

Paul PALMER

REMINISCENCES OF MY LIFE.

Set down in February 1933

Even though time has quickly passed, the memory remains,
like a bright rainbow shining above dark clouds.

Notes.

Recently, in a sleepless night, several events from my life came to me, and episodes of my past flashed through my mind as if on a film screen.

Since the experiences and events were so clear in my mind, I felt a desire to write them down, not for the use and benefit of those people who cannot have any interest in me, but for personal reflection, identifying and examining myself to determine whether I had fulfilled my role in life. God granted me the favour of seeing much of the world and I did full honour to my name "the Palmer" i.e. the pilgrim or the wanderer. Even now a drop of gipsy blood still flows in me, perhaps, inherited from one of my ancestors, whose pedigree can be traced back to the year 1640?

I was born on the 28th of April 1855 in Zion, Jerusalem, the Holy City, as the second child of my parents. I was followed by four other brothers and sisters. My parents were very pious and god fearing people and at that time and for many years afterwards my good father was headmaster and director of the school for orphans, which had been founded by Bishop Gobat and therefore called Bishop Gobat's School. We spent our childhood with the children of the owner of our house, who lived on the floor below ours and we were all healthy and vigorous, rough and high spirited, afraid of nothing. We would leap upon our horses and ride away at a gallop. We climbed up impossible paths and walls. We also played many pranks, for some of which we were punished by our stern but just father. Our dear mother was also stern but full of goodness and love for all of us and she consoled us again and again for our pain. We were very young when we went to our father's school, together with the orphan boys, and there we were taught all subjects in English. Outside the school, German, French and Arabic were also spoken, so we learnt several languages at the same time. On free afternoons when there was no school we took long walks during which our father imparted to us some knowledge of animals, flowers and stones. Then each month there was one day totally free. This day we used for walking to Artas where our landlord owned a small estate. There we strolled in the gardens, ate the ripe fruits from the trees and at lunchtime we enjoyed a fine lamb which was killed and roasted with rice in our presence. We were also allowed to bathe in the spring and how beautiful, then was the ride home. So we spent our days joyful and without sorrow alternating between school and being free with nature, until my parents decided that my dear mother should take us to spend some time in her home town of Payerne. This is a town in the French-speaking part of Switzerland and where my mother's brothers were living. My dear father saw us to Jaffa and onto the steamer and after a calm passage we arrived safely at Trieste. From there we went partly by train, partly by bus until we arrived safely in Payerne where our cousins gazed at us as if we were half-savages. One of our uncles gave up some rooms for us in the back yard and we were housed there for approximately one and a half years. On our arrival, I was aged eight

and started attending the College where I had to learn French diligently. All the other subjects were taught in French too. I was also called up for youth military service there ("Jugendwehr") and all the students had to appear each Saturday afternoon, bright and shining in their uniform, and we were drilled for some hours on the meadow outside the town. Once in Lausanne there was a meeting of the young people of the Kanton who did military service ("Jugendwehrleute"). We went too and were billeted there. We were exercised for several days and a mock guerrilla warfare was arranged. After the manoeuvres, there was a military parade and then we were dismissed. We returned to Payerne partly by train and partly on foot. In the school-holidays we went to the hay and potato-harvest with our cousins and often went bathing in the river thereby learning to swim well. In winter-time we went sledging or ice-skating and in the evenings we all lay around the huge tiled stove playing games or telling stories. So our life passed, free from cares between cheerfulness and earnestness until my dear father came to take my mother and younger sisters and brothers back to Jerusalem. However, my oldest sister was to stay for some time more in Payerne and I was to go to the Realschule in Esslingen. This place in Wuerttemberg was probably chosen by my father because one of his brothers lived there and also the school was recognized as a good one. My father introduced me to the teacher with whom I was to have board and lodging. Even today I remember rushing into a corner after my father's farewell and weeping bitterly - it was the first time that I was seized with homesickness. But after dinner all the boys (there were six of us) were put to bed and although I still sobbed a bit, the next morning all the tears were dry. I went along to the school where all the other children gazed at me, for I had to say to everybody that I came from Jerusalem. I was given a seat in the last row. We had to write from dictation and because I had almost forgotten the German language I made so many mistakes that the teacher left sitting me on that spot. However, after some weeks I began to remember and in a bound became the fifth and later on even the first of the 45 students in the weekly placing. These places I kept right until leaving the Realschule. In class, the emphasis was on work and I applied myself zealously. Sometimes it was difficult to discipline myself

and to suppress all the jokes I had in mind, for I was tall and vigorous and used to an independent life. Any spare-time I had and especially the long school-holidays were spent with my relatives who owned a mill. I stayed there and played with my cousins who were of the same age. We gadded about in the mill, raised sacks of flour on the elevator, built big underground caves between the stored sacks of flour, played many games with the neighbour's children and went with the loads of sacks of flour to the railway station. In doing this I was always allowed to drive the coach. It was always a great joy for me, when, in the summer evenings, I was allowed to take the horses to the river for watering and bathing. Afterwards there was a little extra gallop for me. Sometimes on my free afternoon, I went to visit my aunt and she always filled my bags with various nice things to take back. I was allowed to go into her beautiful garden and to eat as much as I liked of all the nice fruits. I particularly liked to do this as it complemented the not too sumptuous meals of the boarding-house. As at school work so also at playing games, I always was one of the first and strongest and I could always hold my own.

