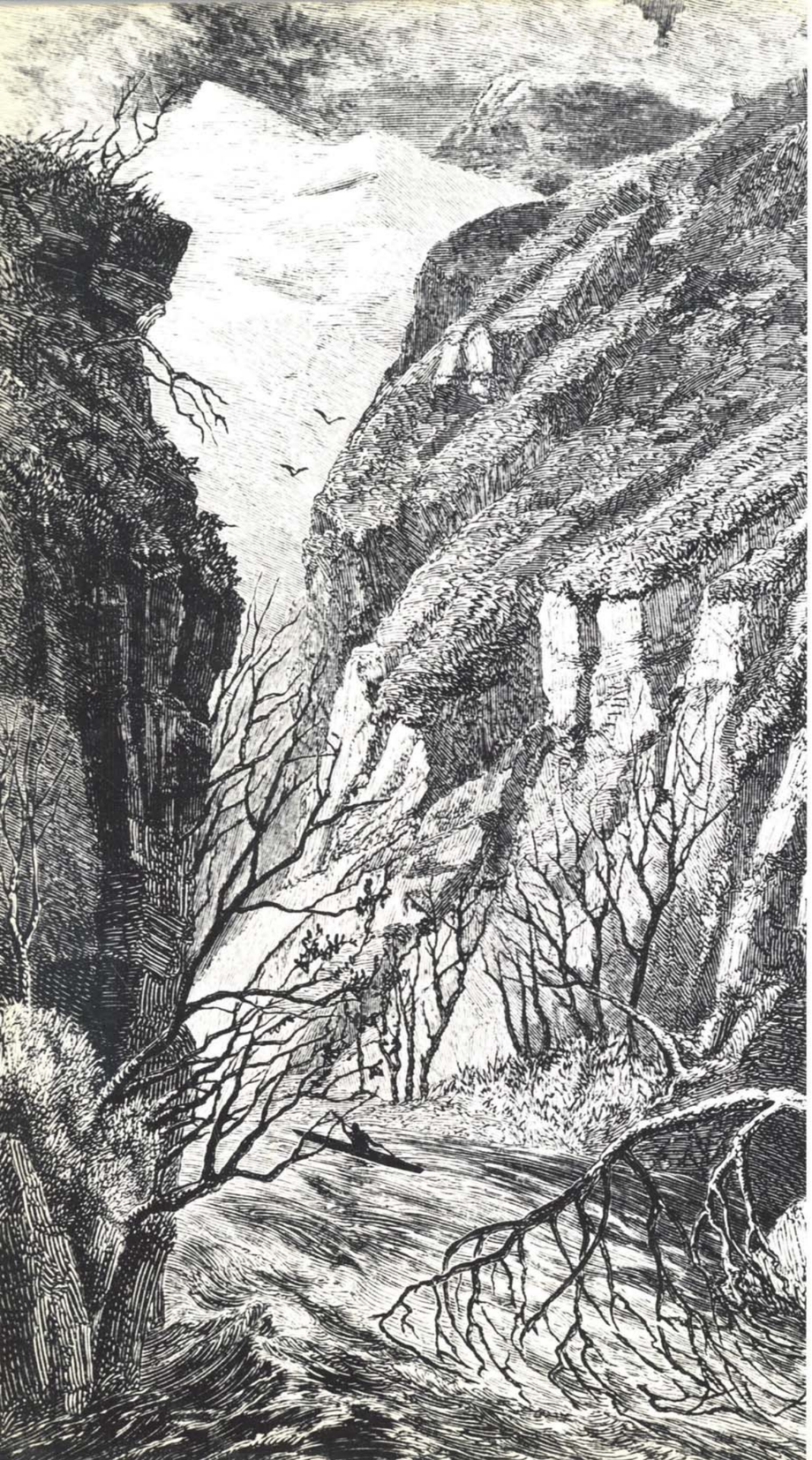

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JULY-AUGUST 1972

"TO THE OLIVES!"

ARAMCO WORLD magazine

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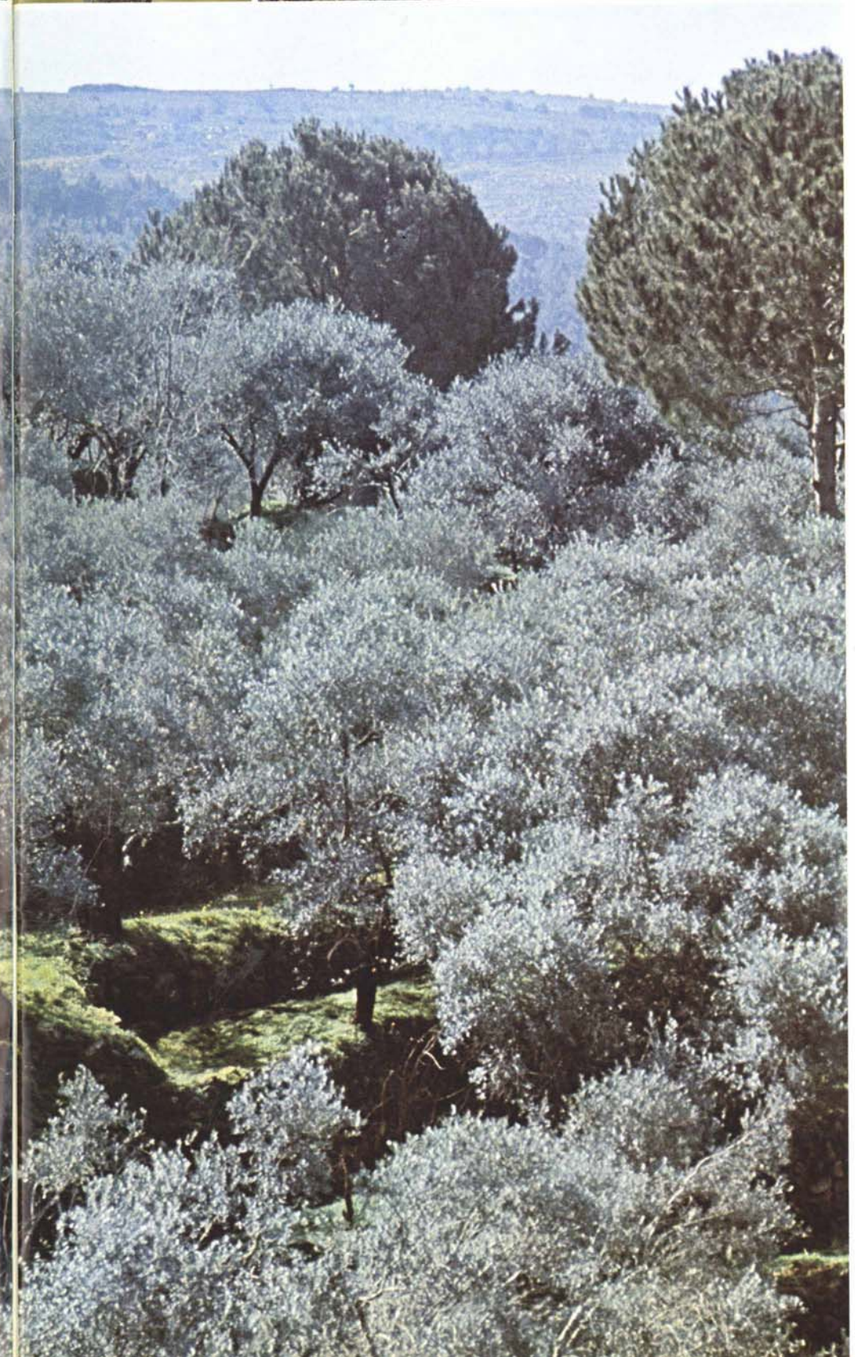
Cover: Like California sequoias and Lebanese cedars, Mediterranean olive trees are as old as time, able to survive, as Jasper Brinton's photograph of this patriarch shows, even when they're so old that piles of rocks inside are the only thing holding them up. Story on page 2.

← Fayrouz, the Lebanese singer whose voice and delivery have reminded critics of Piaf and Dietrich, toured ten U.S. cities last autumn. Story and photos on page 30.

"TO THE OLIVES!"

BY MICHAEL E. JANSEN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY JASPER BRINTON



The road to the olives curves down the mountainside beside our house in Shemlan. It is not a pretty road, shorn of trees and buttressed by heavy gray cement walls where it begins the plunge into the valley. It is not a good road, being rough, water-rutted gravel for 400 yards and then a wide stone and clay swath cut by a bulldozer along an ancient and once lovely pathway. But the road to the olives is heavily traveled, particularly between mid-October and the end of February, when the olive trees give up their harvest. On fine days the workers crunch along the gravel road beneath our bedroom windows as the first gray light appears over the rim of the hill above. A few men, some leading donkeys, three or four in cars, descend quietly. Small groups of women, white, filmy scarves over their heads and long dark skirts swishing round their ankles, walk gingerly, briskly, laughing and chatting; the women carry large baskets, kerosene tins and buckets, and come provisioned with the makings for Arab coffee, round, flat loaves of bread, tins of sardines, *labneh* and olives and sunflower seeds to while away the long day. These men and women come from nearby villages for the five-month harvest, earning a meager wage for their back-breaking work. "*Az-zeitoun!* To the olives!" is the battle cry shouted cheerfully in the village streets of the Chouf, of all Mount Lebanon, of the entire Mediterranean in the annual campaign of the olives.

Indeed, it is said that the olive tree's presence indicates that one is near the Mediterranean. The kinship of the tree and the "Middle Sea" is based on the peculiar character of the olive and the climate created by the sea. The annual cycle of the olive tree exactly matches the cycle of seasons in the mountain ranges which nearly encircle the Mediterranean: chilly, but not severe winters bring forth from the olive trees tiny, cream-colored flowers in March; balmy

springs allow the flowers to germinate; long dry summers fill out and ripen the fruit and rainy autumns swell the olives before the harvest.

In Shemlan, as elsewhere, the olive tree is planted on terraces, overlooking the sea, its silver-green leaves rippling and flowing like the surface of the sea below. Terrace walls are painstaking works of art, rough, uncut stones fitted into the hillside. Massive and medium and small-sized trees lean over the edge of the terraces, their long-toed roots curling round the stones. It would seem that each was vying for the best view of the beloved sea.

Some of the Shemlan's squat stalwarts are as large as the venerable olives of the Garden of Gethsemane, trees which stood when Jesus walked the streets of Jerusalem. But a two-thousand-year-old olive is not unusual; the first olive tree in Greece was probably brought to Athens and planted at the Acropolis soon after it was "invented" on Crete in 3500 B.C.. Since it endured at least 30 centuries, the combined life spans of just two olive trees—the tree on the Acropolis and one of the trees in Gethsemane—cover the entire history of civilized man in this part of the world.

We have said that the olive tree was "invented." And so it was. It was just as much an invention as the wheel which was invented at just about the same time. The wild olive or oleaster is an unproductive evergreen belonging, improbably, to the same family as lilac, jasmine, ash and forsythia—or was until a worthy Cretan found a particular tree or group of trees which produced fruit and discovered that the fruitful branches could be grafted onto the wild olive. As a result Crete became the Mediterranean's largest exporter of oil —and, eventually, of the art of grafting and of the branches themselves. This not only spread the olive culture round the Mediterranean, but made the olive branch a symbol of peace, for with the olive came prosperity and growth, the foundations of peace.

One reason the olive trees live so long is that they simply refuse to die. An olive tree may be hit by lightning, felled in a wind storm, or maltreated by man, but it will not die. Along the terraces on our valley, stand the shells of trees whose hollow trunks are filled with rocks to keep them upright, yet, on one there is a fringe of new leafy twigs and on another a newly grafted branch beginning to sprout. A stump is the breeding ground for branches for grafting.

