

Read at H. Anniversary May 1877.

Shemlan. Mt. Lebanon.
Near Beirut. Syria.
October. 18th 1876

Dear Children

I am writing this letter for a host of American Children, so I will write it in English. Last week I was writing a letter to the Syrian children, and I wrote in Arabic, as the Syrian language is Arabic. When we write Arabic we write backwards, beginning at the right side of the sheet at the top, and away the pen dashes towards the left, and although I do not profess to be a very famous writer in Arabic, I can write it a great deal faster than you can read it, although I know there are a great many smart boys and girls in America. What do you think I was saying to the Syrian boys and girls? Every month I have to write enough to fill four large pages of the Illustrated "Kookab" or Morning Star. One of the articles I wrote for the November No. was on temperance, as we have a "Syrian Temperance League" and a Pledge printed on a beautiful sheet, for the children to sign. I told them a true story of a sad event which happened lately, not far from here. You have heard of Mt. Hermon - I was close by it two weeks ago. The river Jordan rises right under its base and on its southern slope Jesus was transfigured - On its North West side in a deep valley is the town of Hasbiya - we have a church and school there - In 1860 almost all of the men were massacred by the Druzes and Turks - of those who escaped was one named Galib - He was a good man, but he had a great sorrow, His son was a bad boy and drank Arak, the Arab Whiskey - Last year the father tried hard to lead his son to reform, but he would not, and instead of helping his father, he went off to the Grog shops and wasted his time.

The Missionaries and native Christians all tried to save the boy from drink but it was of no use. At length the father fell sick, and when he was dying (in September) he asked for his son. He wished to see him once more and say a word to him before he died - Some of the men went out and brought in the son - he had just been drinking, and when he saw his father instead of speaking kindly and asking his forgiveness, he sprang like a tiger upon his father, seized him by the throat and tried to choke him to death! The people present seized him and dragged him away and locked him up - The father, when he recovered his consciousness a little, was overcome with sorrow for his son, and died soon after, without seeing him again. I hope dear children that none of you will ever touch intoxicating liquors -

I said that I was near Mt. Hermon two weeks ago - Let me tell you a little about my journey - D. Eddy of Sidon, had asked me to go and preach the dedication sermon of a new Church in Jedaidch, which is about five miles west of the base of Mt. Hermon. So on Thursday

September 28th. I mounted my horse to ride to Sidon where I was to join
Dr Eddy - I was not feeling well, but hoped to be benefited by the horseback
exercise - my horse is of a sovel color, and my saddle an American Army
Saddle with huge wooden stirrups covered with black leather - The flies
are so troublesome that I have a long woollen fringe tied around her
breast, and under her belly is a large piece of canvas hanging on cords
fastened before and behind the saddle. I carry my baggage in a Khurj
or saddle bags thrown across the saddle - In these saddle bags I carry a
little bundle of clothing, a few medicines, one or two books, waterproof cloak
and leggings, straps, twine, needles for sewing with twine, a cup, and a
package of lunch for the road - My overcoat is wrapped in oil cloth and
strapped on behind the saddle, then I wear a linen duster or over-
coat, with more pockets than I can describe, almost all of which are
full. To protect my head I carry a white umbrella lined with green,
and my eyes are shielded from the wind and the glare of the sun, by
colored glasses, and as a weapon of defence against loaded donkeys,
mules and camels who sometimes almost knock me off my horse, I
carry a can. Having now strapped on my leather leggings and one spur
I am ready to start - Perhaps the boys will ask, why not use two spurs?
My answer is that if one side of the horse goes ahead, the other side
will be quite sure to keep up.

I left home at nine o'clock - the children
walked out to bid me good bye, there was my son Harry 12 years old,
Stuart who is about 7, and then came Mary and Army, Ethel and
Freddie the baby - After bidding them good bye, I rode along Jibanon
among Olive trees and fig trees, Oaks, and mulberries and treeless fields
and over rocks, and hills to Abeih, one of our Mission Stations, about
four miles from here - Not being well, I was quite tired and sat down
to rest at Mrs Eddy's for an hour. At half past eleven I set out again,
down the steep rocky mountain to the sea side. The sun was burning
hot - the road was dreadful - smooth rocks and rugged stones piled
together, and the road runs right over them - My poor horse would groan
at times when her feet slipped or got caught in the rocks, after two hard
hours, I reached the sea shore at the mouth of the river Damur. - after riding
over the sand and probes a little ways, I came to the iron suspension
bridge. My horse had never seen such a sight and when her foot touched
the planks and she heard the ringing sound of the iron rods, she stopped
and sprang back - I patted her neck and spoke to her, but she would not
go on until a Bedawy, who had a flock of goats, kindly took her by the bridle

and led her across. Just across the bridge is a Khan, or way side hotel where men, women children horses and donkeys, with sheep and chickens can sleep together - I gave a boy two cents to lead my horse around the field to get cooled off, while I took my lunch in the porch of the Khan under a stone arch. The landlady was sitting on the ground moulding flat loaves of bread and baking them on a sheet of copper behind her, which was lying over a fire of coals. The baby was creeping around in the dust among the donkeys. They furnished me with a glass of water, and after resting half an hour, I gave them four cents for the use of their porch, and they thought it a very large sum. Then I rode on - It is twelve miles from the bridge to Sidon - I rode it in three hours - Some of the way the road crosses rocky promontories and then down upon a smooth sandy beach close to the waves of the sea. Whenever I reached the sand the horse would snuff the sea air and start off into a run, and away we went like the wind, the salt water splashing up and flying over us.

