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## Documents Online

**Title:** Trip to Algeria in 1927 by Allen Tanner

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In 19~~20~~(?) The wife of a wealthy Algerian Senator - who dabbled in Art Galleries - and tapestries & my <sup>women by Algerian women from</sup> designs by Lurcat & other "moderns" hatched a scheme whereby we were to visit her husband - with whom she lived in a state of "amicable separation" at his sumptuous villa - on the cliffs of the Mediterranean sea - at Philippeville in Algeria. Her "idea" was that we were <sup>to be paid for a vacation & also</sup> to do a series of large murals for ~~her~~ her husband - to be paid for by the husband. We were glad ~~for~~ the opportunity of getting out of Paris - where we had been in the midst of a vortex of work - worries <sup>and</sup> intensive social and artistic activities - and had just gone through the worst of the break with Gertrude Stein. Pavlik took along several large <sup>and many smaller</sup> pictures which he <sup>could not have had</sup> had been prevented by <sup>his many things</sup> in Paris. One of them was "The Thinker" an idea he had had - a new conception of the attitude of the body in thought - not an "answer to Rodin" but another way of looking at it. The picture had become "muddy" dark - and "sad" & he hoped the light <sup>abundance</sup> of the ~~complex~~ nature in Africa would give him the



"lift" necessary to pull it through - and  
Also perhaps concerning a whole batch of new pictures as well.  
We had been told such  
glowing things by the lady Madame  
la Smetace that we hoped to  
hope - of spending a month (or two)  
in all that magic of luxury and nature -  
would do for us. Our spirits were  
definitely sagged & we needed an  
"elixir". When we went to Madame's  
gallery in Paris - The day of our departure -  
to pick up our tickets - some strange &  
"manipulation" had taken place in their  
purchase - that we - faced with the complete  
lack of time - found ourselves suddenly  
compelled to change our reservations for both  
boat & train - for cheaper class accommodation  
and make up the rest from our own pockets.  
This to a suspicious and mystical Russia  
was already a sign of impending catastrophe.  
We sailed from Marseilles - again -  
but this time the sea was angry -  
and were buffeted all the way to  
Constantine where we landed & were  
to be met & driven to Philippeville &  
the great reception in the "palace by  
the sea". At Constantine no sign of  
host, car, or servant. We were puzzled.  
Paulitz nervously disturbed. We phoned  
Philippeville - & were told there was a  
misunderstanding as to time - & to wait  
there <sup>that</sup> they were sending a car. We  
did - and waited 4 hours in the dusty  
dry town - until finally a car drew  
up with an Arab servant - alone - at the  
wheel we flew back - over dusty roads  
at a speed of 70 miles an hour - in an open



car - with a ~~set~~ violent wind whipping  
against our faces & ears - The wind  
Alabra chauffeur absolute of others  
to our discomfort. ~~Patrick~~ <sup>Paul</sup> was fast  
and Paul's was by the - thought  
announced that everything would  
turn out tragically. He was right.

We finally arrived - he with his  
precious eyes blinded by dust & wind -  
~~on a really~~ heavenly site <sup>high up</sup> on the cliffs of  
~~the~~ a jade green Mediter sea with  
flowers trees & vines dropping down  
from the ~~edges~~ <sup>edges</sup> of the garden right into  
the sea. ~~we were~~ <sup>we were</sup> ~~met~~ <sup>met</sup> ~~by~~ <sup>by</sup> a man  
who was psychologically & socially  
completely unequipped to receive  
or to have anything to do with  
Artists. Above all an aristocrat -  
with a commanding personality  
he disliked us on sight - felt ill at ease  
naturally - and decided therefore  
that here was a bad thing he was  
saddled with & that he would  
make the best of it in his <sup>best</sup> coarse  
lower-middle class fashion. We were  
not <sup>to</sup> entertained - but were lodged in  
a villa at the end of the estate -  
unattended - except by the presence of  
an old Arab <sup>who lived in a little shack</sup> nearby. But we were <sup>surrounded</sup>  
with this we were delighted <sup>with</sup> ~~however~~  
as the villa was nice - quiet - comfortable