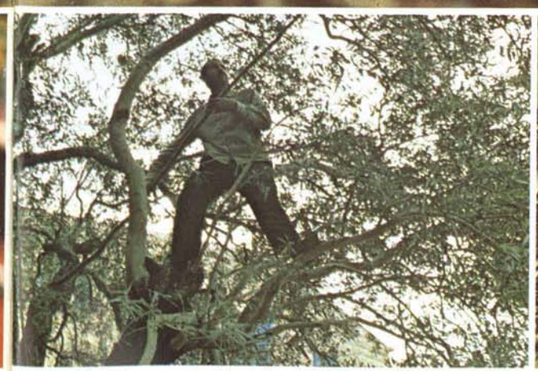
Cultivators of the olive have learned to respect the peculiarities of this very peculiar tree: to wait patiently from one year to the next for a tree which, for its own reasons, refuses to bear; to be indulgent of a tree which, for a time, decides to bring forth fruit on one side only, or, sulking, suddenly lets its unripe fruit wither and drop. Man has had a long time to learn about the curious whims and idiosyncrasies of the olive, even about individual trees which have been handed down from generation to generation. But, if there is anything more individualistic than the olive tree, it is the man who cultivates the olive. No one cultivator agrees with another; each has his very own way with the trees: ploughing once, twice or three times, irrigating or not irrigating, plucking and harvesting early or late. In Shemlan everyone does the large-scale ploughing and plucking at the same time but there is no agreement about the best time for either. The Shemlanis are bound by the schedules of their workers, who will only come after the fig and grape harvests and before the spring planting.

The white-scarved women disappear round the curve and the first wail of a transistor radio echoes across the valley. Only occasionally now do the women sing their traditional songs; the radio has brought popular Arab music and Oum Koulsoum to the olive terraces.

They begin the harvest by gathering the fruit that has dropped to the ground. These olives are shriveled and dry, hard, leathery and inedible, but they are carefully picked up one by one to make oil for soap.

The second phase of the harvest is plucking green olives for pickling. Most of this is done by the Shemlanis themselves who take just enough for their own use. The great bulk of the crop remains on the

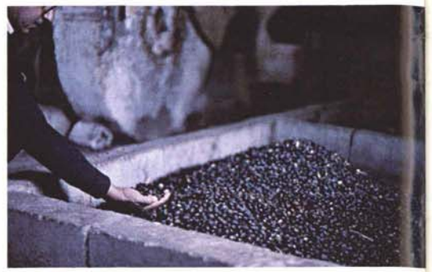
As the olive harvest begins village women (above) scour the ground



for olives raining down as men with supple poles (left) beat the branches until the tree is bare,

the ground has been picked clean and the olives piled up in baskets to be carried away to the olive presses.

trees until late November and then, depending on the weather, the harvest begins in earnest. In a third phase, the ripe black fruit is shaken from the trees by the men and collected by the women. Then, when this is done, the men climb the trees and beat the branches with long, supple poles and the olives rain down onto the terraces. Systematically each tree is beaten and, at the same time, pruned of dead and unproductive branches. White smoke bubbles out of the sea of silver-green leaves from the fires kindled from the discarded twigs and branches. The terraces are scrupulously neat and constantly tidied. It is difficult enough to pick up olives from a clean terrace, but from one littered with leaves and rubble, it is impossible. Finally, the stubborn olives still clinging to the branches are plucked directly off the trees.



The green olives plucked during the first phase of the harvest and the good quality black olives gathered later on are pickled in brine made of unrefined salt and water, the brine being salty enough when it can float a raw egg. The olives are carefully sorted according to size and perfection. The large ones without blemishes are pickled whole and the smaller, imperfect fruit are thumped gingerly with a stone, the skin and flesh cracked, before being immersed in brine. The unbroken olives are ready to eat only after nine months or a year and keep for two years or more; the broken olives take three months and become soft after 18 months in brine. There is great disagreement amongst the Shemlani ladies on the best method of pickling olives. Some soak them overnight in a tub of water, others do not bother. Some wash the olives first and then hit them, others hit first and wash later. A villager from just over the hill, from Beisour, cuts slits in the fruit with a sharp knife and adds lemon juice, lemon peel and chili peppers to the brine. Some ladies recommend bitter orange leaves for flavoring; others argue for garlic and bay leaves or lemon and wild thyme. How mankind learned to pickle this strange bitter fruit to make it palatable remains a mystery.

As stone wheels turn, the oil flows into basins, is skimmed off and piped to a clarifier from which it pours, in golden bursts, into tins.

After the harvest the terraces are scrupulously tidied of twigs, the olives are pickled, the oil used for lamps, cooking and soap—and the pulp is dried, stacked and stored for later use as fuel.

It is certain, however, that the Mediterranean must have played a key role those thousands of years ago when man discovered what to do with the olive: it was the salt of the sea that made the fruit edible. Again the kinship of the tree with the sea is affirmed.

The man who put the olive to use probably extracted its oil first. It is a curious fact that oil from so bitter a fruit flows sweet as soon as it is crushed.

The olive presses of Lebanon have no sophisticated machinery; the work is done today almost as it was a century ago. The great stone wheels, each weighing a ton, press the fruit as they did in Roman times: crushing the fruit and stones to a pulp and adding cold fresh water to make the oil flow.

The oil flows down into a gutter round the tray's edge and through a hose into a series of deep marble basins. The oil is reddish brown as it flows from the pulp. A workman pours cold water on the stack in the press. Oil and water flow together and begin to separate in the basins, the golden oil floating on top of the dark water. The oil is carefully skimmed off, the last drops are caught in a tin cup and the oil is drawn off through another hose into the centrifugal clarifier, the only piece of really modern equipment in the press. The machine runs for a long time, whining and spluttering: water begins to flow into a waste trough and then the oil flows from a spout, slowly at first and then in bursts, cloudy and golden.

As the oil flows into the containers brought to carry it home, the workers turn to the remains of the olives still in the press: great cakes of detritus stamped with the weave of the baskets and blankets that, dried and crumbled, is used for heating and for stoking bakers' ovens as it burns steadily and gives an even and long-lasting heat.

Nothing of the olive is wasted. The wood is used for fuel and for carving, the fruit is, as we have said, pickled and eaten, the oil is used for cooking and for dressing salads, meats and vegetables. For centuries it has been used in lamps, rubbed into stiff joints, served us a hand lotion and bath oil, applied to the stomachs of pregnant women to prevent stretch marks and, of course, later used for baby. In spite of the modern world, the olive continues to hold an important position in the Mediterranean household and is so greatly respected that nothing is ever planted beneath an olive tree; to do so would offend this marvelous, temperamental and demanding friend.

Our oil was something special. One of our eight trees gave us more than enough fruit for pickling and so the rest of the olives went for oil. We cleared our trees early and kept our fruit separate in the press. The pulp was reddish brown and clean smelling, while pulp from less good fruit smelt strong and was a dark brown color. "*Helou! Helou!*... Sweet! Sweet!" was the cry of the workman tending the crushing wheels. And the oil was sweet too. A green gold flowing into our glass gallon bottles.

The oil yield was good: one pound of oil for three and a half pounds of olives. This is the average yield for good olives, the average for Lebanon being one pound of oil for four of olives.

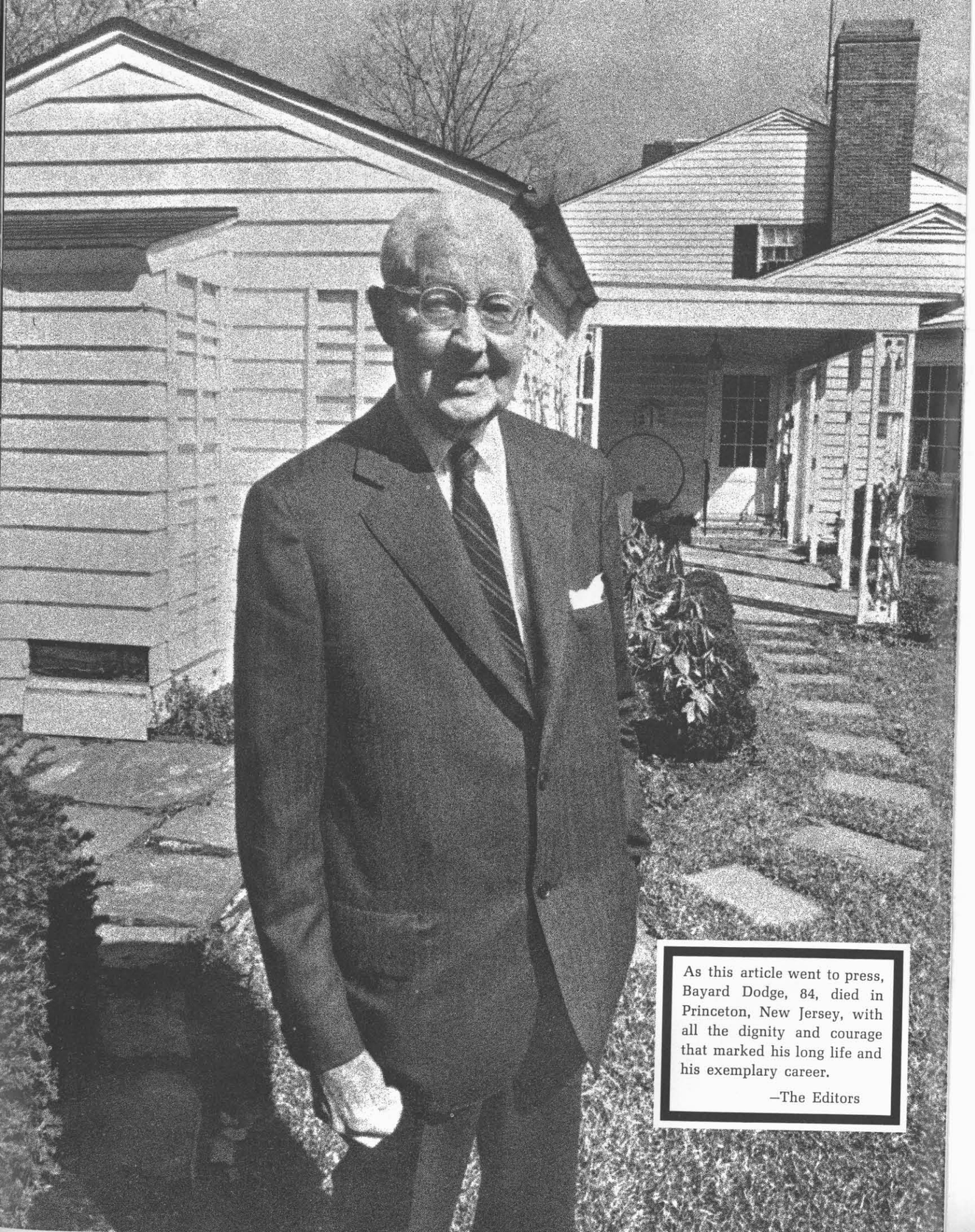
The cultivation of the olive is one of the most important traditional occupations of Lebanon. Three-quarters of the olive trees in the country are old trees and almost all belong to the traditional varieties, *baladi* and *shetawi*, or are a mixture of the two. Today, as in Crete 5,500 years ago, the secret of good olives is not in the breeding, but in the grafting. In Lebanon, baladi branches are grafted onto shetawi trunks as the baladi fruit are larger and fuller and remain longer on the trees than shetawi olives. However, baladi branches on a shetawi trunk to do not produce only baladi fruit, but a mixture of the two.

Mr. Elia Tabib, a Shemlani shopkeeper who has turned to olive cultivation, plans to make big innovations in his terraces: "I'm going to change all my trees. Then I will have the best kind of ripe eating olives to sell in my shop. My trade is all in olives now." A few years ago Mr. Tabib bought terraces with about 300 trees in the valley. He began to develop the long-neglected terraces, ploughing the trees several times a year, building a tank for irrigation, pruning and grafting. Already his trees stand out, a darker blue-green pool in the silver-green sea of leaves.

Mr. Tabib uses his black eating olives to stock his shop, bartering the fruit for soft drinks, tinned goods, sweets, everything he sells: "If they don't take my olives, I don't take their goods. That's all there is to it. They have no trouble selling good olives to their workers." Olives can be good business, bringing as much as 300-400 percent net profit in a good year.

