

Cyprus - Aphrodite's Isle

I first visited Cyprus in the Spring of 1962. I had intended to spend two or three weeks on the Island to rest in the sun and get the feel of Israel off my body before proceeding onwards through the Arab Countries to India. After you have been in a country for awhile, the feel of it, the odor of it, permeates your very bones and, if I was to continue my journey successfully, it was necessary for me to get the smell of it off me.

With the time I had allotted for this purpose - a couple of weeks, I was in the mood to look for Aphrodite who was legended (in Homer) to have been born on the Island. I had nothing else to do on the Island and it was in my mind to walk around and look for her traces. There were already two that I knew of - one on the Southern Coast of the Island where two rocks jutted out of the sea, called Paphos, and the other in the Western wilds named by the Venetians "The Fontana Amorosa" - for obvious reasons probably.

This was before all the trouble began on the Island between the Greeks and the Turks - the trouble with the English for some time having already been settled. On the morning I arrived on the overnight boat from Haifa, Israel on the South-Eastern Coast of the Island at Larnaca, two Turkish journalists (from Mainland Turkey) had been shot the night before and I read in the newspapers something about over thirty bullet holes being found in each of their bodies.

Coming off the boat at Larnaca, I was immediately beset upon along with the other passengers on the boat which was an Italian one, the Lloyd-Triestino Line from Venice, by a group of black-mustached, dangerous-looking taxi cab drivers who gave the impression that, if you did not take their cabs, they would just as soon cut your throat instead. These were Greek Cypriots and they seemed to have a monopoly on the business - that is, the throat-cutting

one, as well as the taxi.

We took the car up to Nicosia, three of us - a short forty-mile ride which, once beyond the winding climb from the Coast, was taken at break-neck speed over a great salt plateau - the fields and rocks of which were scorched yellow in the sun. When we arrived in Nicosia, I parted from my company in the car who were not really my companions and put my bags down in one of the hotels on the outskirts of its center. When I say outskirts, I am not kidding.

Nicosia, Cyprus is a town utterly surrounded by walls, a circular town in the old Venetian Crusader style with walls either partially or still standing dating from that time. Outside these walls, there are walking promenades and open spaces, and the outskirts begin. Inside, are the narrow but fairly straight streets of the older city. It is here that I left my bags, for it was Friday morning and I had some business to conduct at several embassies before they closed their doors for the weekend.

I wanted to do this quickly because it was necessary for me to find out as soon as possible whether it was going to be possible for me, a Jew, to travel across the Arab Countries - which I wanted to do. Of course, I was not going to be traveling as a Jew - this, as we all know, would have been quite impossible especially for one who had just come from Israel after having spent nine months there; for, if it were not possible, then I would have to change all my plans and go through Turkey and overland into Iran via Tehran - a thing which I had already done and was not anxious to do again.

There were three embassies I had to contact in order to find out these things: the Lebanese, the Syrian, and the Iraqi, and I had to contact each of them personally to see if the ruse I had concocted would work. I take them in order, not only of their geographical proximity, but of what I then

thought the difficulty would be - although there was some toss-up in my mind between the Syrian and Iraqi ones.

As I was later to find out, the Iraqi one didn't even exist on the Island - this was at the time of Abd al-Karim Qasim and things were fairly difficult then, though I believe they have since loosened up somewhat. As it was the weekend and there was no point in trying the other two if the first one failed, I did not know this yet. I had six months before in Israel taken the precaution of getting a letter saying that I was a Christian. This was a prerequisite for anyone interested in traveling in Arab Lands - especially if one had a name which sounded Jewish as mine did or if one happened to have been in Israel, as I happened to be at the time.

It was at a time when I had been interested in and become friendly with a good many Christians in the Country, having traveled around in the Autumn from one monastery to another. It was also just prior to Christmas Time when there was a lot of animation on the part of a lot of people about going up to Jerusalem and crossing over the border and visiting the Holy Places (the Country was still divided then).

I had gone to an Episcopal Minister in Jaffa, which is where St. Peter established the First Church, next to Tel Aviv and told him my problem - not that I was Jewish, but that my father was Jewish and my mother was Christian and I had been brought up a Christian and wanted to go over and visit the Holy Places and, for obvious reasons, I would have difficulty because of my name and also everyone who was crossing over the then old "Green Line" had to get such papers.

I do not know whether he believed my story, though I do not believe he did, because he asked me why I did not get a letter from my home Diocese. I told him there wasn't time and then he asked me whether I

swore that I was a Christian - at such moments one could not worry about moral qualms - which I said I did. In that case, he said, he was content. The sin was off him and he proceeded to give me a form letter on a mimeographed little piece of paper (evidently he must have handled a lot of such requests) which just said plainly that "Robert Eisenman is a Christian."

I took this letter and thanked him. I still do not believe to this day that he believed me but he was a gentleman and said nothing further. The first thing I did on the way to the Lebanese Embassy was to take this Letter to the Archdeacon of Cyprus (there were such things on Cyprus).

I didn't know at the time that this individual was the Archdeacon. I picked this one off the map since evidently, if I was going to try to get a visa to cross an Arab Country, I couldn't very well use a letter which originated in Israel. I had a map of Nicosia and his church was the only Anglican one on it. Moreover, it was in the neighborhood of the Lebanese Embassy.

I took a taxi over to it and got off at "The Diocese Headquarters," as it turned out to be. The Church and the Reverend's house next to it were done in old English, Colonial-type flagstone which was very, comforting to encounter out here in the wilds of a Mediterranean Island. When I arrived, it was already close to lunchtime and there was a sign on the gate of the Church saying the Minister was over at his house.

I went up to the gate of the house and, as it turned out, he was sitting in the garden. He invited me into the kitchen where he was drinking some tea and we conducted our business there. I told him my difficulty, that I was a Christian - these difficulties are common in the Middle East - and that I wanted to travel through the Arab Countries and

that I only had this letter from Tel Aviv and he saw the obvious problem.

When he saw the letter, he exclaimed that the Minister there was his colleague and he would be very happy to give me another such letter - this time on his own stationery. I was quite surprised and quite awe-struck that it was from the Archdiocese of Nicosia. Now I had two letters, one from Tel Aviv and one, as I now found out, from the Archdeacon of the Anglican Church in Cyprus, both saying exactly the same thing: "Robert Eisenman is a Christian." As it turned out this was a welcome precaution to have taken.

Bidding the Archdeacon goodbye, I picked my way with the help of the inexact pocket map I had through backstreets and around backyards to the Lebanese Embassy. When I arrived it was already very close to closing time. Consulates usually close (especially for visa business) in this part of the World at 1 PM; but I was beckoned to the desk and, summoning all my courage and composure, I dropped my passport down on the counter and said I would like a visa to go to Lebanon - not bothering to explain anything more but waiting for an answer.

The gentleman at the desk, a short stocky man dressed of the usual Lebanese appearance in a suit that gave him a bottle-like look, spoke French - which I did too - for diplomatic reasons, picked up my passport and started thumbing through it. After having turned over a couple of pages, he put it down and said calmly:

"You've just come from Israel."

I was flabbergasted, overwhelmed. I couldn't believe my ears and couldn't have been more surprised if some one had hit me in the face with a club. I expected trouble, but not so immediately.

"How do you know?" was the only thing I could manage to stammer.

He didn't honor me with a very long reply.

"Easy", he said. "Your passport says that you arrived in Larnaca this morning. Well, the only boat that arrived in Larnaca this morning came from Israel."

His logic was impeccable. I was really surprised. I didn't know they kept such close tabs on everything but in the Middle East, as I guess it is in other parts of the world, if you admit you've lost or let on that you've lost, you are lost. The only way is to keep on going and sometimes a way opens up.

"Well as a matter of fact you're wrong," I said, mustering my courage and saying the only thing I could think of saying (something I had planned to say earlier in response to a great big gap in my passport of nine months from the time I had left Marseilles to the time I arrived in Larnaca. In Israel, if you ask them to at the Customs on entering knowing the problem, they will stamp your passport in a different place - not on the passport but upon a little white money card they give you to keep track of the money you spend in Israel. They don't like to do it and they do it begrudgingly, asking such questions as why do you want that, where are you going, or why do you want to go to the Arab Countries in the first place? They, like the Arabs, cannot understand why anyone would want to go to the Arab Countries in the first place but, if you press them, if you don't allow them to put you off, in the end they will give in and do it).

"I've been at sea."

He looked at me, obviously not believing me - they only believe what they wish to believe anyhow - but by this time his curiosity was aroused. After all, a good story is a good story and it's interesting to hear what someone with a Jewish name and arriving that morning in Larnaca from Israel was going to make up.

"I've been at sea," I repeated, "and I just arrived in Cyprus this

morning."

Once more he took my passport, this time angrily at the inconvenience I was causing him by my story and, leafing through the pages once again, he said with evidence impatience, "Can you prove that?"

This time I knew what to do having recovered somewhat as a result of my quick response and pulled out my piece de resistance, the letter from the Archdeacon of Cyprus I had just received earlier that morning which said I was a Christian. He took the letter from me begrudgingly and read it. Then he shook his head and looked at my passport once again.

By this time I was getting impatient. I had no more ruses to play and nothing more to do - if I couldn't, I couldn't. Then he turned towards some of his colleagues in a partitioned-off section in the back of the office and asked them for help and what their opinion was.

"Look," I said interrupting in French, growing fed up, "Either you want to give me a visa or you don't. I want to go to your Country. What is the problem?"

Surprised at my straightforwardness and candor, he suddenly picked up my passport, picked up the stamp and, with a quick, clean, sure action, stamped it with the little squat, green Lebanese Cedar Tree that stands for Lebanon.

"Ok," he said handing my passport back to me. "That'll be twelve hundred Francs" (he meant old French Francs, as all such transactions were still done in that part of the World in that currency).

I was really surprised. I had never expected to run into so much trouble. Even more, having run into so much trouble, I had never expected to pull it off and get the visa but, as I said, in the Middle



East, if you bluff things through, you'd be surprised what might happen. I didn't have time to wait around and revel in my success or even regain my composure after having had it shaken so thoroughly in so short a time. If I had had this much trouble at the Lebanese Embassy, how much trouble was I going to have at the Syrian Embassy - a very unfriendly place indeed - but I couldn't wait around to reflect upon it. I had to get over there as soon as possible before they closed for lunch.

That was one bird down and one bird to go. Perhaps I could kill two birds on the same day. Anyhow, I had a good head start and I didn't want to hang around Nicosia all week - if I was going to know which way I was going, I had to know soon.

In my hurry to get out of the Embassy and perhaps in my hurry to get away from those inquisitive eyes, over whom I had just pulled off a triumph - that is, in my hurry to get my fumbling papers into my pocket and still appear calm and composed - I left my passport folder in the Embassy on the desk where I had originally pulled it out. This I didn't find out until later - after I had gone over to the Syrian Embassy. Still, it was to lead me to another interesting adventure.

I took a taxi directly over to the Syrian Embassy. When I got there, it was almost one o'clock and it was just finishing for the day, but I managed to get inside before the doors closed. I had none of the trouble I thought I was going to have. A polite young woman at the desk - very petite, very Arabic, and very smart - took my passport along with a pack of others, mostly German they seemed, and told me to come back the next day when I could have my visa; in this case Monday at 12. I said nothing, agreeing, not wishing to cause trouble but I thought

that, if this was all there was going to be to it, it was certainly too easy. As it turned out it was - too easy, I mean.

When I got out of the Embassy and stopped to take stock of all I had accomplished in so a short time, I suddenly realized that I had forgotten my passport holder at the Lebanese Embassy. In it was about forty dollars, which I had made in Israel and left in it for safe keeping in another cache in my wallet. I didn't wish to go back there especially after all that had happened and I knew that they too would be closing for lunch. Still, I hurriedly jumped in another cab and went back. When I arrived, the Embassy was already shut but, by ringing the bell, I managed to get someone to come to the door.

They were surprised to see me and, after telling them my problem, I managed to find my billfold in just the place I had left it when I had been filling out the applications for the visa. However when I looked inside the money was gone. This was a fine state of affairs. I did not want to accuse them of being thieves after what I had just gone through because, then they might cable ahead to Beirut, and who knows what trouble they could cause me? On the other hand, the money was gone and that made me sore as I needed it.

There was another possibility - that it had been taken on the boat during the overnight voyage from Haifa. After all, I had not checked it since I left Tel Aviv, and even before, and there had been three other people in my compartment. Which reminded me that there was still a third possibility - and this is what later seemed the most likely to me for various personal reasons - that it had been taken in Tel Aviv where I had left my pack at a "friend"'s house - himself of somewhat dubious reputation - where a lot of people came in and out. I was using a pack

at that time as I was moving overland and for ease of movement.

But I was so passionately involved in the present events that I could not restrain myself and asked about the money. They were highly indignant and said no one there had touched the wallet and it had not been moved from where I left it since I left, as I had seen.

I asked them, were they sure? And they became angry and said, what did I take them for a pack of thieves?

I said, "No," trying to calm them down, I was not accusing them of stealing but, as it was lying on a public table, someone who came in to fill out visa applications after me could have gone through my wallet and taken it.

I saw that they were getting angry but, nevertheless, they sifted through the two or three people who had come in after me and said they were all respectable people. I could see it would not go well for me if I kept it up, so I bowed out and thanked them, leaving the thing as it stood - not wanting, certainly, any trouble when I got to Lebanon - and left the Embassy but I was still not satisfied. I could believe that it was taken in Tel Aviv before I had left as I had not looked in my wallet since then, but I still wanted to be sure and something in the whole atmosphere made me doubt everything.

