

Notes on the history of the Makdisi Family.

By Jirjis Elias El-Khoury El-Makdisi

(Some of it he heard from his father, and some he witnessed himself)

My father Elias, son of the priest [ibn el khoury] Saba Makdisi , told me the following, based on the account of his maternal grandfather, Sheikh Ibrahim Younis, Sheikh of Amar el-Hosn.

1. Around the year 1740 A.D., a man by the name of Nihme (Khoury) Makdisi, emigrated from the village of Bta'boura, a village in the Koura region of Lebanon, to the village of Amar el-Hosn [in Syria], (which is about two kilometers west of Kalat el-Hosn [Krak des Chevaliers], and two kilometers south of St. George's Monastery in Hmeira).
2. The above-mentioned Nihme acquired land in Amar el-Hosn and began plowing it and planting seedlings. And until now, in the village of Amar, there is land known as the land of the Nihme family.
3. Nihme died in Amar el-Hosn, and was survived by his two sons, Azar and Nassar, who continued working the land that they inherited from him.
4. A series of disasters and invasions befell Amar, so Azar and Nassar moved to Akkar [in Lebanon], and acquired property there and continued working the land. The descendants of Azar can still be found in the village of Jdeide, between Taba and Miniara (in Akkar).
5. Nassar, the son of Nihme Makdisi, had a son he named Elias. Elias had six children: Saba, Dib, Yacoub, Mariam, Diba, and 'Adra.
6. The children of Elias married and continued working the land, except for Saba, who did not wish to pursue work in the fields like his predecessors and siblings, and worked as a salesman, instead. He would buy merchandise in Tripoli [Lebanon], and then roam the villages of Akkar and Safita and Hosn to sell his ware. He often went to Amar el-Hosn, the hometown of his grandfather Nihme, to stay at the home of Sheikh Ibrahim Younis (a famous landowner who owned a guesthouse where his guests could stay). And to this day, his large family owns property in Amar.
7. After working for several years as a traveling salesman in the villages, Saba accumulated a good sum of money that he wished to invest in his own way. While traveling through the villages, he had noted that many of the farmers were unable to cultivate their land because their limited means prevented them from buying cows to plow the land. Saba's plan was to buy a cow or ox, which he loaned to the farmer in exchange for a specified amount of the harvest. This allowed him to acquire many associates in Akkar and Safita and Hosn. During the harvest season

his wealth from grains increased and he was then able to buy a house in Tripoli (at Kubbet el-Nasr), and also build a warehouse to store the grains so he could sell them during the winter. He would then use the profit to buy more cattle for the farmers. In all this, his only concern was their need, and not their religions affiliation. As a result, his associates increased: Christians, Muslims and Alawite. And God blessed his income, which grew, not from charging interest, but from helping the farmers.

8. Once his income became sufficient, and he felt secure about his associates in the plowing cattle business, Saba yearned to learn reading and writing. In those days, there was only one school in the land, in the village of Kima, headquarters of the Moussa Hanna Sheiks, the governors of the Hosn region. So he went there, at about the age of 25 or 30, and he paid the teacher to teach him the Psalms and Christian catechism, as well as penmanship. Since he was the oldest student, he would bribe the younger kids by giving them rides on his shoulders, and then opening the book so the kids could teach him the lessons. The young students would compete to teach him, and soon he had learned the Psalms and Christian religious teachings. At that point, it occurred to him to become Professor Saba, instead of just Mr. Saba.

9. After Saba completed his education in Christian catechism and Psalms in the Kima school, he went to Beirut and opened a school in Bsarma, then in Kfar Acca, then in Kousba. And he became Professor Saba, instead of Mr. Saba.

During the harvest season, he would visit his associates, the farmers, and collect the fees for the cattle in grains, and store them in the house he built in Tripoli. He would then sell the grains and invest the money, as before, to help the farmers.

10. Saba went to Amar el-Hosn, hometown of his grandfather Nihme, and married Wisteen, daughter of Sheikh Ibrahim Younis. In 1837, he returned with his bride to Tripoli to live in the house he had built, and establish a commercial business. As he was attempting to do that, the Orthodox priest, Hanna, priest of the Dinniyeh Division, died. The bishop of the Orthodox Church took an interest in finding a priest for that division. The name of Professor Saba was mentioned to him, and his qualities praised. The Bishop summoned Saba to him and ordained him priest of the Upper Dinniyeh Division, which followed the Orthodox parish of Tripoli. This was on 2, November, 1837.

11. Father Saba served in his religious position in Dinniyeh with integrity and honesty, and was well liked by members of his religious community. He was also liked by the Sunni governors of the land, the Sheikhs of the Raad Family, as well as those who became governors during the time he served in Dinniyeh, Sheikh Mohammad Fadel Raad, and his cousin Sheikh Khodr Raad. And despite the

competition between them, they respected the priest Saba Makdisi because he was a man of peace. His parishioners were therefore safe from attacks, and peaceful relations prevailed between Christians and Muslims.

(In Dinniyeh, many villages exist where Christians have churches...[illegible])

[Note in margin] I remember the incident between Sheikh Mohammad Fadil and his cousin Sheikh Khodr, and the fatalities that occurred.

12. Father Saba's relationship with his associates, the farmers in Akkar, Safita, and Hosn, remained strong. He would ask the bishop for a leave of one month a year during the harvest season. He would then make the rounds collecting the payment for the cattle in grains from the farmers, and buy new cattle for those that needed to plow their lands. He would then store the grains in his home in Tripoli, to be sold during the selling season.

In 1848, while on leave checking on his associates in Akkar, he contracted cholera, which was widespread in those days. He died in Akkar and was buried in the village of Sheikh Mohammad. His tomb is still there, where people believe in his goodness, and many take soil from it to heal their sick. This is proof of his good reputation during his day.

When he was very ill with the cholera, and was no more able to speak, he asked for pencil and paper, and wrote: Give the woman who served me this week 500 piasters. These were his last words, and his wish was executed.

13. Father Saba died eleven years after he was ordained priest (ordained 1837- died 1848). He had five children: Elias (born 1838), Jirjis, Azar, Katrine the first (died young), and Katrine the second. The priest's wife, Wisteen, left Dinniyeh after the death of the priest and went with her young children to Tripoli to live in the house her husband had built in Kubbet el-Nasr in Tripoli. She supported her children with the payments she received from the farms. Some of the farmers paid their share without being asked, in recognition of the priest's generosity in buying cows for them to plow their lands.

14. Three of Father Saba's children died, and two, Elias and Katrina, survived. The priestess paid attention to her son's education (her firstborn), and sent him to the Orthodox school of Professor Hanna Touma in Tripoli, a school whose principal was famous as an educator. After Elias completed his education under Prof. Hanna Touma, his mother sent him to Shiekh el-Wali (in the Ruwayssiya mosque) to learn penmanship. Some Christian boys were students of the Sheikh, of whom we mention the late Nicholas Saibaa and Elias Saade.

After Elias (Khoury) completed his secular education, his mother removed him from the school, and the bishop began guiding him toward the priesthood as a successor to his father. But Elias refused. When he reached the age of twenty,

around 1858, he went to Jerusalem (Al-Kods) with the visitors during the [pilgrimage] season. The trip from Tripoli to Jerusalem took several days. He then spent a month visiting the holy places, and upon his return, the name Makdisi was reinstated after the name Khoury had taken over the family name.

