

Meanwhile S. had succeeded in getting her charming profile fixed by the glassy stare of a corpulent gentleman of incredible girth and equally stupendous presumption. My formula is ill chosen, for it implies that S. had sought to subjugate him. As a matter of fact, he had already, to my certain knowledge, walked his five miles up and down the narrow passage which frames our compartment in the hope of obtaining a satisfying inspection. She promptly developed facility in the quick slamming of her door, which effectually frustrated him until this moment, when, under the influence of food and beer, his interest became exceedingly marked. She chastened him, obviously but most unkindly, Fatty Arbuckle.

By the way! I have discovered, to my chagrin, that we do not traverse Czecho-Slovakia at all—this, since I succeeded in appropriating, for a brief quarter of an hour, an imposing map of southern Europe belonging to the lady next door. Instead, we join up to-night, at Belgrade, with what used to be the main line of the Orient Express *via* Vienna and Cologne.

Unfortunately, we pass through most of Serbia proper at night, if we are more or less up to our time-table.

Our conductor has just come in to offer, with apologies, a friendly word of advice. Apparently the Serbs are averse to the combination of traveling ladies and typewriters! They have objected before, he says, and will probably do so again. As I have no desire to be accused of espionage, I am taking the hint and putting both myself and the machine to bed. I can type in Bulgaria!

*November 4th.*

Good or evil fortune has willed it that our train should be several hours late. Consequently, we breakfasted in Nish, and I had ample opportunity to indulge my desire to see remembered country. The relish of gruesome detail lying latent in any civilized human had prepared me to revel in traces of wanton German destruction. To my surprise, and, it must be confessed, somewhat to my disappointment, Nish and its environs—the whole of Serbia, in fact—looks much as it used to. Inquiries have elicited the information (delivered somewhat contemptuously by our conductor, who is getting very bored with my questions), that people do not usually expect to find ruin around a railway track which it was in the destroyers' own interest to safeguard. Although somewhat snubbed, I was not entirely convinced, and still feel sure that more traces of carnage should obtrude. The British press has given several erroneous impressions *re* this country, among others the one that its population is decimated. Children are teeming everywhere—children three and four years old, war babies all of them, who did not die and who could not have been very underfed, else they would not have survived. Neither have I noticed any shortage of gaping, adult crowds.

They are soldiers still, though. Each man sports some remnant of military equipment, and the greater proportion carry rifles.

They have not changed in that they have kept that curious cult of smartening up their feet which always marked the Serbian peasant as distinct, to my mind, from other Balkan races. However stained or ragged the outer garments, some little ornate fantasy of self-adornment was wont to coquette about the shins and ankles. Where modernity had introduced the leather footgear, that footgear shone as no alien boot knows how to do. This peculiarity of pediculture strikes me still, and is as pathetic as it always was.

Since leaving Nish we have been following the course of the Nishava, through tunnels and around grim rock facings at whose base the river swirls, suggesting trout. It is a stationless region, hence my flagrant manipulation of the typewriter. We are back among the fat-tailed sheep of Eastern cooking, the creak of overladen carts that surmounts the sound waves of native "gee-ing up" to tired bullock teams. And this morning, in the slums of Nish, I saw the first group of Turkish *hamals* squatting, in conclave, to their water pipe.

It has struck me as quite miraculous that we should have eaten such palatable food as we have been given ever since leaving Calais. One is never really hungry in a train where one is sleepless and unexercised. Yet not a dish has seemed openly offensive—many, in fact, have suggested that, under hungrier circumstances, their recall would be very welcome. Considering the paucity of material that must exist, and the restrictions of culinary space which are obvious, I salute our grimy cooks.

A satisfied stomach has gone far to palliating the nervous mental irritation at the astute manner in which one is cheated at every turn by the manipulators of the international exchange. In some mysterious fashion, the most minute financial transaction, be it only about a postage stamp, is juggled into the paper values of several countries with lightning rapidity and entirely unrefutable assurance. I remonstrated once or twice, very feebly, was proved to be wrong, although I knew I was right (and worked it out afterward, alone, to this latter triumphant conclusion), and have now given in to people who are more egotistical mathematicians than myself.