That afternoon I went back to the Hotel, where I had left my pack and decided to forget everything and relax for a while, to unwind, and have a big meal. The hotel where I had left everything was too expensive for me but I had a big meal there, drank wine, and looked around until 3:00 in the afternoon till I had forgotten everything and then, pleasantly inebriated and in a bit of a stupor, I went to look for another hotel.

I found one in the Greek Section right near the sort of Dividing Line

between the two Communities and the prostitute street. I could have found one in the Turkish Area beneath a lovely minaret for even a third of the price of the one I found - but I felt there would be too much difficulty in it, always changing back and forth between Communities - and besides it was deeper into the City, further away from where I had to be to carry on my business.

The Hotel I did find was very pleasant with a friendly Greek proprietor who had a television set in one room where he and his family and everyone else seemed to sit - a living room with Greek Orthodox religious pictures of the Cross and Crucifixion and the Virgin Mary on the walls. After resting away most of the afternoon on a steel-frame, white-covered linen bed in my room, I was still troubled about the theft from my wallet and, to put my mind at ease, decided to go up that evening to the Nicosia Police Station to see what I could do about it.

The Police Station, which I found after being directed to it, was in the form of a kind of rectangular fortress and naturally in the Greek Section of town. The officers at the desk motioned me to the back across a courtyard, around which were ranged separate offices, to an Inspector's Office. Crossing the patio, I was struck by the fact that lying in the sun - it was still light out - were several pieces of tattered blood-soaked clothing.

When I arrived at the Inspector's Office, a typical Cypriot with black moustache, tie, and suit, we spoke for awhile about the money I had lost, which he thought was funny - after all, anything could happen in an Arab Embassy - but which he did not think there was much hope of recovering.

Then I asked him about the blood-soaked clothes lying out in the

courtyard.

"Oh those," he said. "Those are the clothes of the two Turkish journalists who were shot last night."

"Oh," I said, a little surprised at how nonchalant he was about it. "What happened?"

"Yes," he said with evident glee. "There were thirty-three bullets found in one body and thirty-four in the other. By the style of the killings, it was clearly a revenge murder." This, he said all very authoritatively.

"How so?" I said, my curiosity now awakened.

"Oh these two journalists were trouble-makers. They were writing articles in the papers on the mainland of Turkey which the Turks here didn't like."

"Oh?" I asked, somewhat surprised.

"Yes," he said. "The Turks are killing each other."

With that I got up, shook his hand good-bye and, walking across the patio, cast a furtive glance at the by-this-time almost-caked blood-soaked clothes, drying in the lengthening evening sun, and gave up any hope I might have and was quite certain my money would never be found.

Nicosia, Cyprus is a town utterly divided down the middle or rather, I should say, down the quarter because that is the ratio of Greeks to Turks on the Island - three to one - and it runs this way through most of the larger cities on it.

In the Countryside, as we shall see, this division takes a rather different form - according to villages - but nevertheless it still exists with almost clock-like regularity. Three out of every four villages will be Greek - the fourth being Turkish. Nicosia itself is

situated on a broad inland plateau about 60 to 80 miles, east and south, from the sea - only about 20 north. It was probably placed where it was for strategic reasons by the Crusaders - it being, as we said, an old walled city of circular dimensions.

Today Nicosia is a jumping-off point for the whole of the Middle East and is used by travellers in just my situation for that purpose. But this is nothing new and the strategic importance of Cyprus has always been recognized - situated, as it is, in the North-East Corner of the Mediterranean Sea about 60 miles south of Turkey and about 200 miles east of the Lebanese-Syrian Coastline and holding, as it does, a commanding position above the mouth of the Red Sea and present-day Suez Canal and, therefore, for all travel and commerce to the East. The British are not the only ones to have recognized this importance, having taken possession of the Island in the Nineteenth Century and only giving it up, reluctantly - though still keeping a large contingent of troops on it.

If one begins on Ledra Street at the King George Hotel (Excelsior Palace) in the Southern Part of the City - one of the diameters of the circle - and then proceeds northwards, one is in Greece. It is curious because the Greeks seem to cling to the Southern Part of the City, towards the soft underbelly of the Island, while the Turks crowd into the Northern Part closer to the protective folds of Mother Turkey.

All the signs are in Greek, all the articles for sale in the shops are Greek (or English, because of the Commonwealth ties with England). There used to be pictures, too, of Archbishop Makarios side-by-side with General Grivas, the former Greek Cypriot Underground fighter against the British - now the Commander of the Greek Home Guard on Cyprus - or one or two

younger terrorists who had died for the cause. But I don't know if this is still the case today, since these two have become so active again in the even more recent complications and so controversial. Perhaps they have been replaced by photographs of the new young King of Greece itself, Constantine. This would probably suit those enthusiastic for ENOSIS (Union with Greece). Still, there is no doubt that there was real local pride and nationalism being displayed in those pictures then.

If one proceeds for about three-quarters of the way across the circle in this manner, nothing much changes but then suddenly one comes to a street - the one near my Hotel and another of the chords of the circle - and one is in Turkey and everything changes. It is also near the prostitute area, as I have indicated. It is very strange but at the end of one street all the prostitutes are Greek and, when one goes down the street and around the corner, all the prostitutes become Turkish - significantly the only place where the two Communities come together - the prices are respectively different too.

The prices in the Greek Section are uniformly more expensive than those in the Turkish - of hotels, of food, of airplane and boat fares, of just simple day-to-day necessities - sometimes even two or three times as much. The same went as well for the girls as just signaled, a fitting comment on the whole situation. As just remarked as well, once one comes into the Turkish Area, everything changes and one is in Turkey. Suddenly all the signs are in Turkish - that particular blend of Western script and Eastern characters introduced by Ataturk over thirty-five years ago.

All the colors are also different and everywhere is that characteristic red and yellow crescent-and-star flag of Turkey. The travel posters are all to Turkey and of Turkish Scenic Places as well. The airlines are Turkish

Airlines. Even the girls in the travel pictures are Turkish girls. All the shops sell Turkish and English articles (again, because of the Commonwealth) and all the money is Turkish - Lira or Pounds, not Shillings - and, of course everywhere, instead of churches, are mosques with their telltale minarets, not steeples, silhouetted against a clear, light blue sky in the evening - with sometimes even a moon.

Everywhere in the bars and coffee shops is the red-and-yellow flag again and only one faded picture glaring down on everyone - that sparseness symbolic of the Turkish soul - the stern and unsmiling portrait of Kemal Ataturk or perhaps the ever-present reigning Turkish General in the hierarchy of heroes, cold and unbending gazing over everything with a look of no compromise. This then is what the City is like and, in view of these contradictions, the recent troubles are not surprising. This, as I have been intimating, is the problem and the problem still remains today, though in a much more aggravated form.

After the weekend on Monday morning, I went at the appointed time 12:00 PM to the Syrian Embassy. I had since found out that there was no Iraqi Embassy on Cyprus - something that was inevitably going to throw a monkey-wrench into my plans of going overland to India through the Arab Countries - but I thought perhaps I could find such an Embassy in Beirut (there had been one on Cyprus before the Qasim Regime and I did not find out until much later that I never would have been able to go that way, anyhow, for they sent all visa applications to Baghdad and the time usually allotted for such transactions was three months) or, if need be, I could go overland through Syria to Turkey or Iran and to Tehran again (somewhere I had been and did not wish to go to again).

Nevertheless I was determined to get the Syrian visa in any case.



When I arrived at the Embassy, there were the usual two or three Germans ahead of me and they were given their passports, visa-ed and stamped, without any difficulty. Then the petite, little well-groomed girl at the desk turned to me and said: "Oh, Mr. Eisenman, there has been some trouble with your visa. Would you mind stepping inside and seeing the Consul for a moment?"

I had expected this sort of thing. This was more like it. "No, not at all."

She smiled and said, "This way, please," and conducted me politely into the Consul. As at the Lebanese one, he was a spare perfectly-tailored, little man with the black moustache and sharp Arab features - and perfectly correct. It was a big room and he sat behind a large metal tarpaulin-topped desk and I sat opposite him on a metal cushioned, armless chair.

He fingered my passport and the papers I had made out nervously and then he said, looking up at me hesitantly, "Mr. Eisenman, ah-h-h," this latter with a long pause, "You are German aren't you?"

I smiled knowing exactly what he meant, "Why of course."

Seeming relieved, he too then smiled: "Ah-h-h, you can prove that, can't you?"

Again I knew exactly what he meant and without any hesitation, I pulled out my one-time already-used letter from the Archdeacon of Cyprus. Looking happy, he took it and read it over carefully as there was not that much to read. This time he seemed very relieved. As I said, it was not a question of whether I was Jewish or not. He had told me exactly what I should say right from the start. In the Middle East, it was all a question of front. He had the right front now and that was

all that mattered. Of course, if you gave yourself away, then that was your fault and they had nothing they could do except turn you in.

"Umm, I may keep this, can't I?" he said in the politest possible way. He must have been very concerned to want to go to such lengths.

But in Syria, at the moment, it was a time of trouble and they were having *putsches* from one Party to the other.

"I would like to send it to Damascus." He wanted to do everything he could to protect himself in case there was any trouble.

"I would like to let you have it," I said in the politest manner possible and with a little smile, knowing I had him - at least somewhat, "but it is the only one I have and you know, if I do that, I will be stopped very often on the way (there were rumored to be several road-blocks up along the 60-mile road from Beirut to Damascus because of the *putsches*) and everywhere they will want to know the same things you do. If I give it to you, I will have nothing to show them."

Then he stopped for a moment and thought. We both sat thinking and there was silence in the room.

Suddenly he picked up my papers. "All right," he said and, with a quick motion, stamped them, closed my passport, gave them back to me, and I had my visa to Syria.

I ran out of the Embassy utterly exhilarated. I had my visa to Syria and it took some moments to regain possession of myself and calm down.

There was nothing left for me to do in Nicosia, as the Iraqi Embassy didn't exist, except get my tickets and take care of my transportation arrangements and then I was free to go out in the countryside. I had some friends in Beirut who were going to entertain me and wrote them letters immediately to let them know I had been successful and was coming. This I

did quite directly.

There was an Italian Boat leaving in four days, coming from Athens and going to Lebanon from Limassol - they left every week - a lovely seaport along the Southern Coast of the Island which tasted of the same limes as its name, on which I booked passage, "deck passage" - a thing common on the Mediterranean where the voyages were short and where one slept on the deck and brought one's own food. So I was going to take the same voyage I had just come upon - the same way and the same time, one evening - only this time to Lebanon.

The Island of Cyprus is set out strategically in the North-East Corner of the Mediterranean Sea about 60 miles south of Turkey and about 200 miles west of the Syrian Lebanese Coast-Line. It is strategic because it is situated above the mouth of the Suez Canal and, not only the British thought of it as such, but it has always been looked upon like this, and perhaps that is why the Crusaders and after them the Venetians and finally the Turks were so anxious to possess it. It is a jumping-off point for the whole of the Middle East - it itself is not actually in the Middle East but a jumping-off point to it - and whoever possesses it goes a long way towards possessing this part of the waters of the Mediterranean Sea.

It is laid out in the shape of a panhandle with the long end stretching northeast towards the Turkish-Syrian border, actually the present-day Turkish seaport of Iskanderun - formerly the Hellenistic/Syrian seaport of Alexandretta (Iskander and Alexander being, of course, equivalent). The Eastern end of the Island is mostly flat and sandy, as I have already pictured it, and it is only on the Western end that it becomes rugged and wild, which is perhaps why I was attracted there.

The whole Island is dotted with seaports - the only really land-locked

city dominating the Central Plateau, probably for defense purposes as we said, being Nicosia. To the southeast, about 45 miles from Nicosia and facing Lebanon, is the famous old Crusader Seaport of Famagusta - its castle still standing - known for where King Richard the Lion-Hearted was imprisoned after the Third Crusade.

To the south, on the Southern Coast, about 45 miles below Nicosia - as we have already said - is the luxurious seaport of Limassol and to the north, about 25 miles above Nicosia, is the castle-dominated little town of Kyrenia, famous for its walled-in harbor which has now been turned into a yacht basin and is a tourist attraction. Really the main seaport, too, for commerce directly with the Turkish Mainland, it is here where the young semi-rich from Nicosia squire their girl friends or tourist pick-ups.

Also scattered throughout the Island at most of the major cities are contingents of the British Army and Royal Air Force - Her Majesty's Forces Cyprus - the Royal Air Force being at an airbase just outside of Nicosia and the main contingent, the Army, being at an artificial little piece of urban sprawl known as Episcobi and set somewhat above Limassol along the Southern Coast on the way to a beautiful old Greek ruin atop a hill overlooking the Sea called the Temple of Apollo.

Along this Coastline too, some fifteen miles further on, are those two jagged rocks, jutting upright out of the Sea, which on the authority of Homer's *Odyssey*, are called "The Birthplace of Aphrodite". This whole Southern Coastline, therefore, is called "Paphos" - the name Homer used - the actual modern town of that name being some 40 miles further on, about 80 miles west of Limassol along the Southern Coast, the Southwest Corner of the Island.

It is here in the Western Part that the Island is most breath-taking and,

central to all of this, are the Trodos Highlands, a small ridge of mountains running north and south - the central peak of which being Trodos itself, a mountain high enough to support snow almost all year round and used by members of Her Majesty's Forces as a Winter Resort for skiing and hiking.

In the Northwest Corner of the Island, about 40 miles north of Paphos - the Island being only this wide at this point - is the town of Polis and the last of this series of towns which encircle the Coastline of Cyprus. Near it is the other site of these 'Love Locations,' perhaps best pictured as it was by me with "her Leopards and her Pards" and named by the Venetians therefore, probably in the Fifteenth Century, "the *Fontana Amorosa*".