15. The priest's wife lived in Tripoli with her two children, Elias and Katrina. When Elias became an adult, he began frequenting the land of Hosn, especially Amar el-Hosn, the hometown of his maternal uncles. He would collect the payment (rent) from his father's associates, the farmers, who were scattered over the villages, and bring the money to his mother. At the age of 26, he married Mariam, daughter of Ibrahim el-Khoury el-Beirut, who was 16 years old. Four years after their marriage, they had a son they named Jirjis (the writer of these lines). That was around the year 1868 A.D.

16. Jirjis, son of Elias Khoury Makdisi says: My mother told me that she was twenty years old when I was born, and my father was thirty. My mother delivered me in the city of Tripoli while my father was absent in the land of Hosn, at his uncles' (on his mother's side).

As for my mother, at the writing of these lines in 1937, she is ninety years old, and still in good health, and I am seventy. Ten years have passed since the death of my father, who passed away on July 10, 1927. It is now 100 years since he was born. [A note was inserted later which said: (My mother died on 24 September 1941 in Ras Beirut, and was buried in the Protestant cemetery.)]

17. My father, Elias Khoury Makdisi became attached to the land of Hosn where the old associates of his father lived. He became involved with the government, insuring the tithe with some of the elite of the land. He therefore decided to move his family to Amar el-Hosn, land of his uncles. I was then two years old.

At the time, the family included me, my father, my mother, and my paternal and maternal grandmothers. My father built us a house in Amar el-Hosn, which was close to Kalat el-Hosn [Krak des Chevaliers], the seat of government. He also obtained land and, since he was occupied with his dignitaries and government work, he hired workers to cultivate it.

18. The previous information on the history of the family I obtained from my father, who got some of it from his mother and from his maternal grandfather, Sheikh Ibrahim Younis, who it is said, lived beyond the age of 115.

From here on, I shall chronicle the family and social history that I experienced personally during my childhood, youth, and young adulthood, as well as middle and old age.

19. I mentioned earlier that my mother told me that I was two years old when we moved from Tripoli to Hosn. Among the childhood memories that I have in the

Hosn is the birth of my brother Azar. My grandmother the priest's wife told me that my mother had given birth to a boy, and she showed him to me . I shall never forget the image of that infant, as I kissed him on his hand.

20. During my childhood, the war of the seventies took place. It was the war between France and Germany in 1870, which took place in France. I do not remember any of the events of this war because I was three years old. A child will remember the birth of his baby brother, but not the events of the war at this age.

21. I mentioned that I could not remember the 1870 war between France and Germany. But when I reached the age of five or six, I would listen to my father and his visitors talk about the events of the war. I heard about the uprisings and massacres that took place in our country, such as: the sixties movement and the massacres that took place in Lebanon and Syria (al-Sham); and the unrest that occurred in the country in general, such as the revolt of Yussef Bey Karam, against the Lebanese/Ottoman government; and the revolt of Ismail Kheir Bey Al -Alawi [the Alawite], governor of Safita; and the events that were taking place between the Dandash Clan and the Sheiks of the Moussa Hanna family in the Hosn; and the conflicts between the Dandash and Ismail Kheir Bey families, etc. My father witnessed some of these events himself, and he would tell us stories about them.

22. Among my childhood memories was that I greatly enjoyed getting dogs to bark at each other. And so, if a skirmish occurred between two dogs, I would do my best to get them all riled up. I remember that we were eating dinner at the table and a fight between several dogs occurred. I left the table and went out to egg them. When I returned, my father punished me for leaving the table and getting the dogs excited. But I accepted my punishment patiently because my conscience was clear that I had done my duty toward the dogs.

Another thing I liked to do as a child was to pull the tails of donkeys. Every time I saw a donkey I would run and hold its tail. My grandmother warned me about this, but I did not listen. I kept this up until one day I saw a small donkey and I pulled his tail. He kicked me and caused a deep cut in my forehead that bled and made me cry a lot. From that day on I stopped pulling donkeys' tails, because a kick from a donkey is more powerful than a grandmother's lecture.

Another thing I liked to do as a child was to collect sticks. One day I cut the trunk of the vine with an axe to make a stick out of it. This upset my grandmother, who thought it was a crazy thing to do. But I kept collecting sticks from different sources, like stealing them from guests, or getting them from my friends, until I acquired a large number that I hid in a corner of the house. However, we had a problem one day that caused me great anguish: a young man from my father's

family tried to elope with a girl from another family. The families of the young girl and the young man clashed in a fight. A number of people from the latter group were visiting our house when they discovered where I hid my sticks. They took them and used them to confront their adversaries etc.

Another thing I remember from my youth was robbing nests from treetops, and stealing sour grapes and fruits. We used to attack the pear tree of the village monk, picking and eating the fruit so fast, we would choke on it. We would then say that the reason we were choking was that we were stealing the priest's pears.

Other things I remember are the different games we used to amuse ourselves with, besides wrestling, fighting, boxing ,and kicking.

One of the games we played involved two teams, the first of which formed a bridge by holding onto each other's shoulders, while the second team jumped on the backs of the first team. Then one of them would have to say a specific phrase ten times without breathing or making a mistake. If he succeeded, the same team would get to climb down and back up again, and repeat. If he breathed or made a mistake, the first team would get to climb on the second team's back, and so on. One day at church, two boys were competing in saying the Lord's Prayer, and when the time came to say it, one of them started by reciting the phrase from the game, instead of " Our Father..."

23. In 1877, war broke out between Russia and Turkey. I remember this war because I was about 10 years of age. I also remember, prior to that, the murder of Sultan Abdel Aziz and the appointment of Sultan Murad for a short period, after which Sultan Abdel Hamid was appointed. Then the war broke out between Turkey and Russia. It was understood among the Christians that Russia was their protector. Some of the Greek Orthodox would say that our nation Russia was fighting Turkey, the nation of the Muslims. (I heard that one woman, upon hearing of the reconciliation said no ...[illegible]).

I remember that I went with one of our village men to Kal'at al-Hosn [Karak des Chevaliers], because my father had government business there. Once we arrived at the castle, we saw a group of boys - all of them close to my age - playing outside the castle wall. When they saw me, they rushed towards me and tried to attack me, but some men stopped them and told them to leave me alone. When we entered the castle, I was afraid, and my father complained to one of his friends, but his friend tried to console him by saying: These youngsters, who tried to attack your son, probably did so because their fathers went to war, and they believe that the Christians are the cause of the war. This incident had a great effect on me, since it was the result of religious fanaticism. But just as the Muslims were prejudiced

against the Christians, so, too, were the Christians equally prejudiced against the Muslims.

24. My father's relationship with the government and his work as tax collector [damaan al-a'shar, i.e. guaranteeing or insuring the tithe collection] involved suing some of his adversaries or supervisors, which cost him dearly. So he went to Hama to follow up on the law suits against his foes, since the Hosn Division was part of the larger Hama region. And just as he had sued his adversaries to win, so had they sued him for revenge.

My father spent a great deal of money as a result of his business. Our home in the village was open to guests to come and go and eat and hitch their horses. Among those who came often to our home were some of the sheikhs of the Moussa Hanna Family, such as Sheikn Jahjah Saad ed-Din and his entourage (from Kima), and Sheikh Yacoub and his entourage from Dighli, and Sheikh Salim Tarraf and his entourage. These were supervisors over the administration of Wadi an-Nassara [Valley of the Christians]. Others who frequented our home were the Effendis [dignitaries] of the Yaziji Family, among whom were Issa, and Abdallah, and Khalil, and Anis, brother of Elias Yaziji, a relative of ours on our mother's side.

