

Tema. Dec 9th 1927.

Dear Mother & Father.

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Still more thrills - yesterday Mr Harding & I went into Tema to do some shopping. we went down our cliff & mounted two donkeys which were waiting for us, accompanied by our servant Hofney & another arab. we rode until we came to the Nile, & there waited until the very primitive boat came across, & we all embarked. donkeys & all, including a cow & her calf. There was no wind so they had to row with the single enormous oar. 4 men working it & singing to time the motion. The Nile here is about 1/2 a mile wide so it took us a good time to get across, I had to walk along the oar to disembark. our donkeys were encouraged to jump ashore & we mounted & continued our journey. At Tema. when our camp business was done, we left our donkeys, & visited the market; Mr Harding was desirous of having a native costume made for him to wear in Palestine. we visited the various stores & examined their wares, while Hofney & our other attendant kept the whole population of Tema at bay. Finally Mr H. saw a glorious blue cloth that he very much wanted. & bargaining began.

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 it was thrilling. they wanted 80 piastres a metre
 equivalent to 15/- a yard. it was good value, or
 would be in England. but of course one never
 gives what they ask - after about 1/4 hour's conversa-
 tion we walked out of the shop & looked at head
 & neck swathings - like my bedspread, M^r H
 bought one for 15 p. (3/-) & then we went back
 to the cloth shop & again opened negotiations -
 all in Arabic of course, but I guessed a lot by
 the gestures. finally he got the man down to
 70 p. & the cloth was cut. & the Tailor came
 & measured him - (with all Tema looking on).
 the Tailor tore one selvage off the cloth & used
 that as a measuring tape. cut a few snicks
 in the cloth & took it away with him. then
 the bargain being concluded the shopkeeper
 offered us coffee, real Arab coffee. thick &
 sweet, which we drank with much slobbering
 & giggles of approval. it really was good.
 then our attendants having tied up our
 purchases in various loose ends of their
 garments, we returned in state.
 we saw a potter making pots on a primitive
 wheel that he turned with his foot in a

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glorious grove of palms. further on a huge stack of straw blocked our way, on riding round discovered there was a camel under it. We embarked on our Nile boat. but on this occasion there was an adverse wind which drove us down stream & the men had to get out & tow us to where we wished to disembark. (it is extraordinary that after all these years they have not found an easier way of getting across.) We saw the Bedouin tents on the Nile bank & their herds & camels grazing round about. By the time we got back to our tombs we had ridden 12 miles on land backed donkeys with only a bit of blanket by way of saddle & no bridle at all. I was dreadfully sore. so I heated up some water when we got in & sat in my washing basin. much better today.

At dinner last night we had a letter from el Serzawy. worded something like this. "I go to Cairo to night, I much wish you will all come with me by my arrangement. If you agree let me have a letter now &

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 I will meet you at the foot of the hill -
 I hope you will agree. I will be able to show
 you minarets, mosques, pyramids &
 dromedaries & things -"
 Of course we sent back a polite note to
 say we were too busy to accept his kind
 invitation. etc. - Two hours later his personal
 servant burst in upon us to say Melahez (Lieut)
 was at the foot of the hill & would we receive
 him - we said delighted. & after an
 interval el Gerzawy arrived with his usual
 guards & an attendant with a lantern;
 he was so distressed that we could not come,
 he said he was going home for 3 days for
 his birthday celebrations & had told his
 father that he was bringing 5 English
 guests. his father lives in one of the
 old palaces of Cairo with umpteen rooms
 right over the Nile & 100 years old, & we
 were all to stay there, just think having
 to refuse an invitation like that, & what
 made it worse he could not understand,
 he said - "But why you say you can
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 & then stay 3 more days in Tema to finish your work. it is not good to work all the time always -" We tried to explain that if we delayed it would keep other people idle in Palestine - Gerzawy said to that - "but that does not matter, they will be happy to have holiday too -" what can one say to these people? they are so direct & simple its all so true from their point of view - the only snag really is the money question - we finally drilled it into him that the people who were paying the expenses for having the work done would not be pleased if we wasted our time & their money for personal enjoyment. I think he understood that argument. he said. "I will tell my father that, but it will not be easy for him to understand, he will say. the English talk about being friends with the Egyptians, but when we ask them to our houses they will not come" We really did feel bad when he said

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that because it seemed as if we were throwing all his kindness back in his face, when as we would have given anything to have been able to accept; if he had only spoken about it to us before we might have fixed something. but to spring it on us with only a few hours notice was overwhelming. however we are trying to compromise, ^(our party) we are all going down to Luxor together.

I for 14 days. the other 4 for 5 days. When they have to go on to Palestine they will have to spend a day or two in Cairo getting permits etc, so Gerzawy says he will get another leave of 24 hours. come up to Cairo by the night train with us from Tema, & take us to visit his father & show us all round native Cairo. & then return to his outpost by the night train again - I have got to go too, he has told his father there are 5 guests & only to produce 4 would be

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7/7

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 but I would not miss it for worlds
 it would be a deadly insult to say
 I could not afford the extra fare
 when he knows I am staying at Luxor
 for a fortnight. & think what an opportunity
 to see the inside of an old world arab
 palace. & be received as honoured
 guests by an Egyptian of the old effendi
 (aristocracy) class. Unless our plans
 are altered, we are to let Gerzawy
 know the day we catch the night
 train to Cairo & he will get on it at
 Tema (I hope he will leave his guard &
 personal attendants at home). then we
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 the others will probably put up at an
 hotel & proceed to Palestine the following
 day. but Gerzawy & I will have to
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 time for breakfast. Wont it be thrilling
 I shall feel as if I am eloping with a sheik
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him quite on my own. I certainly shall not dare tell M^r Wainright. He would be dreadfully shocked.

When Gerzawy returns from his birthday celebrations he is taking us to visit the village where the tall man we met in Qau lives. The whole village is getting up a fantasia in our honour. & as we specially expressed a wish to see the wife of the tall man, the poor thing is having a series of baths & hair dressings & general beautifying. Gerzawy assures us that she will be perfectly clean to be presented to us. Her husband has even sent to Cairo for shoes for her as we may not like to see her bare feet. We have to seem gratified. but what ever will the poor thing look like when they have got her up for our inspection? I do not know if I shall be able to have my promised ride, because time is getting short & he will be away 3 days, but I shall wangle it if I can. We have got the hotel ~~tariff~~ tariff from Luxor. & the Thebes make special rates for archaeologists. 60 piastres a day (12/-
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inclusive & no tipping - we shall get rooms there if we can - I shall be there for Christmas - it seems funny to think of this as Dec - our average temperature is 79-80 in the shade.

Timothy the tortoise is thriving & will sit in his tin of milk - we shall have to return him to his native element when we leave here.

We had a total eclipse of the moon last night, we watched it from our cliff - we could hear the people in the village wailing & beating drums & letting off guns occasionally. Gerzawy said they think God is angry & will send a war. Our Mahamed[?] & Hofney were very interested but not frightened.

Harding tried to explain the cause of it to them in Arabic but found it rather difficult to convey the correct idea.

I really must close now. love to all friends, I am hoping to have a theological discussion with Gerzawy, ^{on day} & may hear some theorys that may interest Jack - a remark of his interested me. he said. "My Father is a very religious man, he think I ought to pray all the time, but I myself think one can serve God in a better way than so much praying."

Ever your loving daughter Myrtle.

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