

Mediterranean

March 29, 1925

Two o'clock P.M.

Dear Mother,

This is going to be a terrible ordeal. Algiers is a large city and has many many interesting things in it to see but whether it has interesting things to tell about or not is quite a different matter.

In the first place we landed on Algerian soil about nine o'clock. As before we hired a carriage first thing and began riding through the streets. We drove through a beautiful residential section filled with gardens and orchards and then we began climbing. Up and up the horses pulled until we had come out ^{to} the edge of a great high hill from which we could view the whole city. It was very picturesque. The high white buildings with their tile roofs and many of them with domes, the Mohammedan Mosque with their tall minarets, the gardens and parks scattered here and there over the city all with the harbor in the background.

was indeed a pretty sight - beautiful and giving no hint of the squaller below.

As we came down from the hill we drove through the Jardin d'Arsei which is equaled by only two other gardens in Europe. For any one interested in horticulture this is a life's study in this garden. The things most interesting to me were the huge bamboo tree (I picked off a little piece of the bark just for fun), the vines covered with brilliant flowers a kind of purple but with too much red in them to be a real purple and the lemon tree. This must be near the season for the lemons in Algiers for they were of full size but not quite yellow enough to be ripe. In the garden in place of the winding paths that I spoke of on the island were long aisles of palm trees and very high trees that looked like pictures I have seen of coconut trees. Every where were date trees but the dates were not ripe. They just looked like huge bunches of green grapes hanging from the tops of palm trees. It was all very interesting and very beautiful. There was a fountain in the garden and a pond of clear water.

③ Perhaps more interesting but much less beautiful was the fold section of the city. After lunch we hired a guide for the afternoon to take us through this Mohammedan district. Every where you could see men clearing the streets but you were always conscious of the need for such an act and some how the clearing did not seem to help. The buildings, the streets, the people, everything looked exactly as I had imagined one of these foreign and Arabian cities would look like only worse. There is a perfect maze of streets, narrow, dirty and dark, streets none of them very long, all of them paved with cobble stones and all of them filled with ragged beggars incredibly ugly and the more repulsive when you realize that in side that bundle of rags is something human. Street after street like this we walked through, I with my nose buried in Buddy's handkerchief - I had lost my own somewhere in the scuffle - and the others laughing at me for they seemed so interested

⑥ all go in ^{the} narrow space which is called la Rue (the street). French is the main language spoken but many of them speak Italian. There are the cutest little donkeys in this place you could ever see. They are usually carrying bundles bigger than themselves.

Well, the next thing we came to was, to me, the most interesting of the whole trip in Algiers. We squeezed through a very narrow door in one of the buildings and found inside a dark, dingy, dirty, smelly room filled with little boys sitting around on the floor and chanting the Koran. They were having the time of their lives. I was reminded of the little kids in the Bible School - how they loved to let loose sometimes and just yell. Well that's exactly what these little kids (five or six years old) were doing - just yelling the Koran and grinning from ear to ear. Their teacher was about seventeen years old - a fine looking boy. He went around with a big whip and got after any who weren't chanting

⑦ their lesson right.

These children, as all Mohammedans wore the funny little red caps just like the one on that little celluloid doll that Hutch gave me and called the Persian Turkman. Everywhere through out the city you see men and boys with either these red caps or turbans made of rags wound about their head. They all wear the winding robes like you see in the Bible pictures. The beggars usually have nothing but burlap clothes plus a few odd pieces of rag for pantaloons. The women look very much as though they had dressed up in a sheet for Halloween. The sheet usually comes down to their eye brows in the front and drapes around their chin hanging all around them in folds. They wear long bloomers always white but usually dirty. Each pant leg is big enough to make us a pleated skirt. These reach their

ankles. A veil is fastened across the ⁽⁸⁾
top of their nose and hangs down about
five inches below their chin. I don't
know how they keep this on but I
know that it's a big help to tourists
for I don't imagine there are very
many of them that would be at all
pleasing to look upon. The little you
can see of them has a very haggard
appearance and you are glad that
the veil is fastened firmly. Twice
I saw a couple of pretty brown eyes
that looked youthful and I would
like to have seen beneath the veil
but only twice the whole day.

The children are usually dirty
but always cute. They are taught,
however, from baby hood to big
and believe me some of them make
very good beggars. When they
smile up at you it is all you can
do to keep from bankrupting
yourself. They smile with their
lips but a queer, solemn look
which they all have never seems
to leave their whitful brown

than ever. Having safely passed the
dark vestibule I found myself in
a beautiful Moorish court. There
was a fountain in the center, the fountains
and walls were all of white marble
a sweet odor of soap filled the
place and I might add was very
welcome. Everything was spotlessly
clean. At one corner of the court was
a stair way that wound up and up
for four or five stories. At each
story was a balcony. We climbed
up to the top. Here we could overlook
the city. It looked from here just a
mass of buildings. They were so close
together that you could not see a single
street. We took long deep breaths
of the pure air and then returned
reluctantly to the dingy street. Again
we started down the middle of the way.
There are no side walks in this part
of the city because there is no room for
them. The cobble stones are laid right
up to the house and the donkeys
and beggars, the children and mules

(10) The description one I will begin to write you a letter. In the first place I hope this finds you well - all of you. I am in splendid health. I do my daily dozen when I get up in time, eat five meals a day and play schuffle board for outdoor exercise every day. I'm getting fat too but my cheeks are not as pink yet as my husband's.

We four are all having a great time together and gradually by degrees (as it were) I am getting acquainted with Harriet. She told me yesterday to call her Harry. She likes it. Harriet has more fun in her than I thought she had at first. Every once in a while she gets a crazy streak and when she does she reminds me for all the world of aunt Mary.

Having given you a rest I will return to Algiers for it so much on my mind I can hardly write anything else. We visited a

(11) mosque in the afternoon where the Mohammedan men were kneeling in prayer and bumping their heads on the floor while that priest yelled out in a shrill meaningless monotone (as Dutch put it) the words of the Koran.

We stood in the old slave market where the pirates bought and sold Christians and we visited museums where old relics from the pirate days are kept. It was thrilling but the whole city with all its beauty, with all its squalor is fascinating because of the Arabs from the desert that you see in the market in the coffee house etc and because of the striking contrasts you find everywhere. In one shop you will see a show window that is absolutely modern American and on the next door step sits an old Mohammedan with his turban

and flowing robes that looks like (12)
the centurion ^{right after} ~~the~~ Christ. The
city is filled with anachronisms of
this nature. Little ragged boys
with their heads tied up showing
some order of Mohammedans, playing
hopscotch with the same diagram
that our little American boys and
girls use.

The most pathetic thing in all
of our journey is the life that these folks
lead. The men always loafing,
arguing, bickering, swearing, the
women always working. Little
boys out loafing or begging, little
girls in rag shops learning a trade.

Mother, if you think any of the
description I send you could ever be of any
use to me in talks when I come back
I wish you would keep them for me. If
you don't think so throw them out.

Much love to you and Daddy
and tell Judy I think I'll be writing a
letter to Jack soon. I'll send my love
to her with that.

Teddy.