Also, among those who came often to our home, were the Masters of the Zoghbi Kaylani Family, and they were Sheikh Khalil Zoghbi and his eleven children. These were the Masters of Kal'at al-Hosn and they have several houses built around the castle towers. They also owned several villages around the castle and had political and religious stature: Sheikh Khalid Zoghbi was a dignitary who had arbitration powers. My late father was gentle of speech and generous of hand, and many loved him, and Sheikh Khalid Zoghbi would invite him to his house to visit with him.

25. We had mentioned that Kal'at al-Hosn was the seat of government and the judiciary. It was frequented by people who had lawsuits and business issues. The pillars of the Dandash and Sheikh Moussa Hanna families and the Yazijis would all enter on their horses. Also, a large number of governors and leaders visited this castle, among whom were Midhat Basha (who had been hurling strong accusations at Sheikh Khalid Zoghbi), as well as Ottoman leaders such as Hawwash Bey, Kheir Bey al-Alawi, and a large number of the country's dignitaries.

These events I remember because they took place shortly after the Russian-Turkish war that ended with the defeat of Turkey.

26. We mentioned that the Russian-Turkish war took place over Turkish soil. The Russian troops entered Istanbul and the Russians organized the Treaty of San Estefano, which placed Turkey under Russian control. But the English threatened the Russian army with their fleet and cancelled the Treaty of San Estefano, and

established instead the Berlin Treaty, headed by Bismark, Prime Minister of Germany. They divided a large number of Turkish provinces among several kingdoms which had not taken part in the war, giving Bosnia and [--] to Austria, and [--] to Greece, and Cyprus to the English. Some provinces went to Russia, while others, such as Serbia and Bulgaria were set free.

27. The defeat of Turkey and the division of its territories weakened the Ottoman Empire and resulted in chaos and ineffective laws, giving rise to gangs and attacks. I remember a gang of Sunni Muslims that operated in Kal'at al-Hosn and its environs. Among its members were Abu Salah Durra, Ahmad Durra and Khishn and Has'has and Mustafa Bayoud, and others. Some gangs operated in Wadi as-Nassara [Valley of the Christians], of whom were At-Talaafi Abu Yussef and his sons, Youssef and Fahoul and [--], and Nahnuh and al-Hishi and Kastoun and others, as well as a large number of Alawite gangs. Every dignitary and executive would support the gang closest to him. And often, these gangs would collaborate to attack the villages and share the loot. The government was unable to break up these gangs because of its weakness and corruption.

I remember that a large Alawite gang attacked, in those days, a farm that belonged to the Yaziji family and stole around fifty oxen used for plowing. Hawash was accused because he had claimed that the Yazijis, who were his father Ismail's accountants and treasurers, had robbed his father's treasury when he was killed during a fight with the government.

I also remember that a Christian gang made up of the Talaafi family and their followers, and Nahnuh and his followers, spread out in Amar and went at night to the Dandash villages and stole their cattle and drove it away, but they were tracked down and outnumbered by men who rescued the cattle and arrested two of them, a Christian and an Alawite. The rest of the gang were scattered, and Nahnuh returned to Amar with his followers.

We young ones used to sit and listen to Nahnuh tell his stories to those who assembled around him, while he smoked his nargeela.

28. This was the situation in the country as far as anarchy and night raids and road thieves were concerned. There was a gang in Shuweihid (a village near the castle) whose boss was Mustapha Bayoud, who was famous for scattering cattle. Gangs would come from the north with horses and cows they had stolen, and they would give it to Bayoud, who would (scatter) it, or send it in an unknown direction, or he would charge a fine for it and return it to its owners, so he can steal it again.

There was another scatterer in the north by the name of Abu Sirhan, an Alawite, who would be given the loot of the southern gangs, and he would let it loose in his

area, or he would charge a fine for it; and this money would be divided by the bosses and members of the gangs.

I remember a Christian gang made up of Talaafi and his followers, and Nahnuh and his followers, that one night attacked and robbed the inn of Arqa, which belonged to the dignitaries of Akkar. They were arrested and jailed in Akkar. At the time, the prison in Halba was full of crooks, among them Muhammad Agha, who was accused of robbing Bahlawaniyyah, a village that belonged to the Effendis of Tripoli. One of the prisoners told me stories of these incidents.

29. We return now in the discussion to our home where my father, as we mentioned, incurred great losses from his tax collection business, as well as from his lawsuits and from entertaining his friends and political associates. When my father's debts grew, my mother and my grandmother suggested that he sell all his possessions and pay off the debts and move the family to Tripoli, our old home. At that time, my maternal grandmother had passed away, but my paternal grandmother was still alive. Several of my siblings had been born in Hosn, namely Azar, Esther the first (died young), Esther the second, Amina, and Najib. The family numbered eight. [I believe that includes the writer, his four siblings, and his mother and father and grandmother. MA] So my father began selling his property and paying off his debts to the government and his debtors. I remember that around 1879 A.D., we had nothing left of the remnants of aristocracy except a blue mare. My father went to Homs to sell it and buy some staples for the home. However, the mare contracted a nasty illness and died just as he arrived at Homs. So my father entered Homs empty-handed, and sat down in a café to smoke a nargeela, to help take his mind off his troubles. While he was there, two boys had a fight outside the café and hurled a stone that broke my father's nargeela, which upset him. The café owner tried to console him when he heard his story. My father then went to some friends he had in Homs, Moussa Sarkis and Abu Shibli, from the Nassim family, who were frequent visitors to our home in Hosn, and they advanced him some money so he could buy some supplies. He returned home and told us all that had happened.

30. These were the events that took place at our home - from the family visits, to the financial loss, to the selling of our property, to paying off the debt in the village in preparation for moving the family to Tripoli. It so happened that American missionaries had established a school that year, 1879. My father wanted me to enroll at that school - I was around 12 years old - but I objected and asked him to teach me a trade since I hated school. That was because my father had previously enrolled me at the age of seven in a school run by an educator. This teacher would teach the children by charging a fixed sum for a set amount of learning, such as

learning the psalms and catechism. But he treated us harshly: he would hit and kick us and yell at us. I therefore hated school. When I completed learning the psalms and catechism, I was determined to learn a trade and give up on education. So when my father wanted to enroll me at the new American school, I tried to refuse, but he convinced me and took me by the hand to the registrar and entrusted me to the teacher (Ibrahim Moussa). The teacher was pleasant and asked me to read for him. When I did, he praised me and sat me by his side and treated me very kindly, and put me at ease. During recess, he played with the students and we all liked him. I studied under him, from the beginning of the New Testament to the beginning of the Deeds of the Apostles. I also studied a book by Rizkallah al- Birbari. I was pleased with my studies. He used to teach us the Bible, and explain to us the meanings, and tell us to be honest and trustworthy, and forbid us from cursing and swearing. His words were sacred to us.

In the evening, he would meet with my father and some of the villagers, and they would spend time reading books and carrying on religious discussions.

I remember that the teacher had two goats that he kept with our goats. One morning, his wife came to milk her goats, but could not find them. Some of the villagers said that the thief Nahnuh had been let out of the Castle jail the afternoon of the day before, and perhaps he was the one that stole the goats. The teacher Ibrahim then took us with him to see a friend of his, a man from Akkar, who might convince Nahnuh to return the goats. When we went to Nahnuh in the village of Mishtaya, he welcomed us and told us of his adventures and hardships, and he set a table and served us graciously. After eating, our friend from Akkar confronted him about the goats, but he denied that he had stolen them, saying that people make false accusations against him because he has precedents [souftu hamra].