And Mr. Elia is not the only Shemlani who has discovered—or rediscovered—the olive. The valley of olive terraces below the village is awakening. The path gave way to the new road two years ago. Now new reservoirs for storing water are being built on the terraces. Instead of ploughing or digging their terraces once a year, more people are doing it three or four times. This year the villagers introduced the "drop cloth" in the collecting process, spreading white canvas (formerly airplane escape chutes) on the terraces beneath the trees to catch the fruit as it falls. Patiently the trees accept the frivolousness of man and patiently they bear fruit as they see fit. But when the ploughing begins in the spring, we see just how ancient this culture is; a workman with a splendid pair of black bulls appears over the horizon. He comes from Jezzine, four days walk from Shemlan, a long, curved wooden plough, the length of a tree-trunk, over his shoulder. The ploughman and his bulls work the terraces for two months. Tractors cannot manage olive terraces. So we end where it all began: with the wooden plough, the graft on the wild oleaster and the Mediterranean close at hand.

Michael Elin Jansen was born in Michigan, and educated at Mt. Holyoke College and the American University of Beirut. She lives now in Shemlan, a village in the mountains of Lebanon, and has written two books on the Palestinian problem.



As this article went to press, Bayard Dodge, 84, died in Princeton, New Jersey, with all the dignity and courage that marked his long life and his exemplary career.

—The Editors

"We don't understand modern times or what to do with our children. So we're entrusting them to you."

A TALK WITH BAYARD DODGE

BY ELIZABETH AND JOHN RICHARD STARKEY
PHOTOGRAPHED BY TOR EIGELAND

Like Daniel Bliss, who founded the American University of Beirut, and Howard Bliss who carried on in his father's place, the name of Bayard Dodge is woven into the history and fabric of A.U.B. which he served as teacher, administrator and president from 1913 to 1948, a span of 35 demanding and exciting years. But in some ways Dr. Dodge has worked harder, and served the Arab world as well, since he retired—or tried to retire—to Princeton, New Jersey. He has lectured on Arab affairs at Columbia and Princeton, written several books, one on the famous al-Azhar Mosque, and was attached to the American Embassy in Cairo. He also served on numerous boards and committees and has medals and awards from Lebanon, Syria, Greece, the United Kingdom and France.

Mr. Dodge, what led you to Beirut?

When I graduated from Princeton in 1909, I took a trip around the world. As a result of stops in India and Egypt, I became interested in Islam. By the time we reached Beirut I had done a lot of reading on the subject. I was much taken with Beirut that first visit. It was a very free, delightful place. Doctor Howard Bliss was president of the American College then. I hadn't yet met his daughter, Mary, my future wife, but after meeting Doctor Bliss and seeing how progressive he was, I decided I would like to come back to Beirut for at least a year or two and then later go up-country and learn Arabic thoroughly. My idea was to see whether I couldn't contribute to producing a better feeling with the Muslims, who in those days were still very conservative.

But first you returned to the U.S. for your post-graduate work?

Yes, I went to Columbia and to Union Seminary. Union was a radical place in those days and a good place to compare religions. It was easy to see we had a great deal to share with the Muslims—much more than we had to differ with them on. A really good Muslim and a very good Christian have a lot in common.

During this period I met Mary Bliss, then at Vassar, pursued her and persuaded her to marry me. Mary had been brought up as a young child in Beirut and liked it very much. So she was as pleased as I when, in 1913, I accepted an offer from her father to take charge of a beautiful building under construction at the college that was to be a student center.

What was Beirut like in those days?

In 1913 Beirut was a rather pretty, old-fashioned place with narrow streets and a few tram cars. You could see the Lebanese mountains more clearly than today because there were no tall buildings. The mosques with their minarets were taller than anything else. Of course, none of the streets were paved and the harbor wasn't nearly so big as it is today. Most of the ships would anchor out and you had to go out in little boats to get to them.

Beirut was not in Lebanon in those days. It was in what they called the *vilayat* of Beirut (a *vilayat* was an administrative unit of the Ottoman Empire), which stretched all the way down to northern Palestine. So the *Vali* of Beirut, the Turkish governor, was an important person. He ran the city with his secretary, the *Maktabji*, and a few other Ottoman officials, as well as numerous Arabs. Actually, it was such a simple place that just a few men ran the whole government. They didn't need much money and there were a lot of wealthy people who paid their taxes so they got all they needed to keep the government going. Of course, there was, in those days, a good deal of crookedness. The officials all wanted to get their graft.

For instance, one of our friends sent us a beautiful chair for a wedding present and it never arrived. Finally the college steward went down and he saw the director of the custom house sitting in a very comfortable, handsome chair and he said, "By any chance, could that be the chair for Mr. Dodge?" He said, "Yes, yes, this is Mr. Dodge's chair. I've been enjoying it very much." We still have it.

And even then Lebanon was a prosperous little country. The French had started a silkworm industry in Lebanon after the silk worms in France had been wiped out by a scourge. In practically every farm house they were raising silkworms. The young girls would take the cocoons down to the factories and pull off the silk threads in hot water. There were mechanical wheels to wind up the threads. So almost every family in the Lebanon was able to have quite a lot of pin money really, quite a nice little income from their silkworm industry, between what they got for the cocoons and what the girls were paid for unwinding them.

What was the college like when you arrived?

It was a big place even then, with a campus of about 40 acres to the west of the city overlooking the Mediterranean. There were about 20 buildings on the campus, including those belonging to the college hospital and the preparatory school. Although the college was operated by American missionaries, it didn't differentiate at all between Muslims and Christians. Dr. Bliss had such a progressive point of view on religion that he really won the confidence of the Muslim boys. They trusted him and liked him and a good many started coming to the college.

What was Dr. Bliss' secret? Why were the Muslims so receptive to him?

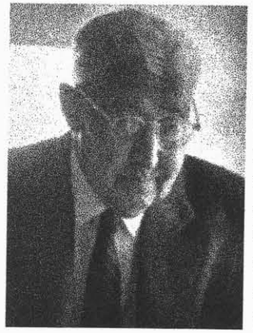
Well, you see, the other missionaries, those around Beirut—in fact, those in the entire Near East, Far East, everywhere—all clung to old-fashioned fundamentalist doctrines, which, of course, the Muslims couldn't stomach for a minute. Also I found that many of them around Beirut were a little bit afraid of the Muslims. They didn't seem to warm up to them very much. They devoted themselves to their own churches and Protestant congregations. Dr. Bliss thought this kind of thing and proselytizing were entirely the wrong method.

How were relations with the French in those days?

Well, the French started their Université de St. Joseph some years after the American College, so there was a good deal of competition. The French, of course, were intensely Roman Catholic and naturally very anxious to have French influence expressed through the Church there. They didn't at all like the Protestants butting in. So there was a lot of bad feeling. That changed, fortunately, after the First World War.

How were things in Beirut during the war? You weren't there very long before World War I broke out.

That's right. I got there just in time to organize a lot of social work for the students. And that was a very good thing because they needed everything they could get of that sort during the war. A lot of students were interned on the campus.



The government wouldn't let them go out. They were terribly discouraged and needed all the cheering up they could get. So I had all sorts of meetings, clubs and societies and lots of entertainments. I also tried to get all the older students to go over to the hospital and read to the blind people. They also used to teach in the evenings. Eventually there were about 150 students in the night schools. I also had to do more and more teaching as the war progressed because practically all the American teachers left. So any of us who could teach English courses, or any subject like that, had to just fall to and do what he could. My main concern, though, was to help the students have a good healthy social life—to get them to do something for other people and make themselves useful. That's the greatest thing to do—to get people to do something for someone else, if you can.

Did the school remain open throughout the war?

Yes, except for a short period. The Turks were nervous about the school, but they allowed it to remain open because Jamal Pasha, who was head of the Turkish Fourth Army, found that the only place he could get doctors who would walk into the front lines and into his typhus wards was in our college. So he gave us military supplies when we couldn't buy anything in the market and he kept the school open. It was just a miracle. Of course, they put in a lot of new rules too. The students had to learn Turkish and the government was rather strict about the way people traveled around the country. There was a brief period when everyone thought America was going to enter the war against Turkey. We did close up then and burnt all the Armenian books and that kind of thing. Everybody got ready to go up into the interior, but the U.S. didn't declare war against Turkey and the Turks were grateful and we didn't have any more trouble.

What happened to you after the war?

Well, by that time, my great-uncle, Dr. David Stuart Dodge, was dying. Ever since the college at Beirut was founded, he had handled all of the college interests in America. So they sent for me to come to New York to help with the work there. Meanwhile, to make matters worse, President Bliss had become very ill and soon passed away also. So I stayed in America for over a year and, with Luther Fowl, who had come back from Istanbul, helped organize the Near East College Office. Later it would become the Near East College Association.

What schools originally made up the Near East College Association?

Originally there were Roberts College and the American Women's College in Istanbul and International College in Izmir. Then there was a college in Sofia and one in Athens and ours in Beirut. Sofia was swallowed up by the Communists, which is very sad because it was a beautiful institution. The school at Izmir had problems with the Turks, who didn't like having an American institution there. So we persuaded the school to come down to Beirut. Today, besides AUB, International College and the American Community School in Beirut, which has more or less joined the association, Roberts is still operating, though it will probably be on a modest scale as a lyceé, and the school over in Athens, which never tried to be a university, is getting on very well.

Did you come directly back to the school after your stint in America?

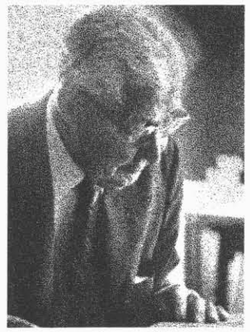
Not directly. For just a short time I was what they called Director of the Syrian and Palestine area of the Near East Relief. The Near East Relief helped the Ottoman regions as the Red Cross helped the Allies. There were about 9,000 orphans and someone had to step in and help them out. I couldn't make much of a dent in the problem, but I did what I could.

There were some very dramatic, wonderful moments. The Turks at the time had a lot of Armenian children and had given them all Muslim names and put them in an orphanage. Some Turkish military officers were assigned to look after the children and they were not too gentle. However, after the war the children got back their Christian names and we had a Christmas celebration for these children, about 700 of them, I think. Each one of them got a present from under the Christmas tree. Suddenly they realized they were free and had a chance now

to make their lives as they wanted. It really was a very moving occasion. We had the orphans learn handicrafts and trades so that every one of them was able to find a job and be self-supporting when he was old enough to leave the orphanage. I wish the same thing had been done with the Palestine refugees. They wouldn't have all the troubles they have now.

You were appointed president in 1923?

Yes, and then, of course, the work got harder. In 1924, we started coeducation, which was a radical thing to do in those days. The admission of girls was part of a big change in the overall character of the school.



Up to that period, practically all the students came from missionary schools and the place was like a Christian college with chapel service and that sort of thing, not obligatory, of course, but it was there. Suddenly, however, many of our students were coming from some of the really good British-type schools where there was a high level of teaching and good laboratories for chemistry, physics and biology. So we were getting a better prepared student with scientific interests, and that changed the whole makeup of the college.

In your first years as president, were you mainly concerned with expansion?

Yes, and not only in terms of additional students, faculty and a broader curriculum. We also needed property, and getting land was becoming something of a problem. The Turks had not encouraged industry, and when they left Beirut began to attract new industry, more trade and lots more tourists. The city became very prosperous and began to build up rapidly. Before the First World War, our college was really way out in the country. After the war it was quickly inside the city and we had to work out our expansion while land values were soaring.

With all influences, American, French and Arab, how did you resolve the language problem at the university?

Well, the first eight or ten years, everything was in Arabic, even the medical school, but they found out that it just wasn't practical. It was difficult to get textbooks and the students who graduated really couldn't get very far. So they started putting things into English. Then, when we brought the International College to Beirut from Izmir, we divided our school into two sections: one a French lycée with a Frenchman in charge; the other an American high school and junior college with Americans in charge and a New York State diploma equivalency. And that arrangement lasted until last year.

