

# Jaunt Along Coast of Palestine Is Refreshing

## REV. F. C. STIFLER TELLS OF HOLY LAND OF TODAY

American University of Beirut,  
Fine Institution, Makes One  
Glad to Be an American

A journey along the coast of Palestine is described by the Rev. Francis Carr Stifler, pastor of the Wilmette Baptist church, in the twelfth article of this interesting series. His recent tour of the Holy Land provided the material for these stories of the past and present of famed Biblical places, which are being entertainingly written.

By Rev. Francis Carr Stifler

ONE thing I missed from the day I landed in Alexandria was music. I am passionately fond of it but can conjure up no love for the Oriental sort. I actually had a pang of homesickness when I heard a phonograph one evening at a resort along the Sea of Galilee playing, "I Want to Be Happy."

You may imagine then what a treat it was as I sat in the sweltering heat on a Sunday afternoon on the hotel veranda, to suddenly hear a great French Military Band whose presence I had not noted, begin to play some of the familiar old classics, not a half block distant. All this happened in Beirut. After our delightful Baalbek visit we had motored over the Lebanon mountains to the sea-coast. Beirut is the great seaport of Syria. It is decidedly European in its general appearance. The people are more Western in their dress and French is spoken everywhere. It is a typical port. One sees on its streets nationals from every principal country of the world.

