



LEBANON

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A RAPID SURVEY OF
LEBANON, YESTERDAY AND TODAY
IN SIXTY-FOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

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YESTERDAY AND TODAY

Pictures of Lebanon are pictures of the world; not of a world dominated or enhanced by its present-day architectural setting, but of a world in which the first place belongs to man on the move, against the varied background that is his.

On this narrow coast, and in the mountains, there exist side by side, at all altitudes and in every possible climate, sun and snow together; in fact, every possible aspect the universe can present.

It has been so since man, coming from obscure regions, with barely a dawning consciousness of his own possibilities, settled there by the sea and dreamed of possessing it and triumphing because of his possession. Then, when he began to read the stars, he came and settled (he was the original Lebanese) in the extreme west of Asia, on this sea coast where civilisation after civilisation imposed itself, beside a Mediterranean Sea, which, as opposed to the un-named ocean, he called the Inland Sea because of the peace it gave him and because of its welcoming grace and dignity.

This point of the planet which is ours seems to us ever predestined. Its geographical position has made it a land of history. All antiquity is here, anxiously waiting for the future to declare itself.

It is, indeed, sufficient to look at the map to perceive that Lebanon,

before Christopher Columbus's voyagings, was placed at the focal point of the main land and sea routes, at the centre of the then known world.

It was from Tyre, two thousand years older than Rome, that the Phoenicians swarmed into Numidian Africa, into Spain, and, by way of Gibraltar, to England and the northern peninsulas. America in those days was a solitary continent awaiting discovery. She was farther removed from atomic energy, from the United Nations and from the Marshall Plan than we are from the nebulae. But time has sped on fleeting foot and changed the face of the earth.

Perhaps more than any other country, Lebanon, placed as she is, sees her future stretching before her. She reaches eagerly to grasp it, but remains faithful to her traditions and her past. She knows how precarious are human wishes, and she sets a high value on experience. A point of departure and of arrival, Lebanon is perhaps more especially a port of call, a happy temporary haven, one of the points through which the swarming masses of Asia progress towards Europe which so recently dominated their continent.

If, however, Lebanon is a focal point for the meeting of men, it is even more so one for the exchange of ideas and of beliefs. Through its intense world-wide business activity it is again a forum of manifest intellectual and spiritual activity. Venerably it testifies to the flux and re-flux of migratory peoples, and to the rise and fall of empires.

Such is Lebanon, our country of sunshine to which we are proud to belong, our ambition stretching beyond material things in all directions, to the ends of the earth, and we only anxious to serve the brotherhood of man and the things of the spirit.

Michel Chiha