Among the things I remember Nahnuh as saying in trying to proclaim his innocence in the accusations leveled against him was: Do you want the truth or its cousin? And they answered: We want the truth. And Nahnuh answered, swearing earnestly: The real, real truth is that sin never entered my home, but people are always blaming me etc. And since he was speaking in all earnestness, I was surprised and blurted out with a child's innocence: Aren't you Nahnuh? And he said: Yes, by God I am Nahnuh. And I said: Did you not, a while ago, steal our flour and that of the people of Amar? And he answered: Yes, it is I. So I said: How can you claim, then, that sin has never entered your home? And he said laughing: Stealing flour is not a sin, because on that day, you had flour and we didn't have any. Is it justice from God that you should have food and drink, while we go hungry? And he continued laughing, as if he had studied the law. And after

that, he spent some time telling us of his adventures and how he had lost his civil rights, and was being chased by the government without just cause. As I remember, the government was after him because of an issue involving his young niece.

31. After I had spent a few months at the school enjoying learning and the kindness of the teacher, American missionaries arrived from Tripoli to inspect the school. The teacher had directed the attention of the missionary, Samuel Jessup, to me, who then asked me questions on the four mathematical operations, and asked me to read from the Bible. Then he wrote my name in his notebook, and promised to help me enter the Syrian Protestant College in Beirut (American University today), and I was pleased with that.

32. In autumn of 1880 (79), I entered the College in Beirut. The cost for a boarding student was 17 gold Ottoman liras. The missionaries helped with 12 liras, and asked my father to pay 4 liras. I entered the school in 1880. My father came to Tripoli after he had sold all his property, and paid off his debts. The family lived in the small house built by my grandfather in Kubbet as-Nasr. The family included me and my brothers and sisters, Azar, Esther, Amina, and Najib. As for me, I enrolled at the College.

33. When I entered the College in Beirut, the number of students was low (compared to these days). They all wore loose robes (kumbaz) and baggy pants (sherwal) and red shoes. I entered the first grade in the preparatory school [I am assuming this is equivalent to 6th or 7th grade, or the first year in middle school, since in 1880 he would have been 12 years old. MA]. I did not know a foreign language, and my academic knowledge was basic simple arithmetic and reading from the Bible.

Of my teachers, I remember Professor Yacoub Sarruf, who taught us reading using the book *Sirr an-Najah* [Secrets of Success] (which he had recently translated following a request from Dr. Cornelius Van Dyck), as well as other subjects. Also, Professor Ibrahim al-Kafrouni, who taught us math in English, and Professor Jirjis al-Kafrouni, brother of Ibrahim al-Kafrouni, who had just started his first year of teaching after receiving his advanced degree.

I remember the first literary event I attended in the prayer room (the library now). Professor Faris Nimr gave a lecture on the human body, in which he presented pictures using the magic lamp [al fanous as-sihry]. During that event, a debate on the rights of women and men took place between Professors Yacoub Sarrouf and Ibrahim as-Kafrouni. A large audience attended from the city, and the event benefitted a charitable project. From that day, I yearned to become a teacher and lecturer.

34. I mentioned that the school had helped me by paying 12 liras on my behalf. The law stipulated that the student who received aid should work 28 hours for every lira he received. These aid recipients were not a small number, and had a supervisor under whom they worked, cleaning rocks from the college roads, and taking them to specific locations. (I remember that the great fir trees in the triangle at the entrance to the President's residence were the result of our hard work, as we filled that triangle with soil and planted the fir seedlings).

35. I made many friends at the school, and at the end of the year, I was sad when we parted. I returned the next year, and was pleased with my teachers, my friends and my education. At the end of the second year, my father wanted me to help him, because the family had grown, so I worked for a teacher in one of the villages for a small salary, most of which I gave to my father. Dr. Daniel Bliss, President of the College, wrote a letter to the missionaries asking about me, and why I had not returned to school. He suggested that if we had trouble paying the 5 liras, then the school would help me by paying the whole 17 liras so I could return. One of the missionaries told me about the letter of Dr. Daniel Bliss, the President. I was very happy and proud that this great man had asked about me.

36. After I taught at the village for one year, I returned to the college without having to pay, but my allowance was small. So I took an exam to enter the first scientific class. I passed the test and saved myself a year, and caught up with my classmates. But that year was difficult because I had skipped a grade. Of my teachers, I remember Professor Faris Nimr in Algebra, Sheikh Khalil Yaziji in Arabic grammar, and Mr. Robert West in English.

Because of the events of Arabi Basha in Egypt, and Ghardoun Basha in Sudan, taking place that year, the English had requested translators who could speak English. I went to the English consulate with some students who had applied. I asked the translator [illegible name] to test me, which he did. I passed the test and was offered 15 gold English pounds. The government would also pay my fare to Egypt. When my father and mother heard the news, they wrote to me begging me not to go to Egypt because it was dangerous, and I was too young. They were willing to manage on very little if I didn't go etc. I was moved by my father and mother's request, and I believed that parents' feelings should be taken into consideration, so I gave up the trip to Sudan with the English group, leaving the matter in God's hands.

37. At the end of the school year, I spent the summer vacation at my parents' in Tripoli. I used to assist the teacher at Kubbet as-Nasr, and help my parents with my salary. At the end of the vacation, I returned to college and entered the second

science year [suff al-muhawillin: “transitional” class?]. Professors Yacoub Sarruf and Faris Nimr had left the college and moved “al-Muqtataf” to Egypt. Professor Robert West taught us Engineering (handassah) [geometry?] instead of prof. Nimr , and Sheikh Khalil Bin Youssef taught us “al bayan” [literary form?].

I longed for the day when I would get my diploma so I could work and help my father raise my brothers and sisters, because I could feel the family’s financial difficulties, and the effort my father and mother were making to support my siblings.

When I completed the school year, I returned to Tripoli. The missionaries put me in charge of a school in Kubbet al-Nasr. They also gave me an assistant because the closure of the Orthodox school had resulted in many of their students enrolling at our school. The missionaries informed me that I should teach for one year to help myself and my parents, and to take care of the school. I resigned myself to the situation, and worked with joy while the school improved and the number of students increased. At the end of the year, I requested to return to college to continue my studies. But the decision was made that I should stay a second year because my father needed my help, and the school needed me. I submitted to the circumstances and to family obligations, but my heart was set on returning to college to obtain my scientific diploma, and I asked God to help me find a way. A few months passed in the second year, Christmas came, and we approached the middle of the year, yet no door opened for my return to college. But I kept asking God to show me a way, because I did not want to anger my father, or upset the missionaries.

One day, two policemen came to the school and informed me that the Turkish governor Aref Bey needed to see me to ask me a few questions. I obeyed without argument. When we reached the serail [saraya: government headquarters], I was admitted to the governor Aref Bey Al-Turki. He spoke to me in Turkish, and he got out a book and began reading in Turkish. He then asked one of the members of the Council to translate. He said: Our Effendi the Governor [motassarref] has been informed that the school you are running has no licence. You must close it down and request permission to reopen it. I told him that the school belonged to the American missionaries. He said that they must then apply for a licence. You need to close it down until the licence is issued.

When I left the governor’s office, I went to the home of the missionary Mr. Hardin, and told him what had happened. His answer was that the licence issue was just an excuse for closing the school. He asked me if I would like to be reassigned to a school in one of the villages. I answered that what I really wanted was to go back to the college. Then he said: But half the year has passed, would they still

accept you in your class? So I asked him to inquire if my return would be possible. I remember walking back to the Mina that day accompanied by one of the elders. I consulted him on my situation and he advised me to go back to the college, even in the middle of the year. He [Mr. Hardin] wrote to Dr. Daniel Bliss, the president of the college, informing him of my request. The reply was: Send him, as his past conduct can vouch for him.

