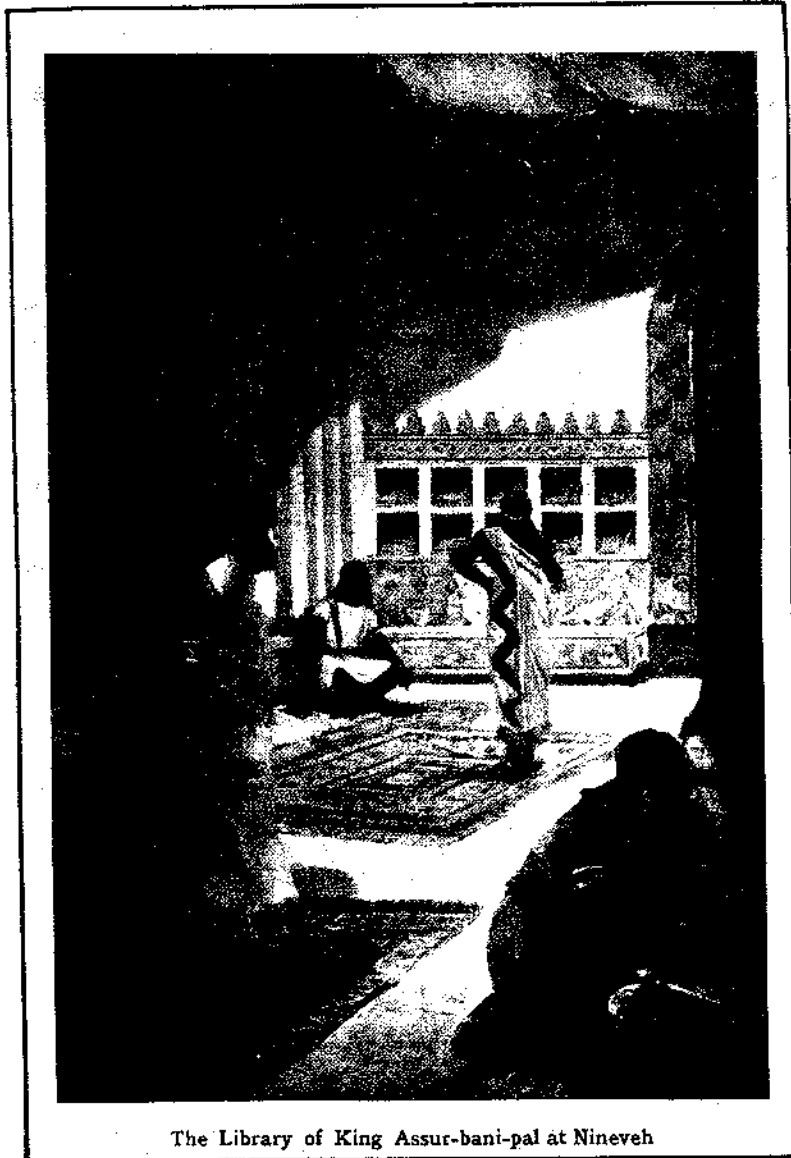




# NINEVEH



The Library of King Assur-bani-pal at Nineveh

## THE FIRST GREAT LIBRARY

Ashurbanipal was the first great patron of literature. It is to his magnificent library at Nineveh that we owe all that we have preserved of the literature that was produced in Assyria and Babylonia. Through the labours of Mr. Hormiz Rassam, the great Assyrian archaeologist the library was discovered and is now housed at the British Museum.

# NINEVEH

MAY - JUNE 1978

VOLUME 1

NO. 1

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ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION OF AMERICA ESTABLISHED JUNE 1964 AND INCORPORATED IN THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA AS A NON-PROFIT, TAX EXEMPT ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF EDUCATION AMONG ASSYRIANS.

### ADDRESS LETTERS TO

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Nineveh is a newly planted shoot growing in the rocky soil of of Assyrian journalism. We believe that with devoted effort and support it will be nourished to grow into a strong tree bearing much needed literary fruits for our community and nation.

We intend to develop Nineveh into a literary magazine concentrating on Assyrian literature, history and culture. It will cover current events and personalities that significantly influence our destiny. It will not report on the day to day happenings of people or organizations that have little or no value to our main goals. Its pages will not be used to settle disputes, air deragotary remarks, attack individuals or groups.

However, it will take a stand on issues that have great influence on our existence. It will expose individuals and schemes that sap the energy of our people and distort the good deeds of patriotic Assyrians. All this we pledge to present in a literary and unbiased manner and without malice to anyone.

The editorial staff invites and encourages Assyrians wherever they are and whatever is their ideology to read, comment and submit material in the specific areas of our endeavor. We hope someday this magazine will mirror both the body and the soul of Assyrian people.