*November 5th.*

This last day of our main journey, which, by all the laws of averages, should have proved the most tedious, has been decidedly the most eventful.



A great many things have happened, and it is as yet only ten-thirty in the morning! Incidentally, we are now ten hours late.

Late last night a rumor reached us that there was trouble on the line ahead. We were entirely unable to find out the nature of this "trouble" except in so far as that it would oblige us to get up at six this morning. So we went to bed early and slept in somewhat of a trepidation.

Sure enough, at six-thirty or thereabouts we were awakened to a gorgeous autumn morning of haze and soft sunlit dew. No station here, yet the train had come to the kind of silent standstill that spells waiting undefined on this sort of a journey. We struggled into our clothes, skimping the agony of washing by silent and mutual consent (it is the last day and we claim a bath to-night!). And then we stumbled out into the open country—a sort of waste of reeds that rustled in the early wind and suggested snipe shooting when the rain should have made of them the swamp it was their right to be.

Our engine had come to a gentle halt in front of a piled mass of apparently inextricable confusion announcing itself quite obviously as a recently derailed train.

"A Greek *comitaji* has amused himself by blowing up a little bridge and there has been an accident," volunteered the conductor. "And there will be a lot of work for us all!" he added, gloomily.

I sympathized. To my certain knowledge, that unfortunate man has not had more than three hours' sleep in the last seventy-two. He is a conscientious fellow and gets little pleasure out of life.

At first sight it looked uncommonly like waiting there in that dried-up swamp until the line should be mended. As we were told that work had already been going on for four days, the prospect of assisting at its final completion was dismal in the extreme and the glory of early morning faded as spontaneously as it had been born. In fact, seldom have I

seen a landscape look so actively repellent.

But the conductor took pity on our chagrin and said that it had been arranged for the passengers in our train to exchange quarters with the fellow-express homeward-bound from Constantinople, and that it was even at that moment waiting on the far side of the debris. "*Ce n'est que moi qui dois travailler!*" he concluded, morosely, "*Vous, vous pouvez aller déjeuner.*" So we went.

The first cigarette was smoked in stumbling progress over displaced sleepers and scattered confusion of rails, bolts, and old iron. Some fifty *hamals* were working, in a desultory fashion, as *hamals* do, and a few Thracian soldiery helped by looking on. A slow string of improvised portage began to take shape between the two trains, threading its way along a dusty pathway between the rushes. And a whole concourse of strange passengers, homeward-bound, began to circulate among us.

We took a few photographs, and the *hamals* lined themselves up voluntarily, as they always do, in anxious, smiling array. At the last minute a couple of soldiers, who had been holding aloof from the picture in proud consciousness of the superiority over their fellow-men that the possession of rifles gave them, unbent sufficiently to imply that they would like to be taken, too.

Now we are started off again, none the worse, and with all our baggage intact, *Inshallah!*

It would be idle for me to attempt to tell you where we are. The country is called Thrace. But I haven't a notion of whom it belongs to now, and there is nothing about the population to indicate nationality, for what little of it there is is as mixed in its accouterment as it sounds to be in its language. I distinctly heard a lot of people this morning talking Greek. But if Turkey is at war with Greece this sounds tactless, to say the least of it. Anyway, it is very peaceful and rather attractive, though barren. The weather is gorgeous. We cross the

Turkish frontier somewhere around lunch time and are supposed to reach Constantinople in time for dinner. This first of my letters will leave Constantinople in the Embassy bag some time this week. I shall keep up with a sort of daily diary so long as daily life continues to hold a modicum of interest.

My next from the shores of the Bosphorus, for we are approaching the Turkish frontier and this land of memory needs a whole letter to itself.

In all friendship.

D. K.

PERA PALACE HOTEL, CONSTANTINOPLE,  
November 5th.