When I was fourteen years old, I was confirmed and given benediction together with my cousins. Soon after this I took the entrance-examination for the Oberrealschule in which I was successful being placed among the top students. But I did not attend this school after all, on the contrary, I was sent to another uncle in Stuttgart who was a building contractor and had moved there after finishing work on the Brennerpass railway line in Tyrol. Without being consulted and knowing it and without having any special inclination for it, I was induced to learn the building trade. Perhaps the reason was that I had some ability in mathematics and drawing and though I had dreamed of long journeys through the world and felt a strong inclination for becoming a seaman, I did not resist the decision made by my parents and relatives. I attended the building trade school and passed by working hard throughout the winter semester. As it was the custom of that time I worked during summer on a building-site as a stone-mason and brick-layer to gain practical experiences. This activity also brought me some small earnings, which I could use in winter as pocket money, as I received free board, lodging, clothes, school etc. from my uncle who was a wealthy man.

So I stayed in Stuttgart until I had finished my studies. This was also the time (1870/71) of the war against France, with all of its episodes and, following the great victories, the conclusion of peace at Versailles. Quite often I was seized with the idea to take part by applying as volunteer for fighting on land or sea, but since I was not of full age my uncle's prohibition prevented my volunteering. After finishing all the semesters successfully I wanted to become independent, so that from now on I did not have to rely on the favours of my uncle. By accident I saw an advertisement for a building assistant for the construction of the Waldshut-Stuehlingen railway line. I applied for this job and after having shown my qualifications, I was appointed to my first position. However, I did not work there for very long because I was suddenly seized by the wish to travel. I went to Zurich where I accidentally met a schoolfellow who was working there during the summer. I joined him and we went together on the "Waltz". We worked here and there for some weeks till the beginning of winter in which time we had arrived at a small township near Romannshorn. There a master engaged us but soon after he stopped getting commissions. He was a man of good nature and introduced us to a brewer for whom we sawed small pieces of ice out of the Bodensee for a small payment and some beer. But this work was soon too cold for us and so we travelled back to Stuttgart. There I was told by my uncle that one of his friends had undertaken to complete the building of the Winterthur-Singen railway line and as a result of his intervention I was employed as a building-assistant and started working. Now, for the first time, I was involved in doing drawings, later on I did some surveying and finally I got to supervise the building of a large bridge. Meanwhile (1875) I had received the call-up papers for the army and returned to my father's birthplace. I was considered to be fit for active service but was lucky to draw a high number which set me free from military service. After visiting my relatives in Stuttgart for a short time I returned to the building-site and stayed there until all the works were finished.

In the meantime I had grown tall and strong and noticed that girls began to take an interest in me. However, the blood of the gipsy and wanderer reappeared and I freed myself to wander carefree and

light-hearted through the world, finally arriving in Basel. There I read in a newspaper about the building of a railway line which would go through Payerne, my mother's birthplace and where I went to school between the ages of eight and ten. I asked my relatives there for information and got the message that I could possibly get a job from a building contractor in Payerne. I packed up, went there and began working immediately on arrival. I worked out the drawings for the contractor and was occupied on the building-sites of the stations. After six months I was promoted to the general board of directors and took over the supervision of the stations between Murten and Bern. I stayed there until all the work was completed and the various sections had been set in operation. The engineer of the section employed me as a secretary and because Payerne was the centre of the section, I moved to the office there where I stayed for some years. My chief spent most of his time on the track, but he placed his trust in me and left me all of the office work. Because I did not have much work to do, I had to put my excess energy somewhere as I did not like to be idle. I started to occupy myself with various agricultural projects. I lived in a farmer's house opposite the station with other boarders, mostly artisans, among whom I played the first fiddle as intellectual. Very often I helped the farmer in his work. I learnt ploughing and mowing and ever took part in bringing in the harvest. Often I drove the workmen out to their working place at four o'clock in the morning or brought them their meal at lunchtime. I also helped with making hay and harvesting potatoes and other crops. In the winter evenings we sat in the big living-room near the warm stove and everybody got a bag of nuts which had to be cracked or apples to be peeled or leaves of tobacco to string and hang up for drying. While doing this we laughed, joked, flirted and sang. On other times, a glass of wine was drunk and some evening was devoted to gaiety. I quickly learnt dancing with the landlady and whenever we heard the sound of the harmonica we immediately started dancing, whether the beat was right or wrong did not matter. When there was no work to do out in the fields I often got the brown horse out of the stable, harnessed it to light carriage or saddled it and drove or rode alone through field and forest. But sometimes I also went with a bigger party to places nearby to attend a church festival or

harvest-thanksgiving, at which there was hearty dancing and the whole party returned joyous and merry.

