

the evening I said good-bye to my companions, the air was already mild and balmy, the mud walls looked as if they were baking in the sunlight, the hotel garden was grateful with green shadow; and as I sat there, confronted by seventeen Persian cats who were smiling and purring on seventeen empty biscuit tins, a babbling fountain and a tree with scarlet flowers seemed to say to me that I was entering unknown seasons.

By-and-by I returned to the ship alone. The pale twilight fell, and enfolded us with unutterable tenderness, just revealing the glimmering snows of Lebanon, and leaving the glass of the sea just distinguishable from the air. Lights glistened from the town; a sound like a fairy bell—I suppose it came from a boat, though in the dimness I could not see one—made at intervals a mysterious tinkling on the water. In due time a term was put to the quiet. There was a dragging of ropes and chains, and a splash of the revolving screw. The funnel buzzed, our bows turned round to seaward, we began to move rapidly, and the sea and the night received us.

Some eight hours later, after a windless passage, I woke up in my cabin, and in sight were the coasts of Cyprus.