MY DEAR ———: Do you know what real ghosts are? They are by no means the visitation from spirits of another world and of another time such as they are popularly credited to be. I have found that out to-day. Cold, mocking, jibbering ghosts are merely memories of one's dearest youth and its companions, called into being among familiar, yet metamorphosed surroundings.

This hotel . . . it hurts most unbelievably to find myself too well developed to fit comfortably into the little alcoves which glimpse from the *premier* into the *rez de chaussée* of parquet floor and well-remembered decoration. People dance there now as people did fourteen years ago; but the people of fourteen years ago were my parents and my friends; the dancers of to-day are strangers, and I resent their presence bitterly. I used to creep here, surreptitiously, after my supper, on those gala nights, having spent a long day helping to decorate this caravanserai for some diplomatic or charitable function, to watch the grown-ups enjoy themselves. When discovered, I used to be sent to bed, or given an ice, according to the mood of those same grown-ups who made my world.

Constantinople is ruined. I have been in it but three short hours, but felt the first anachronism ten minutes before the

train reached it. Out in the suburbs, on the turn around the Golden Horn where one was wont to catch the first soul-satisfying peep of the outlines of Seraglio Point, I saw the headlights, heard the hooting of a motor car!

It is but recently that I looked forward, with a certain pride, to the coming of that moment in my life when I should be able to refer, in languid fashion, to "ten years ago" because I thought to do so with conviction spelled maturity. I know better now. It creates a bitter pang, this realization of the passage of a decade.

I had not thought that Constantinople could ever change! It has been such a wonder dream of mine, this city and its memories of mist and gold.

Three hours have passed, however, the first shock is over, and I am trying to pull myself together, trying to admit that the modern monstrosity of bricks and mortar that now links Pera to Stamboul spells progress, civilization. Galata Bridge, that passageway of tribes and potentates, the rumbling of whose worm-eaten plankings used to awe my childish perceptions of the grandiose, has become a footpath termed unsafe for traffic. The cobbled streets are made hideous by electric tramways. I am trying to persuade myself that I don't yearn for the hubbub of their good old stones.

As I write, an ambitious band is playing ragtime to the parquet, a heterogeneous crowd is dining and making conversation in what used to be a small black hole of an eating room where nothing more inspiring than an omelette or a stuffed rissole ever saw the light of day. Now—shades of every night club in every second-rate capital! . . .

Enough of reminiscences and carping contrast. Here's for the present. Very good it is, too. We were met at the station, cared for and looked after as people with letters to one of our embassies always are. With our luggage intact, we got to the hotel in time to have really luxurious baths before dinner.

I had been told that it would cost us a fiver a day to live here. This must be an inaccuracy. The cashing of our one ten-pound cheque has produced a volume of paper currency that appears quite inexhaustible. Certainly the dinner has not affected it at all. If that preposterous hand were not playing so energetically, I should abandon this scribbling and go to bed. As it is, the gloomy realization has come that Saturday night does not affect hours of revelry in Muslim countries which keep the Friday holy. Consequently, I feel that this custom of Sundays immune from Christian restrictions will be one of the few (because, under the circumstances, so unwelcome) that we shall discover to have survived the war.

I can't see anything out of my window but two English advertisements. No less than three Greek *ménages*, however, can see *me* and are making the most of their opportunities for scrutiny. Good night! Perhaps the morning will show me something that I remember, something that I cherish and that the new era of Inter-Allied Control has not been single-minded enough to kill?

*November 6th.*

The sun is setting upon what has been, in a way, one of the saddest days of my life. And yet I would not have foregone the living of it; therefore it has been well spent.

We were stirred at an early hour this morning by a warning signal of the changed régime. A telephone message to the effect that the British High Commissioner did us the honor to invite us to dine. This, besides being a great personal kindness, sounds a welcome note from the snobbish point of view, for it gives us status in a hotel that appeared inclined to look askance at cheques. But it took me quite a few moments to realize both that it really was a *telephone* message, and that the head of the British Mission here bears a new title nowadays. He will not be called ambassador until the peace is signed.