Of course, I always gave preference to my tasks at the office and never neglected them; because I worked quickly they were done in no time, but really there was not much to do and I had plenty of spare time to do other things especially to enlarge my store of agricultural knowledge, I laid out a nice vegetable garden for myself and the masters and employees of the stations relished the salad made from my big black radishes served with a glass of wine. Now and then, when the farmer's wife was in the right mood, she baked a dripping-cake for us which we really liked if eaten warm. Often I lay in the grass under the big walnut-tree and read stories about travelling and adventures until it seized me again. I would run to the stable, get the brown horse out, saddle up and ride away at full gallop.

The period between 1876-1878, nearly three years, was a beautiful, golden time in the blessed Payerne, a time in which I enjoyed wonderful hours beside the performance of my duty. All of the people were very friendly towards me, but I did not visit my relatives very often, because they always tried to take me under their wing and to re-educate me. I preferred my independence to contact with them. After these years full of happiness and joy I was offered the position of a station-master in another part of the country, an appointment in which my chief certainly played a part, So I went my way, certainly proud of the position to come, but also sad that I had to take leave of my friends. I was 23 when, in autumn 1878, I arrived at my new post in Vevey. I arrived, (as duly appointed station-master with the right to a pension) - just at the time of the grape harvest. I was installed by my present chief and because I had already performed a similar duty sometimes in Payerne I was quick to learn and readily settled down into my new situation. My tasks consisted of daily inspection of a 25km section of track and of directing the men in any work required in one of the most beautiful regions of Switzerland at the Genfersee. Lausanne was the starting-point, Vevey the centre and Ville-Neuve the end of the section. I quickly became known to the workmen and the

officials of the stations and I arranged my work in such a way that I was able to do it conscientiously but with little effort in the shortest time possible. At the station of Vevey I had an office and every day I visited one or other part of my section by train and came back over the same part on foot. In this way I did my checks and ordered what was necessary. But soon I found I had much spare-time which I used for learning telegraphy and doing other tasks. Often I obtained a free hour for one or other comrade by doing his work at the telegraph-station or ticket-office or I sat at his table and did the book-keeping or calculations. Occasionally I rode on the locomotives and took over the controls; the passengers having no idea who was driving them. But I can say that no accident occurred which could have been due to any negligence of mine and I always brought the travellers safely to their destination. When, in winter, the snow was lying as high as a house in the cuttings of the section, blocking the traffic, I got the snow-plough out of the shed, in which it was stored during the summer and cleaned the track. Sometimes the plough got stuck in the snow and I had to quickly fetch the workmen with their snow-shovel, whether it was day or night. Also on night a storm had washed away a large part of the embankment and when the train crossed a mail-coach was thrown into the lake. There was intensive work to do lasting for months and our own personnel together with borrowed workmen repaired all the retaining walls, embankments and the entire section itself. But after this there were again more restful times and I had 14 days holiday with a free ticket which I used for travelling through Switzerland. I stopped here and there to see the sights or for entertainment and I rode on a steamer over the blue waves of the Genfersee to Calvine with a merry party. We went to a shooting match, where I also tried shooting at the target and to a church festival. I went to Payerne to see my friends who I had not forgotten, stayed there for a Sunday and we recalled old times.

I also want to mention a custom which existed at that time and probably I is still common today. In the middle of my section there was a small farmstead which belonged to some vine-growers to which I was often invited when on patrol. Some of the men and I were called down to the cellar which was filled with big wine-casks. All the participants

gathered round a big cask, the host took a glass, filled it at a small tap, drained the glass, filled it again and passed it on to the next person, and then to the next again and so on until the glass had been circulated three, four or five or even more times. Finally the "standing session" was put to an end and everybody went back to his work. During these sessions there was often plenty of excitement, as we were talking and complaining about many things, In Montreux I sometimes tried my fortune at the "petit chevaux" and now and then I succeeded in winning a few Franks from the bank, The risk was not great and the pool only one Frank, But if I had a bad day, then I soon stopped playing.

Each year, a stocktaking of the whole line was carried out. Soon after commencing my job in Vevey I was ordered to do the stocktaking for one district. It seemed that I did my task satisfactorily, because I had to do it every year after that. Even this task was a delight and I enjoyed going over the section by trolley or on foot taking stock of each depot. I wandered along the entire railway line from Genf to Bern, from Vallorbes on the French border to Brigue near the Simplontunnel and from Lausanne to Freiburg via Payerne - in a word, I travelled throughout the whole western part of Switzerland and in doing this I was able to see many beautiful and charming places. But it was nice in another respect too, for I got extra money for this stock-taking. That was very welcome to me, all the more as each time the work took about 14 days.