I set out on a bus going northwest out of Nicosia some two days later after relaxing and straightening out most of my affairs. I had only two days left before the boat, I had contracted to sail upon, was to leave from Limassol on its way to Lebanon and I wanted to see all these things: Aphrodite's Fountains, Aphrodite's Birth-Place, to say nothing of the rugged Western End of the Island, and I thought this the best way to do it, by going north out along the Island's Northwest Coast to the comparatively unknown city of Polis.

People could tell me little about it - only that I would have to hurry if I were to get down to my ship in time and then down along the Western Coast to Paphos and around along the Southern Coastline, where Aphrodite's Birth-Place was legended by Homer to have been, to Limassol. The bus which I chose to go on was a Greek one, the only ones that I knew of at the moment. Later I found out that there were two types of buses, Greek buses which were green and only stopped at Greek Villages, racing through the Turkish ones at breakneck speed and in a cloud of dust, and Turkish ones which were red, invariably a little

older though both were of the old, squat, engine-in-the-front school-bus variety, and only stopped at Turkish Villages.

There was only one bus which went all the way to Polis each day - though only eighty five miles, it took four hours - one which came in the morning and went back in the afternoon. I took this bus and it was filled with wizened Greek peasants, men and women - the women in black shawls and dresses - the ever-present brace of chickens and other assorted animals and packages on the floor. Other things were open on the roof, including my pack.

The bus went at breakneck speed through the Turkish Villages, as I said, the driver leaning on the horn, a cloud of smoke choking anyone's lungs who happened to be in the vicinity, and Lord help anything or anyone that happened to get in the way. Plus, we seemed to stop interminably at every Greek Village we happened to pass with only a few people getting on and though most on already were going all the way to Polis having done their marketing for the day in the capital Nicosia.

At one village especially we stopped and everyone got off next to the town square and its well, the dust from the bus settling slowly from the air, and we all sat in little fenced-in cafes next to its vineyards sipping tea and some people quickly even had some of the ever-present kebabs or yoghurt. Then we all piled back into the bus and we were on our way again.

So it took us about two hours to cover the forty miles to the Sea and it was close to 6:30 and the sun was already lengthening along the waves when we got there. From here on in, it was all uphill but there were fewer stops and it was all along the Sea. This was the area that was fought over and changed hands so many times during the recent

fighting between the Greeks and the Turks. Further back, towards the Trodos Mountains, it was also the area, as I was to find out later, that was the home of most of the terrorist activity during the time of the British.

But at this time, the Coastline was lovely. It was like Southern California along the Big Sur area, but more beautiful with no ugly signs or sights of modern living and convenience to mar the beauty. There were only the farmhouses evenly spaced along the Sea and a few telephone wires, and the sky was blue and the Sea was blue and the sun shone smartly on the sea. Here the mountains tumbled down like in California too in yellows and greens to the Sea, but along the Coast was a flat area where farmhouses could be built with little plots of ground and the ever-present beach.

We climbed up the hill to the ruins of what had once been another Grecian Temple, this one I believe dedicated to Zeus, and reached the summit just as the sun was beginning to set along the Sea and darkness beginning to approach. From here we raced the final 30 miles to Polis.

As it turned out the fellow next to me spoke a few words of German and a few words of English and by this time we had struck up a conversation and I had become quite accepted on the bus. He pulled out the pictures in his wallet and he showed me those of himself and his young wife and two lovely children. He was a wizened sort of man with frayed dirty shirt and tie, open at the neck, and needing a shave. It was difficult to tell how he had learned his German and English. At one moment he seemed to be in the German Army during the War and an English prisoner. He even showed me a picture of himself in a German soldier's uniform and the next moment, watching my reaction, he seemed to be in the British Army.

But, whatever the case may have been, he seemed a decent-enough chap and, as it turned out, he lived in a little village a little higher up in the mountains about five or ten miles this side of Polis and he wrote down his name and invited me to come and visit him if I ever happened to be in this neighborhood again or if I had more time this time - a thing I assured him I did not expect to be. Still, I thanked him all the same for his offer. He got off the bus waving and smiling with about ten other people - as I said, about ten miles this side of Polis. It was just about dark by this time and I supposed they were going to walk up the little distance to the village from the road.

We arrived in Polis about ten minutes later, almost four hours from the time we started out, and everyone tumbled off the bus exhausted. As it turned out, there was only one hotel in Polis, a hotel which was almost empty now and only did business during the Summer in the tourist season but which they thought would open up a room for me; and, after getting their assurances that they would stop for me the next morning and they were true to their word - the bus left at six in the morning and the hotel was on the edge of the village on the road to Paphos, the only road in town - I trundled off over to the hotel.

The town was pleasant enough, a row of cafés along a street, and they did open a room for me, one with a balcony (all the rooms in the hotel, as I was later to find out, had balconies) which overlooked the rest of the village itself tumbling down through shrubbery and a few trees to the Sea. After I had dropped off my things at the hotel and lingered long over a very welcome dinner, I really began to feel at home in this little village.

A few old men sat in chairs along the walls by the sidewalks, smoking pipes and, in every café and every bar I went in, people were



extraordinarily friendly and bought me drinks and coffee. I felt I had found where I wished to stay for a few days and no longer wished to go on. Being fatigued from having traveled all the previous day, I felt I was rushing things and I did not like to rush.

However the next morning after passing a fitful night, tossing and turning, trying to decide whether to go on or not or whether to put it off to the following week - the boats left regularly every week - just when I was hoping the bus had forgotten me and I was going, I heard the fitful roar of its engine as it climbed the incline out of town and then the stop and the shrill blast of its horn. I groaned to myself, "Oh no", in embarrassment and then the horn again and then the sound on the stairs of the little Greek Cypriot girl:

"Monsieur, monsieur, your bus is here."

There was nothing I could do. I could not tell them I was not going. So I jumped up, threw some water on my face, threw on my few clothes and placed the other few articles I had at the top of my pack. They were all standing there, waiting and smiling. They had fulfilled their trust and I could not disappoint them. The bus was standing partially filled, its exhaust smoking in the cold morning air - a bit of cool water vapor hanging over everything. They threw my pack unceremoniously on the top of the bus over the tarpaulin with the rest of the luggage and I was hustled in amid the good-bye waves of the people watching and we were off.

All the way down on the road to Paphos, as I tried to get back my consciousness and awake from such a sudden series of events, I regretted the combination of circumstances and my decision which had made me leave this pleasant little village. As the bus climbed higher and higher into the richly wooded hills overlooking the Western Coast, it was cold and all

around in the valleys, among the trees, and over the blue, now cold, Sea with the rising sun sparkling off it, hung the cold mist but not warming it.

As more and more people got off leaving the bus, leaving it cold and empty, and all the way to Paphos, which took about an hour at the rate the bus was going - we stopped once in a deserted village that might have been right out of Renaissance Italy with a Byzantine-style Church, a town square, and an actual well - I regretted my decision and the few moments of extra peace and relaxation I had missed. But by this time the sun had grown higher in the sky and burned away the mist, not only from the land but from the water as well and, when we arrived in Paphos, the day was warming up and sparkling - one of those rich early summer days so common in the Mediterranean Area.

Paphos was down in the valley, a pleasant-enough town about a mile from the edge of the Sea with an old seaport near the Sea and, by the time we arrived, the it was already awake with old rattling trucks clogging its narrow streets with commerce and produce - the cries of the vegetable men hawking their wares and the fruit men with fruit laid out in shiny new rows of peaches, plums, and grapes, and the fishermen with their fish newly brought from the Sea, glittering in the morning light.

After having a sort of breakfast-lunch, I took the same bus which was continuing on to Limassol and we raced along the Southern Coast the 40 miles or so of straightaway road. Here there were no trees and the land rolled gently down to the Sea in a soft round bluff. Overlooking it lushly green and out at Sea, one could see as far as the eye could see for miles and miles - only that lovely blue Sea covered by the sun and the soft azure sky.

We passed by the fabled "Birthplace of Venus" where Aphrodite was legended to have come out of the foam mixed with the Sea on a seashell and it was

truly one of the most lovely places I have ever seen. The road at this point dips down to the level of the Sea and there is a tawny grey, sand beach. When we passed by, there was a Volkswagen parked on the beach near the rocks and the people - they seemed to be Germans and mostly women at that - had evidently slept the night there and were just getting up, washing and cleaning up down by the water.

I wanted to jump off the bus and join them. Two oblong-shaped rocks, one larger than the other, of yellowish-grey sandstone jutted out from the Sea about 10 yards from the shore and here, which made the scene all the more remarkable, the Sea changed four colors from the white foam as it came up on the shore to a transparent turquoise green, to a purple further out where it met the azure blue of the cool Mediterranean Sea. Homer was indeed a genius - or those Greeks from whom he took the legend - to have chosen this place.

The bus arrived at Limassol around 10:30 in the morning. Limassol was also set in a lushly vegetated, lowland basin far below the rolling bluffs we had already driven along. As my boat was not to leave until about 4:30 in the afternoon, though boarding went on at 2:30, I spent most of my time on the benches there and lounging along the waterfront. There was a promenade draped with palm trees and a cool breeze blowing in from the Sea.

Towards afternoon, I sat down at one of the white, linen-covered restaurants which dotted the promenade and had myself a long and what turned out to be over-expensive dinner while I tried to forget my sudden departure that morning - but by this time I was already getting cold feet. I had read in the newspapers that there had been more trouble in Syria and there were roadblocks up all along the road from Beirut to Damascus. Thinking of what I had just gone through in Nicosia at the Arab Embassies, I did not like that at all.

When, on the quay waiting to get on the ship which was by this time anchored some 250 yards out at Sea - gleaming white - and looking at the other passengers who were all Arab - mostly young Arab students returning from Europe - I became very nervous indeed. Suddenly I thought of all the things I had in my pack which were of Israel origin - my letters of introduction and mail, my sandals, my toothpaste and shoe polish, the laundry stickers on my clothes.

When I had passed through customs and had been stamped in my passport out of Cyprus and was standing along the wooden pier waiting for the launch to come and take us out to the ship, I remembered the book I had in my pack which I had bought in Tel Aviv for learning Hebrew and, becoming frightened, I suddenly pulled it out from the bottom beneath all the clothes and, finding a more deserted part of the pier, I began ripping it up and throwing it into the Sea but the pages refused to sink and just sat there floating amid the green slime around the wooden pilings. Much to my chagrin, at that moment a group of Arab students came by chattering and stood by the rail looking out at the sea and there looking up at them from the water, blinking in the sun, were my pages in Hebrew characters. I immediately disappeared for I did not want them to remember who I was.

The launch took us out to the boat in groups and, as I began to talk to people on the deck and make friends, looking for a place to settle my things, I began to become very frightened indeed. What was the point of all this? I would never be able to get through. Certainly it would be nice to see my friends in Lebanon and be received by them and I had already told them I was coming. But was that the only reason I was going? Even if I got through to Damascus without any trouble, which was doubtful, I would still not be able to go on to Baghdad or further and I would have to go up through Turkey and

over the mountains into Iran and Teheran anyhow. And suppose they caught me? Suppose they found some of the things in my pack, which they would certainly be checking with all those roadblocks - I might get past one of them but not all.

The Arabs are crazy about things like that - they would cry, "Spy! Spy!" For them, there would be no other reason why I was coming. I could just picture myself trying to convince them that I was on a pleasure trip to India. They would throw me in jail and throw away the key and who knows how long they would keep me there - it would depend on any political reasons they might have for the whole thing. The important thing was getting on to India. Seeing the Arab Countries would be nice but getting on to India was what I had to do.

This was but a dangerous whim and I was testing myself. Besides I had not yet had or seen enough of Cyprus. I had not done all the things I had wanted to do on Cyprus. I had not slept by Aphrodite's Rocks and waited for her to come to me - she was going to come to me. I had not seen The Fontana Amorosa, her Fountains, and I had left Polis before I was ready. I had been rushed out of Polis that morning and it was not right. Nothing was right - I did not like to be rushed like that and all that could come of it would be negative.

I had to get off the ship. It was not right that I go today. I did not like to begin a thing in that manner when I was not ready and besides the ships left every week. I could go again next week if I wished and by that time I would be more relaxed and it would be better.

But did I have the courage? I awoke from these musings to see that most of the people were already on the ship and they seemed to be completing their last check-ins.

I had to have the courage. I could not go on like this and besides there was so much I had missed in Cyprus. I sprung up and, taking my pack and all my things, I went to see the mate. I could not waver now - everything depended on it.

"I have to get off the ship," I said.

He looked at me surprised. He was all dressed in the white - so common among sea officers of all nations - with the short pants and white short-length jacket.

"Why?" he said.

"I have just remembered. I left some things in Nicosia. I have to go back and get them."

"Are you sure?" he asked.

"Yes, I'm sure," I said.

He looked at me questioningly and then convinced of the firmness of my resolve, he said, "It's going to be very difficult. We're just about ready to go. Everything's already checked through, but come on."

The Customs launch was still tied up alongside the ship and a few Cypriot Harbor Officials were getting ready to leave. After a series of consultations where I was motioned to several times, they finally decided it was possible to take me in with them. As far as my visa was concerned, the passport people already having packed up and gone in - mine already having been invalidated - it was finally decided that the Harbor Master could just cross off the cancellation.

