

Arabah-el-Madfunah.
Nov 20th 1929.

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Dear Father

It was jolly getting such a long letter from you. I loved hearing all about the Caravan in Red picked out with blue, or vice versa & the Lady (colour not mentioned). All the exciting things seem to happen when I am away. still I mustn't grumble. I'm finding life full of excitements just now.

The big bundle of paper arrived quite safely also the envelope. the contents will help towards decorating the Xmas tree splendidly. Nannie was so delighted with the forget me not seeds, she went straight away & pulled something up to make room to plant them. We have had the cress & mustard, & the lettuces will soon be ready. When I first described the gardens to you I am afraid I very much underestimated the size, the immensity of the desert makes everything else appear very tiny, now that my eyes have got used to the proportions I realize they are much larger than I first thought.

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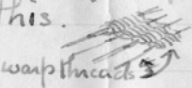
I am so glad the lavender water was a nice surprise I was very much torn in two about it, I did so want to have the fun of giving you your birthday present before I left home, & at the same time I didn't like to think of there being a blank when the day really came so I compromised by giving you the Jade first & leaving Yardley's with Mother. It was lucky the letter arrived in time also, so far the mail seems very good. The natives simply love my letters with the big address they always recognize them & bring them straight to me, they feel they can really understand English writing.

Today Ahmud brought about $\frac{1}{3}$ of the white fleece all beautifully spun, it is all as fine & even as the sample I posted to you a week or so ago the texture seems harsher than English wool but when woven it makes a beautiful supple cloth which does not pull or ravel. If I could procure a pound or so of this spun wool would it be any use to Miss Collins, the red brown sheep here

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The rugs they make in the village are not heavy enough for what we want. They are woven rugs not pile rugs. I will see what I can do in Cairo. I believe old Hammadans & Bokkara's are very scarce now. I am having a hanging made for the door between the studio & library, the weaver is to do the usual native pattern in the 3 natural shades of wool. It will be nice & heavy & I believe draught proof. The method of weaving is like this.  it is rather like

basket work pattern but is beaten up very tightly

Nov 22nd We had a glorious day yesterday. Miss C's friends Mrs & Miss Firth came, so we took the afternoon off & had a picnic up one of the waddy's. We told the men that we should require two

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To carry the tea & the gun. (we never go far in the desert without a weapon because of wolves & wild cats) but they all came, five men & three donkeys, we preferred to walk, so the donks trotted along with us just as dogs would. We walked about 1½ miles along slightly undulating sand & then we came to the glorious pink cliffs. The waddy is a natural break in these cliffs forming a long winding trail that finally leads to the top. The entrance to the waddy is like this →

Imagine blue sky, pink cliffs shading to mauve in the distance & golden sand sprinkled with silver dust.



The tops of these cliffs are white alabaster & the wind blows the white dust onto the sand drifts. (the dots ... are us) we wound our way up & up until we came to a part where a great bank of sand led up to the very top. The servants

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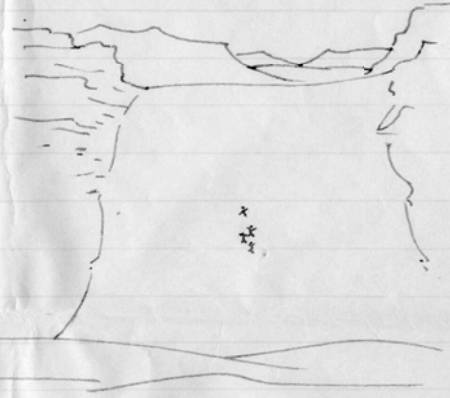
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while the four of us attempted the climb.
it was something like this → (I have drawn us much
too large for correct proportion)

It was like a sand
glacier. we had to
go on all fours & kept
slipping back, but
after a violent struggle
we got to the top
It was worth it, the
view was simply
immense, range
after range of hills
with great sand drifts between. These hills are
crowned with rocks of alabaster & on top are all
silver & gold.