We intend to search the world literature and bring to our readers that which complements and opposes us. For we believe, knowing both sides of the issue will enable us to appreciate our friends and prepare us against our enemies.

One people, one language and one nation are our aims.

# ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES

## BACKGAMMON TOURNEMENT

On Sunday, May 21st., Assyrians from all over the Bay Area gathered at the AFA Cultural Center in Berkeley to participate and watch the Foundation's first backgammon tournament.

Sixteen contestants participated in the game. After many elimination rounds, the two finalists were Baba "Baboosha" Mooshoolov of San Francisco and John Samo of San Rafeal. In a thrilling final match, keenly watched by all the guests, Baboosha emerged as the 1978 Champion of the Bay Area winning the first prize of \$50.00 with John getting the second prize of \$25.00. Congradulations!

This was a successful event and congradulation to Baba Adam, Chairman of the event. Foundation is planning similar activities and invites all Assyrians to participate.

## SUMMER VACATION

A reminder to all our members, the General Membership Meeting will not be held during the months of July and August. Our next meeting will be on September 9, 1978.

## NEW MEMBERS

1. Mr. Youtam Bedjan and his wife Sadyouli of Antioch, California. Welcome to the Foundation.
2. Mr. John Sargoni who recently arrived from Iran accompanied by wife, Samreda, one of our dedicated members. Welcome to Calif. and the Foundation.

## UP-COMING PICNIC

The Assyrian Foundation and Mar Narsai Church are jointly holding a picnic on July 16th at the Robert Crown Memorial Park in Alameda. Announcements giving details will be mailed to all very soon.

## BUILDING FUND

The Assyrian Foundation acknowledges the receipt of the following contributions:

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Samo	\$ 20.00
Mr. & Mrs. Baba Shabbas	20.00
Mr. & Mrs. John Samo	100.00
Mr. Youra Tamraz	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Martin Jacob	300.00
Mr. & Mrs. Ashur Michael	50.00
Mr. & Mrs. Sankhiro Khofri	100.00

## SARGON DAVID MEMORIAL FUND

The tragic and untimely death of Sargon David was a great shock not only to his family but to the entire Assyrian community.

Sargon was a firm believer that education is a primary factor in the advancement of an individual or a nation. True to his conviction, he remembered to include in his will a contribution for the advancement of education among Assyrians.

Recently, the David family met and decided that the Assyrian Foundation of America will be the recipient of the \$5,000 donation. A check for that amount was handed to Youel A. Baaba, Chairman-Education Committee.

In his letter of acknowledgement, Mr. Baaba stated that the donation will be used to establish a fund to be known as "SARGON DAVID MEMORIAL FUND". Interest from the fund will be used for educational purposes. Any future donations received from family, relatives and friends specifically earmarked for this fund will be added to it.

## OBITUARIES

### LADY ESTHER D'MAR SHIMON

Members of the Assyrian Foundation extend their condolences to the Mar Shimon family on the recent death of Lady Esther, mother of the late Patriarch of the Church of the East and sister of the late Metropolitan, Mar Yosip Khnanishu. The funeral services were officiated by Kasha Badal Piro at Mar Addai Church in Turlock, California.

## CONGRADULATIONS

Sam and Lily Neesan - 25th Wedding anniversary  
Evan and Julia Warda - 40th Wedding anniversary  
Sargina Baaba - Graduated from De Anza High School, El Sobrante  
Edy Elias - Graduated from John F. Kennedy High School, Berkeley.

PROMOTE YOUR CULTURE  
BECOME A MEMBER  
OF  
THE ASSYRIAN FOUNDATION OF AMERICA

# Seventy Thousand Assyrians

by

William Saroyan

I hadn't had a haircut in forty days and forty nights, and I was beginning to look like several violinists out of work. You know the look: genius gone to pot, and ready to join the Communist Party. We barbarians from Asia Minor are hairy people: when we need a haircut, we need a haircut. It was so bad, I had outgrown my only hat. (I am writing a very serious story, perhaps one of the most serious I shall ever write. That is why I am being flippant. Readers of Sherwood Anderson will begin to understand what I am saying after a while; they will know that my laughter is rather sad.) I was a young man in need of a haircut, so I went down to Third Street (San Francisco), to the Barber College, for a fifteen-cent haircut.