It was a very interesting experiment in education. The schools existed side by side in a large building. Very often an Arab father would come in and say, "I'd better put one son in each side. In my business they will be able to answer letters in both languages." On the French side, there tended to be a great number of Maronites and on the English side, more Greek Orthodox and Muslims, but they were all together in one building, all friends. So it broke down a lot of existing walls of trouble and made for a very nice feeling.

What about Arabic? Was that lost under this arrangement?

Oh, no. Every student who comes to AUB, unless he's a European, has to learn Arabic thoroughly. There's no escaping. We always had a great number of Arab professors and some of them in very important positions, so that the university seemed like an indigenous institution. I remember once being with a group of Lebanese gentlemen, ten or so of them sitting around, when one of them made a very disagreeable remark about "foreign institutions." Then they looked at me and laughed and said, "You know we don't think of your institution as foreign." And we didn't display American pictures or American flags around at all. The only time while I was there that we put out the American flag was when President Harding died. We put it up at half-mast.

Did you find yourself as president devoting more of your time to any one particular school of the university, perhaps the medical school?

No, I'll tell you, I thought to myself, "If a professor goes six thousand miles, leaving behind family, friends and other opportunities, he ought to be able to get his teeth into something." So I appointed a dean over each school in the university and let him really take charge of all the educational work, the students, and the curriculum. My only interference with their responsibility came when I held them down to their budget. The result was that the deans felt very important—they *were* very important—and took a great interest in their job.

What brought these men out to Lebanon?

I think most of them came out as very young teachers, in much the same way as young people now go abroad with the Peace Corps—for the experience of living abroad and doing a little teaching. Then they could go home and get a higher degree in medicine or in some academic subject and they would be very happy to come back to Beirut. It was an attractive place to live and although the salaries were very small, the money went far and there were many benefits not included in the salary.

What type of benefits?

Well, of course, doctors were allowed to have their private clinics and they supplemented their small salaries in that way. But for the men in the arts and sciences, their income when I first came out to Beirut was about $2,000 to $2,200 per year. That later rose to about $3,000. However, for that rather small amount they were able to have a house in town, a house in the country, two servants and a horse to ride. Then they were given furloughs every five to seven years, free medical care and extra help for their children's education.

The Arab professors would get free instruction for their children in the university. We wanted to pay the Arab faculty on exactly the same basis as the Americans, which we did except for the education insurance and an allowance for a furlough.

I remember one very touching incident in 1933. That was the year of the Bank Holiday. The Depression was a very frustrating time. It is extremely difficult to run a university if your securities are stopping payment and that sort of thing. We called a meeting of the faculty to discuss our financial state and in a spontaneous gesture of support, they voted to cut their salaries, even though, as I have just mentioned, their salaries were very low already. They voted larger cuts for the head people and only nominal cuts for the very young chaps, the assistants. The gesture eased our difficulty a great deal.

Ordinarily did you find yourself devoting a lot of time to fund raising?

We had a fund raising office in conjunction with the Near East College Association and I used to do a tremendous amount of speaking for them. This didn't leave me with much time to approach people directly for money. Only once did I have to raise the money myself. This was in 1938 when we received a promise of another $ 1 million from the Rockefeller Foundation, on condition that we could raise $500,000 ourselves. That year I didn't do any speaking. I just went after the money. Through individual benefactors, and a $50,000 gift from the alumni, this way and that way, we fortunately were able to meet the condition of the Rockefeller Foundation. This made a vast difference to the university—it was the beginning of a great deal of expansion.

The Rockefeller grant came in 1938 and, just as your expansion was getting underway, the Second World War broke out in 1939. How did the university fare during the war years?

Of course, until 1941, when America entered the war, we were neutral and no one could touch us. In fact, they treated us very nicely. The French Vichy troops were more or less holding the country for the Germans and there was an Italian commission in charge of Beirut and a good many German officers around, but they stayed in the background. When America did enter the war, we sent all our foreign students, the Syrians, Iraqis, Egyptians, etcetera, back to their own countries. We were preparing to close down the university because we knew if the Germans came it would be shut down.

We expected the Germans to continue on from Greece and Crete. As a matter of fact, they sent over 40 planes and they got one of the Iraqi leaders to start a revolution in Iraq. It looked as though they would arrive momentarily. I deeded over the management of the university to a local committee, effective the minute I left the country. Of course, we learned only later that the Germans had suffered such losses in Greece that they were unable to continue into Cyprus, Lebanon and Syria, which were to have been their next goals. About six weeks later the British troops came up the seacoast and drove out the Vichy troops, and from then on, we had no trouble.

It must have been about this time that you began to think about retirement?

Yes, I had worked out a time schedule and I told the board of trustees five years in advance that I would retire in 1948. I felt very strongly that nobody should be president of an institution for more than 25 years—it becomes too much of a one-man show and it isn't right. Also, I was 60, which is a good time to retire. I am glad that I stayed for 25 years out there. It took us through the two wars and the Depression. The university was strong and could really get going after the Second World War. When it was time for me to leave, I went six thousand miles away and kept my own counsel. I've seen too many older men connected with an institution trying to browbeat the younger ones.

Has AUB grown much since your time?

It has mushroomed. The growth began just as I was retiring

with Harold Hoskins, who became chairman of the board of trustees. He had been a Middle Eastern advisor to Standard Oil of New Jersey and that put him in a strategic position to approach the oil companies for donations. Then the Ford Foundation and others began to take an interest. Then in the early fifties, it was as though the foundations got together and appealed to the American Government for help. "This institution is getting too expensive for us. You've got to take it on." And so the American Government's been supporting the university for some time now, with large annual subsidies, a number of really beautiful buildings, for biology, physics and chemistry, and, most spectacular, an 18-million-dollar medical center. The American Government also sends about 650 scholarship students, with all their fees paid, from places like Pakistan, Nepal and other countries, you see.

Why is the American Government taking such an interest in the university?

I think they have several reasons. One very definite thing is they want to have a first-class medical center for the Americans in the government service in this part of the world.

The other thing is trying to maintain American good will and prestige. They've found that the university does more than anything else to keep up good will for the people of the country towards America. It's a counter-irritant to some of the things the Arabs don't like. The Arabs don't like U.S. Government policy, but they really do like Americans.

Has Beirut turned out to be an advantageous location for the university?

Actually, the university is fortunate to be located in Lebanon. Lebanon is a unique country and the Lebanese are very broad-minded and independent. They are not fanatics or chauvinists. They also recognize that the university brings in an enormous amount of money, with nearly four thousand students every year and a great deal of trade.

How would you have felt about accepting such large subsidies from the American Government?

If you ask me what I would have done had I been president during this period, I think I could only say that I'm very glad that my time of service had come to an end before the question came up.

Would you tell us about your work with the Palestinian refugees?

I was out in Chicago when I received a page-and-a-half telegram from Trygve Lie asking me to go to Palestine and take charge of the Palestinian relief program. I went overseas the following Monday morning to begin organizing the program with the Quakers, the International Red Cross and the League of Red Cross Societies. The League would later become UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, part of the new United Nations.

After I had gotten as far as Paris I found out that Washington didn't want anyone who was as friendly with the Arabs as I was—Mr. Truman, you know, had an entourage that was not very pro-Arab—so they got Mr. Stanton Griffis, ambassador to Egypt and the Paramount movie man, to be head of the program. But I helped until Ambassador Griffis was free to begin.

So we all got working, trying to get the program going and that was when I first saw them. In those days there were about 580,000 who had actually left their homes. Then there were at least half that many again who were impoverished by the troubles in Palestine. We provided food for them and looked after them as best we could. But it's always been very, very bad, you see, because there were these poor people living in tents or small cement houses, with no work, no self-respect, nothing to do. The population is growing all the time—the trouble is they have had nothing to do but produce children. The number of refugees is increasing at the rate of 2½ percent a year—some say 3 percent a year—and at the present time there are perhaps a million and a quarter refugees.

What about other Arab countries? Can't they absorb the refugees?

People don't know very much about the Arab countries. You see, Egypt is terribly overpopulated. She can't take very many refugees, in fact, she can't take any. And little Lebanon already has over 100,000 Arab refugees down there around Tyre and Sidon. They really don't have room for any more. Jordan, of course, has most of the refugees, but Jordan can barely support her own population. So the only country where some of them might do something is up in Syria. But Syria has its own problems. When the French left, they didn't leave a good civil service and poor Syria has been going through one *coup d'etat* after another. So, although Syria could perhaps be a fertile, rich country, they haven't been able to develop the country so as to be able to take in refugees.

If land is not available for these refugees, is there an adequate rehabilitation program which will enable them to take up a trade?

No. It's been impossible for the United Nations to give them enough education to get jobs. I think the very sad thing

is that the United Nations didn't get America to put up a good deal more money than it did, to give a decent trade education to these children. You can't expect a whole population of boys, full of life, to grow up without enough education to find work and then to behave themselves. It's really not possible. Of course, the American point of view was that they didn't want to give more than their share to the United Nations. However, they might have, I think, said, "Well, we won't give any more for the political things, but we would like to help with the education." Very few people in the United States really understand the Arab problem.

Did this lack of understanding surprise you when you returned to this country?

Yes, it did. For example, when I returned, back in 1948, 1949, it was astonishing that at Princeton they didn't have a single thing about the contemporary Middle East. So they asked me to conduct a seminar on that topic. A great many of the students who came were not taking it for credit. They were just interested because they wanted to learn something about the Middle East.

The most ambitious project, though, was an Islamic conference, they called it a "Colloquium on Islamic Culture," which the State Department and the Library of Congress asked Princeton to run. Of course, it was exceedingly difficult in those days with Senator McCarthy's boys questioning everyone we wanted to invite to the conference. The most gentle lambs were changed into dangerous wolves. But we managed to overcome all the obstacles. I was running the show and I took this point of view: "Now, we Americans are not going to tell these foreigners anything about what's what or what they're supposed to do or what they're supposed to know. We'll spend our time asking them to tell us." I think that sort of psychology is what we need very much in our relations with foreign people. A little modesty and humility increases a person's size rather than diminishing it.

Did this conference lead to your work in Egypt?

Yes, after the conference was over, the State Department, or really the USIS, asked me to go out to Cairo on a special kind of assignment as a sort of free-lance cultural attaché. The idea was to make friends with some of the Muslim scholars. I worked with the embassy for a year, but this was in 1955 and the Americans were in hot water over the Suez trouble and I decided that as long as I was connected with the embassy, I could not accomplish very much.

So my wife and I just stayed on in Cairo on our own for three more years and I devoted myself to two things. I decided that the best way to establish a friendship with Muslim scholars was to write a book about their big mosque. So I started to research the history of the famous al-Azhar Mosque and I would invite them over to our apartment to have tea for a couple of hours and give us information on the mosque. They were tickled to death to have someone so interested in their mosque and I made lots of friends.

Are the Arabs still interested in maintaining their contacts with the United States?

Well, yes, because, after all, America leads the world in science and technology in a rather astonishing way. The Arabs want to keep in with it and they will be glad to have some American professors bringing to them the latest technical knowledge from the United States and helping them prepare themselves for post-graduate study in the United States, that sort of thing.

Do you feel that American influence is as strong today among the Arabs as in the past?

Well, there is certainly a difference in the ways in which we are influencing them. Our earliest effort was the Protestant missionary one. The trouble, of course, with the whole mission system was that its aim was to convert people and to make them change their points of view and make them members of an entirely different cultural unit. And, of course, in the long run, the people resented that attitude and the Protestant effort met with limited success.

Hollywood came along and, while it hasn't always been a good influence, there's no question that in its heyday it was a strong influence. Boys and girls would go to these Hollywood films and be enamored with and want to dress and act like Hollywood people. In fact Hollywood made such a big impression in those years that many Arab parents used to come and say to me, "We don't understand modern times or what to do with our children. So we're entrusting them to you." Rather tragic in a way, but even these things were changing too fast.