So I spent my time doing my duty earnestly and enjoying merry parties. But one cannot bear either constant happiness nor misfortune for too long. I felt inclined to wander again and since I already had been staying for six years in Vevey, I suddenly gave notice, concisely and without giving any reasons. I took leave of my chief who was very unwilling to let me go. He gave me an excellent reference and then I left beautiful Vevey behind, a place which had become very dear to me and where I saw and did many fine things which I have clearly in my mind till this day. In my decision to leave, only the call of the open was speaking and I carelessly abandoned myself to my fate. I did not look for another post at all, but was instantly on the road. Luckily

for me, my sister lived for some time with her children in Morges. Previously she had stayed behind in Payerne, but soon returned to Jerusalem and got married there to an English captain who later became a general. Morges was close to Lausanne and so I went there and stayed for some time, strolling around with my niece and nephews and taking trips of various lengths: In doing this I spent a lot of time with the children, helping them with their school-exercises and playing with them. I often went to the station to visit the employees with whom I made friends and to bear the well-known tumult of the "cheminaux".

One fine day in March 1885 I received a message from my parents inviting me to come to Jerusalem and at the same time sending me the money I needed for the journey. After making all the necessary arrangements, I took leave of my sister and her children, took the train to Genf, then to the Riviera and finally to the magnificent lagoon-city of Venice. I went sightseeing there, riding a boat in the canals. The next day I got on the steamer which took me to Jaffa via Trieste, Brindisi and Alexandria. There my brother was waiting for me and on horseback, pacing or riding at a trot or sometimes at a gallop we journeyed to the Holy City of Jerusalem, my old Zion, There I found my dear parents well and in good health. My father was still teaching at the school. How many things had happened here in the 23 years between my departure from Jerusalem as a seven year old boy and my return!

I had a rest for some weeks which I used to bring back memories, to inspect all the sights and innovations and to roam through the whole of Jerusalem. I also took a three day trip to Jericho, to the Dead Sea and the Jordan, where I had a bath. After this rest, I returned to work and initially gave drawing lessons for the older students at my father's school and taught conversational English to other classes. After some surveying I was soon entrusted with my first real piece of work - to build the church and the school for the Arabic-Protestant community in Beit-Dschala. This was soon followed the order to build the school and church in Bethlehem. Soon I was received building orders one after another, partly from private people, partly from authorities, so that I had plenty to do for many years. I enjoyed working independently. I built dwellings and churches and again did surveying, I also worked on

the railway-line from Jaffa to Jerusalem and later undertook the building of two bridges on a small allotment at my own risk.

Soon after my arrival in Jerusalem, I made friends with some members of the German-Protestant Community, In particular, there was a club formed by some of the young, like-minded people of my age, some of whom were teachers and merchants. We organized chess-playing and reading-evenings, became members of the German and choral societies and after the troubles and labour of the day, we often came together to spend entertaining and pleasant evenings, We also took to wandering and roaming about in the surrounds of Jerusalem and inspected many a hill and ruin. Many weekends were also spent in Jericho or at the Dead Sea and the Jordan and after climbing the "Temptation Mountain" we went bathing there or at the Eliza Spring, We also hunted partridges in the wheat fields, the wheat being as tall as a man.

And so many years passed in serious work, in recreation and cheerfulness, In the meantime I had married a young lady, the sister of my brother's wife, and become the father of four children. One of them had a twin-sister who died at the age of four. Today my eldest son is district-engineer and employed in Amman at the Transjordanian government office which is responsible for all public affairs. He is married and has two children, the younger one being born in December 1931 and the eldest son of our family. Two of my daughters are living here in Jerusalem, where their husbands are employed, I often meet them and visit their houses. The twin-daughter is married to an engineer in Stuttgart and has three sons. Apart from this daughter, who has to suffer want in Germany, we are all quite well and I am able to enjoy my grandchildren. My wife was a dear and faithful companion to me and we shared joy and sorrows honestly through good and bad days. But unfortunately she died much too early on the 13th of July soon after our last return from Germany as a result of malnourishment during the world-war. We mourned for her deeply and now she is lying at Zion.

In addition to my business, I had started a travel agency together with a comrade, which I ran for some years. Therefore I once again had the opportunity to travel to Trieste and to go through Italy

to Switzerland and then to my old Stuttgart, where I again met some of my relatives and friends. When in 1898 the German Emperor was coming to the consecration of the Erlöserkirche (Church of Our Saviour) - on which I had worked for some years - we chartered a ship in Genoa, so that all the travellers who had booked with us could come to Jerusalem to attend this ceremony. The dedication of the orphanage which I had built for the Armenian-Protestant children in Bethlehem by the Empress was also held at that time.