We did not take so long coming down. we
chose a still steeper slope. it was simply
terrifying to approach the edge it seemed to
fall right away the angle was the angle of
rest for sand. about this I think
we sort of flopped & slid down



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all yelling with the joy of it, When we reached the level we found tea ready, our men had made a camp fire & boiled the kettle, dusk came on before we had quite finished & the camp fire with the shadowy forms of our Arabs & the donkeys all grouped ^{together} among the sand drifts made an unforgettable picture (like the one of Mrs Bruntons only a little more light from the afterglow of the sunset.)

We came home by star light, & weren't we just glad of hot baths & clean undies when we got in.

Today we had another excitement, Miss C & I were returning to lunch on our donks with Sardi Ahmad, & Ahmad-Abdu-Sellam, we heard our dog barking violently, (he was chained) & when we came in sight of the house we saw a wolf like creature running round in a strange sort of way, it didn't seem like a dog, & yet the colour was too light for a wolf, our three men were off like a shot, gallabea's tucked up all shouting at once, the animal

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They all got out of sight over the next sand
hills, then we heard two bangs, we left our
donks at the house & scrambled after the
hunt, we found Sandic had shot the creature
it proved to be a mad dog, it was very
gaunt & its mouth was all dribbling & foaming
It was a beautifully clean shot through the head,
& a very lucky thing too, these half wild dogs
often do go rabid & cause a lot of trouble,
(another reason for carrying a gun)

When we got back to the house we looked our
dog over well to make sure he had not been
bitten but he was all right, we have to
keep him chained as they are poisoning
a lot of dogs in the village on account of
rabis. (It is a cruel country in spite of all its beauty)

Same day later. Just heard some exciting news.

Because the mad dog had been round our
dwelling & because one of us caused its soul
to be torn from its body all who saw it are

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(in such a case our servants are one of us, we
provide them with the means of living therefore
they are like blood relations) In order to avert
this dreadful thing the priest is coming tomorrow
to read prayers over us, & we are all to eat bread
that he has blessed, even our own dog will
be included in this ceremony, also the donkeys
we were riding.

This evening the Omdah called, Miss B was
staying on later in the temple so I had to
receive him, I am afraid my conversation was
limited but Nannie filled in the gaps.

I have heard that Turkish delight is pure grape
juice sweetened with honey & boiled & boiled until
it becomes a thick glutinous mass.

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Nov 24.

We had the ceremony to protect us from the evil spirit that possessed the ^{mad} dog. I will try to rem^{em}ber the ritual. First the priest was provided with a mat & a stool, on the stool he placed 7 loaves of bread (like pancakes) & 7 dates & a tiny cup of oil, beside the stool was a water jar. Then, when we had all gathered round & our own dog was brought into the circle, he began to read from a book.

There was a certain holy man who had been bitten by a mad dog, & he was seized by a great fear, but he prayed to God for deliverance & the evil was averted, it was this prayer the priest read out, then he took a stick & struck each of us lightly on the head saying, "Depart oh fear." Then three small boys who came with him walked round us 7 times one way & 7 times the other chanting some ritual. They stopped before the priest & he said to the first boy, "What do you want my son, & the boy replied "Oh Master I crave deliverance from evil," then the priest took the 7 ~~loaves~~ loaves & consecrated them with the holy oil, & he offered the

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It was a most impressive ceremony & it was really delightful to see how anxious our servants were that our dog should get the full benefit of it. Sandie sat hugging him, & implored the priest to hit him well with the stick, & half drench him with holy water. They have great faith in its effectiveness.

We gave the priest coffee, & his 3 boys sweet biscuits, we also (Miss C & I) gave him PT10 (2/-) each for charity. & a fine red silk handkerchief to wrap

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Will you keep this account handy, in case I want to refer to it when I come home.

Tell Mother I will answer her letters as soon as I have started this on its journey. I was very pleased with all the scraps & ribbons she sent, also the pencil protectors arrived safely & are being used.

Love to you both
 Your affectionate daughter
 Myrtle.

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