That is where our influence has been important—helping the young people adapt to change. Through the good schools we founded we got to many people when they were young and trained not only minds but characters.

John Richard Starkey, former reporter and TV news writer, now produces TV documentaries. Elizabeth Starkey studied political science at the Sorbonne and does free-lance writing.

Kalila wa dimna

In the fables, wit and wisdom

BY PAUL LUNDE

DRAWINGS BY DON THOMPSON

One of the most popular books ever written is the book the Arabs know as *Kalila wa Dimna*, a bestseller for almost two thousand years, and a book still read with pleasure all over the Arab world.

Kalila and Dimna was originally written in Sanskrit, probably in Kashmir, some time in the fourth century A.D. In Sanskrit it was called the *Panchatantra*, or "Five Discourses." It was written for three young princes who had driven their tutors to despair and their father to distraction. Afraid to entrust his kingdom to sons unable to master the most elementary lessons, the king turned over the problem to his wise wazir, and the wazir wrote the *Panchatantra*, which concealed great practical wisdom in the easily digestible form of animal fables. Six months later the princes were on the road to wisdom and later ruled judiciously.

Two hundred years after that, a Persian shah sent his personal physician, Burzoe, to India to find a certain herb rumored to bestow eternal life upon him who partook of it. Burzoe returned with a copy of the *Panchatantra* instead, which he claimed was just as good as the miraculous herb, for it would bestow great wisdom on the reader. The shah had Burzoe translate it into Pehlavi, a form of Old Persian, and liked it so much that he enshrined the translation in a special room of his palace.

Three hundred years later, after the Muslim conquest of Persia and the Near East, a Persian convert to Islam named Ibn al-Mukaffa' chanced upon Burzoe's Pehlavi version and translated it into Arabic in a style so lucid it is still considered a model of Arabic prose. Called *Kalila and Dimna*, after the two jackals who are the main characters, the book was written mainly for the instruction of civil servants. It was so entertaining, however, that it proved popular with all classes, entered the folklore of the Muslim world, and was carried by the Arabs to Spain. There it was translated into Old Spanish in the 13th century. In Italy it was one of the first books to appear after the invention of printing.

Later it was also translated into Greek and then that version into Latin, Old Church Slavic, German and other languages. The Arabic version was translated into Ethiopic, Syriac, Persian, Turkish, Malay, Javanese, Laotian and Siamese. In the 19th century it was translated into Hindustani, thus completing the circle begun 1,700 years before in Kashmir.

Not all versions were simple translations. The book was expanded, abridged,

versified, disfigured and enhanced by a seemingly endless series of translators—to which I now add one more: me. The story I have selected is not included in the original Sanskrit version, nor in most Arabic manuscripts of Ibn al-Mukaffa', but it is of interest because it has entered European folklore as the story known as "Belling the Cats," which can be found in the Brothers Grimm and many other places. The difference is that the Arab mice solve their problem much more subtly than their western cousins...

There was once in the land of the Brahmins a swamp called Dawran that extended in all directions for a distance of a thousand parsangs. In the middle of the swamp was a city called Aydazinun. The city enjoyed many natural advantages and its people were prosperous and could afford to enjoy themselves however they liked. Now there was a mouse in that city called Mahraz, and he ruled over all the other mice in the city and in the surrounding countryside. He had three wazirs to advise him in his affairs.

One day all the wazirs were gathered in the presence of the king of the mice discussing various things, when the king said: "Do you think it is possible for us to free ourselves of the hereditary terror which we and our fathers before us have always felt for cats? Although we have many comforts and good things in our lives, our fear of the cats has taken the savor out of everything. I wish all three of you would give me the benefit of your advice about how to solve this problem. What do you think we ought to do?"

"My advice," said the first wazir, "is to collect as many bells as you can, and hang a bell around the neck of every cat so that we can hear them coming and have time to hide in our holes."

Then the king turned to the second wazir and said, "What do you think about your colleague's advice?"

"I think it's lousy," answered the second wazir. "After we collect all the bells, who do you think is going to dare hang one around the neck even of the smallest kitten, much less approach a veteran tomcat? In my opinion, we should emigrate from the city and dwell in the country for a year until the people of the city think that they can dispense with the cats who are eating them out of house and home. Then they'll kick them out, or kill them, and the ones that escape will scatter in all directions into the country and become wild and no longer suitable for

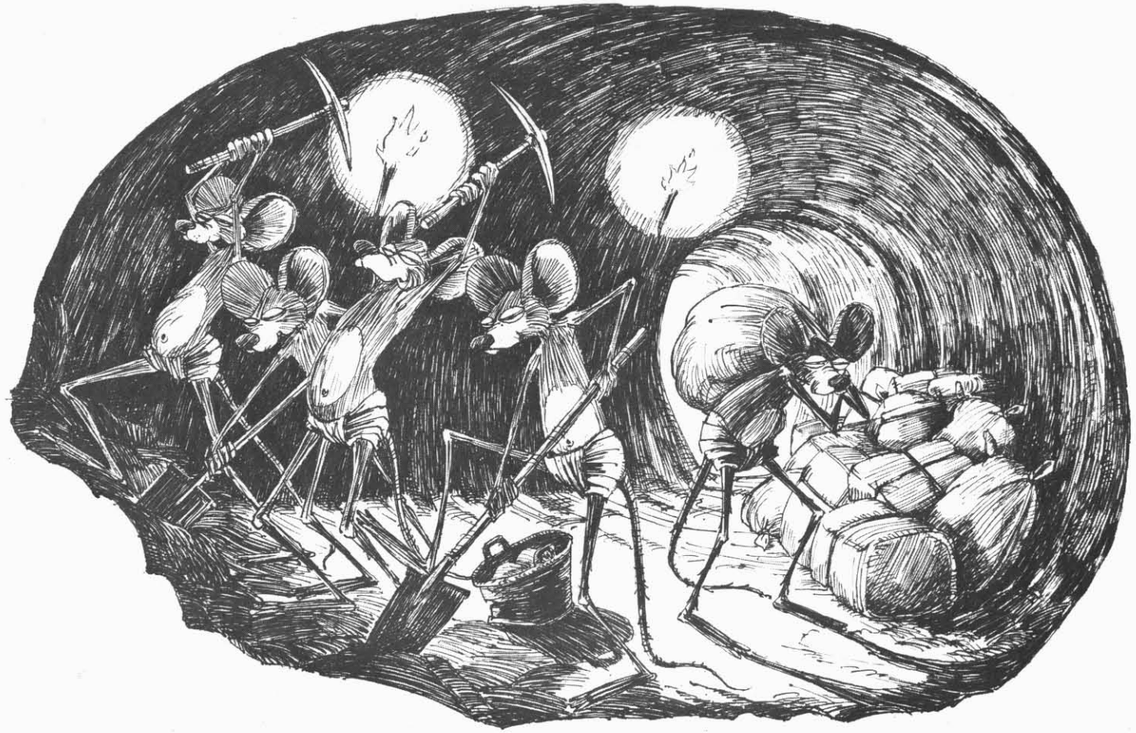
house cats. Then we can safely return to the city and live forever without worrying about cats."

Then the king turned to the third and wisest wazir. "What do you think about that idea?"

"It's pretty poor," replied the third wazir. "If we leave the city and go live in the country, how do we know that the cats will disappear in a single year? And what about the difficulties we will experience? The wilderness is full of wild animals that like to eat mice, and they will do us a lot more harm than do the cats."

"You're right about that," said the king. "So what do you think we should do?"

"I can think of only one possible plan. The king should summon all the mice in the city and in the suburbs and order them to construct a tunnel in the house of the richest man in the city, and to store up enough food for ten days. Have them make doors in the tunnel that lead to every room in the house. Then we will all get inside the tunnel, but we will not touch any of the man's food. Instead, we will



concentrate on damaging his clothes, beds, and carpets. When he sees the damage, he will say to himself, 'Obviously one cat can't handle all the mice around here! And he will go get another cat. When he has done that, we will increase the amount of damage that we do, really tearing his clothes to pieces. Again he will decide to get another cat. And then we will increase the damage threefold. That should make him stop and think. He'll say to himself: "The damage was much less when I only had one cat. The more cats I get, the more mice there seem to be."

So then he will try an experiment. He will get rid of one of the cats. Immediately, we will lessen the amount of damage that we do by a third. 'That's strange,' the man will say. And he will get rid of another cat. And we will again decrease the amount of damage by a third. Then the light will dawn on him. When he gets rid of the third cat, we will stop our destruction completely. Then the man will think that he has made a great discovery. He'll say: 'It's not the mice that damage food and clothes, but cats.' He will run to tell his neighbors, and because he is a rich and respected man in the town, they will all believe him and throw their cats out of doors, or kill them, and forever after, whenever they see a cat, they will chase it and kill it."

So the king followed the advice of the third wazir and before very long not a cat remained in the city. The people remained so convinced that they were right about the cats that whenever they saw a hole in their clothes, they would say, "A cat must have gotten into the house last night." And even when there was an outbreak of disease among men or livestock, they would say, "A cat must have walked through the town last night." So by this strategem, the mice freed themselves forevermore from their hereditary fear of cats.

Paul Lunde grew up in Saudi Arabia, studied Arabic at the University of London, and is now studying and free-lancing in Italy.

MEANWHILE, BACK IN THE 20TH CENTURY...

Mouse Threat To Parliament

LONDON, March 12 (Reuters).—A silent army of tiny invaders is infiltrating the British Houses of Parliament.

Parliamentarians are so worried about the growing battalions of mice lurking in the long, dark corridors of the 19th-century building that the issue will be raised in the House of Commons later this week.

Conservative party member Joseph Kinsey said today that he would ask for a squad of cats to be brought in for a counter-insurgency operation.

"Mice are popping up everywhere—in the tearoom, in offices and along the corridors. It is a regular population explosion," he said.

(Reprinted from the International Herald Tribune, Paris.)

REPORT TO READERS

In the National Press Building in Washington a mailing campaign specialist offered a frank opinion to an Aramco World *editor on the subject of a proposed survey of* Aramco World *readers. "We're sending out 15,000 questionnaires," he said, "but if we get 1,500 back—10%—we'll be lucky. Readers of industrial magazines just don't have the kind of interest you need to get the big, valid response."*

That was last August. Two months later, Public Relations executives in Saudi Arabia received a cablegram from the same mailing campaign specialist. "EARLY RETURNS SHOW STRONG READER INTEREST," the cablegram read. The next day they got another one: "PHENOMENAL RESPONSE . . . CONTINUES . . . TOTAL THROUGH MORNING OF OCTOBER 18, 7,456 . . ." Two days later a third cable arrived and a week later a fourth. When the cables finally stopped coming nearly 20,000 readers—about 20%, not merely of the sampling, but of the entire readership—had either sent in a questionnaire or asked to be sent one so they could fill it in. "Your readers," the specialist admitted cheerfully, "obviously have more interest than we thought."

It was not, to be candid, entirely accidental. As a result of the specialist's anxiety, the editors had approved a proposal that we send sets of color photographs to each reader who returned a questionnaire. We also decided to insert in Aramco World *a reminder that questionnaires should be returned. Last, in hopes of interesting perhaps 500 or so particularly devoted readers, we included a post card for those who had not been selected to participate in the survey but who might want to do so.*

Even so the results were surprising. Instead of getting back the expected 1,500 questionnaires from the original mailing, we received close to 6,000—a response rate of nearly 38% on just one mailing. Instead of the approximately 500 or so requests, we got about 14,000, more than 14% of our entire U.S. readership. To the specialist, James Marshall, president of Public Affairs Consultants of America, this was astonishing. As Public Affairs Director for the Citizens Committee for Postal Reform, which spearheaded the nationwide effort to improve the U.S. mails, and as Press Secretary for the Republican Governors' Association, Marshall had developed a taste for direct mail campaigns. They're not only much cheaper, he told us, but when the response rate is high, more valid. The trouble is the response rate is rarely high enough. "But these returns," he said, "are not only valid, they're fantastic!"