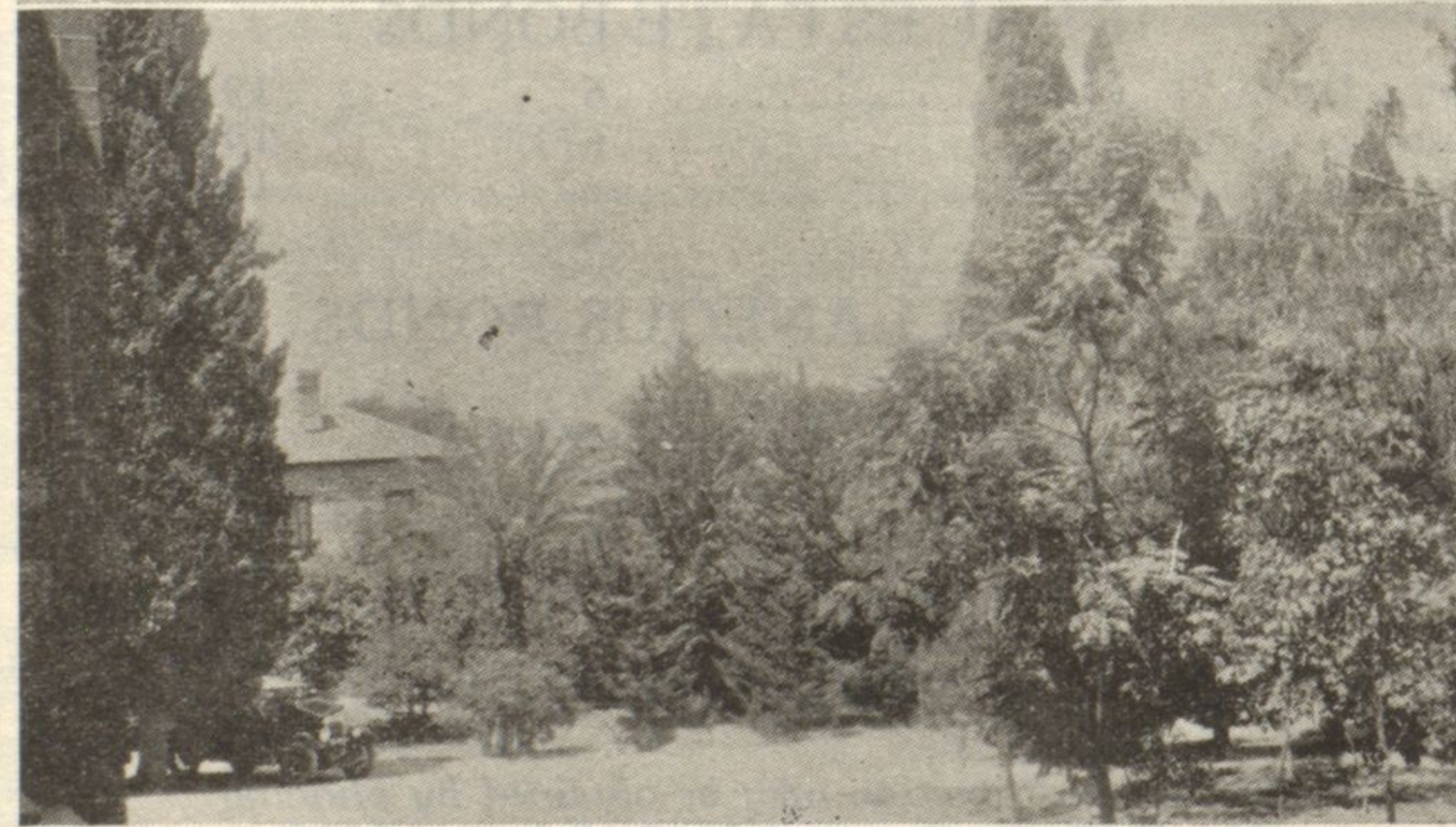
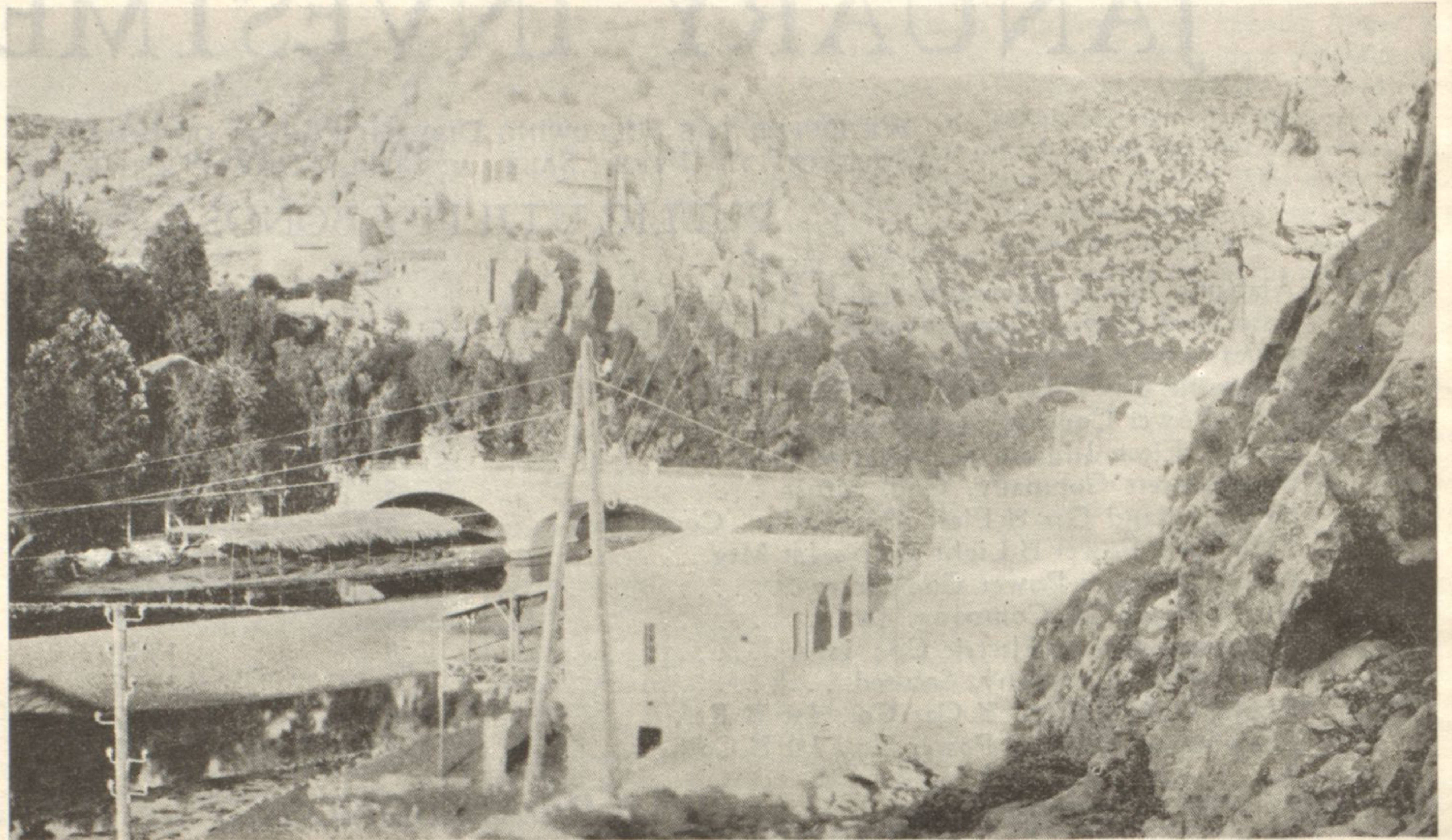
Directed by Wilmette Man

The American university is located there. This is probably the best known of the six great institutions operating under the Near East College Association, Incorporated, whose Central Division headquarters are under the direction of one of our Wilmette citizens, Dr. William F. English, Jr. On our tour this summer, we visited all of these colleges except the one in Bulgaria. And, by the way, the other most impressive college of the group we saw was in Constantinople and its President is the brother of Henry B. Gates, our local Telephone manager.