In this way we made good time going to Sidon. I was anxious to hurry as I was not well and longed to reach a place of rest, at five o'clock I entered Sidon gate, where I found the narrow street blockaded by a rabble of boys looking at a dancing bear, and I had to dismount and wait till the crowd passed, as my horse was disposed to dance and might have trodden upon the little children in the street.

It was Ramadan, the great Mohammedan fast. The people neither eat nor drink all day long, but they spend the most of the night in eating and drinking. They fast all day and feast all night. I found Dr Eddy at the Sidon Female Seminary, and took tea with him there, and then went to his house to sleep. The Seminary building had been all cleaned and whitewashed, and was looking very nicely, and the forty five girls will have a pleasant home there this coming year.

On Friday morning Dr Eddy and I set out for Mimas a ride of nine hours. It was a hot day with scarcely a cloud - we lunched at noon under the "shadow of a great rock" in a narrow valley which is four miles long and which has sometimes been a haunt of robbers.

When we came to Nebatigh where we stopped at the village fountain to buy a drink of water, water is so scarce that a great crowd of women are always waiting their turn, and an old man stands as watchman to keep them from fighting. After another hour we came to the brink of a deep gorge, about 1000 feet down - Far below us was a beautiful valley, and the river Beantes runs roaring and dashing through it - We dismounted and led our horses down, and on reaching the bottom, the horses rushed to the stream to drink of the cool waters. We rested a little, and drank of the

gave good attention - there were turbaned old men and grave old women fine looking young men and fair young women, boys and girls and a large number of babies - the people all sat on mats on the floor, and were crowded together almost like matches in a box. When a baby cried and was carried out, the little girls tittered and laughed - then the baby would get quiet and they would pass it in again through the window and over the peoples heads to its mother or aunt - all this made some confusion, but the people gave good attention and it was pleasant to preach to them, especially as many of them had come through dangerous regions, among robbers, to get to this meeting. They came from ten towns or little cities, the "Decapolis" of Protestantism in the region of Mt Hermon. As I preached I could see the Mount of Transfiguration, through the window and just below was the Valley of the Upper Jordan, and Cesarea Philippi and the Waters of Merom. When I was half through the sermon, a turn of fever came upon me, and I felt as if my feet were in a furnace of fire, but I had strength to go through to the end. In the afternoon was the Communion Service, and eight babies were baptized by Dr Eddy. We then rested a little while, after which we rode back to Dir Minas to sleep. I was ill when we arrived, but the fever was broken in the night and on Monday morning we rode back to Sidon. We stopped again at Nebatiget, where a great weekly fair was being held, and hundreds of men and women were gathered from all the region. The Bedawin were there with their long spears, bringing caravan loads of wheat from Houran. You could buy mats of papyrus reeds, pottery from Mt Hermon, grain of all kinds, sheep and cattle, horses and camels, grapes, water melons, homegranates, dried figs, honey, olive oil, and European dry goods. We rested half an hour, bought a flask full of water for our lunch in Robber Valley, and a few grapes, and then rode on. The road was lively with people coming and going, and when we stopped at noon under the "Shadow of the Great Rock" to lunch, the Valley was quite merry with donkey bells. I was very weary, but Dr Eddy had thoughtfully brought a quilt and shawl and I lay down on the dry grass and slept a full hour before taking lunch and arose much refreshed. Oh! how welcome the blue waters of the Mediterranean looked as we left the mountains and caught a glimpse of the sea! And how lovely and pleasant the domes and minarets of Old Sidon looked as we rapidly drew near to it! I forgot about its being the birth place of Jezebel and thousands more of naughty princesses and princes in the old Pagan

days, and I thought little about the Moslems and Greeks who now dwell there. I was longing for a bed and a pillow, and rest to my aching bones. Our horses wanted to gallop but we held them in and they waited as if they knew that the barley was near. Before sunset we were safely at home, and I found sweet repose in Dr Eddy's hospitable home.

Since I returned home 50 armed robbers on horseback attacked the French wagon train on the Damascus road near Eshtorch and plundered the goods. In the mountain all is quiet and in Beirut it is peaceable as usual. The Moslems and Christians are all armed, so neither one dares attack the other.

In Beirut we have a large Sabbath School and multitudes of children are under religious instruction. I hope you will pray for the children of Syria. You must not expect a letter from me very often - I have not strength to write such a big letter many times in a year.

My children send their love to you, and if you will come here they will teach you how to play Arabic games of ball and talk and sing in Arabic.

Yours affectionately.

N. N. Jessup.