I returned to college that year, and the class had covered subjects such as chemistry and geometry and others. Dr. Daniel Bliss urged me to work hard and learn the material. I took the mid-year exams and God helped me. At the end of the year I passed the exams in all the subjects. But I felt fatigue in my eyes. However, at that point, all that remained to obtain the scientific diploma was one year; and I was determined to obtain it, God willing.

38. It is now summer of 1887, and the missionaries have asked me to teach and preach during summer vacation in the town of Kousba (Lebanon). I began working, happy with the students and the parents. I informed the missionary in Tripoli, Mr. March, of my intention to return to college at the end of the vacation. His reply to me was that he had met with my father, and after negotiations on the matter, they both agreed that I should continue to teach and help my parents; and that I had achieved enough, in the way of education, to be an accomplished teacher; and that there was no need for me to get my scientific diploma.

Of course, my father's financial needs led him to be satisfied with what I had achieved so far, and he requested what was to his advantage. And the missionary's need for a school teacher made him try to convince me to be satisfied with what I had. But I insisted on completing my degree, especially that I had only one year left. But how to do it if the missionary would not accept? And the missionary absolutely refused to accept, using my father's will as his reason. Both wills were in agreement on my behalf. So I decided that I would go to the college, even if it were against the will of Mr. March. I then began to pray, asking God to help me succeed.

When college started in October, I rented a mule from one of the mule owners, since there were no carriages or automobiles in those days, and I went with him from Kousba to Beirut. We spent two days on the road. After I paid the mule owner, I had only a quarter riyal (Majidi) left. I remember the missionary's anger when he found out I had left against his will.

I went to the college and rang President Daniel Bliss's doorbell. When he saw me, he was surprised, and asked what had brought me here. He said: Mr. March sent me word that you had come here without his permission, and he requested that we refuse you. So I told him the story from beginning to end. He said: As long as

Mr. March has not given his permission, we cannot accept you. The best we can do is to accept you as a guest of the college, and not as a student: you may eat and sleep here, and in two weeks, Mr. March will come, and if you can convince him, then we'll accept you. But if he continues to refuse, we will not contradict him. As for me, I said to myself, I have two weeks of food and lodging, and after that, God will take care of things.

At the designated time, Mr. March arrived and entered the college door. He was riding a horse. I remember how he turned around and saw me in the courtyard, and gave me an angry look. Then he went straight to the home of President Daniel Bliss. I was, at that time, praying to God to inspire him to do good and approve of me so I can complete my year. However, the missionary did not ask to meet me, but left the university with the look of victory on his face. I then received a letter delivered by a servant of the president of the college. I knew from the address that it was from the missionary who was angry at me. Before I opened it, I asked God that it would be good news. Then I opened it, and this is how it began: Since you have disobeyed us, we inform you that you are not accepted at the college, and you must return to Kousba to the school to perform your duties or else etc...

The person who was addressing me was the absolute master, who had the financial, academic, and scientific means, and I was a youth with no money or friends to influence the missionary. The world turned dark in my face, and I was determined to make every effort to return to the college. So I went to the homes of some of the missionaries we knew; perhaps they might influence the absolute master. But I found no one, because they were all still on summer vacation. Even if they had been there, they would not contradict each other's decisions, since they figure that I have been given my orders and must obey.

I then began to roam the streets of Beirut aimlessly. As I passed through the souks, I saw an office for American and British missionaries, managed by Mr. Moussaly. Inside the office I saw Mr. March, who gave me a half-hearted smile to indicate his victory over me. He said: You're still here? You need to return today. Rent a horse and sleep in Jounieh, and the next day continue your journey to Kousba. I said: I have no money. So he took out one gold Ottoman lira and gave it to me on account, and asked me to rent something to ride on. However, when I took the money and put it in my pocket, I felt a certain power, so I remained seated on the bench. The missionary asked me: Why don't you go and take care of your affairs? I said: I need to tell you one word. He said: If you mean a word about the college, you know there is no point in discussing it. He then went on to reprimand me about my disobedience and about leaving the school, calling my behavior defiance. I answered that I admit to all of this, but the Lord Jesus forgave his

enemies, and he said: As for forgiveness, that's okay, but you must return to Kousba because the doors to the college have been shut, since we have no money to pay for you. So I said: If it's a matter of money, this is something I'll take care of myself, only I beg you not to be upset if I take care of my own affairs. He looked at me laughing, and said: And how will you take care of your affairs? I said: I will find someone to pay my tuition, but don't be upset with what I'm about to do. At this point, the missionary looked very worried that I would find someone to pay my tuition, as this would cause the mission's investment in me to be wasted. He started to think, and I started to pray to God to keep the illusion going. After a short while, he told me to sit down, and I sat. He then told me: We can pay twelve gold Ottoman liras to the college, and you take care of the remaining five liras (because tuition was seventeen liras). I said that finding five liras would be difficult and asked if they could pay fourteen liras, and I'll find the rest. He said: If we accept the fourteen, you'll ask for all the seventeen. I promised I would not ask for more than fourteen, and he promised to pay. Then I asked him to write a letter to the president of the college pledging to pay the amount, and he did. But I felt that he was upset at being defeated. He then rode his horse and left.

After Mr. March had left, Mr. Moussaly, the office manager, came out from behind a partition and asked me: Where are you from, my son? So I told him my story, and he said: I am amazed at this exchange between you and the missionary. It started out with him being the master and you the slave, and it ended with your victory, making him the slave and you the master. He then wished me success. I went to the college and showed the president the letter Mr. March had written. He beamed and promised to pay the three liras from the college budget, and congratulated me on my victory.

Professor West helped me obtain books, on condition I return them at the end of the year so others can use them to study. I taught Mr. Beatty(?), the president of the Preparatory School, Arabic in exchange for what I had to pay to the college. Later the Board of Trustees cancelled the student work program, and I became free to work on my own, and was paid a monthly fee by Mr. Beatty for teaching him Arabic.

At the end of the year, I earned my scientific diploma. Mr. March attended the ceremony and congratulated me on my success and perseverance. We became friends, and I forgave him for doing his job as a missionary who needed to be obeyed. He forgave me because he realized that I disobeyed him for a higher cause. My family and friends were very pleased that I obtained my diploma. And now I'm all done with student life, during which I was in great financial difficulties. These difficulties forced me to work very hard and skip the last year of the Preparatory

School, and complete another grade in half a year. I admit that skipping a grade is a difficult matter, causing the student to rush through a lot of material without really absorbing it. But then, what can we do; circumstances dictate their own rules.

Continuation of notes from the history of our family, and my personal relationship to it.

I obtained my scientific diploma in the year 1888 A.D., and spent the summer in Kousba (Lebanon). In early October 1888, I was sent to Homs to teach at the American missionary school. There I met several of the town dignitaries, among whom: Suleiman, brother of the Rev. Issa, a doctor and employee whose son Kamel was my student, now preparing to study medicine at the Jesuit University in Beirut. Because of him, I used to frequent his father's home. He was very well respected in Homs for his education and his integrity and his work in the government. Also, among the friends I enjoyed was Dr. Jirjis Al-Kafrouni. I knew him at the American University in Beirut. He was my teacher in the first year at the Preparatory school. Among the friends whose homes I visited are the brothers Mikhael and Ibrahim Safi, whose wives Nazha and Yasmine were refined women. This family traveled to America, then returned to Homs. They were originally from Burj Safita.

I met the dignitary Habib, brother of Mirhij, originally from Lebanon. He lived in Homs and was employed by the government.