For that response, we, on behalf of our pleased selves and Aramco's management, would like to thank you—for showing an interest that readers of industrial magazines aren't supposed to have.

The Editors

Statistics are notoriously dull, but to *Aramco World* editors the tabulations received from a Washington pollster this spring were electrifying. The tabulations were the results of an extensive survey of *Aramco World* readers and they showed that reader enthusiasm for the magazine exceeded the editors' most optimistic expectations.

Being modest souls, the editors were hesitant about publishing reviews that can only be called glowing. Believing, however, that the readers who participated in the survey might like to know the results, and not being entirely devoid of ego, the editors decided to print at least the highlights.

The point of the survey, of course, was to see what readers thought of the magazine's two major themes—oil and Arabs—and what role, if any, the magazine plays in affecting opinions. The answers were conclusive: enthusiasm for the magazine, general endorsement of American foreign investment, specific approval of the Arabian American Oil Company, and an acknowledgment that the Arab East is considerably more advanced than readers used to believe.

For example, on the often sensitive subject of oil companies' foreign involvement, a surprising 85% of all readers saw Aramco's role in the Middle East as either "important" or "vital." Even the most skeptical readers replying—reporters, editors and editorial writers—thought investment abroad was "usually beneficial."

With regard to the Middle East, responses were also positive. About 55% saw the Middle East as an area "with great potential which is undergoing marked modernization," and 26% saw it as an area "with great potential" and at least "slowly developing nations." Only 1% saw it in terms of "desert" and "Biblical" levels of life.

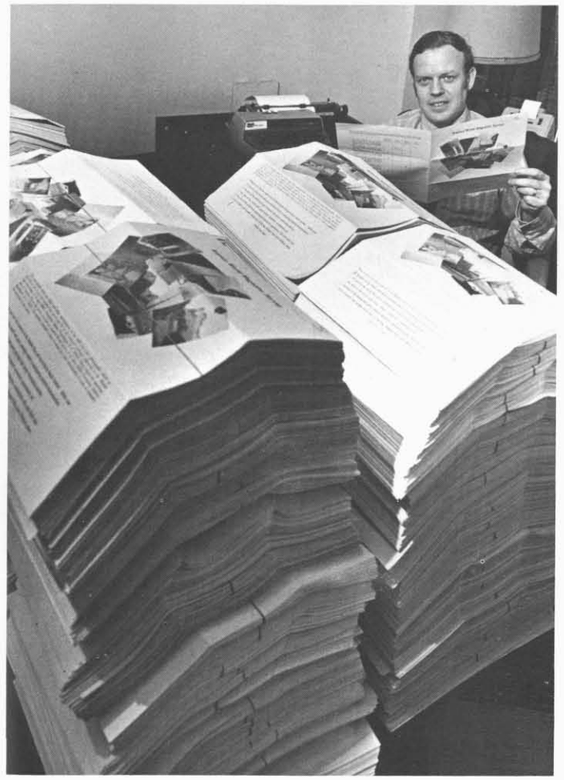
But the most gratifying of these findings is that readers like *Aramco World*. More than 97% rated it "excellent" or "good"—12,920 out of 13,213—with only 14 readers saying "poor." Furthermore, more than 80% think "photography and layout" and "writing" are as attractive as *National Geographic* and *Life*. And more than 1,000 readers voluntarily added that in some respects *Aramco World* was "better" than either of those publications. To editors who admire and imitate both those publications, that is heady wine indeed.

Some readers like it so much that they keep the magazine for years (nearly 8,000 readers say they keep it for more than six months) and almost everyone who gets it reads it. More than 97% read it "regularly" or "fairly often," and only 16 said they "never" read it.

It is not only subscribers who read it either. Additional readers—friends or relatives of those who returned questionnaires and who read the magazine at least occasionally—total 75,748. This extra readership, added to library readership (more than 70 readers per copy in some reading rooms), means that a whopping 500,000 readers see some issues.

It also seems that *Aramco World* is more than entertainment. Out of 13,264 readers, 13,150—better than 99%—said the magazine has helped give them "a better understanding of the Middle East."

This apparently was achieved by simply presenting more information of a kind that was either not previously available or had gone unnoticed. For example, more than 9,600 readers out of 13,140, said that before receiving *Aramco World* they would have been surprised, skeptical or downright disbelieving if told they could "ski in Lebanon," that "Saudi Arabia has floods" or that "there are 21 universities in the Arab world." Now, it seems, they know such statements are true.



And statistics were only a part of the picture. In addition to the tabulations, the pollster also received more than 4,800 voluntary comments that, he reported, drove the statisticians wild and added six weeks to tabulation schedules. These comments ranged from the scribbled "thank-you's" to a 17-page manuscript on what the magazine was doing right. But they also included this letter from a mother in Niagara Falls, New York, whose son first began to receive *Aramco World* in the sixth grade but never will again. It is the kind of a letter one doesn't forget and for which the editors and the management of Aramco are touched and grateful.

Dear Sir:

I have answered your survey to the best of my ability instead of my son. My son, Lt. Dennis F. Grace, was killed in Viet-Nam March 11, 1970, but I still accepted your Aramco World Magazine. *We have been receiving the magazine since my son wrote your company when he was in the sixth grade; he had to write a paper on Saudi Arabia. Your company came through beautifully for all the information he needed at the time. As a matter of fact, my daughter, who is married, found the magazine so interesting that she personally wrote you years ago to send her a copy. She still receives it, enjoying it immensely.*

We wish to thank you sincerely for enlightening us on Arabia and bringing us enjoyment in the magazine's readings. I hope I did not do anything wrong in accepting the magazine in my son's name. Since he is dead now, would you still send me the magazine in my name? When the magazine arrives and I see his name on the cover, tears come to my eyes. He was a history major, graduating from the University of Niagara here in Niagara Falls. After teaching one year and one summer school session, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in a first year program. He was trained in Quantico, Virginia, then went on to Pensacola, Florida, and Camp Pendleton, Calif. for helicopter training. He left for Viet-Nam September 1969 and was stationed at Marble Mt. DaNang. He was killed March 11, 1970, fighting the enemy, and became just another dead hero fighting for this country and what he believed in. I thank you sincerely for the enjoyable reading.

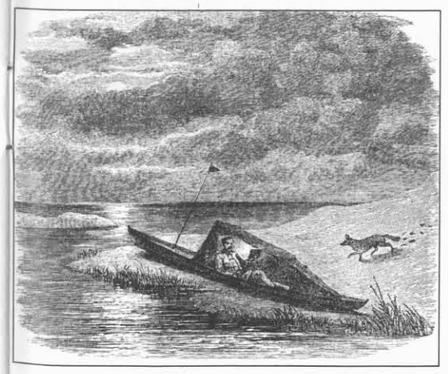
Sincerely,

Mrs. Edward F. Grace.

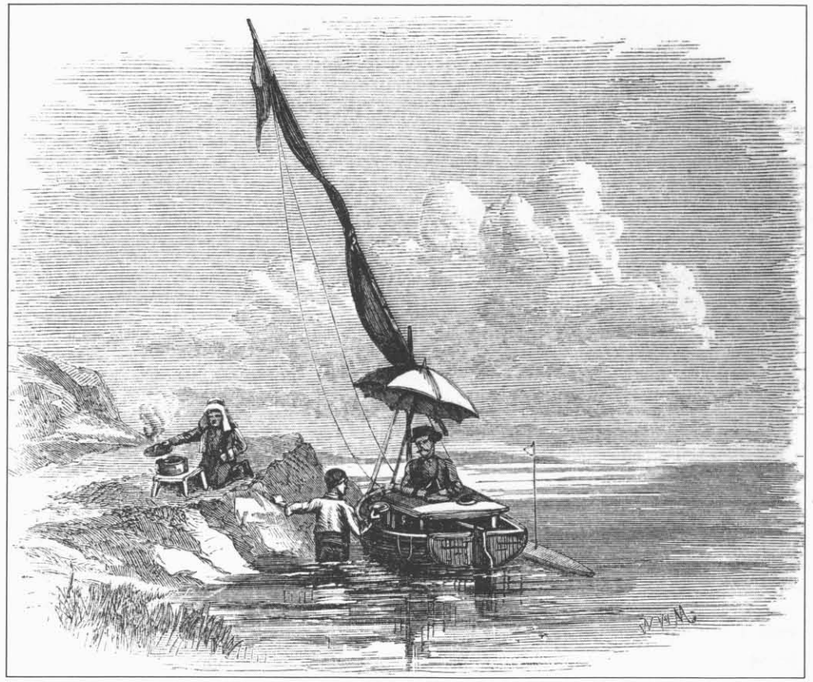
Starting on Lake Menzaleh in the Delta.

SAILING TO DAMASCUS

BY JOHN BRINTON



Night Visitor on Crocodile Lake.



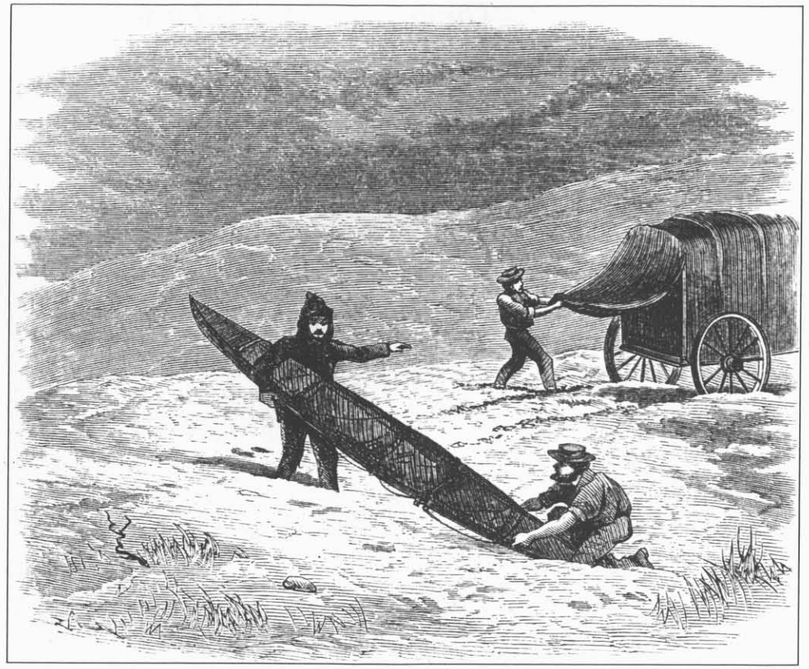
Dinner in the "Sweet Canal."

Millions of travelers have visited Damascus over the years, but not many have arrived by boat. One who did was John MacGregor, a Scotsman who, just over 100 years ago, sailed his canoe, the "Rob Roy" down the Barada River from its source in the Anti-Lebanon mountains, paddled right across Damascus and ended his journey in a swamp in the middle of the Syrian Desert.

His visit to Damascus was only one of a series of daring canoe trips which he made in Europe, the Middle East, Russia and Armenia and which he later described in several books. He was the pioneer of British canoeing, and the name of his little craft became a household word in Victorian England.

Because of his enthusiasm, the Royal Canoe Club was founded in 1866, with the Prince of Wales as commodore, and a canoe club was founded in New York in 1871. As early as 1865, MacGregor popularized the sport by designing a canoe for long journeys. It could be propelled by both paddle and sail, and yet it was light enough to be carried overland. It was made of seasoned cedar wood. It had an overall length of 14 feet, a beam of 26 inches; yet when packed with all its gear only weighed 72 pounds. MacGregor could cruise in it for an entire week without replenishing his stores and, since he often slept in his canoe when traveling, it had been built around him lying in a prone position. An apron, fixed to the cockpit of the canoe, could be tied around his middle to keep out the water. It carried a small sail, boom and mast. Large waterproof pockets on each side of the cockpit contained vital supplies such as a pistol and ammunition, a brandy flask, an Inverness cape for sleeping in, a large water bottle, spare shoes, fishing tackle, mosquito net, food, books, maps, matches and money.