We strolled round to the Embassy this morning to inquire about our tickets to Smyrna, and found that all requisite trouble had been taken, with the usual official forethought. There, much to my surprise—for I had gone to bed last night determined to picture myself to myself as in a land of strangers—I met several old friends. One of these inquired as to our program for the day, and I volunteered that I had planned a slow perambulation up the Bosphorus in some kind of a boat, possibly one of the penny steamers that used to do the trip most satisfactorily when I was young. As soon as I had spoken I realized that I was behind the times:

“Not—not in one of those dirty old ‘*sherkhats*’?” was my friend’s astounded query.

“No, no, of course not!” I prevaricated, hastily (though it was exactly what I had meant). “I thought perhaps . . . a nice *caïque*?” (this *very* tentatively).

“No one goes in *caïques* now!” he told me, brusquely, as he might have said, no one wears any clothes nowadays. And the effect upon me was extinguishing.

“One goes in a car,” he added, kindly, “and it takes only thirty-five minutes.”

To cut a pathetic story short, we went in a motor. The only thing that cheered me up about the idea was the look of the machine. It appeared strong, but a bit tired, as if it and the roads of the Bosphorus had not agreed too well. Deduction—that some roads would not prove entirely unrecognizable to my homesick soul.

Fourteen years ago Pera died away on an upward slope with expiring gasps of masonry which were casually scattered barracks. What road there was, crumbled off in small forked streaks of dust—little hill pathways that curved and lost themselves in various directions. One single track, defined by a double row of trees, was known in the various summer villages as “the way to town by road.” Everybody who possessed the spirit of



adventure traveled it once, in a native *araba*, to see what it was like. No one was ever known to go a second time. This was the road along which we were taken to-day. How the four tires survived it I cannot conceive; no description of mine can do the track sufficient injustice.

We passed my old home of 1900, my old home of 1908, the old homes of all who were once my good friends and are, perhaps, good friends no longer, for I have never seen them since. And each in turn looked drearier, more desolate, more dead. Familiar landmarks had vanished. Others, actively repellent, had taken their place. Where, as children, we used to gallop on the greenward in the early morning, was a golf links with people playing golf. Where once had grown and flourished a fruit seller's hovel under flowering acacia trees, was a British Red Cross installation. And where one halted, in the good old days, at the halfway monument to some departed sultan, was a veterinary hospital.

Progress, sanitation everywhere—and beauty dying! Buyukdere, always a Russian village, was full of Russians. But the inhabitants of our day were brilliant, opulent, strong in their knowledge that the Black Sea and the southern riches of their country flanked their palaces of painted wood in spirit of proximity, if not in fact. The Russians there to-day were fugitives, furtive and poverty stricken, living on sufferance as another name for charity. I have since been told that there are nearly thirty thousand Russians of Denikin's army refuged here, all of them without visible means of support.

The intermediate passages of the afternoon, when I stopped the car near our dismantled garden in Therapia and allowed myself to wander there for a brief half hour among its ruined roses, could interest nobody except myself. Besides, to that self they are sacred. Suffice it that I do not wish to live in those places again. One flower was

picked and given me by some one who remembered my father. That flower I shall keep, but all other recollections were buried, very dark and deep.

Came the moment for departure and the homeward drive. I felt we could not face the hills again, and I did want S. to see something more interesting. For one wild moment I thought of taking my penny steamer, after all, for it passed us as we stood on the quay and my informant at the Embassy had libeled the poor little thing most infamously. It was almost the only living relic that looked just as it used to do fourteen years ago! Then I remembered that the journey used to take a long time and that we wanted to see the sun set over the Golden Horn. So I asked our Russian driver whether there was not a way home along the water's edge. "Water? Yes. Anywhere. Anyway!" was his encouraging reply. And we started.