Suddenly, I found myself in the speed launch. It was smaller this time and the shadows were lengthened and it was cooler and the spray came over the side and into our faces. Once inside the Customs Shed, they re-opened the counters especially for me. I had already been refunded my ticket which

fortunately enough on these runs were good every week and they checked me back through with a smile and laughter telling me how fortunate I was that they had not already gone home - and suddenly I found myself outside the Customs Shed and the fence once more on dry land and in Cyprus. I could not believe eyes.

Events had moved too fast for me to even comprehend what had happened. I only wanted to get myself a hotel room and not look at that white silhouette, which had been my ship, out on the Sea to possibly regret what I had done and to recover my sense of direction and relax. I found a hotel a few blocks further down from the shed along the promenade - a Turkish Hotel, spotlessly clean - and all I wanted to do was to go inside and go to sleep. Later I saw pictures of this region during the fighting in Downtown Limassol, when the Turks were bottled up in the Harbor Area, and this hotel was completely demolished.

I was badly shaken by what had just happened to me and I wanted to regain control of myself once more. I did not know whether what had happened to me was right or wrong. I did not know whether what I had done was right or wrong. I was ashamed of my weakness and cowardice and did not know if it was justified or not. I did know that I had to write letters to my friends in Lebanon and tell them I was not coming and that, if everything went all right, I could possibly still come next week. I had all this time but there was nothing to be done about it now. I just wanted to forget it and start over again.

It was done now and that was that. That evening, when I went out for dinner, I found the neighborhood very sympathetic. I now had another week to kill on Cyprus and I had plenty of time. I could go back along the Southern Coastline and sleep under the Rocks - I planned to sleep the following

evening under those Rocks, the Rocks of Aphrodite, anyhow - and who knows what wonderful things would come to me under those Rocks? I could go back to Paphos and see that city and then spend the two or three days I had not spent and had wanted to spend in Polis.

The next morning was beautifully clear with a fresh, cool breeze blowing in from the Sea. I rose early, shouldered my pack, and set off up the road in the direction of out-of-town and Paphos. I was feeling better and had almost forgotten the embarrassment of what had happened the day before - at least I was looking forward to what was coming. It was 8:30 in the morning. I didn't like to start much earlier than that if I was going to hitchhike and I was going to hitchhike - this was to get the feel of the Island - I was going to hitchhike around the Island and take my time, and go back to Polis!

People were just finishing their chores and coming out on the streets as I walked past the porches and frame houses. I chose a place a little bit out of the city but still in its environs, a little bit beyond where the road from the city met the main Highway coming from Larnaca and Nicosia so I could take advantage of both.

I placed my pack down on the road and waited. This was, as I was presently to find out, in the middle of a Turkish Suburb of the city for I was to wait a long time as there was not too much traffic on the road and whatever little traffic there was, was not stopping. Soon I became on nodding acquaintance with many of the people in the neighborhood and saw the children going off to school and, as the sun climbed higher in the sky, I went to several of the inns to buy orange soda or coke. There was a school in the neighborhood - a newly-built fairly modern Government one - and, after I had been standing for quite awhile, about two hours at about 11:00, suddenly a



bunch of police arrived and lined themselves up along the roadway and I was forced onto the sidewalk.

"What's going on?" I asked one of them.

"Vice-President is coming".

"Who?" I said.

"Faisal Kutchik, Turkish Vice-President," he said proudly to me.

I sat back to watch the fun. This was going to be fun.

Presently a group of army trucks, American-style of World War II-vintage, came rolling down the road from the direction of Nicosia.

"Turkish Army", the policeman next to me beamed, as he stood at attention. I watched the trucks roll by one after another, about eight of them. At the wheel of each was a driver dressed in the familiar Turkish Army Uniform - a fur hat and olive green shirt with red collar insignia - and next to him was a companion with that usual raw-boned, guileless, almost-toothy look of the Turkish peasant, red-faced and open-hearted.

I had been in Turkey before and I knew that look well. There was no mistaking it - a good, straightforward, stubborn (almost-courageous) look, but utterly simple. He was capable of doing anything, of following any order - this was the stuff which built and preserved the Ottoman Empire for almost 500 years - but of also bearing unspeakable humiliation.

As the policeman later explained to me and which I knew something of anyhow, according to the Armistice Agreement signed by the British after the Disturbances, there were to be two contingents of foreign troops stationed on Cyprus besides the British - one Turkish and 600 strong to protect the interests of the Turkish Community; the other Greek, 1500 to protect the interests of the Greek Community. They were looked upon with unmistakable pride by the respective inhabitants of the Island and, rightly so, because

in the end they were their only guarantee of safety.

The trucks turned off the Highway sharply to the left down the road from which I had just come and then left again over to an open field followed by the people, running. The policeman I was talking to turned out to be a Motorcycle Officer and spoke fairly passable English.

"You are Turkish?" I said.

"Yes," he nodded. I should have known anyhow by the straightforwardness of his gaze and its enthusiasm - its utter guilelessness.

"Where are they going?"

"They are going to the field by the school. President Kutchik is coming to inspect the school, the Turkish School."

I should explain now that at the time - since changed by the Greek Cypriots - there were two Leaders of Cyprus, one for the Greek Community, it being in the majority, the President Archbishop Makarios, and the other for the Turkish Community, they being in the minority, the Vice-President, Faisal Kutchik. Though the latter theoretically had a veto on everything the former did and all decisions were to be made jointly, in practice since that time it hasn't worked out that way.

"Those are Turkish Soldiers?" I asked. I wanted to get him talking.

"Yes," he said proudly again. "There are six hundred of them on Cyprus."

"That's not very many," I said.

"Yes," he said, "But they are very good. One Turkish soldier worth ten Greeks." He said this with such conviction that I believed him but there was a ruefulness about his answers - a sullen repressed frustration.

"If they let them go," he said, his face brightening up with pride, "we would need no others. They would have the whole thing cleaned up in

a matter of days."

"Yes," I said.

I believed him, not literally but in the spirit in which he said it. There was something so pathetic about them in their predicament, hounded into small sections in every town.

At that moment a group of three cars, long black sedans, came down the road and turned off right in front of me down the road back towards the school. The people started cheering and waving red Turkish flags and ran after the car. I could see Vice-President Kutchik sitting round and squat in the car - a pleasant-looking man, simple, with a deferential expression on his face.

The band, which had evidently been in the trucks and come with him, started playing and the soldiers, who were by this time all lined up and in formation, presented arms and started marching in a goose-like gait. For a long time there was much commotion over at the field, what with the soldiers, the sound of the band striking up now and then, the people standing in groups alternately shouting and silent, and the men disappearing within the school. But after awhile all was over and the whole thing disappeared as quickly as it had come, and life went back to normal and I resumed my hitchhiking.

At about one 1:00 in the afternoon, after standing there for about four and a half hours and becoming very discouraged indeed, I finally got a ride with an English technician and his family who were stationed with the British Army at Episcopi, further down the road, and so I was in for my next adventure. He lived on the outskirts of Limassol in a small house with a garden - he later even gave me his address and invited me to come and visit him and his wife if I ever happened by that way again - and commuted back

and forth to work the twenty miles or so to the British Base.

He was taking his four children and two of his neighbor's to see the Temple of Apollo on the Limassol-Episcopi Road and later he was going on to the Base, so I went along for the ride. As I said, the Temple of Apollo, the ruins of an old Greek Temple and former Monastery for students learning to be in the Priesthood of Apollo, was situated on the bluff of a hill overlooking the whole lowlands where the present-day city of Limassol stood and the Coastline of Paphos and the Sea as far as the eye could see. The Greeks were evidently masters at choosing the most scenic spots on the Mediterranean for their Temples and religious shrines and people from all over the Hellenic World probably used to come here to study.

Whereas modern man and the modern Greek, in particular, builds his cities in the lowlands with the accompanying level of spiritual awe, the Ancient Greek built his Temples in the highlands and this was undoubtedly accompanied by a highness of religious feeling and religious awe. We stayed at the Temple for about an hour and a half and his children enjoyed themselves immensely, running in and out of the ruined stones, the grass and shrubs growing in and out of them, by which time we had become fairly good friends. He then took me down to Episcopi to show me where he worked and what the Base looked like.

This was a whole Community of British soldiers, families, and such-like completely cut off from the rest of Cyprus - with even black leather-jacketed, motorcycle boys (they call "Rockers" today), who were off-duty young British soldiers. My friend worked in a group of temporary, pre-fabricated-type barracks painted white, the grass around them well kept. After showing me around his office - he was in electronics - he suggested I go for a swim. Knowing that I was anxious to be on my way, he still suggested

that I go down to the Enlisted Man's and Officer's Beach where he would take me and have a swim before I left. I was so fascinated by his offer that I accepted.

He took me down to an red-clay area off the Highway where there were playing fields and other things and, beyond which, two sets of shacks for officers and otherwise. This was the restricted British Army Beach, fenced off and enclosed from the rest of Cyprus with its beaches everywhere, where they could bring their own little world with them. He left me there after seeing to making it possible for me to get into the Officer's Bath House.

On the Beach were two areas, one roped off from the other - the Officers and the Enlisted Men - and everywhere was piped British rock-n-roll music of the time. The Officers had a bar, around which they sat in short pants and long socks, ordering their drinks while the Enlisted Men had a "Wimpy Bar" where lemonade, wimpy burgers, and the like were served. The English had brought their own little world with them - here to the charm of the Mediterranean Sea.

Everywhere were English voices and accents: "Hey love, Hi duck" and white skin and blond hair - particularly the women that freckly skin that tans so badly and reddens so easily. The Beach was littered with papers and empty soda bottles and beer cans and, of course, there were the signs in English and the fences further away. One could tell the Officers from the Enlisted Men by their, on-the-whole thinner and more effete frames or the kind of drinks they held and the way they held them while lying on the sand talking to their women.

I stayed for only a little while, enough time to get my body wet a few times and see the young men on-the-make looking after the young girls - perhaps daughters of the sergeants or sergeant-majors. Then I was off

and walking up the road, back out to the Highway once again. I had had enough of England and felt it was a shame to ruin this part of the Mediterranean like that.

By this time it was getting late, about 4:30 in the afternoon. At the place where I stood on the road overlooking the football fields and perhaps the drilling ground, there were mostly trucks that were passing and it was not too long before I got a ride with a truck that was going all the way to Paphos.

We were off and running, this time on the straightaway to Paphos, and we passed by the two barrel-shaped rocks sticking out of the Sea at the site of Aphrodite's Birth-Place.

Should I get off here? This was the place where I had seen the Volkswagen stopped and the German girls camping. I had wanted to. Who knows what would happen to me if I slept under Aphrodite's Rocks that night - and yet it was early and what would I do with my time before darkness set in and I was ready to go to sleep. I wanted to stop him, yet I did not have the courage and could not tell the driver to stop and say I wanted to get off - and we were on our way and running.

All the way to Paphos I regretted this and yet we were free and running with the wind rushing by the car - the late afternoon sun, the gently-rolling, grass-covered hills - and I soon forgot about it becoming exhilarated by the drive. But when I got to Paphos, the question came up in my mind again, should I go back or should I not? It was much later now and there would not be so much time to spend by myself on the beach near the Rocks before darkness set in. Yet I did not and set to work looking for a hotel instead.

On the outskirts of Paphos we had passed a car accident in which two cars

had knocked each other off the road, one having overturned - not surprising in view of the speed at which some of these vehicles were traveling - and the driver of my car became very agitated as he recognized the car as having been the one in which his mother had been traveling.

He became very agitated but, as it turned out, there was not too much to worry about as she had been taken to the hospital and there was nothing wrong with her except a hurt back. Here I got off and my driver proceeded on in his anxiety to the hospital. It was here that I actually could have turned around and gone back to Aphrodite's Rocks but it was getting late - the sun going down in the West - and I did not but rather proceeded on with another ride into Paphos.

In Paphos I looked around for a hotel room and found one near the Central Square of the town next to a church. The hotel I found had a courtyard in the back and a spiral staircase that overlooked the courtyard. I was given an outside room on the roof of one of the levels. From it, one could see a good part of the city and down to the port area - an old wharf with one or two boats tied to it and the Sea in the background.

I was very tired and rested for a long while. Later I went out for dinner and had a coffee in a cafe, one of the biggest cafes in the town and one of the most authentic I had ever seen. It consisted of a large hall with a long bar with men sitting at the tables either talking or playing one of the characteristic Greek Cypriot card or board games. On the walls all around were great colored portraits of Greek mountain heroes with long sock-like hats on their heads - some with gun-belts crossed over their chests, some dressed in the old uniforms that seemed to resemble French Zouaves.

Of course, there were the characteristic portraits of Archbishop Makarios and General Grivas at one end of the hall, flanking a large blue and white Greek flag.

But, strangest of all, on an opposite corner of the room between some portraits of other Greek heroes, was a portrait of the poet Byron who had died for Greek freedom (so the popular story goes though actually died of sickness he had incurred during the campaign).

The following morning I rose late and in no hurry, listening to the flanging bells of the churches, I packed my things leisurely. Paphos was lovely and peaceful, there being hardly anyone on the streets - it being a Festival Day - and I set off for the road North. I had made it - I was going back to Polis!

I took the road out of town and sat for awhile on a concrete piling where it began to rise uphill. Presently a little truck came along the almost-deserted road and we were off. It chugged faithfully up the hill and plodded along in the higher atmosphere at about thirty-five miles an hour as we overlooked the Sea, which was now on the left, and the tree-covered valleys. We arrived in Polis about forty-five minutes later.

The town was lazily sleeping in the mid-afternoon sun and I dropped my pack off in the lobby of the hotel I had stayed in before and sat against a wall outside in the sun - a little further into town closer to the central promenade - with some old men for awhile. They recognized me and nodded, and we sipped coffee together outside.