The "paddler's kitchen" was also designed to produce hot meals anytime anywhere, at a moment's notice. Bread was the most important item and since it had to keep in hot,



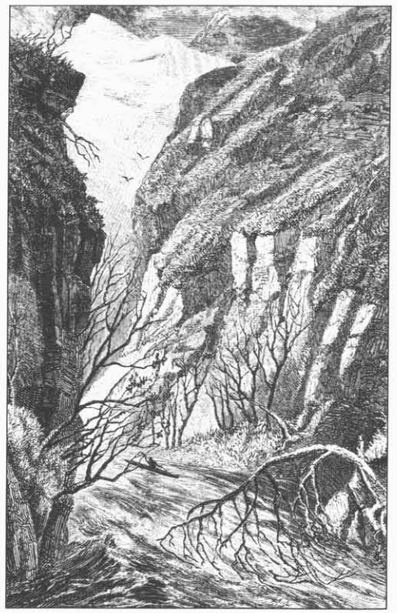
Crossing Mount Lebanon.

cold and damp climates, MacGregor dried it out and stored it thoroughly in waterproof bags. When it was needed it was dipped over the side of the canoe, immediately softening and expanding. MacGregor praised the bread he bought in Damascus, which he claimed, in an apparently serious footnote, he kept and was able to eat after 20 years.

John MacGregor began his Eastern tour with a trip up the Nile, through the Suez Canal and around the great lakes of Egypt. Then he took a steamer to Beirut where, as soon as the ship dropped anchor, he paddled to the shore in his canoe. In his mock humorous style he wrote, "Splendid old Lebanon, snow-capped; young Beyrout smiling in rain tears; and all the street-boys running down to the beach to see the canoe."

After a few days in Beirut buying stores and hiring guides and porters, he began what was to be an exploration of the waterways of Syria by hoisting the Rob Roy, well wrapped in Oriental carpets, onto a wagon that would haul it over the Lebanese mountains to the source of "the Abana River." MacGregor used the old biblical name; today this river is referred to as the Barada.

To reach Ain Figi, the historic source of the river, in the Anti-Lebanon range, took three days, according to MacGregor, and they arrived during a storm. MacGregor and his party of seven men, six mules and two horses took shelter in the house of a Syrian. This party, incidentally, followed him on land wherever he went.



Gorge of the Abana.

Although MacGregor had to be cautious about launching a canoe in turbulent waters, he decided after two days of exploring that he could safely launch the Rob Roy at the village of Doomar, on a stretch of river "like a Scotch salmon stream." He did and instantly shot off on the swift current at great speed, steering between huge crags and boulders. The gravel banks were lined with trees. Later there were rapids where he was obliged to carry the canoe around to safer waters and at one point the river flowed through a dark tunnel in a cliff which "would have been madness to follow." MacGregor wrote, however, that the Barada River was "true luxury" in its headlong flight to Damascus after the quiet level of the Suez Canal and the oily running Nile.

As the river approached Damascus it became more shallow, for many small canals led off the precious water to irrigate the adjoining fields—a system of irrigation still practiced today. MacGregor had to take to the water to steer the canoe through the waterfalls, weirs and rapids he met. It took him five hours to reach a point which, on foot, took one. Suddenly the tree-lined gorge widened, the Rob Roy floated into an expanse of calm water and there was Damascus, a vast circle of green at the edge of the desert.

"Old Damascus gleamed out brilliant before me in the evening light," MacGregor wrote, adding that it is "one of the sights of the world."

To better savor it, and to prepare for the great moment of arrival in the city, MacGregor stopped on the outskirts, by a grassy meadow bank to have his supper. Refreshed and ready for his triumphal entry, he set off again in the Rob Roy, paddling slowly toward the center of the city. He sailed under bridges, around acqueducts, past the Pasha's palace—all under the gaze of the incredulous inhabitants.

He at last reached a stretch of calm water by the garden of Dimitri's Hotel where he had planned to stay. There a large crowd had already gathered and a great cheer went up as MacGregor hove into view. When he

Morass of Ateibeh, east of Damascus.

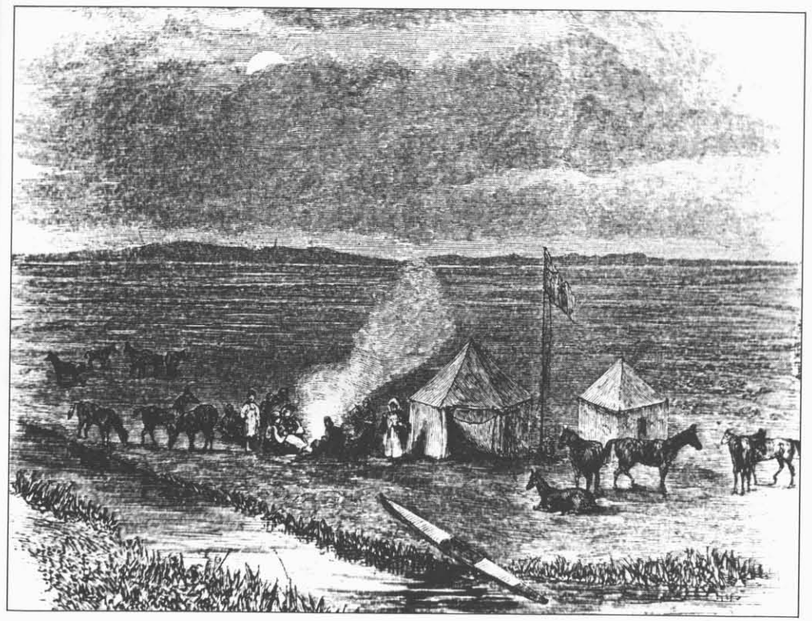
stepped ashore he was saalamed, shaken, struck on the back, and escorted up the path to the entrance of the hotel. Behind him the Rob Roy was picked up by the cheering crowd and deposited in the unnavigable waters of a wide marble basin in the hotel garden, where, her blue sail hoisted and her golden flag flying from the little mast, she was the sight of the town. Even the Pasha with his entire suite came to inspect her, followed by the British Consul. The local newspapers, MacGregor wrote, "gravely chronicled the arrival of the Rob Roy on the same page with the movements of the Greek fleet."

During his short stay in Damascus MacGregor was widely entertained. He met a charming Englishwoman, married to an Arab shaikh, Lady Jane Digby, later to be an intimate friend of Sir Richard Burton, who arrived a few days after MacGregor left to take up his appointment as British Consul.

MacGregor now prepared to follow the river to its end. Terrible tales were related about the bleak, impenetrable morass at the mouth of the Barada: people sucked into whirlpools, devoured by panthers, hyenas and wild boars, or destroyed by snakes and "jinns."

Since irrigation canals in the fertile plain around Damascus made even canoeing difficult, MacGregor had to travel a day's distance from the city to find a spot where he could launch the canoe, and as he paddled off again, the Barada was red and swollen from the recent mountain rains. But the channel was wide and flowed through delightful orchards and meadows. Tortoises slept on the banks, land crabs scuttled about and the surrounding marshes were alive with "fat, lazy ducks that couldn't be bothered to rise and fly away." It was picturesque, but slow going, and the canoe had to be carried over many obstacles.

As MacGregor neared the edge of the plain bordering the desert the landscape became wilder. Soon the current swept the Rob Roy into an impassable tangle of willows, ten feet high, growing in marshland full of deep holes. MacGregor was stuck. However he had developed an infallible solution for this kind of problem. "Persist in the assurance that you must get through, pull to the side, ponder the next plan, and shout as loud as you can." He did this and an Arab hunter popped out of the bulrushes at his side.



Christmas Night on a Mouth of the Abana.

By a Boar-track on Lake Hijaneh.

MacGregor's smiles and soft speech convinced the hunter that he had not seen the devil, and he guided him to a tiny village of thatched huts. Here the rest of his party met him and the friendly inhabitants of Jisrin gave them a night's shelter.

The next morning MacGregor paddled off eastward on a tortuous channel. He was accompanied for some time by a good humored, smiling band of men, women and children, but he left them behind as he entered a marsh overgrown with weeds and pierced by narrow channels. Then he came to a small village inhabited by "marsh Arabs." Three splendid basalt columns gave the name of "Harran of the Pillers" to this village, about 16 miles from Damascus. The shaikh allowed MacGregor to climb the minaret of the village mosque to get his bearings. He found that he was near the edge of a huge morass called Ateibeh.

Now MacGregor had to continue on foot to the edge of the morass. The canoe was carried on horseback, a perilous operation in this swamp. The "marsh walkers," acting as guides, lost their way several times. They floundered around helplessly in a shallow swamp covered with tufts of grass and

Stone Door of a House in Bashan.

pocked with deep holes. At last they came to a small piece of firm ground where the tent could be set up. They also erected a flag pole and soon the red ensign of England was run up "to wave over as wild a spot as ever seen."

The next day would be an exciting one. MacGregor would penetrate into the heart of the swamp, and trace the Barada to its very end. Of the many wild animals rumored to live in the morass MacGregor feared only the wild boar. Normally the boar avoids man, but a man in a strange craft encroaching on his private domain might be a different matter. Excitement, mosquitoes, the croaking of frogs kept MacGregor awake most of the night.

Early in the morning MacGregor began his countdown for the launching into the unknown. He had stored emergency rations for two days aboard the Rob Roy, a double-barrelled shotgun for wild boar, a long pole for pushing his way through the reeds. He also carried a supply of strips of colored cloth, two feet long, to tie to the reeds as markers in order to find his way back to the base.

MacGregor knew that if he followed a course where the current flowed most swiftly it would take him to the lowest point in the swamp. At 8:38 A.M., as entered in his logbook, MacGregor waved good-bye to his staff, and pushed off down the little stream which cut through the thick tangle of reeds.

Ten minutes later he was out of earshot of the camp but he could still see the Union Jack. The little stream branched out into six different channels. He tied the first strip of colored cloth to the tops of the three highest bulrushes. He carefully entered the particulars in his logbook, marking down this spot as Station 1. Choosing the channel with the strongest current, he carried on. He propelled himself along with the long pole until Station 1 was barely visible.

He continued with his marking as he advanced until he had reached Station 6. Here all motion of the water had stopped. The time was 13:05—nearly five hours after leaving his base. McGregor believed that he must be in the very center of the morass. He got out of the canoe and started to wade around in the mud. This was dangerous however, for the clumps of grass and reeds concealed deep holes—probably the famous "whirlpools which drag men down." MacGregor was convinced that the Barada River ended just here, in the marshes of the Ateibeh morass, "yielding," as he put it, "its vapory spirit to the hot sun." Tired and hungry he returned to the Rob Roy and enjoyed an "excellent solitary luncheon."

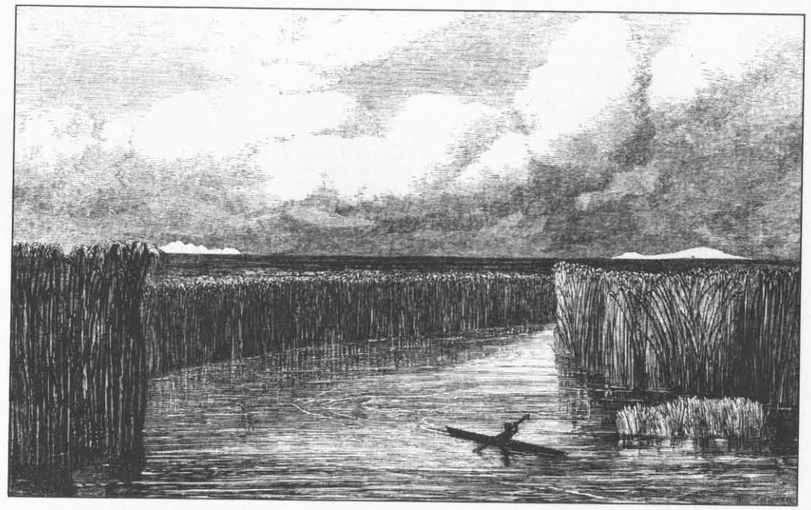
MacGregor turned the Rob Roy in a half-mile sweep and began the journey back to base, to a hero's welcome. How his heart leapt up when he at last saw the Union Jack above the rushes, and his hail was answered by his faithful dragoman. A cheerful fire was burning outside his tent; a camp table spread with a white cloth and silver set up in front of it. MacGregor sat down to a splendid roast turkey, followed by a "capital plum pudding" swimming in flames of brandy. Exploration was not only a serious business, but it had to be done in style.

