

address

Bibeh, Up. Egypt.

28 Dec. 1896 - 10 Jan. 1897.

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Bibeh, Up. Egypt. (63)  
 After returning from the southward  
 round to Minyeh, I stayed two days  
 at Behnesa to look after matters,  
 writing up journal, getting stores out,  
 &c, before going north on further  
 exploration. (I write this on boxes in  
 an open boat, amid continual little  
 lurches & gusts, of which you will see  
 the "graph" in this writing.) In these  
 two days Miss Oldroyd came down here  
 with her nephew, and I sent over Ali  
 to Beni Mazar to fetch them, to their  
 great satisfaction, though their language  
 in common is but a dozen words. I saw  
 them settled down, & in touch with the  
 rest of our company, & then started off  
 north with Ali & donkeys as before.  
 This time we had a different man, who  
 was an utter coward, & would not go a  
 day's journey alone, but required to  
 get sight of us half way each day to  
 encourage him. It made our standing  
 joke; & so well known is he in the village  
 for this, that when starting north again in  
 the boat he asked if I would take him, &  
 I asked if he was afraid to stay alone in

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(64)  
 his village, a bystander said "Ah the  
 khawaga knows your walk". Our  
 travelling expenses were not serious. Two  
 donkeys & a man 8 piastres, Ali's donkey  
 gratis, donkeys food 4 p. Ali 4 p. Total  
 16 p. or  $3/3^d$  a day for a party of three  
 donkeys & two men. Such is Egypt when  
 you know the prices. Such is not Egypt  
 to the tourist. (Here it became so bitterly  
 cold that I gave up writing until I  
 reached shelter.)

That day we saw four probable sites  
 of tombs, & three Roman villages, &  
 reached El Mesid that night. Near  
 our camping I went on ahead on foot  
 to look for a place, & passed a  
 house of an Arab Bey. Soon after  
 I saw a horseman in hot pursuit, &  
 his servant overtook me with a  
 pressing invitation to go & stay with  
 him, & the bait added of a horse  
 to take me wherever I wished  
 next day. However Arab hospitality  
 is rather wearisome, so I declined &  
 went on to the village. My donkeys  
 came up by dark, & we pitched.

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 went on to the village. My donkeys  
 came up by dark, & we pitched.

It was well I did so, for I met here the  
 only Egyptian who had a real interest  
 in the antiquities. After dinner the shekh  
 came to see me, very politely not pushing  
 into the tent, & with him a scribe  
 Umran Khallil, an honest-looking man,  
 who began to pour out an account of  
 each town & cemetery all the way north,  
 with the names & position of each. I saw  
 he knew things, & made notes at once on  
 my map, nearly every one of which I  
 afterwards verified. He had also been  
 over the east side; but had apparently  
 not done any digging or plundering, only  
 visiting & observing the places. There  
 was no endeavour to get either payment  
 for information or any promise of any  
 kind; but simply he told me all he  
 knew because he was interested in it. He  
 came again next morning, & told me  
 more, pointing out places in the hills.  
 The shekh sent us a bowl of milk in the  
 morning, & was more polite & less  
 obtrusive than any I have met with.  
 Next day I saw three Roman villages &

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(66)  
 three cemeteries, beside a large town,  
 "Kom el Ahmar", near Mazurah.  
 This has a great cemetery, now all  
 plundered, & for half a mile the  
 desert is white with bones, & thousands  
 of skulls. Here, north of Mazurah,  
 we pitched on a grassy rise near the  
 stream, close by a cemetery & a shekh's  
 tomb. We asked a man of the farm  
 hard by if there were any guards,  
 "No, the shekh is their guard". Such is  
 their respect for this tomb, that as an  
 advancing sand dune ~~has~~ buried the  
 lower part of it, they built a long  
 tunnel of bricks so as to still be able  
 to visit the chamber under the dome,  
 which stands now half in the sand. The  
 night was cloudy, & all the fields  
 scented the air; while all night long  
 there came faint wafts of tamarisk  
 that seemed too sweet to be believed.  
 Had a bath, & in the evening a very  
 interesting long talk with Ali on the  
 varieties of lies. He hates lying most  
 heartily, yet often wronging my conscience

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B)

B) with statements to other people which I must ignore or contradict. So I enquired as to his views. It seems that to Egyptian consciences a lie means ~~an~~ injurious falsehood; but a falsehood which is only to save a person's feelings (such as "Not at home") is not a lie, but only a polite prevarication. I told him the distinction some make of white lies & black lies, & to him a white lie is none at all, so long as it is not against the interests which he is bound to serve. It is well to get to understand their canons of right & wrong, as then one can take them on their own ground. I have never known him anything but absolutely truthful to me; but then he is "my man" & feels bound to let me know all. He told me that he had warned his wife that if she told him a single lie he would divorce her at once.