I used to visit the Greek Orthodox Bishopry [?] Where I met the Bishop Athenasius Atallah, who was active in spreading Greek Orthodox schools for boys and girls.

All this, in addition to meeting members of the Protestant community, such as the Ghurabs, the Khishns, and others.

Of the incidents I remember: A Protestant young man fell in love with a girl of the Greek Orthodox denomination. Some people staged a demonstration against them because they wanted her to marry an Orthodox man. The executives of the Protestant congregation refused to allow the Protestant pastor to perform the marriage ceremony, as this would cause problems. As for me and some of my friends, we saw this as going against personal freedom, so we intervened with the Orthodox bishop and he sent a priest on his behalf to perform the ceremony, on condition that the Protestant young man would enter the Orthodox faith. This upset the elders of the Protestant church.

Another incident I remember was an event I organized at the Protestant church, where I gave a lecture. We invited men and women of different religious

affiliations and we discussed social issues. This was among the first events to include members of both genders in Homs.

In the autumn of 1889, the missionaries transferred me from Homs to Mar Marita (Hosn), claiming that the Protestant school there had a large number of students from different schools, and was in need of a willing principal and teacher. I figured that since I had disobeyed some of the traditions of the old missionaries, they must have complained about me. In short, I went to the land of Hosn and took charge of the work at the school, which included a number of students who were preparing to enter the American University. Some of them had studied at another school that was now closed, and they wanted to continue their education. Some of them were studying algebra, and language and philosophy. The number of students was about 80 girls and boys. The population of Mar Marita al Hosn was the country's elite, most of them from the Yaziji family, with great influence in the government where many were employed.

Among the incidents I remember was that upon my arrival, I found a conflict between two branches of the Yaziji family over the building of a large storage room [qabou]. The owner of the building agreed with the contractors to build him the room according to specific dimensions for length, width, and height, for a specific amount of money. Before starting the work, the owner asked the contractors to increase the dimensions (length, width, and height) of the room, and he would compensate them for the addition. When the building was completed, the two parties disagreed, the contractors having requested a sum that the owner found too high, while the owner offered a sum that the contractors found too low. The two groups then threatened each other, claiming they were going to use force to secure their rights.

When I arrived in town, the two parties met and appointed me arbitrator. I was a young man with no experience in practical affairs. So I asked each team to suggest a solution, which they did. I then explained both solutions to show each team the flaws in what it had suggested. When they understood the problem, I presented them with a simple way to solve it. They understood it, accepted my arbitration, agreed on the matter, and thanked me for my clear solution.

I remember the visit of Bishop Nikodemus to Mar Marita, and my meeting and greeting him.

Continued notes from the history of the family

I met many people, visited nearby villages, and was introduced to the sheikhs of the Moussa Hanna family in Kima, the Helou family in Mashta, and the Bashour family in Burj Safita. I visited the homes of Khalil Jirjis in Muka'bara, Antonius Obeid in Mishtaya, Ibrahim Shahin in Houash, Youssef Nader in Mzeibeleh, and

Dagher in Khreibi, among others of the old and new dignitaries. I frequented the monastery of the famous St. George of Hmeira, and the Kal'at el Hosn [Karak des Chevaliers], where the Sheikh Khalid Zoghbi Kaylani and his family of more than 10 boys lived and had homes on the towers of the castle [abraj al kal'a]. The castle was the headquarters of the government, destination of the country's business people. A large number of dignitaries from the Hosn would enter it on their horses, such as the Dandash clan, the Effendis of the Yaziji family, and the Sheikhs of the Moussa Hanna family, the Nader, the Shahin, the Jirjis, and Obeid families, as well as other visitors and employees and business people. I often went to Amar el-Hosn, the village where I spent years of my youth, and where my grandmother and my father's maternal uncles, the Younis family, lived.

It occurred to me to convince the missionaries to build a boarding school in Mar Marita, and as we were negotiating the issue, a few incidents took place, which changed the course of events. This is the summary:

A young man, of the Yaziji family, who had studied at the college and returned to his hometown, requested from the missionaries something that would require a certificate of good conduct from me. When I was asked about him, my assessment [ifadah] (according to my conscience and knowledge) was that he had a temper, was quarrelsome and disruptive, and did not deserve what he was asking for. When the missionaries refused to grant him his request, he bore a grudge against me and attempted, with his friends and colleagues, to close down the school. I went to Tripoli on vacation, and was sent an anonymous (without signature) letter, threatening me if I returned. I showed the letter to the missionaries, and accused the above person of sending it. After some negotiations, we agreed that I should return to Mar Marita, because it wouldn't be fair to close down the school based on an anonymous letter. I returned to school and showed some friends the letter, and we resumed our teaching with the assistant. Barely a week had passed when the door of the room where I slept, close to the school, was attacked with stones and pins. Some friends were visiting me, and we thought that these were scare tactics, aimed at making me close the school and leave town in fear of retribution.

The town then split into two groups: one group wanted to preserve the school and win the battle for me and the school. The other group wanted victory to the party of the person who was trying to take revenge on me.

Party politics began to take its course in the town. My party and that of the school and the parents and students announced that they would protect me and the school by taking turns staying up at night to watch over us. Some members of the opposing party demonstrated that they were plotting their revenge.

One night, a fight broke out around the school between the two parties, and there were some injuries. The school administrators met and drafted a petition accusing the vengeful person and some of his friends of attacking the school and entering it with the purpose of seeking revenge over me. In truth, the fight took place outside the school and no one touched me, but I went along with the petition in deference to the party. I presented it to the government with a complaint, and the investigator from the castle came to Mar Marita and conducted an inquiry. But the accused from the opposing party did not surrender, so the government summoned them and pursued them. The fact that they were under indictment put my mind at ease, and made me think that fear would deter them from attacking me or the school. (This was faulty thinking, since being pursued does not stop criminals from continuing with their plans for revenge). Before the lawsuit was initiated against the revenge party, I would never walk around, day or night, without being accompanied by a number of my students and colleagues, in fear of being attacked. But after the lawsuit got underway, I began to walk alone sometimes. One night, after I had spent the evening at a friend's house, I returned to my quarters. Some of the members of the opposing group observed me and set a trap for me in a secluded area. When I arrived there, one of them suddenly attacked me with a stick and started beating me with it. But I managed to grab it and we got into a fight, and he was pinned under me. As I was trying to wrestle the stick out of his hand, two individuals jumped out of a pothole nearby and began hitting me with sharp instruments. A woman who happened to be passing by, started screaming, and the attackers ran away, after inflicting several wounds on me. People rushed to the scene and the two parties got into a fight that lasted till midnight.

On the morning of the next day, the incident was reported to the government at the castle. An investigation took place, and my deposition was taken (I named my three attackers). I also named a fourth person who was standing by watching the fight without interfering, as though he were in collusion with the attackers. The lawsuit took its legal course. The government went after the criminals, but they did not surrender.

I agreed with my colleagues to take a vacation from school and go to Amar el-Hosn, which was only a half hour from the government headquarters at the castle. There I could follow the daily proceedings of the case while feeling safe from the vengeful acts that I might be exposed to in Mar Marita.

This was in early summer. In Amar el-Hosn, I found a church, a Protestant congregation, an American missionary school, and relatives of mine.

I took a house in the upper section of town, near the Protestant church and the home of the minister. A friend of mine slept at my house, and we followed the

court case and went daily to the castle (seat of government), and tried to influence the government to pursue the perpetrator. I had paid five gold French pounds: two to the judge, two to the inspector, and one pound to an officer who was from Baghdad. I noticed that the one pound paid to the officer had done more than the four pounds paid to the judge and inspector, because the officer was the Agha, head of the gendarmes, and he would from time to time send a number of his horsemen to raid the attackers' homes, and to chase them and catch them and bring them to jail. But they had employees who told them of my every move with the officer, and would warn them to stay away from their homes in fear of being ambushed by the gendarmes.