Now that we are safely home again, I am ready to say that I enjoyed it. S. says the same. But if I had to live here now I would walk rather than motor! It was the most dangerous drive that I have ever embarked upon in my life, and can be best described by stating that it was the kind that had to be pursued unto the bitter end, once one has started, because one could not have turned round. Neither could one have passed, except at very rare intervals, any conveyance traveling in a reverse direction. Luckily, we met none. The quay was just wide enough for an expert driver to keep four wheels on the road. And this same road was cobbled mountainously where it had not fallen away into holes.

Incidentally, we burst three inner tubes inside the first half hour. But what we saw was worth the emotion, now that the emotion is over and memory remains.

At the present moment I don't believe that there is a nationality or a profession on the globe that is not represented by both sexes and several generations in the suburbs and purlieus of this city. The

maelstrom of human traffic began to make itself noticeable just after we had passed under the shadow of the seven towers of Roumeli Hissar, halfway down the Bosphorus. These, secure in mediæval dignity, still frown serenely from out their cypress frame across to the minor forts of Anatoli Hissar on the Asiatic side of the Straits, and gave me one more brief backward glimpse (such as I have sworn to deny myself) of what was once and can never be again.

Staggering anachronisms—such as a complete motor-repair installation of granite, rubbing shoulders, on the one side with the vine-roofed booth of a vender of entrails, on the other with a shanty marked, “BEER. Only genuine English, London.”—“BAR”—confront one at every turn. A double tramway line has been laid along three or four miles of the water’s edge. There is no room for traffic to pass on either side of it, so these rail emplacements carry, besides their legitimate load of clanging, overcrowded trams, innumerable lorries, *arabas* by the score, donkey caravans, ambulances, herds of goats, sheep, troops of children, soldiers, sailors, Greeks, Armenians, Jews. My dear! the list would fill ten pages of type!

I may be maligning, criminally, any official order that holds sway. Of things official I do not presume to judge. But to the mere private individual this place spells neither the heaven that it used to be, nor the hell at which it seems to hint—just purgatory, which is polyglot hurrying, without aim or object, to and fro.

When we got back to our hotel (in an *araba*, by the way, for the brave car died with the bursting of its fourth and last tube two miles from home) we climbed to the fifth floor in search of a sunset and a view. The lights were disappointing, for clouds had gathered in the Sea of Marmora to obscure them, but one thing remains here that neither man nor time nor brass buttons can alter, and that is the ethereal outline of a real old Turkish minaret silvering into the

evening sky from behind the solid blackness of proportioned dome and cupola.

The most idealistic silhouette that unidealistic man has yet conceived, they stand, still, sublime in cool fragility, rivaling the cypresses on Seraglio Point. And so they will stand fourteen years hence, when some one in as regretful passing as was my reminiscent pilgrimage this afternoon, stands to lament the yesterday that will have, by that time, become for them my own to-day.

November 7th.

This has been a better day! Our kind friends at the Embassy gave us a *cavass*, and we set out early and full of hope to cross the bridge and visit old Stamboul. It is idle to suggest that we were systematic sightseers. One short morning would have been, for such a purpose, entirely inadequate. But I wanted a bird’s-eye impression of all that I once knew so well and had forgotten.

At least the native city has not altered. A feeling of somewhat *dolce far niente* descends upon one with the passing of the bridge. There people still wander aimlessly, in the middle of the road, without fear of being crushed or deafened. And turbaned dignitaries sit in alcoves, reading what one hopes is the Koran, but is probably the *Vie Parisienne*. There, also, one can find a few real, old-fashioned Turkish women who smoke in public and wear the *chardaf* modestly, to their entire disfigurement, but to their souls’ salvation. Besides, it had been raining in Pera when we left it and the sun arrived tactfully to shine upon us here.

San Sofia brooded in golden dignity and I listened, yet once again, to a whining guide retailing the good old tales which are its story. He showed us, with the identical gestures of the past, the spot where Mahommed II left the impress of his sacred hand as he rode triumphant into the Christian church, over the bodies of the dead and dying. His charger kicked the cornice and his saber slashed another marble column, all at

the same instant; and I was left thinking to-day, just as I used to be of old, that the Conqueror's charger must have been a very well-developed horse!