Mister Groth, a master-builder who had come to Jerusalem to work on the building of the Church of our Saviour with me, also loved roaming. We each had our own horses and therefore took frequent rides, inspected many a ruin, hill and mountain and had many adventures. Once we rode to "es Salt", where I had to complete a building for the English Missionary Society. On the way there it was raining a little and after crossing the river Jordan we noticed that the water level of the creek close by had increased. But we hoped when returning after three days to be able to cross the creek easily. We were both astonished and frightened when we saw, that even the river Jordan had overflowed its banks and had joined with the creek. They flooded an area about two kilometers square and formed one large lake. We had to camp in the open air at the edge of the water and had to join a couple of Bedouins who had been on the way to Jerusalem with loads of wheat. They also had been stranded by the water. Now we became acquainted with life in the wilderness. It was raining incessantly day and night and we had absolutely no shelter other than a few trees. We dragged the huge trunks of trees felled by the storm to our camp. We lit them at one end and so they pushed further and further into the fire. We had nearly no provisions with us, because we had certainly not expected a delay of several days. The little we had with us was soon eaten up and after the second day we had to be satisfied with the raw wheat of the Bedouins toasted in the fire. That was our only food until on the fifth day when one of the people brought some flour from a mill about five kilometers away and baked some bread for us. Meanwhile some other people came and joined us, Arabs who had been on the way to the Holy City too, bringing sacks of corn and other goods with them. Soon we were a caravan of 25-30 people. The water still did not decrease, despite our making enact and frequent observations, until finally, on the seventh day, the water began to recede. Now we were able to approach the bridge and try to make it passable. There were also some people coming

from the other bank wading across the river up to their stomachs and even higher. Suddenly a man appeared with a large haversack full of food on his back which he gave to us. We shared the food fairly among our fellow-sufferers and after having fasted for seven days we certainly enjoyed it. We were very grateful to the donor, one of my workmen and a good-hearted fellow. He had come totally on his own initiative to find and to help us. As soon as the last plank of the bridge had been put in its proper place. We could pass across with our horses. We still had to pay a fee to the watchman of the bridge, although in reality we ourselves had repaired the crossing. But we did not mind, we only wanted to get away from the water. We leaped on our wheat-fed and well-rested horses and rode at full gallop a distance of five kilometers to Jericho, where we arrived with torn clothes and boots and some tiny fellow-lodgers. The hotel keeper who was a friend of ours served us a glass of Champagne and invited us for a meal - an invitation which we did not accept, because we were in a hurry. We wanted to get home as soon as possible to reassure our dear relatives. They had been very worried about us, because the rumour was abroad that we had been drowned in the Jordan. But we returned to our family well and in good health and were warmly received. Staying in the moist plain of the river Jordan and the hardship suffered there had not harmed us and after a days rest we went back to our work at the church, greeted happily by all of our workmen.

During our involuntary stay at the Jordan we were told by some Arabs of Madeba that a beautiful mosaic-map of Palestine had been found while they were flooring the new Greek church. We decided to ride to Madeba at the first opportunity and to inspect this mosaic-map, to sketch it or to take some photographs. But, when we got there we could not get a true picture. Later, by accident, two painters were staying in Jerusalem and I rode with them to Madeba.

Working for several days, I made a drawing of the mosaic-map, I painted the exact colours of each of the stones and a copy of the original painting will still be obtainable from the Society of The German League for Exploration of Palestine (Gesellschaft des deutschen Vereins zur Erforschung Palästinas).

The greatest highlight of all of our trips was the journey to Petra which we both made with our servants and some stable-boys. It was a fairly dangerous trip at that time and we were almost the first Europeans to have visited there in a very long time. We crossed the Jordan, the river which formerly had stopped us for such a long time and now was flowing like a guiltless creek, and reached Madeba and Kerak. In Kerak we visited the governor who we had told of our destination and he sent four horsemen with us to give us protection. The following day we rode to Schobak. There the officer of the Circassians welcomed us very warmly and for our evening entertainment organized with his horsemen the performance of a true Circassian dance, accompanied by the sounds of a harmonica. The next day we arrived at Tafileh, passed the "Moses Springs" and reached Eldsche. From there went through the "Sik", the very narrow rock walled entrance to Petra, the rose-red city, once the capital of the Nabatians, now the city of the dead.

We pitched our tent at a spot in the middle of the town and for some days travelled from one rock-tomb and pyramid to another. The facades of the tombs are splendidly carved into the red, yellow, blue and violet rocks and show several styles of architecture. The tombs themselves are simple, square chambers. Amongst innumerable tombs we saw the so-called treasury of the Pharaoh and the tomb which contains the colossal urn, also the Corinthian and the three-storied tomb. We saw the ruins of the Amphitheatre, a bridge and a temple, the ruins of the former palace and also, high up on the mountain the so-called "Deir" (monastery) with its magnificent facade which you can only get to by going over steps carved into the rock. After spending five days among the graves, inspecting and sketching them and taking photographs, we left Petra and rode back through the "Sik" and via Eldsche to Tafileh. There we dismissed our four loyal companions who had conveyed us safely and performed many a brave riding-feat.