The life of these perpetrators was not easy because of this pursuit, especially that they were from good families, and not accustomed to being pursued by the government. They had an influential relative who sought, through the Turkish supervisor [qaem maqam], to threaten me so I would shut down the school and leave Hosn. But I did not give in, and I wrote a letter to the missionaries in Tripoli informing them of the supervisor's threats. Since the school was opened with a licence, the missionaries complained to the governor (mutasarrif), through an interpreter from the government of Kaysar Bey al-Fass, about the supervisor's interference. The governor sent a letter to the supervisor in which he criticized him for threatening to close the school. The supervisor was upset with me, but appointed one of the young men from the school party to open the school during my vacation.

That was the situation: I would go to the government center daily to pressure the executives so they would close in on the perpetrators by sending the gendarmes to pursue them.

Finally, the enemy made a decision, with some of their assistants, that the only way to get rid of this case was to execute me. And that surely, all this pressure on me may lead me to heaven.

One Saturday evening, I was asleep in my isolated house (in Amar). A young man from Tripoli, (named Suleiman Shayboub), out to experience the world, was visiting us at that time. The guest suffered from asthma in his chest, and would stay up all night with insomnia. That night, he woke me up from my sleep, and said in a weak voice: It seems that the house is surrounded by a group of people. He could see heads looking in from the windows, visible by the light of the moon. He asked me to take a look, which I did. Then he told me: You are the one they are after, so you better not make a sound as they will shoot in the direction of the sound. And he taught me to fold my quilt several times and place it in front of my face, and he did the same with his quilt. Then we each sat behind a column in the house, and

with a strong voice, he yelled, several times: Who are these men? The villagers heard his loud voice and some woke up and came to help us, while the gang that was stalking us fled.

Two days later, the guest departed, and the teacher Antonios Hadid returned to stay in the house with me.

On Saturday, one week after the incident, I felt a tightness in my chest around dusk. So I went with Antonios to the valley near the house, and we sat down and talked about the guest, Mr. Suleiman Shayboub, and how he had noticed the gang that was surrounding the house a week ago. Sometimes we believed what he had seen, and at other times we accused him of imagining things. At that moment, we felt the need to pray, and we asked God to save us from the evil people who were trying to harm me. We then went to the home of the pastor of the church to spend the evening. While we were there, the wife of Antonios came and told him that his brother was planning to travel to Homs that night, and was therefore unable to sleep in the threshing field. This meant that Antonios would have to sleep in the field to guard it against thieves. Antonios went to the field, and one of the young men volunteered to sleep in the house with me. However, the father of the young man, believing that we were in danger, refused to let his son go with me. As for me, I did not believe that I was in any danger, and I stood up to go home and sleep alone. But the preacher's wife, (Um Toufic), made a bed for me to sleep at their home, and convinced me, along with her husband, not to go. So I gave in to her wishes and spent that night at the pastor's home.

In the morning, we found the house where I usually sleep ransacked, with a hole in the back, adjacent to the roof. The robbers had made a large opening from which they entered the house. (No doubt they were planning to harm me and anyone who was with me, so there would be no witnesses). When they found the house empty, they stole whatever was there, such as bedding and kitchen items. It seems there were at least ten people, judging from the stuff they carried away.

Antonios Hadid, (the owner of the house), and I followed their trail towards the monastery of Mar Jirjis [St. George] Hmeira, by way of the crossroad to Wadi Zamara. The trail was clear, until we reached the bottom of Wadi Zamara. We did not go further for fear that some of them were planning to ambush us in those remote valleys, far from inhabited areas, especially that we were both unarmed. (I think that it was dangerous to follow the trail to that point, which was about a mile from the village, but our emotions were stronger than our fear). We then returned to Amar, determined to file a complaint against our enemies. We were convinced that they were the ones who had come with their gang, and ransacked the house while planning to harm me so they could get rid of me.

There were two ways to the castle. The first went through the village, and the second passed by the government offices [saraya]. I usually took the second route, because I liked to pass by one of the employees (Matta, brother of Attiya) before going to the castle, to get his opinion on the issues I wanted to present to the government. My adversaries knew that I did that, so they lay a trap for me in the valley, by the second route. It didn't occur to me and my friend, Antonios, that they would do that, and we just proceeded to the castle by way of the saraya, so we could pass by the aforementioned employee. Before we reached the valley where they were hiding, we saw a woman, (named Hilani, wife of Hanna Haddad), running towards us, with a look of fear on her face. She told us that there were three armed men who, when they saw her picking greens, yelled at her to leave the valley. From the description she gave us, we knew they were the enemy. And since they had not succeeded at my home last night, they hid in the valley to attack me, knowing that this was my way to the castle (government center). At that point, we returned with the woman Hilani, and she told the public what she had seen.

We understood then that it was divine intervention that had saved us the night before, when it called on the brother of Antonios to go to Homs, forcing Antonios to sleep in the field to protect it. And it was divine intervention that called on the father of the boy who wanted to sleep in my house to protect me, to refuse to allow him to go with me. And it was this intervention that called on Um Toufic, the pastor's wife, to make me a bed and convince me, with her spouse, to not sleep alone in my house. And it was the intervention that saved me in the last plot devised by my enemies, through the woman Halloun [nickname for Hilaneh or Helen], wife of Hanna Haddad, who was yelled at by those hiding in the valley.

We then wrote a petition and sent it to the government with a person, describing the incident of robbing my house and trying to harm us. The next day, I went to Tripoli, accompanied by two friends (Elias Attiya and Daoud Al-Khal), by way of Shaara, fearing an ambush if I went by way of Nabh el-Khalifa.

This ended our mission in the land of Hosn. When we arrived in Tripoli, we found men waiting for us, we told them what had happened, and they thanked God for our safety.

Our arrival in Tripoli was, (as I remember), in September of 1892.

In those days, it was the American missionaries that assigned teachers to their positions. I was assigned to a position in Lebanon, which I refused. My excuse was that I was tired of teaching in day schools, and if they could not find me an assignment in a boarding school, I would resign. After some negotiation, the missionaries decided to establish a boarding school for boys, where I would teach.

Among my teaching colleagues was the Baccalaureus Salim Youssef Attiyah (later known as Dr. Salim Attiyah).

The missionaries rented the Abdallah Nahhas building for us, in the Zahiriyah, and accepted a small number of boarding students. A large number of day students were enrolled as well and we began working seriously. About three months later, our friend Prof. Najib Saade, recipient of the Scientific diploma, and the Theological diploma, passed away. He had taught at the American Girls' Boarding School, in addition to managing the Protestant preaching pulpit. He was a very gentle and well-mannered young man, and his death caused great sadness in his friends' hearts. The missionaries realized that they needed someone to fill the position of teacher and preacher, and they picked me. I left the boys' school and moved to the girls' school.

My work was organized. I would come to school at 7:45 in the morning and listen to the school hymns while walking in the garden. That gave me spiritual energy. At 8:00 o'clock, I would go to the classroom, and my classes would be sent to me on time.

I taught many subjects, including Arabic language, grammar, and comprehension, arithmetic, algebra, psychology and philosophy, as well as astronomy, and others. I taught five sections between 8 and 12 o'clock. Then between 12:00 and 12:30 I would stay in the classroom to grade composition papers. This was my work every day before noon, except for Saturdays, when there was no teaching at the girls' school.