A little while later - it was already about 1:30 in the afternoon - I decided to go and look for something to eat. After all the commotion of the previous days, I was glad to be back in Polis and happy no matter what happened. I walked down the main street past all the cafes and, as I went by a Turkish Restaurant I had seen before when I was in Polis, I saw a group of girls - three of them - sitting at a central table in the restaurant, drinking wine, talking in louder than usual tones in English, and evidently having a good time.

As I had not seen any "Western" girls for quite a long time - I mean girls from out of the Middle East with whom one could perhaps talk - I went in and sat down thinking



perhaps I might get in a conversation with them. They were sitting with a fourth person, a man in his late thirties, well-dressed, but evidently from the surrounding area. After having some food, sure enough, true to my prognosis, I did get into conversation with them and then they invited me over to sit down at their table and join them.

They turned out to be English secretaries in their late twenties - early thirties working for the British Embassy in Nicosia, with the usual more-or-less frustrated character of that breed, and the gentleman with them a Turkish dentist of moderate means living in the area here in Polls. They were on vacation for a couple of days and he was showing them around. They were going to be going back to Nicosia that afternoon after the Festival had and ended in time to begin work the next day.

I was not the only one apparently who was watching them or who had gotten the idea of talking to them. This was not surprising owing to the considerable amount of noise they were making while talking and the rare spectacle, at least on Cyprus, of seeing women out drinking together like this - not to mention being foreign and being just a little bit high. Almost imperceptively, a group of young Cypriot men had begun to filter into the restaurant and take up seats from where they could watch the show. They grew in numbers, so much so that by the time one had become conscious of them, they were sitting around in all the tables facing the table of the girls and making no pretense whatsoever at eating but just watching the spectacle before them with more than unusual interest.

They could do this, probably, because they turned out to be Greek Cypriots and, as this was a Turkish Restaurant, they had absolutely no concern for the feelings of the proprietors - in this case, they being in the majority and the management being utterly powerless in the face of them. They were the usual Greek Cypriot young men with black hair wavy and thick upon their

heads, the usual sort of mocking or scoffing grin on their faces, and the ever-present black moustache above their lips.

By this time the girls had become conscious of the spectacle they were making, a thing not done by "proper" girls in this part of the world, and they began to tone themselves down. But the damage had already been done and it was still taking them some moments too to recover from their tipsiness. The Turkish dentist by this time too had become extremely nervous in view of the delicate position he was in, he being Turk and the escort of these girls and the spectators being Greek; and it was decided, after attempting to sit for a bit more calmly in hopes that the young men would disperse, that we should go back to the hotel and pack their bags - the same hotel I was staying in - as I said, the only one in town.

They had a car and they were driving back to Nicosia by themselves. They were late anyhow and they wanted to be off, so that they wouldn't have to drive back in the dark. I was invited, of course, to come along with them.

We got up and paid the bills and, almost en masse, the men got up as well - they were by this time of assorted ages between their twenties and early thirties and there were between fifteen or twenty of them - and followed us out of the restaurant. They made no bones about the fact that they were following us, so evidently at home did they feel in this place, and they followed us right to our hotel but they did not stop there.

There was no one at the desk in the hall. Still I doubt if this would have mattered in any case - there was never anyone there anyhow. They followed us up the stairs like a troop of noisy horses right up the two flights to the girls' rooms. By this time the girls were becoming very anxious, too, as one could hear the men outside the door in the hall, fumbling and tramping about and talking to each other at the top of their voices.

We sat there in the room for awhile hoping that they would go away, the girls' clothes and various other articles strewn around, their suitcases on the beds almost packed. The dentist had become very nervous indeed. He listened to their conversation out in the hall and he said the men were thinking of following the girls back to Nicosia that night, since the girls had a car and were driving back by themselves - one of the vagrancies of Western women having cars. I was sitting on the bed not saying very much but I was growing very disturbed indeed as well.

Several of the men suddenly appeared on the balcony outside the window. As in Paphos, the balcony in the back of the hotel went all around to every room and they had gone in some other room and gotten out there and were jostling each other around out there on the balcony to get a better view. With that and the sound of them thumping around against the walls out in the hall, I became very angry indeed and did not wish to take this anymore.

I went out in the hall to see what was happening and I was met by icy stares from the men who were huddled together - about nine or ten of them out in the corridor. We said nothing to each other and I looked them over and down the rest of the corridor, the other rooms which they had entered, and then I went back inside without a word.

The women had become very animated indeed. It was getting late and they wished to be back in Nicosia before nightfall. The dentist was staying here in Polis and they wanted me to drive with them back to Nicosia - in any event, they invited me to stay with them when I came to Nicosia - but I had come all the way back to Polls to see Aphrodite's Fountains, which I planned to do the following day, and I wasn't going to miss them now. Besides, if the young men followed them in the car and forced them off the road or something, it would be worse with me in the car than with me not in the car. The women

could take care of themselves better by themselves.

But still my blood was up and I felt I had to do something. The women were going to go anyhow and I told them I would stay behind and see what I could do to stop these men. They took up their bags with the help of the Turkish dentist and, with that, they went out into the hall. The men broke apart to let them pass and we went down the stairs out of the hotel to the street. The men, for a moment shocked into immobility, followed clumping down the stairs like the same stampede of wild horses. The women turned left with their bags with the Turkish dentist and went down the street to where their car was parked. I said that I would see what I could do here with the men.

When they came down the stairs bursting out into the street looking to the right and the left to see which way the women had gone and then turning to follow them, I stepped out in front of them.

"Where do you men think you're going?" I said. It was a foolish thing to do. It was right out of the old Western Cowboy Movies. The men understood English or a form of English, most of them having gone to English-speaking Government-sponsored Schools.

"Get out of our way. Get out of the way," they jostled and shouted and attempted to brush past me. "We're going to follow the girls."

"The girls don't want you. The girls are going away. Leave the girls alone." I caught them up. "Don't follow the girls."

"Get out of our way," they said - this time angrier, taking notice of me for the first time. "The girls are ours. You don't belong here. You are came are the interloper. The girls were originally with us. The girls are ours."

I had to think of something to say quickly. They were growing impatient and beginning to push by me.

"Look," I said, this time almost in the form of a command. "Don't

follow the girls! If you follow the girls, remember, I know it. I've seen it!"

That stopped them up. They stopped as if all the air had been taken out of their lungs and they were deflated.

The girls got in the car, having closed their luggage in the trunk, shook the dentist's hand goodbye and then came over to me and said good-bye - they had already given me their address in Nicosia in case I happened to come by that way - and got in the car and drove away. No one even bothered them. No one lifted a hand to stop them and meanwhile all the men were standing still in their small groups, glaring at me.

Once more I was alone in the town and I went over to where I had been sitting before, next to the old men who were still sitting against the wall and sat down, but this time no one spoke to me or nodded their greeting. The Turkish dentist had disappeared up the street into the hotel where he stayed as well. Suddenly the whole town had changed. Whereas before everyone had spoken to me and nodded to me, now no one spoke to me. The whole town had suddenly become alien. Now all the rancor of these men was concentrated on me. It was not long before they took some action to show their feelings in relation to me.

They were still standing over on the corner of the street where I had left them. There was a car standing next to them with the doors open and about three people sitting inside, so the Turkish dentist had not he been wrong - these men had been planning on following the girls (They could have been taxi cab drivers in the town or such-like and it was utterly easy for them to get their hands on a car).

Suddenly a group of about three or four of them detached themselves from the others and came walking over to where I was sitting. I was sitting

on a chair leaning against the wall in the sun next to the old men, as I said.

"Hey, English, American," they stood before me in the sun, their mocking faces evidently primed for trouble. "You want to cause trouble in our village, eh?"

I said, "No...no," in a very steadied voice.

"Yes, you want to cause trouble. You make us lose face in our village." They said this in measured phrases but then they became more excited, "You call us liars in our village and make all the village mock at us. The girls were with us. We were eating with the girls. It was you who came later. It is you who were unwanted."

"No," I said softly, "That is not true. The girls did not want you. You were not with the girls."

The old men were watching all this with evident interest though I noticed no one took my part.

Suddenly the car which had been standing across the way with the three men sitting inside drove up and the doors flew open, the driver grinning in that mocking way of theirs, "Hey, you, English! You want to go for a ride?" An electric shock flew down my spine. "You want to go for a ride? Come on. We take you for a ride down to Paphos."

I hesitated for a moment and then I said as calmly as I could, "No." I was quite comfortable where I was.

"Come on. What's the matter?" They said all this in that taunting way of theirs. "You frightened? Come on. We take you for a ride down to Paphos."

"Nope," I said. "I'm all right where I am."

They laughed uproariously and over-loudly and slammed the doors and

drove a little ways back down the street from where they had come to where their friends were still standing. At that moment something passed over me and I knew I would have been killed. I don't know how I knew it, but I knew it. Just to prove to myself I wasn't crazy, I later met an Englishman in a bar in London who had been in the Foreign Service on Cyprus and, when I told him the story, at just this point he interrupted me and said, "You didn't go with them did you?"

"No," I said. "Why?"

He said, "Because they would have killed you, that's why. They wouldn't have robbed you or beaten you up. They would have just killed you. That's all".

"It's funny," I said, "But I've always had that feeling myself. But when I've tried to tell it to other people, I've always been afraid to say it. I was alone. I felt no one knew me. I felt my body would have just turned up on a roof somewhere."

"No," he said. "They wouldn't have just robbed you or beaten you up or anything. They would have just slit your throat and thrown you out of the car and that would have been that."

"Thank you thank you," I said. "I've always felt that way myself."

They were all standing over there in that big group still eyeing me and I began to feel suddenly that I had to do something. Slowly they began to disperse but still they were always, even when they were walking away, eyeing me over their shoulders.

I got up and began to walk down the street to where the bars and cafes I had been in before were. Suddenly the whole atmosphere of the town had changed. I began to feel them eyeing me everywhere and the most infuriating thing was I couldn't tell my enemies from my friends.

Everyone had that black hair and those black moustaches and I couldn't tell which ones I had been in trouble with and which ones I hadn't. Now, when I went into the bars or cafes, no one spoke to me; no one offered me any drinks; no one even seemed to notice I was there.

I began to think I had to get out of that city. I could not stay in that town until evening. I could not stay in that hotel that night. It was the same hotel we had had all the trouble in earlier and, if they could just have gone into it so easily before, what was to stop them from going into it so easily that night again if they felt like it? And all the evening they would be thinking about me and knowing that I was there.

Even if I stayed, I would get no sleep that night. All the time I would be waiting for them to come and get me. It was a Fiesta Day so they would be drinking. What would stop them from just suddenly deciding to go up and get the "Englishman" or "American" or whatever they thought I was?

I was alone. I knew no one in the town. There was no one I could go to for protection. All I had was my passport and in the morning they would just find me somewhere, washed up on some beach or something, and no one would know what happened. No one even knew I was out here.

I walked up the main street of the town again past the bars and cafes towards the hotel. I had to get out of this town! I could not stay the night here. But how could I? There were no buses going out anymore. It was a Feast Day. There would be no buses going out until tomorrow and I could not go out of the town and hitchhike. They would see me going and what was to stop them from picking me up, which was just what they wanted?



I began to feel at my wit's end. Suddenly I got an idea. How about that fellow I drove up with on the bus when I first came to Polis about four days ago? How about him - the German-speaking fellow or English-speaking one - I don't know which. He lived in a village near the town. He lived in a village up in the hills. I could go to him. They could take me in there. I could go to him and see what would happen.

I ran up the stairs of the hotel to the room of the Turkish dentist. He could help me. When I came in, he was very nervous indeed. In fact his hands were sweating. I could feel it when I shook his hand.

"What do you want?" he asked. "You know you've done a very foolish thing? You know that?"

"I know, I know", I said. He was obviously frightened as hell. I told him what I wanted.

"I can't help you," he said. "I can't help you. I've got to live in this town after you go."

He was right there but he was also a coward. I've often wondered what happened to him in the recent trouble that took place in Polis. After all, Polis was the center of all the fighting that so recently occurred between the Greeks and the Turks. I'm not surprised at that either. It was also the center of all the Guerilla activity against the English during the earlier war and I'm not surprised at that either. The mountains made excellent hide-outs for the escaping Guerillas. In view of all this, I shouldn't have been surprised about what happened to me.

"Listen," I said. By this time I was getting a little angry with him. After all he had been in it too and it was a matter of his honor too.

After all I had stopped them in one way or another from following the girls. "I'm not asking you to do anything like that. I'm not asking you to take me to Nicosia or anyplace. I'm just asking you to take me to this friend of mine's village about five miles out of here in the mountains. I can't walk there myself. You know that. They're sure to get me if I do. All I want is for you to take me out of here in your car (he had a car) and not let anyone know where I have gone. That's all. Just take me out of here and drop me. After that, you're free. You can do what you wish."

"All right," he said. "I'll do that and no more. No more. Remember, I've got to live in this town after you go." He did do just that and no more.

We packed up my pack which I had left downstairs in the hallway of the hotel and he brought his car around, a Citroen DS11, a blue one. He must have been pretty well off at that. Anyhow, it was nice to drive in such a car at a time like this. It gave one a feeling of comfort and security.

We threw my pack in his car and both jumped in and then we were off, driving out of town without anyone able to see us or at least follow us. It was a very good idea at that - the perfect get-away - and, if anyone saw me going, they couldn't have known where I was going.