At our own risk we chose another way home via Ghor es Safi at the outermost shore of the Dead Sea, but lost our way between the chasms and had to stay overnight. Eventually we found the way and reached the Bedouins of the "Ghor" who welcomed us quite graciously. In the evening they killed a sheep and organised a great "Fantasia", performed dances and offered us coffee. But next morning, we were very surprised, when they demanded a lot of "Bakschisch" which we refused to give them, where-

upon they refused to show us the way we had to go. But they could not hold us back nor intimidate us and we departed confidently alone. Some distance from the camp after a ride of about one quarter of an hour, we were lucky to meet a young shepherdess. She had not joined the "Fantasia" the evening before and told us the right way through the mud in return for a small gift. The passage at the outflow of the Dead Sea was hardly four meters broad, but my horse was no sooner in the dirty water than it stuck in the mud up to its back and I barely had time to jump to the opposite side, pulling some mud with me. All the others went carefully and got to the other side safely. Having cleaned ourselves to some extent we continued our journey after a short rest. We passed the salt hills of Uschum, stayed overnight in the remote fort of Zwerna, for the last time sleeping in the open air. The next morning we were happy not to have been burgled or murdered during the night, a fate which we were told had befallen some passers-by several days before. About midday we reached Hebron, had a short rest there and at about sunset returned to Jerusalem via Bethlehem, after a ride of twenty-one days. There we found our family well and in good health. We rested for one day, then returned to our work again. For a long time we kept the memory of this pleasant journey in our mind.

We also visited the Northern part of Eastern Jordan and inspected the great ruined towns with much interest, and the remains of the former Roman time in Amman, Dscherasch etc. But the trip to Petra was the most beautiful of all.

After completing building the parsonage and the school of the German-Protestant community in Jerusalem as well as the church at Jaffa in 1903, I was informed of the building of a railway-line from Haifa to Damaskus, the Hedschas-track. I went to Damaskus to look at the advertised details of the work to be undertaken. I made my offer and at the beginning of February 1904 I got the commission to do the work at the allotment of Samach near Haifa. The allotment had a length of 16km, and the work consisted of major earth moving and building a bridge 50 meters long. I worked there with an army of workmen from all nations and was finishing the task within twenty months. As a result I was lucky

to carry home a tidy sum. The region I worked in was fairly muddy and fever was prevalent. Therefore I left my family in Haifa, after they had moved there from Jerusalem. After finishing the work, I moved to Haifa to allow myself a well deserved rest in the bosom of my family. In August 1906 I undertook the building of the large repair-workshops for the Hedschas-Railway in Damaskus. I worked there till March 1909 and was happy with my enterprise there. At that time my brother and his family lived in Alexandria where he was "Municipal-Inspector". Therefore my wife and I decided to move there too instead of returning to Jerusalem. After the confirmation of my son and my eldest daughter in Haifa we packed our suit-cases and travelled to Alexandria. We rented a flat in the vicinity of my brother's home and waited patiently for things to come. In the meantime I undertook some minor works.

One time I also wanted to show my wife and children some parts of Europe which they had never seen before. Therefore on a fine day in summer 1910 we boarded the steamer to Marseille and after a short stay there travelled on to Paris. We arrived there in good health and were fortunate that it was the National Day, the 14th of July. So we were able to take part in the tumult of the festivities. After staying eight days in Paris for sightseeing, we went to Pommery where my younger sister had some holidays for some time with her family. We had a pleasant time there spent on trips of various lengths in the surrounding district. From Pommery we went to London, via Calais and Dover. During our stay in London, which lasted ten days, we spent most of the time with my older sister with whom I had formerly stayed at Morges and who I had not seen since. We had a fine time together with her and her husband who had retired in the meantime. From London we went to the exhibition in Brussels, then to Holland and afterwards down the Rhine from Rotterdam to Cologne. After visiting the cathedral there we went to Stuttgart via Frankfurt to see my old friends. We stayed there for a few weeks, sightseeing in the city and surrounds and often taking pleasure trips with our relatives who lived there. We also went to Munich and Oberammergau, where we attended the Passion Plays. We viewed the Rheinfall in Schaffhausen, went to Zurich and finally to Vevey, which we made our headquarters. We took a round trip through Switzerland, from one end to the other in the course of which we came to my beloved

Payerne. There I saw my former hosts, my dear farmers, after so many years. I found them in good health and relived old memories. After some weeks we returned to Vevey. stayed there for a while longer during which we visited the old card table in Montreux, where I won seven Franks at the first pool. We immediately turned the money into whipped cream. Many memories were stirred in my mind, but I also noticed that some things had changed. From Vevey we finally went to Marseille via Genf, boarded the steamer for Alexandria where we arrived safely and in good health after an absence of several months. We found there all our things in order. This journey had been a delight for us all. We had been privileged to see many beautiful and pleasing things which remained a topic of conversation for a long time afterwards.