Third Street, below Howard, is a district; think of the Bowery in New York, Main Street in Los Angeles; think of old men and boys, out of work, hanging around, smoking Bull Durham, talking about the government, waiting for something to turn up, simply waiting. It was a Monday morning in August and a lot of the tramps had come to the shop to brighten up a bit. The Japanese boy who was working over the free chair had a waiting list of eleven; all the other chairs were occupied. I sat down and began to wait. Outside, as Hemingway (*The Sun Also Rises; Farewell to Arms; Death in the Afternoon; Winner Take Nothing*) would say, haircuts were four bits. I had twenty cents and a half-pack of Bull Durham. I rolled a cigarette, handed the pack to one of my contemporaries who looked in need of nicotine, and inhaled the dry smoke, thinking of America, what was going on politically, economically, spiritually. My contemporary was a boy of sixteen. He looked Iowa; splendid potentially, a solid American, but down, greatly down in the mouth. Little sleep, no change of clothes for several days, a little fear, etc. I wanted very much to know his name. A writer is always wanting to get the reality of faces and figures. Iowa said, "I just got in from Salinas. No work in the lettuce fields. Going north now, to Portland; try to ship out." I wanted to tell him how it was with me: rejected story from Scribner's, rejected essay from *The Yale Review*, no money for decent cigarettes, worn shoes, old shirts, but I was afraid to make some-

thing of my own troubles. A writer's troubles are always boring, a bit unreal. People are apt to feel, *Well, who asked you to write in the first place?* A man must pretend not to be a writer. I said, "Good luck, north." Iowa shook his head. "I know better. Give it a try, anyway. Nothing to lose." Fine boy, hope he isn't dead, hope he hasn't frozen, mighty cold these days (December, 1933), hope he hasn't gone down; he deserved to live. Iowa, I hope you got work in Portland; I hope you are earning money; I hope you have rented a clean room with a warm bed in it; I hope you are sleeping nights, eating regularly, walking along like a human being, being happy. Iowa, my good wishes are with you. I have said a number of prayers for you. (All the same, I think he is dead by this time. It was in him the day I saw him, the low malicious face of the beast, and at the same time all the theatres in America were showing, over and over again, an animated film-cartoon in which there was a song called "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?", and that's what it amounts to; people with money laughing at the death that is crawling slyly into boys like young Iowa, pretending that it isn't there, laughing in warm theatres. I have prayed for Iowa, and I consider myself a coward. By this time he must be dead, and I am sitting in a small room, talking about him, only talking.)

I began to watch the Japanese boy who was learning to become a barber. He was shaving an old tramp who had a horrible face, one of those faces that emerge from years and years of evasive living, years of being unsettled, of not belonging anywhere, of owning nothing, and the Japanese boy was holding his nose back (his own nose) so that he would not smell the old tramp. A trivial point in a story, a bit of data with no place in a work of art, nevertheless, I put it down. A young writer is always afraid some significant fact may escape him. He is always wanting to put in everything he sees. I wanted to know the name of the Japanese boy. I am profoundly interested in names. I have found that those that are unknown are the most genuine. Take a big name like Andrew Mellon. I was watching the Japanese boy very closely. I wanted to understand from the way he was keeping his sense of smell away from the mouth and nostrils of the old man what he was thinking, how he was feeling. Years ago, when I was seventeen, I pruned vines in my uncle's vineyard, north of Sanger, in the San Joaquin Valley, and there were several Japanese working with me, Yoshio Enomoto, Hideo Suzuki, Katsumi Sujimoto, and one or two others. These Japanese taught me a few simple phrases, *hello, how are you, fine day, isn't it, good-bye*, and so on. I said in Japanese to the barber student, "How are you?" He said in Japanese, "Very well, thank you." Then, in impeccable English, "Do you speak Japanese? Have you lived in Japan?" I said, "Unfortunately, no. I am able to speak only one or two words. I used to work with Yoshio Enomoto, Hideo Suzuki, Katsumi Sujimoto; do you know them?" He went on with his work, thinking of the names. He seemed to be whispering, "Enomoto, Suzuki, Sujimoto." He said, "Suzuki. Small man?" I said, "Yes." He said, "I

know him. He lives in San Jose now. He is married now."

I want you to know that I am deeply interested in what people remember. A young writer goes out to places and talks to people. He tries to find out what they remember. I am not using great material for a short story. Nothing is going to happen in this work. I am not fabricating a fancy plot. I am not creating memorable characters. I am not using a slick style of writing. I am not building up a fine atmosphere. I have no desire to sell this story or any story to *The Saturday Evening Post*, or to *Cosmopolitan* or to *Harper's*. I am not trying to compete with the great writers of short stories, men like Sinclair Lewis and Joseph Hergesheimer and Zane Grey, men who really know how to write, how to make up stories that will sell. Rich men, men who understand all the rules about plot and character and style and atmosphere and all that stuff. I have no desire for fame. I am not out to win the Pulitzer Prize or the Nobel Prize or any other prize. I am out here in the far West, in San Francisco, in a small room on Carl Street, writing a letter to common people, telling them in simple language things they already know. I am merely making a record, so if I wander around a little, it is because I am in no hurry and because I do not know the rules. If I have any desire at all, it is to show the brotherhood of man. This is a big statement and it sounds a little precious. Generally a man is ashamed to make such a statement. He is afraid sophisticated people will laugh at him. But I don't mind. I'm asking sophisticated people to laugh. That is what sophistication is for. I do not believe in races. I do not believe in governments. I see life as one life at one time, so many millions simultaneously, all over the earth. Babies who have not yet been taught to speak any language are the only race of the earth, the race of man: all the rest is pretense, what we call civilization, hatred, fear, desire for strength. . . . But a baby is a baby. And the way they cry, there you have the brotherhood of man, babies crying. We grow up and we learn the words of a language and we see the universe through the language we know, we do not see it through all languages or through no language at all, through silence, for example, and we isolate ourselves in the language we know. Over here we isolate ourselves in English, or American as Meucken calls it. All the eternal things, in our words. If I want to do anything, I want to speak a more universal language. The heart of man, the unwritten part of man, that which is eternal and common to all races.