He was true to his word. He did not even take me up to the village. He drove me about five miles out of town to a field next to the road and dropped me where a little dirt road branched off up the hills through the fields to the village. He was so frightened he couldn't get away fast enough. He didn't even have time to say goodbye but just zipped away.

So here I was just left alone in the middle of the fields. After all

that excitement, I must admit, it was very pleasurable just to feel the breeze blowing over the wheat and hear the low moan of the crickets, but I didn't have time to stand and enjoy it.

I shouldered my pack and walked to a little inn about twenty-five yards up the road. There was a tractor and an old broken down metal frame standing outside it in a bare place. I went in and the owner and another person were sitting about drinking wine. I asked him how I could get up to my village. He said it was about a mile or two up that dirt road up in the hills but, if I waited, some one would be along soon in a tractor and I could go up with him.

"How long?" I asked.

"Oh, about a half hour or so," he said.

"Ok," I said. It was already around four o'clock in the afternoon and I wanted to take as little time as I could to get myself settled. Still I decided to wait. About forty-five minutes later the tractor did come and he did take me up to the village, chugging up the dirt path in the rising hills between the two fields.

When I arrived, they were dancing in the Central Square of the village. I thought some cars had passed me on the way, some black sedans, and I remember having the feeling, suppose these were the people from the town? I asked some people standing near me where this friend of mine was, but they didn't seem to know anything.

For awhile I stood watching the dance. They were doing the handkerchief dance so characteristic in Greece, that is, the children and the young men. The older men were all lounging around the one main cafe on chairs, drinking coffee, and watching the dancing. I thought I saw some movement in the background on the other side of the dancing and the square - some young men

with the ever-present black moustaches moving from one to another and furtively whispering.

The whole atmosphere was very strange. Usually when one comes to a village like this, people come out to you to greet you. Everyone takes notice of you and, understandably so because you are a stranger, especially the children. But here no one came over to me. No one stopped dancing or invited me to dance. No one did anything. They even seemed to be purposefully ignoring me and acting as if I wasn't there.

My suspicions were aroused. I thought to myself, could it be, could they know? Could word have come up from the town - those people in the cars - and gotten here before me? Had I jumped from the frying pan into the fire? I vowed that whatever happened I would not let on that there was anything wrong, that anything had happened. I would not give myself in.

Finally I went over to a group of older men standing near me watching the dancing and I asked them about my friend.

"Who?" they said, hardly stopping to turn from the dancing or look at me.

I showed them the piece of paper with his name written on it. First they made as if they could not understand it and then that they did not know him - all peering at it - before finally saying, "He's not here"

My suspicions were really aroused now. "But where is he?" I asked.

"He's gone away."

"How could that be? I just saw him a couple of days ago. He invited me to come up here and visit him."

I made it seem as if it were more recent than it actually was, as if it were only yesterday or the day before. They shrugged their shoulders as if they could tell me no more and turned back to looking at the dancing. I turned to watch too and then returned to where I had been

standing to think things over, as they evidently didn't wish to talk anymore.

Somehow they acted as if they already knew what had happened. I really had to be careful now. How could they know? Could word have come up and gotten here from the town before I got here? Those people in the cars - could they have been the ones or even the ones I had had trouble with in the city earlier? That would be too much. I was really shaken now. What would I do if I couldn't find him? What would I do if he really were gone? Where would I go? Or was I just seeing things? Yet somehow I trusted my intuition. There was something wrong.

I had to know, so I went over to some other men and asked them whether they had seen my friend. This time I was not going to be put off so easily, but they too did not even turn aside from looking at the dancing to acknowledge my presence. Nevertheless they finally said, "He's not here."

That was better. At least they acknowledged his existence. Now all I had to do was find out where he was. "But where is he? Where did he go?" I expected the usual response, but once again I they surprised me and I did not get it.

"He's down in the fields working."

"But it's a Feast Day? How can he be working on a Feast Day?" and, then with further persistence, "When will he be back up?"

"We don't know" and, once again, they shrugged their shoulders.

"But how can you not know? Is something wrong? He told me I could come to visit him here." Now I knew there was something wrong and paused for a moment before finally asking, "Can I stay the night here anyway? I've got to stay the night here. I have to know that." That was

the important thing. Whatever else happened didn't matter. "I have no place else to stay tonight." It was already getting late, perhaps 5:30.

This they seemed to understand and went over to speak to some other people, leaving me standing alone once again looking at the dancing.

I went back to where I was standing. I had to collect my thoughts. Whatever happened, I could not stay on in this village past a certain time. If I could not find my friend, I had to get out of here. I could not be caught here in the dark.

Suddenly someone appeared from the crowd and came over to speak to me. He was a young man, not much older than myself, tall like myself and solid-looking, and he spoke perfect English. He was straightforward, frank, and obviously intelligent and he turned out to be the school teacher for the village. I was somewhat relieved having found someone like this and told him my story and what I wanted - being careful not to let on that anything had happened anywhere else. He seemed friendly enough but I had already decided not to let any of it out.

When I asked him where my friend was, he said he was down in the fields working. This was all right. It confirmed what the other men had told me and was probably, therefore, the truth but, when I asked then showing some of my indignation, why they hadn't told me that in the first place, "Why did they tell me he was gone?"

He said, "They didn't know."

But sensing this was inadequate and a feeble excuse and the question I was evidently wondering what he was doing down in the fields working on a Feast Day like this, he said trying to add something else to it: "He has some extra work to do."

And then he said, "He'll be working very late tonight. He didn't work yesterday and he has a lot of extra work to do." I remember his telling me now that he was the only tractor driver in the village but still it sounded strange - especially the way he spoke for all the others. What did it have to do with them and their not knowing when he would be back up?

"Look," I said. "Is there something wrong?" Again, I did not want to let on that there was something wrong or go too far in giving him that impression, but I had to know.

"No, there's nothing wrong," he said. "What could be wrong?"

The way he said this - so certainly - added to my suspicions, but I couldn't say anything more and then I came to the most important question, what was bothering me most of all and which I had to have an answer to, "Well look. Can you tell me? Am I going to be able to stay here for the night?"

Behind my question was the appeal and mute point of the lateness of the hour, all of which he understood.

"We don't know," he said. "They're", he beckoned to three or four elderly men with white hair sitting on a porch in easy chairs on one of the buildings across the way and one or two young ones, who stood on the ground looking up at them, talking, "talking about it now."

It was the way he said "we" that got me most of all. There was something wrong. They did know. They were over there discussing it right now. I had been right all along. He had been sent over to me by them, a sort of representative, to talk to me.

Those were the Elders of the Village and they were talking about whether or not to let me stay in the village. It had nothing to do with

my friend at all. He was unimportant now. There was something very terribly wrong. I was really in trouble. I had to keep my head. I had to watch out. I could not let them lull me into forgetfulness.

What would I do if they decided that I could not stay? I would really be in trouble then. I had come all the way out here to this village and now I was stuck here without anywhere to go. I would be alone in the hills. I could not let them catch me alone in the fields around this village. I could not let them catch me here after dark. If I could not stay, then I had to get out of here in time to give myself time to find something else.

"But how soon will they know?" I asked.

"I don't know," he said.

He was a nice enough fellow and, as he had evidently been sent over to me to make conversation and make me comfortable and to take my attention away from what was going on while they deliberated, I wanted to make his job as easy as possible for him while we both waited. We later even found we had some things in common for I had been a schoolteacher for awhile myself and he liked that - we almost became friends.

He wanted to show me around the village - a fine time to be going sightseeing with someone - but there was nothing else to do and, as long as I kept my head, it was all right. The dancing was over and the people were already going back to their various dwellings. I sympathized with the difficulty of his task and, as I didn't want to arouse any more suspicion than I already had, I accepted his invitation.

We set off on a guided tour of the village - whatever there was to



see of it. We trudged over exposed water pipes and muddy areas where the fittings were loose and sprayed water on the ground in little pools, over the bare ground of the village which had only a few trees - most of them with exposed roots - which was built on the knoll of a hill. From it, one could see the whole valley below, the fields richly cultivated, and the Sea in the distance. We trudged past white stucco houses with red roofs built on cement foundations - the foundations were visible above the red earth.

The houses or huts, whatever one would like to call them, were placed one higher than the other on the hillside and the village ranged up the hill. We even went by his house which was a large building, one of the largest in the village, of three stories built fairly high on the hillside. I later found out he lived with his mother and two other brothers and some sisters - a sort of parental estate. Still I had to decide what I would do if I could not stay.

What would I do if they decided I could not stay? There would not be enough time to go down to the Highway once again and, if they decided I could not stay, that meant that they were around here and everywhere. No, I would drop my pack in one of the fields and take off for the mountains. I had as much chance as they did in the hills at night. If they were going to get me, let it be difficult. Let's give them a run for their money. I felt better now that I had decided something, more sure, and more secure with myself. But still I felt nervous, even though I had come to some idea as to what I would do, some decision as to what I should do.

Once more I asked him, just to try to assuage my uneasiness, "Are you sure there's nothing wrong? Has something happened?"

"Why?" he said. "What do you mean? What could be wrong? What's wrong?"

"I don't know," I said. "I just thought there might be something wrong. That's all."

"No," he said, "There's nothing wrong." That was enough. I knew I was right. I didn't wish to go any further.

I looked back over my shoulder at the sun as I walked behind him and followed him around the village. He was my friend now. Still I couldn't afford to forget what was going on. I couldn't be lulled by the gentle and friendly nature of his conversation even though I felt like letting down and was feeling very fatigued. Everything would end and they would leave me and I would be alone once again.

I had to keep on going. I couldn't afford to be caught in this village after a certain time. I was getting very cold-blooded and calculating now. If they didn't tell me by a certain time before the sun got so far down that I couldn't see where I was going, then I had to be going. At least they wouldn't catch me in this village or around the village on the road at night.

We stood at the edge of the village on the knoll of the hillside overlooking the Sea. The lovely cultivated fields stretched away down the valley to the low ground below. It was getting late though the sky was still clear blue. The sun hung over the Sea to the Northwest and its white light sparkled in a million tiny little dots off the blue Sea. A small breeze was blowing in off the Sea from the North and I admired the peacefulness of the view he was showing me.

It was a beautiful sight and I only wished I had the time to enjoy it but I was getting nervous yet again - once again I was becoming upset.

What would I do if they didn't decide in time, if they didn't make up their minds until very late, if I was caught in this village after dark? I had a picture of them tramping around in the night looking for me and I hiding in an overgrown gully and their feet going right by my head. I couldn't afford to be standing around waiting and then their deciding I could not stay and it being dark already. I had to have time to find some protection for myself.

I measured the sun with my eyes. When the sun got...there! - I paused, fixing its level in my mind's eye - I was going to go whether they had decided or not. I didn't want to go but I couldn't afford to wait for a decision. I couldn't afford to be caught here at night without having found some protection and then their saying I couldn't stay. It was too bad. I did not like to go like that before they had decided. I would much rather wait around for a decision but I could not afford to take the chance. I would give it a little more time.

Finally we went back to the Central Square of the Village which was almost deserted by now - just a few people lounging around at the tables in front of the café or curiously standing near us watching what was happening. The old men and the one or two young ones were still deliberating on the porch of the house.

I kept my eye on the sun, watching it affectionately. It was my old friend now - my one real true companion - and suddenly I felt better and smiled and winked at it confidently trying to screw up courage and nonchalance. When it got to be a certain point I was going no matter what happened.

Suddenly they called my teacher friend over to them and I watched them gesturing for a moment and talking to each other. Then he returned

to me. Measuring his phrases he said softly, yet firmly, "It's all right. You can stay here tonight." He paused for a moment, "But tomorrow you must go."

I could not believe my ears. My cares fell from me in a flood and an overwhelming feeling of relief spread over me. I have never felt anything like that before in my life. I did not have to worry anymore. I had nothing to worry about. I was safe - at least for the night. I was given one more day. They would not be able to get to me.

The Leaders had taken the responsibility for my safety upon themselves. I was safe tonight in their village. This was the Law of Hospitality in the Middle East. My fate was upon their hands. I was no longer my own worry. I no longer had to be concerned about it. The concern was theirs.

Whether the people in the village knew anything about any of these things or not was unimportant, whether the people down in Polis wished to come up and get me or not - even whether I had imagined the whole thing or not - I was safe here for tonight, "but tomorrow I must go." There was no doubt about that. Tomorrow I had to go whether I wanted to or not and they would be true to their word about that. Moreover there was no doubt that there had been something wrong.

They knew about the whole thing. Somehow the word had gotten up to them even before I had. I had not been wrong. I had not imagined any of it. There had been something wrong - something very serious - and we never talked about any of these things. These subjects were taboo and there was an unwritten silence between us concerning these things.

It was already dark when we went down, past 9:30, and he took me to see my friend who had first given me his address. He was back now and

lived in a little bungalow near the center of town. When we arrived, he was eating dinner - some cold and unappetizing-looking chicken. He had evidently been told of my presence in the village, for he was not surprised to see me and he was still unshaven.

His wife - a plump, good-natured, little woman much younger than himself - bustled around from the kitchen to where he was sitting in the living room and his children were already in the other room, sleeping. He beckoned to us to sit down. Two flies were flying about in the yellow, cone-like lampshade that hung above him, but he was obviously so nervous that there was no point in staying very long. When I shook his hand, I could feel the sweat on it and, when he ate, his hand shook and, when he spoke, he had difficulty saying the words.

They said that they were sorry but they had no food to offer me. But I said it was all right. I had already eaten. I felt sorry for him and I did not wish to embarrass him anymore than I had. I was sure he was suffering enough as it was. That he was already in enough trouble was evident, so I motioned to my friend the school teacher that we should go. Hence, after about five minutes, we left and I am sure he was very glad to see us go.