agrove of  
lovely Eucalyptus trees  
with their leaves like  
Coke - feathers



furnished and we would be to  
 ourselves - away from the  
 monster. Thereafter we were  
 treated with a stiff self-conscious  
 and begrudging civility (he was the  
 type who held out one finger to  
 "stake hands") - and on the other  
 hand appalled at the ostentatious  
 banquet fare. ~~we~~ <sup>we</sup> consumed at every  
 meal + which we were ~~expected~~ <sup>expected</sup> to  
 consume. Chief among all this  
 were lobsters (one to each <sup>person</sup>)  
 which seemed to have been dredged  
 up <sup>in great quantities</sup> from the sea - and which were  
 of <sup>such</sup> gigantic proportions <sup>they were</sup> - more like  
 dogs than lobsters. This superhuman  
 fare - plus the disagreeability of having  
 to dine <sup>in a</sup> ~~at~~ <sup>so</sup> unpleasant  
 a host. <sup>who yelled names at his servants</sup> ~~made~~ us so "space"  
 that Pavlik succumbed to a very  
 severe gastro-intestinal inflammation -  
<sup>in a short time</sup> became delirious. A doctor was  
 summoned + warned that it was  
~~not~~ ~~impossible~~ ~~to~~ ~~save~~ ~~him~~ ~~if~~ ~~not~~ ~~very~~ ~~soon~~ ~~that~~ ~~he~~  
 must have <sup>curative treatment</sup> internal baths of hot  
 water <sup>plus</sup> special medicine. Our precious  
 host was <sup>remained in a</sup> ~~delirious~~ <sup>state of</sup> delirious - Pavlik  
 days to weeks without sleep. <sup>sitting on the bed</sup> ~~watching~~  
 over him - until the "condition" <sup>"broke"</sup> -  
 One of the cooks - a kind woman - <sup>a faint</sup>  
 orders "not to eat too much to hysterical Artists"

in control did not take people  
 to inform us that we must clear it up as soon as possible  
 to be safe & that we must clear it up as soon as possible



"whose illnesses were only imaginary" -  
would slip out of the vast kitchen  
and come to the villa to give Pavlik  
the baths. In a huge kettle, I suddenly  
began to get abscesses - from the <sup>strange letters</sup> <sup>we were</sup> <sup>getting</sup> <sup>from</sup>  
nervous strain of it all - and <sup>and then</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>scene</sup>  
really became complicated. Mme  
la Senatnee arrived on the <sup>thwarted</sup> <sup>approval</sup>  
and added the stiffness of her <sup>disapproval</sup>  
with of his failure to make "his" murab,  
We knew of course that all was  
lost - that our whole trip was a  
mistake. We decided to cut short our  
stay - Pavlik was summoned by the  
Mino tam - in his den - who stuck  
out the smug finger as "Goodbye with  
a few bills to pay our passage - said  
we had not wanted the murab <sup>anyway</sup>  
and the jig was up. So we left that  
heavenly spot - lived in by a  
monster - who had a garden in  
which <sup>white</sup> roses with red polkadots on their  
petals grew - <sup>pink</sup> violets as big as giant  
Pansies - Honey Suckle as big as orchids  
that dropped in strands clear down to the sea and  
in which nightingales sang all night -  
and strange flowers that looked like  
birds of paradise. <sup>By</sup> Monsieur le Senatnee  
who <sup>presumably</sup> <sup>only</sup> put on a collar when he  
went to the Senate - <sup>was</sup> <sup>it</sup> <sup>only</sup> <sup>seemed</sup> <sup>as</sup> <sup>a</sup> <sup>face</sup>  
<sup>who</sup> <sup>from</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>villa</sup> <sup>which</sup> <sup>was</sup> <sup>luxurious</sup> <sup>hideousness</sup>  
<sup>of</sup> <sup>his</sup> <sup>villa</sup> <sup>and</sup> <sup>what</sup> <sup>Paris</sup> <sup>called</sup> <sup>a</sup>  
"nightmare of <sup>organs</sup> files" - <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>evenings</sup> <sup>up</sup> <sup>on</sup>  
the flowers "because his bathroom was  
up <sup>the</sup> <sup>upper</sup> <sup>floor</sup>.  
One thing did impress us - Pavlik too -  
the day we arrived. The monster's housekeeper took



us up onto the roof of the villa -  
 to see the sea + surrounding countryside  
 which ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> lovely - on a very "Biblical"  
~~state~~ - High mountains - dark  
 valleys - winding spirals of roads  
 monkeys flying about in the far away  
 trees - when suddenly we heard  
 a ~~the~~ sound of <sup>percussion</sup> rhythms coming  
 from the distant roads in the hills -  
 and as it ~~got~~ nearer we were  
~~delighted~~ <sup>amazed</sup> by the beauty of those  
 rhythms - a whole ~~complex~~ <sup>complex</sup> pattern  
 beating against the earth - I would have  
 "What is it?" we gasped <sup>been in a</sup>  
 "Oh nothing" said the Housekeeper <sup>transport</sup>  
 (just the Senegalais (African soldiers from  
 Senegal) there. They march they make  
 those "strange" sounds - clapping their  
 hands, stamping their feet, hitting the  
 butts of their guns against the ground  
 and making <sup>all at the same time</sup> ~~various~~ noises in their  
 throats - we are so used to it that  
 it ~~really~~ <sup>really</sup> annoys us."  
 How sorry we felt for the white  
 man at that moment - as we  
 stood <sup>deaf and</sup> oblivious to the Housekeeper's  
 admission that it "would probably  
 disturb us - too - at times - when they  
 marched" - we said a <sup>silent</sup> fervent prayer asking  
 to be disturbed ~~as~~ <sup>as</sup> soon as possible  
 as much as they could "disturb"  
 so we said back home again away from such a wealth of potential