Now I am beginning to feel guilty and incompetent. I have used all this language and I am beginning to feel that I have said nothing. This is what drives a young writer out of his head, this feeling that nothing is being said. Any ordinary journalist would have been able to put the whole business into a three-word caption: Man is man, he would have said. Something clever, with any number of implications. But I want to use language that will create a single implication. I want the meaning to be precise, and perhaps that is why the language is so imprecise. I am walking around my subject, the impression I want to make, and I am trying to see it from all

angles, so that I will have a whole picture, a picture of wholeness. It is the heart of man that I am trying to imply in this work.

Let me try again: I hadn't had a haircut in a long time and I was beginning to look seedy, so I went down to the Barber College on Third Street, and I sat in a chair. I said, "Leave it full in the back. I have a narrow head and if you do not leave it full in the back, I will go out of this place looking like a horse. Take as much as you like off the top. No lotion, no water, comb it dry." Reading makes a full man, writing a precise one, as you see. This is what happened. It doesn't make much of a story, and the reason is that I have left out the barber, the young man who gave me the haircut.

He was tall, he had a dark serious face, thick lips, on the verge of smiling but melancholy, thick lashes, sad eyes, a large nose. I saw his name on the card that was pasted on the mirror, Theodore Badal. A good name, genuine, a good young man, genuine. Theodore Badal began to work on my head. A good barber never speaks until he has been spoken to, no matter how full his heart may be.

"That name," I said, "Badal. Are you an Armenian?" I am an Armenian. I have mentioned this before. People look at me and begin to wonder, so I come right out and tell them. "I am an Armenian," I say. Or they read something I have written and begin to wonder, so I let them know. "I am an Armenian," I say. It is a meaningless remark, but they expect me to say it, so I do. I have no idea what it is like to be an Armenian or what it is like to be an Englishman or a Japanese or anything else. I have a faint idea what it is like to be alive. This is the only thing that interests me greatly. This and tennis. I hope some day to write a great philosophical work on tennis, something on the order of *Death in the Afternoon*, but I am aware that I am not yet ready to undertake such a work. I feel that the cultivation of tennis on a large scale among the peoples of the earth will do much to annihilate racial differences, prejudices, hatred, etc. Just as soon as I have perfected my drive and my lob, I hope to begin my outline of this great work. (It may seem to some sophisticated people that I am trying to make fun of Hemingway. I am not. *Death in the Afternoon* is a pretty sound piece of prose. I could never object to it as prose. I cannot even object to it as philosophy. I think it is finer philosophy than that of Will Durant and Walter Pitkin. Even when Hemingway is a fool, he is at least an accurate fool. He tells you what actually takes place and he doesn't allow the speed of an occurrence to make his exposition of it hasty. This is a lot. It is some sort of advancement for literature. To relate leisurely the nature and meaning of that which is very brief in duration.)

"Are you an Armenian?" I asked.

We are a small people and whenever one of us meets another, it is an event. We are always looking around for someone to talk to in our language. Our most ambitious political party estimates that there are nearly two million of us living on the earth, but most of us don't think so. Most of us sit down and take a pencil and a piece of paper and we take one section of