Soon after our return I was told of same work in Asia Minor. After finding out more details. I went to Smyrna at the end of January 1911. There I applied for an allotment of the Soma-Panderma railway-line and was given the commission to carry out the work. I had to work hard and diligently under trying circumstances with the primitive Kurds whose language I did not understand. But this time too "my old luck" was with me. I was able to complete the task within the ordered time of seventeen months and presented it to the management fully operational. The work cost about one million Franks. Just before the work was finished my family came to see me for a short time and after the handing over, we all returned to Alexandria together with a nice cheque in my pocket.

In the late summer of 1922 we undertook a second journey to Germany. This time we went via Venice, Mailand and St.Gotthard to Stuttgart, where we lodged in a boarding-house because we wanted to stay for a considerable time. We indulged ourselves in "dolce far niente" - sweet idleness - looked at all sights and climbed up all the hills and mountains to assimilate this magnificently sited city from all directions. We made many trips into the surrounding district and also travelled to Munich and Berlin. We also attended many concerts and Church festivals. There our girls had the opportunity to go dancing to their heart's content and so several months of peace and joy passed until the late autumn when we had to think again of returning to Alexandria. This time our son was to stay behind to attend the university at Stuttgart and therefore we went our way sadly. We had a safe journey home. Formerly

I had already bought a building-site and now I set about drawing up the plans for a house and flats to rent. I began building in summer. In the meantime my son had returned for the long school-holidays and helped me with the work, but he had to go back to Germany before the building had been completed. The house would yield sufficient rent for us to live of it. In May 1914 it was completed, but we had no sooner rented the larger part, made a flat ready for ourselves and moved in, than the disastrous world war broke out. As Germans, we had to present ourselves for registration and had to report personally to the government house from time to time. Very soon, a number of misfortunes befell us. In September of the same year I and my family were expelled from Egypt by the English and had to leave behind all our property. We went to Germany via Genoa and Switzerland. At first we went to Nürnberg where my son was about to finish his studies and had applied as a volunteer for "Chevaux-legers". After a few weeks of instructions he was sent to the front. Soon afterwards we moved to Ludwigsburg, where my daughter (the twin) and her husband lived. They were expecting their first baby. My wife and I stayed in Ludwigsburg until my youngest daughter married. After the wedding she moved to Augsburg, where her husband was employed.

During my stay in Ludwigsburg I determined not to idle away my time, so I applied for the auxiliary air-raid precaution service even though there was no need to do so at my age. At first I was on the board of examiners of the prison camp at Eglosheim. Together with my daughters and some of the soldiers, I had to check all the incoming and outgoing mail of about 1200 French prisoners. Later I was bookkeeper and paymaster in the clothing-office and then until my departure to Palestine I worked at the examination board of the department for damages of the league of German people living abroad (Auslandsdeutsche), at Stuttgart. As an official expert I had to check all the transferred actions for damages, so that they could be passed on to the commission of the department for damages (Reichsentschädigungsamt). They had to be accompanied by well-founded proposals. At this point I would like to mention that the damages paid by the "Deutsches Reich" to those German people living abroad were barely sufficient being only 10% of the damage suffered in reality, which does little to the honour of the Deutsches Reich.

My son returned safely from the war and was engaged at one of the numerous offices responsible for winding up all the businesses and affairs. He and my eldest daughter decided to go to Palestine again. That was not very easy for Germans, at that time, but finally they obtained the required Passports and in December 1922 they went to Jerusalem. They arrived safely and, my son as the first and only German, was lucky to get a post as an engineer for road-building. We had meanwhile moved from Ludwigsburg to Stuttgart, but became very homesick and in March 1925 my wife and I also went to Palestine. We arrived safely at Nablus, where my son was employed, but soon my dear wife became ill and died and we brought her to her last resting place, the cemetery of Zion in Jerusalem. A couple of months after that my son was transferred elsewhere, whilst I stayed on with my daughter in Nablus. She kept house for me. At the time I was occupied with making ground plans for new houses for the local inhabitants and for some strange reason I was the only one to prepare plans which were acceptable to the competent authority. Consequently I had a monopoly to do the work. But the people were poor or pretended to be so and therefore, payment for the plans, which were forced a bit upon the people by the authority, was rather poor. In 1925 I gladly received an offer from the former district-engineer of Nablus who, in the meantime, had become director of public affairs at the government of Transjordan, to go to Amman as a government building-master for surface engineering. I was employed there for three and a half years and prepared countless plans for a number of buildings, including mosques, schools, jails, military camps etc. of which only very few could be realized owing to the lack of money. I also planned a gallows, because the government had sentenced a poor devil to death, and they did not as yet have a gallows. It was executed very quickly.

