

Arabah.  
Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> 1931.

Dear Mother.

I had such a <sup>then</sup> big mail on the 20<sup>th</sup> you  
an mail letter came, at the same time as the  
one you wrote a few days before. There was  
also a letter from Pat, & one from Father, & the  
box with Amice's pen & my cat brooch.

Thank you ever so much for the nice hankies, I must  
keep them for my return to civilization, I also loved  
the gay coloured hankies & the brooch. many thanks  
for every thing.

I had a very jolly birthday. Amice  
made me a donkey egg cosy, out of a kid glove  
it is very amusing. the fingers make the long ears,  
& two dress snaps form the eyes. All the men came  
& wished me Many Happy Returns or rather the equivalent  
Arabic greeting. Nannie made a special chicken  
pie for lunch in my honour & we left off work an  
hour earlier & came back for a cosy tea in the house.

Amice was so delighted with the pen,  
it was a great surprise. she can hardly believe  
it is really her old one repaired. she asks me

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117 2

To thank Father ever so much for her.

We have had another invasion. I told you about the previous one in my last letter. Some more people, again perfect strangers write to ask Amice if she could put up a party of four people who were motoring from Luxor for two nights. We thought it pretty well cheek, & she wrote & said that we had only a very small staff & could not accommodate so many & again suggested they might apply for the Antiquities Rest House. She had a letter a few days ago to say they were putting up at the rest house, & could we lend them extra bedding, cooking utensils, crockery etc. & get in provisions for two days. & wire reply. She sent a telegram to say we would do <sup>anything</sup> we could to help them. & the next day, <sup>being Market day</sup> purchased two chickens, a leg of mutton, eggs, tomatoes, lentils, oranges etc. The following day the party arrived. They were a very dull uninteresting lot of youngish people, a Mr Jones & his wife, <sup>he being</sup> a minor government official & a Mr & Mrs Mackintosh - who proved to be vegetarians!! They told us that M. Laco would only issue a permit

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117<sup>3</sup>

to the Jones couple for the rest house, the others not being Archaeologists or government officials were not allowed to use it, so what could we do about it.

Well, under the circumstances - the only thing we could do was to offer to put the two up. we gave them all tea in the temple & invited all four to have dinner with us that night, it was then that we heard that the M's were vegetarians, rather difficult to cater for out here. After tea the party went to look round the temple & we were just returning to our work when in came two delightful friends, Mr & Mrs Sandford, I do not know if I mentioned them in an earlier letter they are quite young, & both Geologists, she was a Girton girl, & they are now touring up & down the desert level of the Nile valley making a geological survey & collecting data for an early history before neolithic<sup>sic</sup> times, they go about in an ancient Jowett car & a still more ancient Ford, & where cars cant<sup>sic</sup> go, they travel by boat or camel or donkey, They had promised if ever they were in our locality they would come & stay a day or two with us, Imagine how sick

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117<sup>4</sup>

we were at being cluttered up with dull tourists just when our nice friends turned up. When they heard of the invasion they said of course they would'nt bother us, they could easily pitch their tent near our house, but we would'nt hear of it. They'd been been sleeping on camp beds in a tiny tent that they carry on the car, for several nights on end, & a comfy bed & washing arrangements were a great treat to them, so we insisted that they had the guest room. & we'd make shift in the smaller room with a couple of camp beds for the tourists, they'd just come from a luxurious hotel in Luxor so it would'nt hurt them to rough it a little.

So Amice & I hurried back to the house to break the news to poor Nannie & to prepare the extra room, the tourists arrived in the middle of it, they stood & watched Amice put up the camp beds & make them, & never offered to lift a finger to help. I was busy filling a basket with the provisions we had got in for them, for the Jones to take back with them to the rest house after dinner

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117

also sorting out extra crockery etc, it was rather a strain on our resources. Nannie of course was hard at it preparing dinner & Abdullah was laying the table. The guest room that we insisted on the Sandfords having was all ready except making the beds. Nannie said she would see to that while we were at dinner, but as soon as the Sandfords arrived they brought what they needed from the car & made their own beds & then offered to do anything they could to help us.

We learnt afterwards that Mr Sandford found the tourists' car stuck in the sand on the way here from the temple, so he & his native servant (who drives the Ford) got out & put their shoulders behind & shoved it out, while Jones & his friends looked on -

Nannie had prepared a huge bowl of barley broth, & a dish of stew to follow, & cooked one of the Xmas puddings that we had over from the Xmas stores for the sweet. so we gave them a good dinner. During conversation, Mr Jones

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117

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We sat up talking till long past our usual bed time & it was past 10.30 before the Jones made a move to return to the rest house, we had to send a man to show them the way.

The next morning we were so tired that we were rather late getting up, & decided to make it a holiday & spend it with our friends & work next market day instead. The two tourists (Mr & Mrs Mackintosh) had breakfast with us, & then went to join the Jones. We really felt we need not bother with them any more until they returned to sleep at night, they ought to be able to manage with the provisions we had got in, (Nannie had cooked everything ready for them). We all had a quiet morning, Mr Sandford took advantage

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117

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 Mrs Sandford to see the village of Beni Monsur.  
 & for the afternoon we planned a grand picnic up  
 the wady with the sand slope. Sardin provided  
 his lady donkey & found two others, we have  
 to have donkeys of one sex otherwise the noise is  
 deafening, also manners may be a little unseemly,  
 & as a fourth lady donk was not forthcoming I had  
 my favourite camel. & we set off with all the  
 men & Abdullah & our dog.

It really was one of the jolliest picnics we  
 have had, when we got to the great sand dunes  
 at the base of the cliffs the dog went mad with  
 excitement, he'd never been on fine sand like  
 that before, he raced about, rolled in it &  
 tried to bite it, he galloped up the steep sides of  
 the dunes, charged through the crest in a flurry  
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117

8

We climbed up to the high desert & along to the top of the mighty sand slope. dog too. here he had an extra burst of exuberance, & as we were standing on the top ridge of the slope he suddenly charged me from behind, I sat down with a flop. right on top of him, how we laughed. then we all slid down the slope & had tea at the bottom. The men had carried wood, & they made a fire to boil the kettle for their tea & ours. Wip-wat sat with us & behaved beautifully sitting expectant & accepting nicely when he was offered a piece, although he simply dithered with excitement when he thought a bit was coming his way, the Sandfords simply loved him. They both enjoyed their visit to us tremendously & said it was the loveliest picnic they had ever had. We rode home in the sunset, I had a gorgeous trot on my camel the last part of the journey & arrived at the house some time before the others, I was quite breathless with the shaking, a camel has some stride when he gets going.

M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Mackintosh returned about 9.30 for the night

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117<sup>9</sup>  
 They had had a busy time seeing the temple & the Osirion & the ancient fortress out in the desert, & were tired, so we all were glad to go to bed early.

The next morning all the guests departed, Mr Jones brought his car round to fetch the Mackintoshes & return the things we had lent them, & they promptly stuck in the sand again when they tried to get out of our wady. & all our men had to help get them out  
Feb 24<sup>th</sup> We had two visitors from Chicago House for the day today, they were very serious young men, we gave them lunch in the temple, & brought them to the house for tea, they seemed to enjoy themselves very much, they were very interested in our work, they have just ~~started~~<sup>departed</sup> on their return journey to Luxor. they had started by 5.30 this morning so I expect they will be pretty tired

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10  
117

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I shall probably have a few days holiday while  
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I want to explore the desert North of here

Lots of love & thanks for letters, hankie  
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Your affectionate daughter  
Myrtle.

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