the world at a time and imagine how many Armenians at the most are likely to be living in that section and we put the highest number on the paper, and then we go on to another section, India, Russia, Soviet Armenia, Egypt, Italy, Germany, France, America, South America, Australia, and so on, and after we add up our most hopeful figures the total comes to something a little less than a million. Then we start to think how big our families are, how high our birth-rate and how low our death-rate (except in times of war when massacres increase the death-rate), and we begin to imagine how rapidly we will increase if we are left alone a quarter of a century, and we feel pretty happy. We always leave out earthquakes, wars, massacres, famines, etc., and it is a mistake. I remember the Near East Relief drives in my home town. My uncle used to be our orator and he used to make a whole auditorium full of Armenians weep. He was an attorney and he was a great orator. Well, at first the trouble was war. Our people were being destroyed by the enemy. Those who hadn't been killed were homeless and they were starving, *our own flesh and blood*, my uncle said, and we all wept. And we gathered money and sent it to our people in the old country. Then after the war, when I was a bigger boy, we had another Near East Relief drive and my uncle stood on the stage of the Civic Auditorium of my home town and he said, "Thank God this time it is not the enemy, but an earthquake. God has made us suffer. We have worshipped Him through trial and tribulation, through suffering and disease and torture and horror and (my uncle began to weep, began to sob) through the madness of despair, and now he has done this thing, and still we praise Him, still we worship Him. We do not understand the ways of God." And after the drive I went to my uncle and I said, "Did you mean what you said about God?" And he said, "That was oratory. We've got to raise money. What God? It is nonsense." "And when you cried?" I asked, and my uncle said, "That was real. I could not help it. I had to cry. Why, for God's sake, why must we go through all this God damn hell? What have we done to deserve all this torture? Man won't let us alone. God won't let us alone. Have we done something? Aren't we supposed to be pious people? What is our sin? I am disgusted with God. I am sick of man. The only reason I am willing to get up and talk is that I don't dare keep my mouth shut. I can't bear the thought of more of our people dying. Jesus Christ, have we done something?"

I asked Theodore Badal if he was an Armenian.

He said, "I am an Assyrian."

Well, it was something. They, the Assyrians, came from our part of the world, they had noses like our noses, eyes like our eyes, hearts like our hearts. They had a different language. When they spoke we couldn't understand them, but they were a lot like us. It wasn't quite as pleasing as it would have been if Badal had been an Armenian, but it was something.

"I am an Armenian," I said. "I used to know some Assyrian boys in my home town, Joseph Sargis, Nito Elia, Tony Saleh. Do you know any of them?"

"Joseph Sargis, I know him," said Badal. "The others I do not know. We lived in New York until

five years ago, then we came out west to Turlock. Then we moved up to San Francisco."

"Nito Elia," I said, "is a Captain in the Salvation Army." (I don't want anyone to imagine that I am making anything up, or that I am trying to be funny.) "Tony Saleh," I said, "was killed eight years ago. He was riding a horse and he was thrown and the horse began to run. Tony couldn't get himself free, he was caught by a leg, and the horse ran around and around for a half hour and then stopped, and when they went up to Tony he was dead. He was fourteen at the time. I used to go to school with him. Tony was a very clever boy, very good at arithmetic."

We began to talk about the Assyrian language and the Armenian language, about the old world, conditions over there, and so on. I was getting a fifteen-cent haircut and I was doing my best to learn something at the same time, to acquire some new truth, some new appreciation of the wonder of life, the dignity of man. (Man has great dignity, do not imagine that he has not.)

Badal said, "I cannot read Assyrian. I was born in the old country, but I want to get over it."

He sounded tired, not physically but spiritually.

"Why?" I said. "Why do you want to get over it?"

"Well," he laughed, "simply because everything is washed up over there." I am repeating his words precisely, putting in nothing of my own. "We were a great people once," he went on. "But that was yesterday, the day before yesterday. Now we are a topic in ancient history. We had a great civilization. They're still admiring it. Now I am in America learning how to cut hair. We're washed up as a race, we're through, it's all over, why should I learn to read the language? We have no writers, we have no news—well, there is a little news: once in a while the English encourage the Arabs to massacre us, that is all. It's an old story, we know all about it. The news comes over to us through the Associated Press, anyway."

These remarks were very painful to me, an Armenian. I had always felt badly about my own people being destroyed. I had never heard an Assyrian speaking in English about such things. I felt great love for this young fellow. Don't get me wrong. There is a tendency these days to think in terms of pansies whenever a man says that he has affection for man. I think now that I have affection for all people, even for the enemies of Armenia, whom I have so tactfully not named. Everyone knows who they are. I have nothing against any of them because I think of them as one man living one life at a time, and I know, I am positive, that one man at a time is incapable of the monstrosities performed by mobs. My objection is to mobs only.

"Well," I said, "it is much the same with us. We, too, are old. We still have our church. We still have a few writers, Aharonian, Isahakian, a few others, but it is much the same."

"Yes," said the barber, "I know. We went in for the wrong things. We went in for the simple things, peace and quiet and families. We didn't go in for machinery and conquest and militarism. We didn't go in for diplomacy and deceit and the invention of machine-guns and poison gases. Well, there is no use

in being disappointed. We had our day, I suppose."

"We are hopeful," I said. "There is no Armenian living who does not still dream of an independent Armenia."

"Dream?" said Badal. "Well, that is something. Assyrians cannot even dream any more. Why, do you know how many of us are left on earth?"

"Two or three million," I suggested.

"Seventy thousand," said Badal. "That is all. Seventy thousand Assyrians in the world, and the Arabs are still killing us. They killed seventy of us in a little uprising last month. There was a small paragraph in the paper. Seventy more of us destroyed. We'll be wiped out before long. My brother is married to an American girl and he has a son. There is no more hope. We are trying to forget Assyria. My father still reads a paper that comes from New York, but he is an old man. He will be dead soon."