But San Sofia is lighted by electric bulbs nowadays, and the myriad little glass lamps are emptied of their sweet olive oil. So the mystic shadows that flickered over the midnight services will flicker thus no more, hinting at secret passages and crime.

There were no pigeons left to flutter in the courtyard of the pigeon mosque. Sensible creatures! They don't like soldiers and motor lorries, and I was told that they have all migrated to Ayub, a cemetery at the final curve of the Golden Horn. Beggars importuned us still, but unconvincingly, and the lepers crouched no more. For these two facts one can be profoundly grateful.

We inspected the library and were shown a fifteenth-century Koran and a vellum tome of Persian miniatures far more lovely than any I ever saw in Persia. And then, after a respectful tribute to the tomb of a sultan who had one hundred and thirteen children, quite a number of whom he murdered, we drove once round the Hippodrome, dismissed the cab, and plunged into the bazaars.

There, thank God, the past will always be the present until oblivion covers both. The same old junk decked out for sale, the same bright shafts of filtered sunlight where motes dance joyously, proud of having turned visible at last. Greasy paving stones and rotting beams, scoundrelly venders of meretricious ware, donkey boys, and sweetmeat sellers—I salute you all. May you continue indefinitely to jostle and to shove, seminating the while that individual, highly spiced aroma which to some of us spells "atmosphere" and to others just—germs.

Knowing myself, alas, too well, of old, I had taken with me hardly any money. What I had I spent. This in the first ten seconds by the carpet sellers' booths. I have since been told, by a knowledg-

able person, that I got a bargain for my four pounds ten. It was a little crimson-silk rug with blue and jade-green border, worn in places and rather tired to the feel. But it was the first sample that met my eye of real old-rose color lit by one becoming beam of sunshine from a hole in the roof. It was thrust under my nose by the owner of it, who needed the money, and I remembered how, years ago, some passing Americans had bought a valuable diamond, in just this manner, for the proverbial song. Satisfied and penniless, I carried it home and wrapped it up affectionately in my hold-all brought for just such a purpose.

We spent the afternoon calling upon old friends, and subsequently, in the hotel, held quite a little reception. It is very cheering, this feeling that one is not entirely forgotten, and it has decided me, quite definitely, to go back to England again this way. So much for the change of mood that a little recognition brings one!

More friends came to dinner and we broached two bottles of champagne. Then, full of the heartiest of cheer, we made for Top Khane, the port of embarkation, in a couple of decrepit cabs. Here a launch was waiting to take us to our ship—just one more token of the courtesy which has been our portion here on every side. It is an Italian boat of the Lloyd Triestino line, the best of a very bad lot. I have had one look at our cabin and have decided that we are not going to spend at all a comfortable night. It is made for four people. If even one more woman attempts to come into it she is going to have an extremely unfriendly welcome. Two more would be an *impasse*.

Our belated arrival proved very disturbing to the steerage, whose passengers had gone to bed with an abandonment such as the lower Eastern orders reserve quite particularly for their sea journeys. Men, women, and children were laid out in rows, misshapen silhouettes in the half light, intrenched behind their bundles in snoring frowst.

I'm afraid that we woke them all up! The electric light in our cabin has gone out. To bed, perforce!

*November 8th.*

I am glad that I never cherished the illusion of spending a comfortable period of time in that infernal cabin; a practiced eye had revealed most of its innumerable deficiencies within the first ten seconds of being ushered into it. But what I had not realized was that it was situated next door to the donkey engine which loads the hold of our ship. The thing began cranking at five minutes past four this morning, and at that hour precisely I woke up for good. At five I could stand it no longer; an indefinite lightening of the shadows announced the dawn, so I decided to get up.

There was no sunrise, for there was no sun. In fact, while I breakfasted, it began to pour rain.