We called upon Gertrude







[Trip to Algeria in 1927 by Allen Tanner]

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In 1927 (?) the wife of a wealthy Algerian Senator—who dabbled in Art Galleries—and tapestries & [cut off] woven by Algerian women ~~of~~ from designs by Lurcat & other “moderns”—[cut off] hatched a scheme whereby we were to visit her husband—with whom she still lived in a state of “amicable separation” at his sumptuous villa on the cliffs in the Mediterr Sea at Philippenville in Algeria. Her “idea” was that we were to go there for a vacation & rest all transportation paid but that Pavlik would also do a series of large murals for ~~which~~ her husband—to be paid for by the husband! We were glad for the opportunity of getting out Paris—where we had been in the midst of a vortex of of work—worries—and intensive social and artistic activities—and had just gone through the worst of the break with Gertrude Stein. Pavlik took along several large & many smaller pictures which he had long before started—but had been prevented—by many things from finishing in Paris. One of them was “The Thinker” an idea he had had—a new conception of the attitude of the body in thought—not an “answer to Rodin”—but—another way of looking at it. The picture had become “muddy”—dark—and “sad” and he hoped the light and ~~abundance~~ amplitude of nature—in Africa—would give him the

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“lift” necessary to pull it through—and to perhaps conceive a whole batch of new pictures as well. Also we had been told such glowing things by ~~the lady~~ Madame la Senatrice that we ~~hoped to~~ left with ecstatic hopes—of spending a month (or two) in all that magic of luxury and Nature and of what it would do for us. Our Spirits had definitely sagged & we needed an “elixir”. When we went to Madame’s gallery—in Paris—the day of our departure—to pick up our tickets—~~some~~ so strange a “manipulation” had taken place in their purchase—that we—faced with the complete lack of time—found ourselves suddenly compelled to change our reservations for both boat & train—for cheaper class accomodation and make up the rest from our own pockets. This—to a suspicious and “mystical” Russian was already a sign of impending catastrophe. We sailed from Marseilles—again—but this time the sea was angry—and were buffeted all the way to Constantine where we landed & were to be met & driven to Philippenville & the great reception in the “palace by the sea”. At Constantine no sign of Host, car, or Servant. We were puzzled. Pavlik nervously disturbed. We phoned Philippenville—& were told there was a misunderstanding as to time—& to wait there—that they were sending a car. We did—and waited 4 hours in the dusty dry town—until finally a car drew up with an Arab servant—alone—at the wheel. We flew back—over dusty roads at a speed of 70 miles an hour—in an open

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car—with a violent wind whipping against our faces & eyes—the wild Arabian chauffeur absolutely oblivious to our discomfort. ~~Pavlik~~ We were aghast and Pavlik was by then—thoroughly convinced that everything would turn out tragically. He was right. We finally arrived—he with his precious eyes blinded by dust & wind—in a really heavenly



site high up on the cliffs of the a jade green Mediterr Sea with flowers trees & vines dropping down from the edge of the garden right into the Sea. We were Ster a emt allar = ushered in to the august presence of a man who was psychologically & socially completely unequipped to receive or to have anything to do with Artists. Above all an aristocrat—with a commanding personality. He disliked us on sight—felt ill at ease naturally—and decided thereupon that here was a bad thing he was saddled with & that he would make the best of it in his best coarse lower-middle class fashion. We were not to be entertained—but were lodged in a villa at the end of the estate—unattended—except by the presence of an old Arab—who lived in a little shack nearby—but we were surrounded by a grove of lovely Eucalyptus trees with there leaves like Cope crest-feathers. With this we were delighted however as the villa was nice—quiet—comfortably

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furnished and we would be to ourselves—away from the monster. Thereafter we were treated with a stiff self conscious and begrudging civility (he was the type who held out one finger to “shake hands”)—and on the other hand appalled at the ostentatious banquet fare ~~he consumed~~ served at every meal & which we were ~~also~~ expected to consume. Chief among all this were lobsters (a whole one to each eater person) which seemed to have been dredged daily in great quantities up out of the sea—and which were of such gigantic proportions—they were more like dogs than lobsters. This super human fare—plus the disagreeability of having to dine—forced by so unpleasing a Host who yelled numerarily at his servants—~~gave~~ made us so “spastic” that Pavlik succumbed to a very severe gastro-intestinal inflammation—& in a short time became delirious. A Doctor was summoned & worried that it was very grave & that he must have careful treatment internal baths of hot water & eucalyptus leaves—and with ~~several~~ special medicines. Our gracious Host was annoyed—Pavlik ~~became~~ remained in a delirious state & had to spend 3 days & and nights without sleep—sitting on the bed watching over him—until the condition “broke”—we were astounded & revolted when the Housekeeper presented herself to inform us that “our Cuttole did not like people to be sick & that we must clear it up as soon as possible”—somehow one of the cooks—a kind woman—against orders “not to cater to much to hysterical Artists”