Then his voice changed, he ceased speaking as an Assyrian and began to speak as a barber: "Have I taken enough off the top?" he asked.

The rest of the story is pointless. I said *so long* to the young Assyrian and left the shop. I walked across town, four miles, to my room on Carl Street. I thought about the whole business: Assyria and this Assyrian, Theodore Badal, learning to be a barber, the sadness of his voice, the hopelessness of his attitude. This was months ago, in August, but ever since I have been thinking about Assyria, and I have been wanting to say something about Theodore Badal, a son of an ancient race, himself youthful and alert, yet hopeless. Seventy thousand Assyrians, a mere seventy thousand of that great people, and all the others quiet in death and all the greatness crumbled and ignored, and a young man in America learning to be a barber, and a young man lamenting bitterly the course of history.

Why don't I make up plots and write beautiful love stories that can be made into motion pictures? Why don't I let these unimportant and boring matters go hang? Why don't I try to please the American reading public?

Well, I am an Armenian. Michael Arlen is an Armenian, too. He is pleasing the public. I have great admiration for him, and I think he has perfected a very fine style of writing and all that, but I don't want to write about the people he likes to write about. Those people were dead to begin with. You take Iowa and the Japanese boy and Theodore Badal, the Assyrian; well, they may go down physically, like Iowa, to death, or spiritually, like Badal, to death, but they are of the stuff that is eternal in man and it is this stuff that interests me. You don't find them in bright places, making witty remarks about sex and trivial remarks about art. You find them where I found them, and they will be there forever, the race of man, the part of man, of Assyria as much as of England, that cannot be destroyed, the part that massacre does not destroy, the part that earthquake and war and famine and madness and everything else cannot destroy.

This work is in tribute to Iowa, to Japan, to Assyria, to Armenia, to the race of man everywhere, to the dignity of that race, the brotherhood of things alive. I am not expecting Paramount Pictures to film

this work. I am thinking of seventy thousand Assyrians, one at a time, alive, a great race. I am thinking of Theodore Badal, himself seventy thousand Assyrians and seventy million Assyrians, himself Assyria, and man, standing in a barber shop, in San Francisco, in 1933, and being, still, himself, the whole race.

### Editor's Note

William Saroyan, the well known American Armenian writer entered the world of published writers with the publication of a collection of his short stories in 1934. The second story in that book was "Seventy Thousand Assyrians". Mr. Saroyan has written favorably and has made frequent references to Assyrians both ancient and modern.

In today's world where we are struggling for our indentity and recognition of our rights and when most writers either ignore us or write in a deragatory manner about Assyrians, it is truly encouraging to read Mr. Saroyan.

Mr. Saroyan captured and vividly illustrated the despair of our people after the massacre of Simel in 1933. Mr. Badal, the Assyrian barber of San Francisco is expressing the mood of an entire generation of Assyrians in those miserable years of early thirties.

We confidently believe that today's generation of Assyrians have a more positive attitude and are working diligently to recover what Badal thought was lost forever.

We hope someday, a young Assyrian writer will return the favor by writing about our christian brothers and neighbours, the Armenians.





"The Role of the Nestorians and Muslims in the History of Medicine", by Dr. Allen O. Whipple, is a book that will make all Assyrians proud of the achievements of their ancestors in the field of medicine. Dr. Whipple was born in Tabriz, Iran, of missionary parents. By the age of 14 he could speak and read Assyrian\*\*, Turkish and Persian. The deep love he developed for the people of the region where he was born stayed with him all his life (he died in 1963; the book was published in 1967). His career in medicine took him to the top - he became Professor of Surgery at Columbia University's Medical School in New York City, and Surgeon-in-Chief at the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center there. He spent the last years of his life as a medical historian in search of the ancient medical schools and hospitals in the regions of the Middle East. This book is the story of that history.

Dr. Whipple emphasizes a fact that very few people in the Western World are aware of, namely, that the wisdom of ancient Greece - Greek philosophy, science and medicine - was preserved for the world by Assyrian scholars. The great works of Greek civilization such as those of Plato and Aristotle were translated from Greek to Assyrian in the Assyrian schools in Edessa and JundiShapur. Later, the Assyrian scholars translated them into Arabic, and the Arabs introduced them to renaissance Europe.

Through their studies the Assyrians became extremely interested in medicine. In the famous Assyrian school at Edessa medicine as a field of study grew and attracted more and more students. A hospital was founded there in the 4th century by Ephraim of Nisibis, and clinical instruction to students was given in the hospital. This was the first example of hospital clinical teaching in the history of medicine.

