

Cecil House
Feb 5th 1929.

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I am going to try to tell you my adventures in more detail. The first start off was nearly tragic & I did not mention it in my brief letter.

When we arrived at Cecil House I was handed a letter from El G. I read it in absolute amazement. He had not answered any of my questions about how to reach his out post but he asked me to come in my riding clothes disguised as a man because the people had not seen an European lady, no directions or even name of nearest railway station, we were absolutely dumbfounded. It sounded so strange that we decided not to go. So went out & wired "your conditions make visit impossible, letter follows." In about two hours time a wire came back "write me tomorrow" we began to think the man must be mad, anyway, we went to bed intending to go to Cooks early Monday morning to see when we could come back home.

Sunday morning we had scarcely finished breakfast before he arrived at Cecil House. & then everything was explained. The wire should have been wait me tomorrow.

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he had answered all my questions in a letter five days before (we found it had been mislaid in the hotel) The disguise he suggested was explained thus. he misunderstood my letter telling him our plans for the day after our arrival in Cairo. I had said we must do so & so. then my uncle would like to go to see the pyramids. he thought this meant I was coming to Vicha alone & Uncle J following later, so as an English woman ~~was~~ would be a 7 days wonder in the village he thought if I was alone it would be better for me to be in riding clothes, then the people would think I ~~was a~~ ^{was a} man & would not crowd round & stare so much. We thought his explanation absolutely reasonable & of course apologized & said we were ready to do what ever he suggested. so he said he thought it would be best for us if he took us to the outpost & let us see it for ourselves. then return to Cairo & collect our luggage & return to take up our abode in the wilds the day after. Uncle Jimmie was very taken with him. he says he is so absolutely genuine. so off we started. we drove through the native quarter, stopped once to get out & see a man making braid on a native loom. such a dear old chap. he gave us quite a demonstration & was delighted at our interest. then we visited his father & mother. we did not go to the big family house which is a little way out of the town part of Cairo, but to a smaller house where the younger boys live during the school term. The parents spend sundays (which is a holiday) at that house. our welcome was wonderful, although neither could speak English their

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whole manner made us feel at home. we stayed about an hour. the younger boys had gone out for a walk. but all the servants came in & were presented to us, & sat round the room at a respectful distance. they are treated as humble members of the same family & expected to share in such an event as a visit from an English lady & gentleman.

When we left the house we were driven to an Arab restaurant for lunch. (G. thought Uncle J might prefer it to a meal with the family for his first introduction to eastern ways. wasn't that thoughtful of him?)

We had some sort of hors d'ouvres (can't spell it) then a bowl of wonderful rich soup, with a couple of the front legs & hoofs of some small animal like a little pig or kid. we had to fish these out & put them on a plate, then drink the soup with a spoon & finally tackle the legs & feet with a fork. after that we had bread soaked in honey & spread with a thick crust of cream. the cream was so thick that it was folded like an omelet. then coffee. the real coffee. not smell only.

Afterwards. I just glanced at my hands. instantly El G. said. "You wish to wash?" he beckoned a servant & I was conducted to the lavatory etc. Then we set out for the outpost. Such a drive. right across the famous barrage across the Nile. a most lovely view. then along earth roads. through villages, along by canals, across one in one part, going over a bridge made of felled trees packed with earth, no rail or edge. & not much wider than the car & a right angle turn to get on to it. & so on for 50 miles. Our first

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view of Vicha el Kubra showed a little group of native
 houses, a white mosque with a pointed minaret
 reflected in the waters of a large lake - close to the
 mosque was the police quarters, a whitewashed
 building with green shutters, all very clean & orderly.
 we were taken first to see the horses. I am to have
 a white arab this time. El G says he is very calm &
 gentle. I soon made friends with him. he is a little
 taller than dear old Rufus & more slender.
 Then we saw the soldiers quarters, the lock up cell &
 the office & finally were conducted to the hotel!!!
 where we are to stay. you enter a courtyard, just
 inside is a wide wooden bench with a mat & several
 decorated water coolers. then a wooden flight of steps
 lead from the courtyard to the first floor which we
 are to share with El G. it consists of 3 rooms. his room
 a room for Uncle & I to share. two beds & a tin bath.
 & we can arrange it so as to divide it with a curtain,
 the other room is the kitchen & servants room. I think
 we shall be able to settle in quite comfortably - especially
 as he has had a W.C built for our own private use
 so that we need not go to the one down stairs that the
 natives use. Can you imagine any greater consideration
 for our comfort,? it isnt many visitors have that done
 for them is it? our window looks onto the roof of the
 mosque & we shall be wakened in the morning by the
 priest calling the faithful to prayer from the minaret.
 On coming out we paused by the open door, the floor is
 covered with rush mats, & in a shaft of sunlight coming
 in from a little square window near the roof we saw a white
 turbaned arab kneeling, intoning a prayer & bending down
 between the sentences to touch the floor with his forehead.

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We like the look of the lake. El G has the exclusive rights for wild duck shooting - & he tells Uncle J that there are lots of fish & he can fish from a boat to his hearts content & the benefit of our supper.

Time was getting short & we wanted to be back to catch the 8 o'clock post. so El G told his driver to take us back to Cecil House. To go carefully. because if we complained & said he drove like a devil, he would place him under arrest. so we were landed safely outside our hotel after one of the most wonderful days I have ever spent.

My love to you & Father & to Pat also
I expect you will give her this letter to read.

Your affectionate daughter
Myrtle.

I expect my next letter will be from Vicha el Kubri

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