That night in the school teacher's house, I slept in the main living room which was on the top floor, two flights above the ground floor - itself actually the basement - and over another floor which was where the front door was located, these houses being built on a hillside as I have said. I slept in the younger brother's bed which I had urged them not to give me to use saying that they should not go to so much trouble, that I could sleep on a couch or the floor. But they insisted, saying this was the guest's prerogative and the younger brother, indeed, did sleep

downstairs on the floor.

In the room with me slept the middle brother and it was by no accident that they put me up there out of reach of anyone - with one of them sleeping in the same room with me, while the other two slept one flight below in the other room next to the only entrance to the house and to the staircase leading up to our room.

I have never slept so well in all my life. True the blanket was woollen and rough and there were no sheets - and there were a few flies - but for awhile I just lay awake and mused on the snugness of my position, so protectively ensconced between these three brothers as I was, and the breeze that blew in silently through the window and the events that had happened so fast and so often that day and the sounds of the Cypriot night.

The next morning, true to their word, I had to leave. There was no talking about it but there was no backing out of it either - no matter how friendly we had become. Their mother and sisters, who were by this time up and had come up to the house, fixed me breakfast - a long leisurely breakfast of eggs and such-like - and I remember brushing my teeth and washing at the grey metal tap that came up from the ground outside.

When the time came, the middle brother brought his motorcycle around. It was a beat-up thing and he had already been in several accidents with it, but he had been fixing it up in the morning earlier for just this occasion. He even pumped up the tires with a hand pump right before my eyes. He was not supposed to be driving anymore as he had been in several accidents and had had his license taken away but this was the sort of person he was. He guessed it would be all right just to take me down the two miles to the main Highway and back - and he was right.

I shook hands with everyone, his mother, his older school-teacher

brother and the younger one, the sisters, and we bid each other warmly and meaningfully goodbye. Then I hopped on the back of his motorcycle and I have never had such a wild ride in all my life. His motorcycle had no springs, being old and evidently worked over as I have said. I had to put my pack, which was 35 pounds and which I could not therefore hold in my lap or hang anywhere, on my back with no support, while I held on to his waist for dear life or, as there was no strap to hold, the bottom of the seat or the edge of the rear rim.

He drove, as I said, like a maniac. He was one of the more modern breed of intelligent Greek Cypriot young and every bump we hit - there being no springs - went right through me and shook the very inside core of my being. One or two bumps jarred me so much - they with the resplendent crash of my pack on the upper part of my back and under my armpits - that I did not think I would live through the ride.

I hoped and prayed for the end of it, but could not scream out as I was with a man, my friend. I just ground my teeth together and closed my eyes, looking up at the sky and hoping for the end. We sped down the narrow dirt road with the grass rise in the middle of it, as all such semi-used dirt roads had, between the fields. All the way was downhill and, as the wind whistled by our faces and along the rushing fields, I had all I could do to keep from rolling up over his back.

We turned around several corners, jagged zigzags in the road, almost always screeching as we went, and I believe, as he sensed my pain and discomfort, he sped up going even faster for. When we arrived at the bottom of the road near the inn, where all had begun the afternoon before when I arrived, I gingerly got off his bike taking care that all my limbs were in their proper place, my pack still on my back too.

We bid each other goodbye, shaking hands firmly, and, without much more ado, he turned around on his motorcycle, stood for a moment watching me, and then was off in a cloud of dust back up the hill to the village from which we had come. We never did mention anything about what had happened the day before. We never went into any of it. To this day, I don't even know whether any of it even existed or happened the way I said it did but they were some of the nicest, most hospitable, people I have ever met.

I turned around towards the town. I was not going to be put off now. No, I had come here yesterday to see Aphrodite's Fountains and that had been my original intent in getting off the boat the day before and in coming to this Island anyhow, to walk around this Island, and I wasn't going to be put off just because I had had a little trouble. Besides it was a nice day now, a full sun and the wind was blowing intoxicatingly, and I had had a good night's sleep. Most of the men would be working anyhow, as it was not a Feast Day any longer and I could get into the town, go out and see the Fountains, and be gone before they even had a chance to know was there. This time I would not miss the bus and I knew, it being Holiday, that it left at 3:30 in the afternoon. They would know that they had not so easily frightened me.

I waited where my host's brother had dropped me off. He had brought me down in time to get the 9:15 bus and presently a bus came by going into town - the morning bus carrying people in for shopping, marketing, and work - but I had decided to hitchhike in the direction going into town instead.

Presently I got a ride and, when I got into town, when I got out of the car and they could see me walking jauntily down the main street again, my pack on my back, I could feel every eye on me. Perhaps they weren't but I believe they were. The American has come back, the American has come back -



the fool has returned. I walked down the main street, swaggering as I went, to the bus station where I had first arrived five days before.

This time there were going to be no mistakes - this time there would be no mistake. I put my pack down in the bus station to insure that I was coming back, to insure that I had a place on the bus, and checked to make sure what the bus times were. Then I took off on the road out of town the other way. This was where I had to be careful - on this stretch of the road, and my mood changed to one of wariness. As I said, most of the people were working anyhow and there were not too many people out on the road.

The Fountains were said to be about seven miles - ten kilometers - out of town in the other direction - in the direction of the West towards the end of the Island and the Sea where the Island jutted out in that direction and there was only woodland. I passed some children playing in the mud by a stream where the women washed clothes and, as one had to pass over the water anyhow in this way, I skipped over the puddles. I picked up some rocks from the road just in case there was going to be any trouble and put them in my pocket. I had used this sort of defense before. It worked for men as well as dogs.

I walked along by the Sea. The road here paralleled the Sea completely and was on a level with it. There was no forest here. That was only to come later when one got near the Fountains. Here the land was perfectly flat and sand beach as far as the eye could see. The white sand on a perfect beach paralleled the blue water blinking in the sun. After passing a few huts, a few people outside doing some chores, and a few dogs coming running, barking, I suddenly had the overpowering urge to go in for a swim alone - just myself here by the Sea - my fear having by this time dissipated until it was next to

nothing. I had nothing to worry about until I got back to the town and, by that time, I would be going.

Did I have the nerve? Could I forget all these other things and just enjoy myself? Could I do it? Could I just take off all my clothes and leave them on the beach, for I did not have a bathing suit and I would have to go in like that with nothing on and naked, and then wait for myself to dry? Could I do it? Yes, I would revel in it!

I ran down to the edge of the Sea over the soft and resilient sand, stopped for a moment, and looked at the Sea and smelled the air - then pulled off all my clothes. I stood for a moment - then plunged into the Sea. It was cloudy with the bits I had raised up with my feet, the sand from my feet mixing with the transparent colour of the water turning into a smoky blue in front of my eyes when I ducked my head. The sand plunged away quickly into deep water and there was a rolling undercurrent, so I was careful not to stay in too long or go out too far so as not to have any trouble.

After staying in long enough to have my fill, I sprawled out on the sand in the sun and that was even better - the hot sand upon my belly, the hot sun upon my back. I stayed in the sun, stretched out spread-eagle, revelling in it until I was completely dry. Then I sat for awhile, putting a little shirt over my private parts to protect them both from the sun and the eyes of passers-by on the road behind me; and, looking around, breathed in the peacefulness.

A dog came over barking and I had some difficulty chasing it away as I did not want to attract too much attention. Then I went in again and had my fill before drying off a second time. I felt even better now, my hair caked with the salt and wetness of the Sea. Then it was up to the road and off again. The road now began to mount up into a bit of scrubland and, by the change in atmosphere, the moisture and the cooler air, I knew we were coming to the forest. Really it was

not much of a forest but there was not much else one could call it.

After awhile, I got a ride with a farm-boy. He was about sixteen years old, driving a tractor with a metal tow-wagon full of grass behind him. He had another farm-boy hitchhiker he had picked up and the two of us sat on the freshly-mown, sweet-smelling grass in the back. He dropped me off only about three-quarters of a mile from the Fountains, where he turned off to the right. We were out of the woods now and in the fields again and this was how I first arrived at Aphrodite's Fountains.

However a little before this, a car of Greek Cypriot tourists from Larnaca came up the road on their way to the Fountains as well, picked me up, and I went the rest of the short distance to the Fountains with them. They included a very bourgeois merchant of the French variety from Larnaca, sort of beetle-shaped with a paunch and the ever-present French sort of glasses - his wife, their daughter, and his mother. It was with these people that I first go to see the Fountains.

"The Fountains", as it were, were really not much of a fountain - only one single, small waterfall falling out of some very hoary and mossed-over rocks. But there was something about the glade - something pure and peaceful, what with the rustling of the leaves on the few, low-hanging branches of trees hanging over the water and the twinkling of the sunlight through them - that merited this name.

The Venetians were not all that wrong in their choice of names and places. Leave it to the Italians to know about love despite the pieces of paper and metallic things - the leavings of tourists - which glistened silver in the bottom of the pool. Yes, there was a pool of very clear water, almost fragrantly clear, and there was grass and moss along with some roots of trees growing along its banks and one tried to picture "Venus and her Pards" lounging around in the shade. There was also a small trickle of white fresh water that fell down into the pool

in bubbles. For Cyprus, this was quite something - first to have water at all, for it was a fairly dry Island, and then to have it fresh. Yes, there was little doubt that it merited its name.

We stayed for awhile and then, since the tourists were getting ready to go back to their car and return to Polis, I had to decide whether I wanted to go with them. It was still early only - around 12:00 - and I would have to hang around in the town until 3:30 for the bus to Nicosia, that is, if I did not wish to hitchhike - a thing I did not really wish to do in this situation. I was just beginning to feel at home here in this glade and just beginning to enjoy lounging around in it. But, if I stayed too long, I might have difficulty getting back in time and might miss the bus. So I decided to do the safe thing and go with them. They would take me all the way back into Polis and all the danger would be over. I had had enough adventure for one 24-hour period anyhow.

As we walked down the path to the car - I rueing my untimely departure from the Fountains, a thing I did not like to do, but then who knows when I would get another ride back like this - what did I see coming up the path but two men carrying a fully grown sheep. It had its legs tied together on a pole slung over their shoulders and in their free hands they were carrying great straw-covered gallon casks of wine. In the woods, gathering up twigs and sticks for the fire, there was a third man with them too.

My God, I thought, the Lord has prepared a Feast for me. He was not content with having rescued me from bodily danger but now He was preparing a Feast for me too. I quickly ran ahead to speak to the tourist couple from Larnaca who had befriended me, as the men with the sheep which they obviously intended to butcher and barbecue passed us going up the path towards the Fountains. I had never seen such a thing before - only read about it. I was mistaken again.

It seemed the Feast Day was not over yet at least for some of them - the more

hot-blooded ones - for these were clearly hot-blooded ones who had knives stuffed into their belts, the characteristic curved knife of Cyprus, and were evidently on their way to have a Bacchanalian Rite of some kind at Aphrodite's Fountains. Thanking the couple from Larnaca profusely for their hospitality, I explained to them that I was not going back with them to Polis after all but was going up to see what these men were going to do.

Shaking their hands and bidding them goodbye, I ran back up the path. Perhaps these men would invite me to join them. After yesterday's danger, I could really use - no needed and deserved - some sort of banquet and this was clearly going to be a real one. The Lord had prepared me a banquet. On the way back up the path to the Fountains, I passed a fourth individual carrying some more wine and supplies with the same characteristic curved knife the others were carrying too.

When I arrived at the edge of the pool, they were already gingerly lowering the sheep, which was still alive, to the ground on the other side of the pond and putting down the other things they were carrying as well.

When they looked up, I said, "What are you fellows doing?"

They took one look at me and shouted, "You! Get out of here!"

Astonished, I whirled around and took off down that path for dear life. I never ran so fast in my life, the breath coming into my lungs in gulps. They clearly recognized me but, for my part with their black moustaches, I wasn't able to tell one of them from the other. They all looked the same to me. I passed the fourth one on the way back down but neither of us stopped to look the other. I was running so fast, I don't think he could have either seen or recognized me even if he wanted to.

When I got to the car, it was just in time as my tourist friends were just getting in. That was why I had run so fast, to get to their car before they got

in and were gone. I didn't want to get caught in the same predicament again in those woods. Those fellows must have been out having one last day of their Feast and, as usual, yet again I had misjudged things. My Larnaca friends were surprised to see me again - especially running down the path the way I was, panting and just about out of breath. I didn't go into the story at all, but simply told them I had changed my mind and how very glad I was for the good company and comfort of their car. Nor did I worry about getting back to Polis a little early with several hours to kill, but hugely enjoyed the slowness and peaceful bourgeois security of the ride back.

Once back in Polis, I did not wish to wait around for the bus, it being only around 12:30, and, feeling pretty good about everything because I had succeeded in doing all the things I wished to do before leaving the Island, I decided to hitchhike out of town. There wouldn't be any trouble now anyhow - it being only the middle of the day.

I was right. I soon got a ride with a pick-up truck, a father and his son, and the son got out and they put me in the middle between them. They turned out to be some of the most sympathetic people I had met since those in the hill town. They were only going a little way - about twenty-five miles down the road - but any way, just so long as I got out of Polis a good distance and on my way, was good enough for me.

They lived in that little cluster of shacks, I mentioned seeing before, along the Sea by the beach about 25-30 miles outside of Polis - the Sea, where the mountains rolled down so gracefully in green and yellow hills and fields like California to the straight and wide, long flat beach along it.