In the 5th century the great Nestorian theological controversy reduced the school at Edessa. Many of the teachers and pupils connected with the medical school and hospital in Edessa accepted the asylum offered them by the Sassanian King Kubad and moved to the city of Jundi-Shapur near Susa in southwest Persia. The Assyrian medical teachers and physicians brought with them their medical texts and knowledge, and in Jundi-Shapur they rebuilt their medical school and hospital. Jundi-Shapur became the most advanced medical center of the entire civilized world, and it was later to become the great link between Greek and Arab medicine.

The most famous of the Sassanian kings, Nushirvan, in 530 gave the school in Jundi-Shapur every advantage and encouragement. During Nushirvan's long reign of 48 years the school of Jundi-Shapur became the greatest intellectual center of its time. Within its walls Greek, Jewish, Persian and Hindu thought and experience were freely exchanged along with Assyrian. But the Assyrian teachers remained the most prominent and influential, and the teaching was done largely in the Assyrian language. In the 20th year of King Nushirvan's reign the physicians of Jundi-Shapur held a meeting by order of the king to discuss various scientific subjects. Records were kept of the debates. This scientific meeting was presided over by the Assyrian Gibrael Durustbad, the special physician to the king.

Describing the medical school and hospital in Jundi-Shapur, the Arab historian Ibn-al-Qifti had this to say: "They (the physicians) made rapid progress in the science, developed new methods in the treatment of disease along pharmacological lines to the point that their therapy was judged superior to that of the Greeks and Hindus. Furthermore these physicians adapted the scientific methods of other people and modified

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\*\*Dr. Whipple uses the terms Syriac, Nestorian, Syrian and Aramaean. In this review I use the word Assyrian in place of all of these terms.

them by their own discoveries. They elaborated medical laws and recorded the work that had been developed."

For several centuries this Assyrian school and hospital held first place in the world of medicine and science. Persia and the other countries of the Middle East recruited their physicians from the students at Jundi-Shapur. Pupils from all nationalities gathered there for instruction. Later, the Moslem conquerors did not hesitate to call into service the physicians trained in this school.

The Moslems, under the second Caliph Omar, captured the city in 636, but the Assyrians and their School and Hospital were treated with great respect by the Moslem conquerors. The school was to have a great impact on the development of Arab civilization and culture.

. . . . . To be continued.



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Assyrian publications have taken a leading role in alerting our people to the cloudy skies surrounding their destiny as a nation.

Thousands of pages have been written trying to reach the Assyrian people on this sophisticated issue. My thoughts are not the first nor would be the last; it's like adding another brick to Pharaoh's Pyramid.

In this country, more than anywhere else, our identity is threatened. To resist this threat it is essential to keep Assyrians informed and enlightened of their culture and the problems facing their nation.

Up to now, Assyrians have not been responsive and enthusiastic about what has been advocated by these publications. It is truly a great disappointment to let a handful of devoted and knowledgeable individuals listen to the echo of their own writings instead of offering them a warm reception and encouragement. Such a positive reaction will undoubtedly benefit the Assyrian cause.

Publications are a means to an end, and not an end by themselves. We should not dilute ourselves by believing in them as a goal, but only as a route toward that goal. Quality and objective of the materials covered comes first, not the appearance.

We are a people desperately in need of actions directed toward promoting our culture. The people should support those publications, organizations and individuals that have devoted themselves to work for this purpose. Every possible way of support, whether morally or financially will pave the way and help accomplish more and more.

Let us admire with great respect and a feeling of gratitude those dedicated publications and every drop of sweat and tear they have shed to revive our precious culture from the ruins of yesterday.

Sargon R. Michael

The Old Testament (2 Kings 18 & 19) narrates the story of how the mighty Sennacherib, King of Assyria attacked and took all the fortified cities of Judah and demanded the surrender of Jerusalem. And how the Lord responded to the pleas of Hezekiah, King of Judah to save Jerusalem.

The following passages from the Old Testament inspired Lord Byron to write his well known poem about the mighty Assyrian King. These passages give sufficient background to appreciate Lord Byron's poem.

In fairness to King Sennacherib, we would like to present his side of the story. Following lines are taken from George Smith's translation of King Sennacherib's inscriptions. Mr. Smith conducted excavations at Nineveh in 1873 and 1874, and documented his discoveries in his well known book "Assyrian Discoveries".

In the fourteenth year of the reign of Hezekiah, Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked and took all the fortified cities of Judah. Hezekiah king of Judah sent a message to the king of Assyria at Lachish: 'I have done wrong; withdraw from my land, and I will pay any penalty you impose upon me.' So the king of Assyria laid on Hezekiah king of Judah a penalty of three hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold; and Hezekiah gave him all the silver found in the house of the LORD and in the treasuries of the royal palace. At that time Hezekiah broke up the doors of the temple of the LORD and the door-frames which he himself had plated, and gave them to the king of Assyria.