After the Barada, MacGregor set out to canoe to the source of the Jordan River—the point where the Hasbani, Dan and Banias rivers, rising in southern Lebanon, converge. This trip was to be equally exciting. Just past the point where the Hasbani and Banias rivers meet, some tribesmen attacked him, one with a flintlock rifle. The marksmen missed, but he was seized. He could think of only one thing to do: he smiled and, as usual the Arabs responded. Indeed. They helped him canoe and all, and carried him to the tent of the shaikh. The astonished shaikh had come out of his tent at the sound of the commotion and invited MacGregor in. Along with the Rob Roy, which was carried inside and placed on a beautiful Oriental carpet. But the shaikh adamantly refused, for some reason, to let him continue canoeing down the river, so MacGregor resorted to trickery. He set up his little stove in the shaikh's tent and asked for some water. When the water was boiling he put some preserved beef into it to make soup. He opened his salt box and offered the shaikh a pinch, which he eagerly took, thinking it was sugar. The salt used by the Arabs in those days was usually black. As the shaikh tasted the salt MacGregor did the same, and with a shout thumped the shaikh on the back. The others standing around asked the shaikh, "What is it?" "It is salt," he answered. At that they all laughed for they realized that since MacGregor and the shaikh had tasted salt together in the shaikh's tent they were bound by traditional ties of friendship. MacGregor had won the day and, amid much cheering, he was allowed to paddle off.

While navigating the Kishon River, one of the small streams which empty into the Mediterranean (at a point that was then in north Palestine and is now in Israel), MacGregor had another exciting experience.

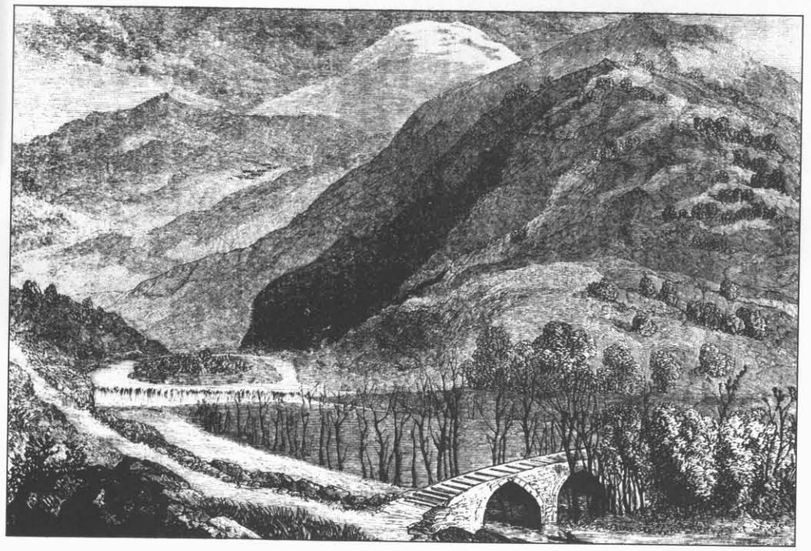
After a night's camp at the base of Mt. Carmel, he set off through lonely channels in which there was no sign of man or beast. Rank grasses waved on both sides, and wild ducks and herons flew down wind above him. Around noon the weather cleared and MacGregor came to a stretch of open water. It was time to eat. He spread his food out and, lolling in the well of the canoe, began to eat. It would have been impossible to land on the Kishon's steep banks.

Just as MacGregor was dipping his drinking can over the side of the canoe he heard a queer noise, "a measured breathing, gurgling, hissing sound." He turned quietly around to look. Within a foot of his paddle he saw the nose and mouth of a crocodile! Its nose was grey, smooth and round, and stuck straight out of the water, and from its wide open mouth water gurgled in and out. What to do? Any sudden move might alarm the creature and with one lash of its tail it could severely damage the Rob Roy.



The New-found Mouth of Jordan.

Quietly rising from his reclining position MacGregor grabbed the paddle and cautiously dipped its blade into the water. Immediately the nose and mouth disappeared. With one stroke MacGregor sent the canoe out into midstream. His curiosity was aroused, however, and he paddled close to shore to examine carefully the muddy bank. Sure enough he saw the unmistakable footprints of a crocodile, similar to the impression made by a human hand with wrist lowered and fingers bent. He had seen them on the Nile.



Source of the Jordan, near Hasbeya.

MacGregor ran the canoe onto the bank in order to make a sketch of the footprints. Suddenly he felt something hard under the boat, a bump, bump, bump right under his seat; the crocodile was as curious about him as he was about the crocodile. MacGregor had seen enough. He "fled from the spot at top speed."

(Inquiries later proved that the presence of crocodiles on the Kishon River is not unlikely. They had been reported on the Zerka River nearby and the higher tributaries of these two rivers are only five miles apart. MacGregor had inadvertantly paddled on to one of the least known wonders of the Holy Land.)

One last view of this intrepid Scotsman. In Alexandria, Egypt, on his way home to England, his ship passed the royal yacht with the Prince of Wales on board. While the captain held the ship MacGregor couldn't resist launching the Rob Roy in the open sea to salute the royal party. The crew of the royal yacht clustered thick in the rigging and cheered the tiny craft. "Turn now before the wind," they cried, "and show how you can go." And go he did, to explore, write his books, and achieve a modest immortality. With his pen, pencil and paddle he left an enchanting record.

John Brinton, whose hobby is collecting old books, frequently contributes articles on forgotten but fascinating personalities in Middle East history.

FAYROUZ ON TOUR

STORY AND PHOTOGRAPHS
BY WILLIAM TRACY

"I must say... that Fayrouz is an exceptional artist, exceptionally gifted, and inhabited by the soul of the poets of her race. I believe I would have felt that even if I had not felt the vibrations around me of the thousands of Arabs who were not just applauding a star."

—La Presse, Montreal

From my hotel in Houston I had telephoned an old friend from the Middle East in New York. "I have tickets to hear Fayrouz tonight," I said. "Don't you wish you could come along?"

"Not at all," my friend replied. "I saw her here last week." Fayrouz—Lebanon's hauntingly intense singer—was on tour.

Last fall, Fayrouz, accompanied by a full orchestra and a folklore troupe of 30 singers and dancers, made an 11-city concert swing through Canada and the United States. Everywhere, from Carnegie Hall in New York to Shrine Civic Auditorium in Los Angeles, from Houston to Montreal, she and the troupe were acclaimed—and not, as might be suspected, solely because something like half of the overflow audiences were usually Lebanese-Americans and Arab students. One soft-drink executive sitting next to me in Houston's posh Jesse Jones Hall exclaimed, "I just had a free night from our regional sales conference and wandered in here—but this is really something to write home about."

Critics in the U.S. press seemed to agree. "An Arabic Edith Piaf," wrote the *Boston Globe*. "A younger and smaller Dietrich, very straight, very solemn and, when the mood is on, impassioned," said the *Boston Record-American*.

This was not Fayrouz's first overseas tour. She had sung in Royal Albert Hall in London and enthralled audiences in Brazil and Argentina. But never before had she received a more enthusiastic reception—even in the Arab world, where she has been a stage, movie and recording star for 15 years.

Born Nouhad Haddad, Fayrouz (from the Persian for "turquoise") began her rapid rise to fame in the late 1950's when, after studying at the Lebanese Conservatory of Music, she joined forces with Assi and Mansour Rahbani, a composing team specializing in marrying traditional eastern themes to modern western orchestration. And Fayrouz's unique style suited their music perfectly. Assi, in fact, found his singing star so especially perfect that he soon married her.

Of the three leading female Arab vocalists Fayrouz is by far the easiest for a western listener to understand and appreciate. Her fine, clear voice places her somewhere between the classic improvisation of Egyptian singer Oum Koulsoum and the torch-song throatiness of Lebanon's Sabah. As the *Globe* said, an Arabic Piaf.

Despite this background Fayrouz is surprisingly stiff on stage. During her U.S. tour, critics almost unanimously commented on her "aloof, chaste" bearing. One said that "you cannot imagine her laughing...her voice conveys all the emotion."

In the lobby of their Houston motel, I asked tour manager Sabry Sharif, choreographer Abdel Halim Caracalla and designer Jean-Pierre Delifer to tell me about the production. The consensus was that for the U.S. tour costumes and choreography

were very important. "Without bulky sets, costumes have to establish mood, and because the songs are in Arabic, the costumes also have to help tell the story."

In a nearby circle Joseph Chahine of the Voice of the Orient record company, who had come along to record the tour for an album called *Fayrouz in America*, was talking to the four-man movie team sent along by the United States Information Agency to produce a color documentary on the tour which would be distributed throughout the Arab world. The cameraman was waiting for a light rain to let up to film a bus-load of the enthusiastic young singers and dancers (mostly students, secretaries and gym teachers when not performing) as they played tourist at Houston's N.A.S.A. space complex. Although rehearsals necessarily filled much of the tight schedule, the troupe was obviously enjoying its whirlwind trip across the U.S.A.

Then Fayrouz came in, relaxed after a quick dash through a nearby shopping mall, and I asked what had impressed her most in the United States.

"Cities today look much alike anywhere in the world," she replied, "but I'm pleased by how gardens and lawns surround houses in American suburbs." Then she went off to her room to rest for her performance and I talked for a while with pretty Violette Yacoub, driving force behind the Forum for Arab Art and Culture, the non-profit San Francisco-based student group which had sponsored and organized Fayrouz's U.S. tour.

"We began this whole operation on a shoestring," she told me. "But from the beginning we have insisted on quality. Arab music deserves a proper hearing in this country, so we brought the best star, backed by the best troupe, and we have reserved the most prestigious hall available in each city for gala performances. It's the first time the American public has had a real exposure to the Arabs' rich cultural heritage and it's a great success. We're going to meet our expenses and even offer some help to Palestinian schools and orphanages."

I told Mrs. Yacoub that I gathered that the tour had also been a welcome shot in the arm for the morale of many Americans of Arab origin. She showed me some clippings. "There was something moving about the communication between artist and audience," *The Christian Science Monitor* wrote of the Boston performance, "the shared national pride and nostalgia of an ethnic group so often misunderstood and underrated in the United States." From Hollywood, the *Star News and Pictorial*, a monthly national newspaper for Arabic-speaking Americans, editorialized on the tour, "We know of no event that has had so great an impact... on our communities."

That night Fayrouz and the folklore company were booked into the glittering Jesse H. Jones Hall for the Performing Arts, a five-year-old $7.4 million showcase. The audience, which had paid as high as $50 each for benefit tickets, was fashionably dressed and in a festive mood. "On an emotional high from start to finish," said one local paper the next day. Many had driven four hours or more from Austin and Dallas.

They were glad they had. The program, especially tailored for America's restless, TV-honed viewers, was, according to one critic, "taut, fast, professional," and included hymns in Aramaic, the language spoken by Jesus, and a composition with lyrics from Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet*.

When it was all over Fayrouz was showered with roses and a spokesman read a congratulatory telegram from Lebanese-American Danny Thomas which brought the audience to its feet cheering. "I'll tell you one thing," a socialite Houston matron said to me later in the plush lobby. "This hall has not seen an audience show so much natural enthusiasm and spontaneity since it opened."

Several weeks later I had a letter from another old Middle East friend in San Francisco. "Fayrouz was in town and I was able to get tickets for the concert," my friend wrote. "Don't you wish you could have heard her?"

William Tracy is Assistant Editor of Aramco World.