This was the area has been fought over time and time again by the Greeks and the Turks, for it was the area on the Northern Shore of Cyprus

where the Turks had established a little beachhead for the landing of supplies from mainland Turkey during the recent warfare. It was also the place that was dive-bombed so repeatedly by the Turks because of the Greek attempts to encircle this little enclave and cut off their supplies, so I can only hope my friends, as these people turned out to be, survived this dive-bombing and fighting and their house and fields and everything else that they valued so much as well.

They had one son in College in the United States, the University of Indiana, and this was quite a surprise coming from a little Greek farming family like this on the edge of the Sea with not much apparent wealth except their farm and their fields, but they were building a foothold to get out of the Country and had sold one field to send him to America.

They had three sons and both the others were going to get the same treatment, both studying English quite diligently now in the local schools and, for each of them, they were going to sell another field. I could see how dearly this hurt them, both the father and the mother, for they were a farming family - the both of them working side-by-side alternately in the fields - and this was their sustenance, the only way they had learned how to get along for centuries and yet they were selling one field after another to send their boys to college in America.

It was a way out and the only way out and they were very intelligent people despite the simplicity of their agricultural backgrounds, but one could see that the whole process of parting with something they loved - something tangible for something intangible - pained them very deeply.

The mother affectionately showed me a picture of their older son in Indiana. They hadn't seen him for about a year and a half. He looked very American with crew cut and everything. He was wearing a tracksuit

and was in the pose of a sprinter, since he was apparently on the Indiana Track Team.

I don't know whether it was because of this son in America and because of their desire to do something for and be hospitable to me once they heard that I was an American or whether they just liked the idea of having an American or a foreigner around - one they could ask questions to and be hospitable to - but when I arrived, they insisted that I stay the evening at their home.

I wasn't planning on doing this. I was planning on putting as much distance between myself and Polis as possible in the remainder of that afternoon and also on getting back to Nicosia if I could. But when I saw the sympathetic layout of their house across the road from their fields, upon the beach but a stone's throw - thirty yards from the Sea - I couldn't resist. Besides they were so hospitable and so warm and friendly and I was so tired from my recent experiences that I thought such a stop and rest would do me good.

The two younger sons especially pleased me. They were both studying English as I said and they hung on my every word, wanting to hear everything they could about the life their older brother was living and the life which they would soon be living in turn themselves. Young men like these on Cyprus were especially upright - and especially rare.

I told them about some of my recent experiences in and around Polis and they listened in evident pain. It made them all the more hospitable towards me, wanting to make up for the excesses of their countrymen - they said they would show me that all Greek Cypriots were not the same - and insisted that I take my time and relax, for they



knew something of the travels I intended to take, and that I just enjoy myself without their bothering me or without my bothering them.

That afternoon I took advantage of the possibilities offered me and went for a swim on their large and lovely deserted sandy beach. The sun was hot and the water was good and I lay for a long time on the sand. Later on, both boys came down with their two dogs which they fed only on bread and water - they could not believe that anyone could feed dogs on anything else - other things being too rich and bad for the dog's health anyhow. They couldn't believe that some people fed dogs on things better than what humans had which I later affirmed. The dogs seemed none the worse for the wear, being big and full of energy. They never tired of tearing up and down the beach in the sand and running into the ocean.

That evening they had something of a banquet for me. They had a pigeon coop in front of their farmhouse, a large one that attracted twenty or thirty pigeons at a time whom they fed and kept, and they killed the pigeons for me which was apparently both quite a delicacy and an honour. I had never had fresh pigeon before. Anyhow the way the warm-hearted mother cooked them, they are quite a delicacy and they were brown, tender, and succulent. That night I slept in the guest room in the front of the house on the level of the Highway while both brothers slept outside on the front patio right near my window.

The following day after a large breakfast of as many eggs as we could eat, they insisted I stay on another day. They were so warm and friendly in their feelings towards me and about it that I decided that it would not only give me a chance to get some more rest and enjoy the beach and the Sea in the shadow of the clouded hills another day, but

also it would give me a chance to think a little more over whether I was going to go on to India via Erzurum and the Turkish Border or go through the Arab countries. So I accepted and put off my departure until the following morning.

That day I watched them awhile working in the garden - pitching in a hand here and there - both the father and the sons and, then, the mother after she had finished her housework. They had a small irrigation system and a pump house and their vegetables were planted in small but neat little rows. They insisted I enjoy myself and not work, so I spent the rest of my day along the beach by the Sea, thinking and mulling over my problems.

The following morning I rose early and after warm goodbyes - they insisted that I could come back whenever I wished and stay as many days as I liked. It was nice to know that such people existed - I thanked them profusely for their hospitality and set off on an early bus about 9:30 in the morning.

One got the bus here by just standing out in front of their house by their mailbox and flagging it down. Most of the early buses had already passed and they were packed with people going into the cities for the morning and I was just as glad they didn't stop. The one I got was not the characteristic green one, but a red one which was so dilapidated that it was hard to believe it was Greek. Plus, there was hardly a soul on it - just one or two passengers - and they got off at that fishing village where the road branched inland about 40 miles north of Nicosia.

The bus did not go straight to Nicosia, but branched off to go up in the hills somewhere to make a stop. I became so worried, because I thought the bus was not going to Nicosia, that I went up and asked the driver where he

was going. Both he and his coachman - all these buses usually had two people working on them, as they did in most countries in the Middle East, a driver and his assistant, who usually helped load the luggage or doubled as a mechanic in moments of difficulty - were very good-natured and they laughed and told me not to worry, that the bus would be getting to Nicosia soon enough. By their good natures and lack of procedural formality, I realized I had been right - they were Turks. True to their word, shortly thereafter we turned off the detour and came back down to the familiar dust-soaked main Highway, covering the remaining thirty or so miles of straight-away at a fast rate.

We arrived in Nicosia somewhere around 12:30 in the afternoon and, to relax myself before I got in touch with the girls, I went over to the Bar of the Excelsior Hotel, which was large and spacious, and had myself a beer before calling them from there. One of them was home - apparently they lived right next to the English Embassy where they worked - and told me to come over whenever I liked.

They put me up but they were not as good hostesses as my previous ones. Young women, such as these, never are or seem to be. Nor did they appreciate much what I had done for them - not that I had asked them to. As a matter of fact, they listened to the whole thing with such evident lack of concern that I broke off telling them about it in the middle.

At the time they were being squired around by some Turkish boys or shall we say men in the usual manner that Anglo-Saxon or Germanic - I mean Northern European girls - are squired around by Southern men and I suppose that was how they came to know their Turkish dentist friend in Polis. Anyhow they seemed to be very much involved in the whole thing as only single English

women, past the age of twenty-five and beginning to feel the tenseness of approaching age, can be.

We went down to the Sea one day, to Kyrenia, past Lawrence Durrell's house in Bellpaise where he had lived when he wrote his famous novels. It was set back up in the hillside among vineyards in quite a scenic, but in all-in-all a rather over-settled and tame part of Cyprus. I must admit that, except for the title *Bitter Lemons*, I don't believe he gave a very intelligent or adequate taste of what life on Cyprus was really like.

We went down into the Port and sat around for awhile with the few tourists, sipping coffee and looking at the yachts in the story-book-like, enclosed circular harbour and at the turret of the castle overlooking it. Then we went out a ways along the Sea for a swim. Here people changed in bathhouses, erected for that purpose, but the sand was white and fine. The Turkish boys looked rather scrawny with their white skin and loose bathing suits but the girls seemed to like them anyhow and they evidently had what it took to satisfy them.

The next day I again had to look into my passage to Lebanon. I still hadn't decided which way to go - whether through Lebanon or to Turkey and further. My good sense told me to forget about the Arab thing and go the safe route through Turkey and overland, but it was much longer and not at all direct. My will to adventure and my blood told me to go by way of Lebanon and Syria and I'm afraid I was beginning to bend that way once again now that I had had the week to rest and I had thought everything out.

I even began having images of my friends in Beirut and the visits I was going to have and the things we were going to do together. My bags were all packed, my clothes all clean, and that night I went out for a walk near the girls' apartment. I was screwing everything up in my mind again and getting

ready for my passage the next day, when I happened to pass a bar - or really a sort of nightclub - and went in. There was a circular bar and a raised platform where a singer, if there was one, could sing. It was a good place for dancing, but there was no dancing tonight - only a score of patrons drinking.

Somehow I got to talking with the owner and he invited me over to his table. He happened to be sitting next to a very powerfully-built woman with a wide-open straight face and a deep booming voice. He was a Greek from Alexandria who had left some years before owing to the difficulties brought on by the Nasser Regime there. He had apparently had a bar and nightclub there too and was still in touch with many friends who still had bars and nightclubs there. He was a smooth but friendly man with a white dinner jacket and interesting to talk with.

He especially liked to talk about Monte Carlo and its gaming tables and his desire to go and end his life there, a desire I was not loathe to talk about for, indeed, I had many friends who had wished the same thing. She turned out to be an English-speaking belly dancer. I say English-speaking with some hesitation, for she spoke that peculiar brand of G.I. English she could only have picked up in such company and the English she spoke was evidently of that origin.

What origin she was herself was something of a mystery. She could have been anything from Greek to Yugoslav to Italian to Lebanese but, above it all, she had managed to pick up that strange English mixture she spoke as she had evidently lived in the United States for some time as well. Anyhow, she was dancing at the capitals around the Middle East in such places as Beirut, Istanbul, Athens, and Alexandria and evidently doubled as a prostitute as well - a fairly low-priced one at that. But that was unimportant for I was

not meeting her under such circumstances and she was not here in this bar at this moment under such circumstances. She was altogether a very powerful and straightforward, warm-hearted person and she made a very unusual impression.

When they heard I was going to Beirut and then on to Syria, they were both very interested. The owner of the Bar even gave me the names of his friends in Alexandria in case I happened to pass by that way. But when they heard I was Jewish, that was another story. It wasn't that this bothered them. It wasn't that they were anti-Semitic. No, that wasn't it. She had just come from Lebanon and Syria the day before and apparently the *Putsch*, I spoke about, that had occurred two weeks before was very serious.

They said I was crazy to go. She said there were ten roadblocks on the road between Damascus and Beirut alone and she said - she, just having come from Damascus herself as I said - that they were crazy there. She said that they thought nothing of cutting off your ears or hanging you up by your thumbs. Though she had just danced there and though she liked to dance there, she said they were a crazy people - as I well knew and especially about this one subject - and, when she had left, there were people hanging up in the Central Square by their thumbs.

This could have been just tourist talk or, on the other hand, it could have been true, but she got her impression across - the impression she wished to give. She was genuinely concerned for my welfare and she said, especially about this one subject - being Jewish - they were insane. I thanked her for her concern and thanked both of them for the conversation and went back out in the night.

They had really gotten to me. It was not so much what they had said. All these things I could take with a grain of salt except for the fact of the roadblocks up on the road between Beirut and Damascus. This I quite believed

and it made such an impression on me that I realized I was just being foolhardy to wish to go that way. Perhaps some other time under other circumstances but, under these circumstances and these conditions, it was just foolish and I was being pig-headed to even think of going that way.

After all, the important thing for me was to get on to India, not whether I went overland this way or that - to reach India - and not to end up in some Arab jail somewhere, which was altogether possible, they being just fanatical enough to think I was a spy of some kind because I had concealed several things, and have them throw away the key. It was not to go through the Arab Countries though I would like to do that too. But I could do that some other time. Only God knew when I would ever get out, when they were able to get the diplomatic activity going enough to get me out.

As I walked home to the girls' apartment, where I was staying that night, I began to think how foolish it was to think to go through the Arab Lands whereas for me the only way to go was overland through Turkey and Iran and I began to come up with a whole new resolve and with it, a whole new feeling of resolution welled up within me. I had decided. I had changed my mind. It was foolish to change on such short notice but I was going to go the other way.

The next morning when I awoke, I said goodbye to the girls and thanked them very much for their hospitality. They had begun to become more friendly to me by this time and they were surprised to hear that I had changed my mind and I was not going down to Limassol and on by boat to Lebanon, but rather flying by way of Turkey, as there were no passenger boats over to its Southern Coast. Still they understood and sympathized with my decision and did not question me about it.

I shouldered my pack and went downtown to cash in my boat ticket. The desk clerks were very nice about it and only took off a little bit - besides

what I had already lost coming in and going out in harbour fares - as a penalty. I then went over to the Turkish Section of the city in the shadow of the lovely white limestone minaret and mosque and bought my ticket on Turkish Airlines to Adana on the Southern coast inland from Mersin. It was going to be a Fokker Friendship and I had never been on a Fokker Friendship.

Everything was very relaxed and very easy. I had my last meal on Cyprus in the Turkish Section near the Airline Office in a very slow mood and the bus going out to the Airport was going to leave at 1:30. On the bus, aside from the usual assortment of Turkish businessmen, were two American tourists, women from California who were on their way around the world by themselves and at their leisure - their plan being to do it in eighty days! We struck up an interesting conversation and I sat behind them on the plane. The plane itself was an interesting-looking affair of curious design - evidently done with economical intent - yet "Friendly," as its name implied, with great broad windows for one to look out of.

It was growing a little bit cloudy when we took off. The plane did not climb very high but hugged the water, which we soon reached, passing over the Northern Coastline of Cyprus in the neighbourhood of Kyrenia. It was not long before we had passed over the narrow stretch of Sea between Turkey and Cyprus and were flying over the Turkish Coastline.

By now, it was beginning to rain a little. We came down an hour later through overcast skies to the overgrown green flatlands about twenty miles inland from the Sea around Adana and touched down on its already-wet runways about 3:30 P.M, the rain coming down in heavy droplets now - the wind whistling through the lush green grass on either side of the runway.