With the weighing of our anchor at 10 A.M., however, the clouds broke and light gleamed in fitful patches from off the Sea of Marmora, for which we headed. We had just got our propeller well turning when it stopped. I had forgotten the passport ceremony, so impressive at sea. No less than five officers of divergent Allied nationalities found therein their occupation for more than an hour and a half. Then, when every passenger had come under their scrutiny, when we felt that we could bear their presence in the only cabin for not one instant longer, they all began to drink coffee and liqueurs!

I had just settled down to this typewriter, well surrounded by the gorgeous untidiness of blotting paper, fountain pen, and carbon-copy accessories, with half the crew gaping interestedly at the paraphernalia and its manipulation through the window, when I was politely requested to move, not my belongings, but my person. This because the ship's doctor respected my feminine modesty.

"Three gentlemen vaccine are to be

going," he announced, mysteriously. "Not good lady here. Outside!"

So I "outed." As he left the door and six windows open and as there was nothing else for me to look at, I watched the ceremony of the three inoculations with interest and without shame.

Finally, at noon, we steamed slowly out into the Sea of Marmora. Sunlight on the sea, a distant line of hills, and the somnolence born of excellent macaroni, cheese, and beer—Rothschild himself, on an exceedingly well-planned yachting trip, could not, in November, ask for more!

It is a pleasant surprise to find out, too, that, in paying five pounds each for our tickets, we paid for a lot of quite good food as well. Luncheon was a sort of educational passage of time, for we employed it in trying to teach ourselves to eat spaghetti as professionally as did the other passengers. S. and I were flanked on either side by two very fat men who managed it like Italians, but made entirely Armenian noises the while, so we decided that the art was not entirely the secret of the Italian race.

*Later.*

Do you know, the Sea of Marmora is rather a dull place! I had forgotten how big it was or what a long time it took to get through it. In the old days we used to be taken yachting here, but on those occasions we skirted the coasts on either side and explored up the various gulfs and inlets. That was interesting, for the places were still rather wild, and foreigners rarely visited them unless it was with an escort. But this aimless expanse of amiable emptiness is so boring that I am putting my writing materials away.

*November 9th.*

We woke this morning to find narrowing land on either side, and I had the gloomy impression that we were to be several hours late, for we had been told last night that we should go through the Dardanelles just before breakfast. Much to our relief, however, I have now

discovered this land to be the beginning of the Gulf of Smyrna. This is a misleading phrase, however, and I now remember in the past having waited several times, all teed up for departure, from a ship that took five or six hours to get along this Gulf.

I shall close this letter to-day. There is no point in holding it over to describe an arrival that is as well known as the

town pump. Our journey has all been very pleasant, but I am glad that it is over, glad that for thirty nights I shall not have to unroll my toothbrush from among the folds of my nightgown, or extricate my comb from inside my bedroom slippers.

My best salaams, and my next will follow in due course.

D. K.

*(To be continued)*

## A BALLADE OF WATER LILIES

BY RICHARD LE GALLIENNE.

I WOKE at dawn, with troubled mind;  
 The years seemed desolate and long,  
 The way through thorny wastes to wind.  
 Too drear to note the merry tongue  
 Of earth that seemed all birds with song,  
 Heedless amid the dews a gleam  
 I walked, then met a starry throng—  
 White water lilies in the stream.

Strange! from earth's rough and bitter rind  
 So fair an apparition sprung—  
 My eyes, but now with sorrow blind,  
 Remembered that I once was young,  
 Forgot the weariness, and hung,  
 Lost in the hallowed perfect dream  
 Of those hushed flowers, a thousand strong—  
 White water lilies in the stream.

So, 'mid the city's glare and grind,  
 With hot noon like a brazen gong,  
 Healing I carry, undivined  
 Of the loud herd I walk among  
 Peace that to holy thoughts belong;  
 As in some leafy academe,  
 My eyes that vision still prolong—  
 White water lilies in the stream.

ENVOI

Prince, though our hearts be warped and wrong,  
 Howe'er awry the cosmic scheme,  
 Still bloom, amid a world of wrong,  
 White water lilies in the stream.