Soon after my arrival in Amman, I tried to get a post there for my son who was still employed in Palestine at the time. I soon managed to find one and so we three were reunited again and lived together as in Nablus. My son is happily married and the father of two children. The young one is two months old and the eldest son of the family. My son also has a good position in Amman as the assistant to the director and we hope that he will occupy it for many years,

Unfortunately my eyesight deteriorated and I was no longer able to draw properly. I did not like to receive my salary gratuitously, so I tendered my resignation, although they would have preferred to retain me in spite of my disability. I moved to Jerusalem with my daughter. She remained faithful to me and kept house until her marriage one year ago. But even after her marriage she stayed with me and recently she had the misfortune to lose a daughter at birth and she will need much rest in the near future. My youngest daughter who had also married at that time in Ludwigsburg and moved to Augsburg with her husband, has been living now for five years in Jerusalem with her family. Both, my daughter and her husband, are employed as housekeepers at the "Johanniter Ordens Hospital", whereas the twin-child still lives in cold Germany with her family and has remained with its misery. So far, all our enticements to come to us, have failed, but we shall not stop our enticements until she is here and we are all joined together in the Holy Land and in Jerusalem, our birth place.

God willing, I shall be allowed to celebrate my 77th birthday this year, on the 28th of April. I am still healthy, vigorous and in a good state of mind, enterprising and still making plans for trips and journeys which I would like to do, but as a result of my progressing blindness will hardly be able to do. From time to time, sometimes after long periods, I visit my son in Amman and delight in the family there. But almost every day I go from my flat to the hostel, where I am noisily received by the children and joyfully by my daughter. Frequently they come to visit my daughter for half or a whole day which then immediately becomes a holiday. I also tried to start several enterprises, but was not lucky with them, so that I ceased almost all activities. I now live on the small amount of money I received as damages for my former suffering in Egypt at the hands of the Deutsches Reich and which is really not much. But I am convinced that I shall never be in need and that I will get help from one or other side, when it becomes necessary. Therefore I don't worry too much about my future. My dear children all have settled down and don't need my help. That is a great comfort to me.

God only knows if I have been the right man in the right place in my life or if I have fulfilled the right role. He will judge me on that. I always

enjoy good health and courage and even in the hardest times I can never remember really being in want of anything, Indeed, God granted me the favour of showing me much of the world and many beautiful, useful and pleasant things and protecting me from all misfortune and injury. I feel that there was a blessing on all my doings that I can say I am happy with my family and my work and everything has been good.

In writing these notes I was able to review my whole life and could recognize, that I was blessed and happy and was allowed to joyful and beautiful I things. I recognized this especially when I went through the time of my youth and my manhood which I spent in Payerne and Vevey. The many years spent with family or friends, the years in Jerusalem working and travelling around, and the serious and hard years of work on my enterprises I with all of their sorrows and troubles, all of these things helped me to realize that I was a happy and blessed man. I always tried to do my duties meticulously, I was respected by my superiors and friends and made friends easily and was always readily to help where I could. I also have the satisfaction of being able to say that I had no enemies and I never knowingly did any wrong to the artisans and workmen I employed. However, I always stood my ground if I had been wronged.

I hope I may spend the time which God pleases to give to me yet quietly, happily and free from cares, I thank God very much for the many fine and wonderful things which he gave to me and for protecting me from all misadventures. I finish these written notes about my life, as much of it as I can remember, with the words which always served me as a guiding principle:

If you have the knowledge to do something and you are doing it well,
often many people are envious of you;
always remain faithful to yourself, be of good cheer,
your ability will help to achieve your goal.

Jerusalem, in the days of February 1932

Postscript

Reflecting upon my path through life, I find it strange that from time to time without any intention, knowledge or purpose I returned to those places where I had stayed previously for prolonged visits. In this way, I returned to Payerne which I had left many years before without any presentiment of going back again. Similarly, I returned to Vevey, of which, in fact, I had fine memories, but had not thought to return and also to Jerusalem, where I was born and which I left as a boy of seven and did not see again until 23 years later. And at point I am staying in Amman again, a city I once hated and which I left five years ago hoping never to see again. How is this possible? Is there any explanation for the fact that I am now staying in Amman and there recently celebrated my 78th birthday in the bosom of my family?

In the summer of 1932, My relatives from the hostel in Jerusalem went on a holiday to their home country, Germany, after having worked continuously for many years. The administrative board of the hostel decided that my daughter and I should manage the hostel during their absence. So we moved there, after breaking up our household, worked industriously and had a fine time together with the guests who, that summer, had arrived in extraordinary numbers, and with whom we got on very well.

After the relatives returned in autumn, we were in no mood to start a household in Jerusalem once more and so abruptly decided to move to Amman to my son-in-law, my daughter's husband. He is employed there at the English airfield and my son and his family also are there, so we can often stay together.

It is certain that providence, destiny and fate which nobody can escape, brought us together here and only God alone knows how long we shall stay.

Soon after my arrival I concerned myself with thoughts of working out a plan for the foundation of colonies of German peasants in this country and to write an article about the land itself, its size and location, the nature of its soil, its history and climate, its production, inhabitants and their occupation. I have finished already this work

-23-

and hope, with the intervention of some friends to find an agricultural co-operative society in Germany who would be interested in the subjects. It is my most ardent wish that such a foundation would be possible and I would soon see the first flourishing German village in Transjordan.

signed Paul Palmer, Amman, In May 1933