Hezekiah took the letter from the messengers and read it; then he went up into the house of the LORD, spread it out before the LORD and offered this prayer: 'O LORD God of Israel, enthroned on the cherubim, thou alone art God of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth. Turn thy ear to me, O LORD, and listen; open thine eyes, O LORD, and see; hear the message that Sennacherib has sent to taunt the living God. It is true, O LORD, that the kings of Assyria have ravaged the nations and their lands, that they have consigned their gods to the fire and destroyed them; for they were no gods but the work of men's hands, mere wood and stone. But now, O LORD our God, save us from his power, so that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou, O LORD, alone art God.'

Isaiah son of Amoz sent to Hezekiah and said, "This is the word of the LORD the God of Israel: I have heard your prayer to me concerning Sennacherib king of Assyria. This is the word which the LORD has spoken concerning him:

'Therefore, this is the word of the LORD concerning the king of Assyria:

He shall not enter this city  
nor shoot an arrow there,  
he shall not advance against it with shield  
nor cast up a siege-ramp against it.  
By the way on which he came he shall go back;  
this city he shall not enter.  
This is the very word of the LORD.  
I will shield this city to deliver it,  
for my own sake and for the sake of my servant David.'

That night the angel of the LORD went out and struck down a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp; when morning dawned, they all lay dead. So Sennacherib king of Assyria broke camp, went back to Nineveh and stayed there.



Sennacherib on his Throne before Lachish.

## The Destruction of Sennacherib

The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;  
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,  
That host with their banners at sunset were seen:  
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,  
That host on the morrow laid withered and strown.

For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he passed;  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill,  
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still

And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,  
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride;  
And the foam of his gasping lay white on the turf,  
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

And there lay the rider distorted and pale,  
With the dew on his brow, and the rust on his mail;  
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,  
The lances unlifted, the trumpet unblown.

And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,  
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;  
And the might of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,  
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord!

—GEORGE GORDON, LORD BYRON



**M**asrudin went into a shop to buy a pair of trousers. Then he changed his mind and chose a cloak instead, at the same price.

Picking up the cloak he left the shop.

'You have not paid,' shouted the merchant.

'I left you the trousers, which were of the same value as the cloak.'

'But you did not pay for the trousers either.'

'Of course not,' said the Mulla—'why should I pay for something that I did not want to buy?'

**M**asrudin had saved up to buy a new shirt. He went to a tailor's shop, full of excitement. The tailor measured him and said: 'Come back in a week, and—if Allah wills—your shirt will be ready.'

The Mulla contained himself for a week and then went back to the shop.

'There has been a delay. But—if Allah wills—your shirt will be ready tomorrow.'

The following day Nasrudin returned. 'I am sorry,' said the tailor, 'but it is not quite finished. Try tomorrow, and—if Allah wills—it will be ready.'

'How long will it take', asked the exasperated Nasrudin, 'if you leave Allah out of it?'

1. their innocence I proclaimed. Padi their king
2. from the midst of Jerusalem
3. I brought out and on the throne of dominion
4. over them I seated, and tribute
5. to my dominion I fixed upon him.
6. And Hezekiah of Judah,
7. who did not submit to my yoke,
8. 46 of his strong cities, fortresses, and small cities
9. which were round them, which were without number,
10. with the marching of a host and surrounding of a multitude,
11. attack of ranks, force of battering rams, mining and missiles,
12. I besieged, I captured. 200,150 people, small and great, male and female,
13. horses, mules, asses, camels, oxen,
14. and sheep, which were without number, from the midst of them I brought out, and
15. as spoil I counted. Him like a caged bird within Jerusalem
16. his royal city I had made, towers round him

**M**asrudin was walking past a well, when he had the impulse to look into it. It was night, and as he peered into the deep water, he saw the Moon's reflection there.

'I must save the Moon!' the Mulla thought. 'Otherwise she will never wane, and the fasting month of Ramadan will never come to an end.'

He found a rope, threw it in and called down: 'Hold tight; keep bright; succour is at hand!'

The rope caught in a rock inside the well, and Nasrudin heaved as hard as he could. Straining back, he suddenly felt the rope give as it came loose, and he was thrown on his back. As he lay there, panting, he saw the Moon riding in the sky above.

'Glad to be of service,' said Nasrudin. 'Just as well I came along, wasn't it?'











# مجله

تاریخ و فرهنگ ایران باستان را در این مجله به تفصیل و با دقت و وسعت در اختیار خوانندگان عزیز قرار داده ایم. این مجله به منظور آشنایی بیشتر مردم ایران با تاریخ و تمدن باستان این کشور تأسیس گردید. در این مجله به بررسی و تحلیل آثار باستانی، سبک زندگی، هنر، ادب و سایر جنبه های فرهنگی و تاریخی ایران باستان پرداخته می شود. این مجله به زبان فارسی و به صورت فصلنامه منتشر می شود.

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