I enjoyed organizing the classroom, as well as teaching the ladies, who belonged to the best families in Tripoli and its surroundings, and meeting their parents. In the afternoon, I would eat lunch at my parents' house and rest a little, then take a walk in the countryside for about two hours. During that time, I would think of a topic for my Sunday sermon, since I was in charge of the pulpit. On Saturday, I would isolate myself at home and focus my thoughts on ideas I had collected from books and the news. I would build my sermon briefly, and then deliver it orally without using a paper or notes. The sermon was attended by members of the church and visitors as well as students from the girls' and boys' schools.

Sunday afternoon (between 2:00 and 3:00) I set aside for visiting the prisoners in the Tripoli castle, accompanied by my friend (Jijis Abou Dib), a person experienced in the behavior of delinquents. This general prison housed over 400 young men from all over the Ottoman Empire, convicted of different crimes, such as murder, or burglary, or robbery. In this prison were shops for different crafts including weaving, shoe repair, carpentry, and others, where anyone with a skill

could work and profit and keep his mind off idleness and unemployment. Those that had no vocational skill were crowded in cells, and were allowed to walk around in a large courtyard, surrounded by the cells. In the evening, they would be ordered by the guards to enter their quarters. However, these prisoners often clashed in the courtyard during the day, with Christians and Mohammedans fighting over religious beliefs. As a result, the government decided to give the Mohammedans half a day of recess only, after which they would return to their cells, and the Christians would then come out of their cells for half a day. This solution solved the problem, and each group lost half a day of fresh air and sunshine in the courtyard.

We had several acquaintances among the prisoners, both Christians and Mohammedans. We used to request to talk to them and we gave them useful books, and some of them learned to read while in prison.

With experience, we learned that many of these prisoners had more self-respect than some free men living outside the prison. Perhaps circumstances led them to end up in prison, and had they had better guidance, they could have been good, brave and strong men.

During the holidays, we would visit sick people or friends in their homes. In the evenings, after we had finished our social obligations, we would spend the evening at home with friends and family, engaged in various educational, cultural, and mostly political discussions. During that time, wars broke out between America and Spain, and between England and the Egyptians and Sudanese, and revolutions took place in the Ottoman Empire, in Armenia and Macedonia and other regions.

There were quite a few educated people in Tripoli, from various schools, such as the Syrian Protestant College, and others. So we decided to form a scientific, cultural, literary society whose members would give lectures in the Protestant auditorium. Among the members I remember were Misters Jirjis Yanni, and Samuel Yanni, Dr. Mikhael Maria [?], Dr. Dimitri Sioufi, Dr. Khalil Hayek, Assaad Bassili, Farah Antoun, and the sons of Naoum and Nassim [?], and other men of literature and science. The society held its meetings in the Protestant auditorium (with permission from the missionaries, owners of the auditorium). Lectures and discussions took place, on condition they did not get into sectarian, religious or political issues.

These events took place in the evening, at specific times, and were attended by ladies and gentlemen who had received written invitations. Among those that attended these events was the eminent scientist Mr. Iskandar Kasteflis, Consul of Russia and Germany, and other good people such as the Naufals, the Sarrafs, the

Khlats, the Ghorayeb, the Wards etc. This society flourished with speakers and attendees, and resulted in a literary renaissance in the city.

I forgot to mention that, when I was first assigned to teach at the Girls' School, and to be in charge of the Protestant pulpit in Tripoli, the missionaries decided to send me to study theology in Beirut, believing that this position required a degree in theology. I refused to go to Beirut to learn theology, claiming that I could learn the material on my own while performing my work. I gave them examples of some who had studied theology but lost their natural talent to deliver a lecture or sermon because, upon their return, they began imitating their American professors in pronunciation and delivery. The missionaries were convinced, and gave me some theology books to study on my own.

This is how I spent my time: 1. Teaching four hours in the morning at the Girls' School, and an elective hour at the Boys' School. 2. I spent one hour each day writing my journal. 3. I spent one hour reading English and Arabic books to get ideas for my sermon and my teaching. 4. I spent all day Saturday in my house working on my Sunday sermon. 5. Sunday morning I delivered my sermon in the sanctuary, and in the afternoon, I visited prisoners and sick people and friends. 6. In the evenings, I attended meetings or spent the evening with family and friends at home. 7. In summer, we went to the mountains and visited schools.

This is how I met many residents of the towns and villages, and many of my students were now all over, so that I seldom visited a place without finding friends and students.

During my stay in Tripoli, I was able to translate three educational [behavioral?] books suggested by the American Press in Beirut. They were (Al Akhtar fi Asfar al Bihar; Tanassul al Aadaat al Thamima; and Khidmat al Massih), [loosely translated as: The Dangers of Sea Travel; The Persistence of Bad Habits; and Serving Christ, respectively-MA]. I was paid for translating them by the British Society, and I used the money to publish my two textbooks on the Arabic language.

In 1900, I married Miss Mariana Khawli. The Reverend Dr. Nelson, the American missionary in Tripoli, officiated at the wedding ceremony. And here I must mention an incident that happened to me while I was in Tripoli, due to its importance:

An employee of the Ottoman postal department was transferred from Beirut to Tripoli around 1897. This employee used to frequent our Protestant church. He and his friends behaved rather rudely. Then a story spread that he was a spy for the Sultan Abdel Hamid. This caused people in general to fear him, but I personally did not believe that he was a spy for Sultan Abdel Hamid. So I inquired about him

in Beirut and was told that he had stolen a check and was transferred to Tripoli without being tried in court, but that he had support from some Turks. And since he had been rude in church, and was having a negative influence on some of our youth, I made an agreement with the school principal, Miss LaGrange, that he would not be invited to our literary events. This upset him, having been informed by some of our teachers, and he wanted to take his revenge on me. As I returned home with my siblings from a church meeting one night, he sent someone to attack me in one of the alleys. I managed to prevail by severely beating the attacker, but I was detained that night. The next day, the city was abuzz with the news, and the people understood the motive behind this, and I was released immediately from detention.

Shortly after that, the employee met in his office with some young men, and they brought a gun, and someone was killed. The employee was then sentenced to five years in prison. When the employee was sent to prison, the man who had been sent to attack me got scared, and came to me and confessed. I told the prosecutor Rashid Bey Thahboub of the incident, and he sent after him and got a deposition from him. At this point, his second deposition contradicted the first deposition. The court then decided to declare my innocence. The head of criminal justice [?] was Shaker Bey al Kouatly al Turki.

On September 4, 1900, I married Mariana Khawli. Our wedding was blessed by the American minister, Dr. Nelson. After we had two daughters (Soumaya, then Fadwa) we had a son we named Elias, after his grandfather. However, Fadwa died young. And in 1905, I agreed with the University [American University of Beirut, previously known as the Syrian Protestant College] on a teaching contract.

These notes have been translated by Mariana Abdelnour (nee Makdisi), granddaughter of the author Jirjis Khuri Makdisi, and daughter of his oldest son Elias. A notebook, handwritten by him in Arabic, was found at the home of his late daughter, Wadad Cortas, in Brummana.

I have enjoyed translating this history, and have tried to remain faithful to the text. Sometimes I had to guess the meaning of certain words or expressions. But on the whole, I have tried to convey my grandfather's spirit to the best of my abilities.

The purpose of this translation was to make it available to the generations of the family who have grown up outside Lebanon, and may not be able to read the original text in Arabic.

I hope they and future generations will enjoy reading about their family as much as I have enjoyed reading and translating it.

Mariana Khuri Makdisi Abdelnour