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“whose illnesses were only imaginary”—would slip out of the vast kitchen and come to the villa to give Pavlik the baths from a huge kettle. I suddenly began to get abscesses from the nervous strain of it all and from strange letters we were getting from Gertrude in Paris—and life really became complicated. Mme la Senatrice arrived on the scene and added to the stiffness of her thwarted disapproval ~~with~~ of his failure to make “her” murals we knew of course that all was lost & that our whole trip was a mistake. We decided to cut short our stay—Pavlik was summoned by the Minotaur—in his den—who stuck out the single finger as “Goodbye” with a few bills to pay our passage—said he hadn’t wanted the murals anyway and the “jig was up.” So we left that heavenly spot lived in by a monster—who had a garden in which white roses with red polka dots on their petals grew—pink violets as big as giant Pansies, Honeysuckle as big as orchids that dropped in strands clear down to the sea and in which nightingales sang all night and strange



flowers that looked like birds of paradise. But Monsieur le Senateur who presumably only put on a collar when he went to the Senate—used it only served as a place to step out from the luxurious hideousness of his villa—which Pav called a “nightmare of ceramic tiles”—in the evenings—to urinate upon the flowers “because his bathroom was upon the upper floor.

One lovely thing did impress us—Pavlik too—the day we arrived—the Monster’s housekeeper took

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us up onto the roof of the Villa—to see the sea & surrounding countryside which was lovely—in a very “Biblical” sense way—high mountains—dark valleys—winding spiral of roads monkeys flying about in the far away trees—when suddenly we heard a sound of percussive rythms coming from the distant roads in the hills—and as it got nearer we were ~~transfixed~~ enraptured by the beauty of those rythms—a whole complex pattern of ~~complex~~ poly-rhythmic design—beating against the earth. Stravinsky would have been in a transport of delight. What is it? we gasped. “Oh nothing” said the Housekeeper just the Senegalais (Negro soldiers from Senegal) when they march they make those “strange” sounds—clapping their hands, stomping their feet, hitting the butts of their guns against the ground and making guttural noises in their throats all at the same time—we are so used to it—and it really annoys us.”

How sorry we felt for the white man at that moment—as we stood deaf and oblivious to the Housekeeper’s admonition that it “would probably disturb us, too—at times—when they marched”—we said a silent fervent prayer—asking ~~hoping~~ asking to be disturbed—as soon as possible and as much as they could “disturb” us

So we sailed back home again away from such a wealth of Potential but impeded delights. We called up Gertrude

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Add: Slowly but surely P. convalesced but we stayed pretty much to ourselves—and were treated like quarantined internees who were a nuisance[?] and tolerated only for humanitarian reasons—We took long walks—through the “Biblical” hills & valleys with their high lights and deep shadows—finding rare & beautiful leaves along the roadsides. Evenings we spent talking—Pavlik by [illegible] the bed did some marvellous caricatures of Gertrude & Alice—Helena Rubinstein Jane Heap & others. It was a month, however, of bored unhappiness and we could not wait to make our arrangements to get away as soon as possible. We had spent a month of frustration, tension, loss of time & damage to our nervous health not to speak of the unbelievable indefinite [illegible] inflicted upon us by a [illegible] & socialized quarantine “self made” tyrant—besides we were [illegible] about the unhappiness of the Algerians—who had lost all their native strength & character even their good looks under the brutality of the French colonists who were largely people of not very high class, or breeding.



The "Agony"  
of  
(Trip to)  
Philippenville

As if in conspiracy with ~~certain~~ other aspects of the place—suddenly one evening we heard blood-curdling shrieks—from the vicinity of the hen house—I ran out—found a hen lying on the ground—with a large gaping hole—so carefully pecked that it's roundness could only have been achieved by an expert with a drill. The inmates of the ~~chicken house~~ roost—were running around then—cackling and leering—with an evil light in their eyes—in a perfect circle—and a sadistic [illegible] each one pecking like a corps de ballet of trip-hammers. This occurred often & one day Pavlik happened upon it—he was so ill—from repulsion & disgust I had to put him to bed for rest of day

Pavlik found the "evil eye"—omens—on everything—servants etc.

Reread—revise & recopy