The American university of Beirut is an institution that makes one glad he is an American. There is no need to discard the name as some of our institutions in the Old World and in the Far East are finding it wise to do. Beirut is proud of the college and well it may be for since its founding in 1866 it has developed departments in Arabic Literature, mathematics, medicine, commerce, Biblical Archaeology, and Literature. Included in the student body are Protestants, Orthodox Greek Catholics, Latins, Maronites and Armenians as well as Jews and Moslems. The Campus and the Buildings were one of the beautiful sights of our whole journey.

**Dog River Reminder of Warring Past**

The American university drew our thoughts toward the future while the little trip we took that Sunday afternoon carried us back over a long extended past. We motored ten miles north along the coast to Dog River. This is a spot where there comes dashing through the Lebanon range a



The pictures: Dog River, near Beirut, famed for warring in generations past (top)—Here is Main street, Sidon, as it appears to camera's eye (middle)—View of campus of American University at Beirut (bottom)

broad and turbulent mountain stream. For milleniums this river has afforded the pass through which the armies of Egypt have gone in their campaigns against the Kingdoms of the East, Assyria, Babylonia and Persia and through which these Eastern Empires have hurled their hosts against Egypt.

From our earliest Sunday School days we have been told that Palestine was a highway between the great warring nations of antiquity. There is no place like Dog River to confirm this teaching for here on the sheer limestone cliffs above the roadway the monarchs of all times have left the records of their conquests. There are the effigies and the superscriptions of Rameses II, of Egypt, the Pharaoh of the Oppression who reigned from 1300 to 1234 B. C. Most of the old monarchs mentioned in the Bible have their tab-

lets there, Shalmanezzer II., Esserhaddon, Tiglath Pileser, Sennacherib and others.

There are Roman inscriptions there and one of Selim the Ottoman Sultan who conquered Syria early in the Sixteenth Century. Napoleon III has his inscription there and last of all the rather elaborate inlaid tablets of the French conquerors of 1918 and beside it the more modestly becoming one of the British General Allenby. The hosts of the ages covering thirty-one hundred years at the least have marched past this spot where the river offers a pass through the mountains. Ancient history seems very real indeed to the visitor to Dog River.

As we were driving out of Beirut next morning, suddenly George, our guide, gave the order to stop and pointing to the rear he remarked, "There

goes the modern caravan of the desert." We looked and beheld the hugest motor truck I have ever seen. I think its hood must have been ten feet long and the body twenty-five. It had a double set of rear wheels and was painted a dull gray. The only lettering on it was the word in huge block capitals, "Bagdad." Somehow the very name Bagdad sounds adventurous. There is romance clinging to it. This great van loaded with freight from the French steamers was just starting out on its trip of 400 miles across the trackless desert to that great interior city on the Tigris—the Babylon of these modern days.

Our trip down the coast from Beirut to Haifa—a distance of 90 miles, was crammed with interest. We passed through miles of mulberry groves, for silk culture is a great industry on the Syrian coast. We stopped at Sidon where we bought some native bananas. Soon we reached Tyre and saw the Tomb of Hiram, the king who aided Solomon in the building of the Temple. A little south of Tyre we went through customs from Syria and back into Palestine. By mid-afternoon we were at Acre, famous old city on the north side of the bay of Haifa. There the road ended and our day's journey closed with a fifteen mile spin at 30 miles an hour on the beach of the sea as we rounded the bay to the city of Haifa.

**Haifa Has Big Future**

Haifa has Palestine's best harbor. When the Dead Sea's chemical products are moving they probably will be loaded at the Haifa docks. Haifa is already a large city of 25,000 inhabitants. Nestling on the side of stately Mt. Carmel it presents a pretty picture. Like all port towns, we found it reasonably modern. Our hotel, though rather ant-infested, gave us the best food we had had for days. And we had there as well, the luxury of a shower bath.

Haifa is not a town of any antiquity

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