The next day we came on a cemetery with some large tombs, none yet opened, & a bit of XVIII dyn pottery close by.

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(68)  
 The sign of such tombs is a slight sinking in the ground, with a slight ridge on one side where the stuff has not yet been levelled. The test is to see if there is a sharp edge of desert soil at the side, with a filling of softer stuff. After this we saw two Roman sites & a cemetery, & then reached Deshashek.

Here I found a large cemetery of the IV-VI<sup>th</sup> dynasty on the hills. Much of it has been plundered out by native agents of the Museum, but dozens of tombs yet remain, & it is far the most valuable site that I have yet seen. Two tombs are sculptured, & are now shut up with doors, & a guard to see that they are not broken. I could not see them as the key is kept at Medinet el Fayum. North of this I saw another Roman village, Ali grubbed up bits of papyri,

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I found a long line of flint <sup>(69)</sup>  
 tumuli just behind it, quite unopened.  
 West of Myana (Amyana of map) is  
 a small Roman village, which my friend  
 Umran had told me of, calling it  
 Mayalet Belesan. At Myana we  
 pitched for the night, on the dried  
 bed of a lake which was all soft below.  
 In the village next morning I saw a  
 part of an inscription dedicated under  
 Ptolemy Soter, apparently by Amadokos,  
 which seems a Thracian name. It is in  
 Greek, on a bit of a basalt shrine,  
 & came from Ahnas. Thence we went  
 on to Ahnas, which I was anxious to  
 see again. All the mounds are hopeless;  
 gigantic masses of II<sup>nd</sup>-IV<sup>th</sup> cent. Roman.  
 I hunted for Naville's temple, & found  
 (as I had supposed) that he has not been  
 below the Ramesside floor level. The  
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70  
As the water in a pit close by is four feet under the floor now, we shall have at least six feet to work in before I leave. So I must see if there is anything older below, as at the other temples that I have dug.

Thence we went on to Illahun, or rather Hawaret el Makta. Two little effendis were in the inspection house - my old home - so I pitched in the garden by the sluice bridge, near the gentle rush of water pouring through to the Fayum. I saw several of my old friends, who had not been up to the three years' southern work; & when they heard that was to work near there, they bubbled over with delight, patting me on the back, all ready to be off at once. Ali was much cast down at finding that his unscrupulous father had not only swallowed so much of his money, but had sold his donkey, & called in his loans, & refused to pay a piastre. The old man must be a miser, not a spendthrift,

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C)

As it was only three weeks ago he had thus raised £3, & his wife (11) urged him to pay Ali. Finding that nothing could be done I told him he had better take it out in boys, whose services from eight <sup>or ten</sup> years old are worth more than their keep. So Ali is to confiscate the share of Mahmud's earnings which would have gone to the father; & he carried off with him little Yusuf his youngest brother, a sweet slip of a boy, who had much better be with Ali than with the father, & who can earn 12<sup>s</sup> or 15<sup>s</sup> a month beyond his keep. I give these affairs of Ali's because it is hardly ever that the real working of a fellah's life comes before one of us so fully.

We went over to near Medinet el Fayum to see a cemetery, which is of the Old Kingdom & has been slowly worked out, by the Copts of a neighbouring convent, for reburials in the rock tombs. There is still much of it remaining which should be secured. It would be a hard fight to get it from the Copts, as they would swear that all the

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(72)  
 ancient tombs were in their cemetery & could not be dug up, in order to keep them to themselves. So I asked de Morgan to put a guard on this year, & to delimit the Coptic rights; & applied to be allowed to work it next year, after the Copts are quieted. It ought to be the cemetery of the Fayum in the IV-VI<sup>th</sup> dynasties, of which we know nothing yet. The tombs are ~~all~~ many of them stairway tombs like those of Naqada, and stone vases & statuettes are found in them. I also saw a Roman & Ptolemaic town close by, & another Roman village & cemetery a couple of miles west, & then returned across the desert to Illahun.

The next day I went over Gurob again, & saw that much yet remains untouched there. I have not seen anywhere so much of the XVIII-XIX dyn. to work as there still is there. Three men had gone on with the donkeys to Deshasheh to await us. I had a good look over the cemetery of Ahnas on the way, & see that there is yet much to do there, after Naville & the

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Museum people have plundered it. (73)  
 I wrote from Illahun to de Morgan  
 applying for Deshasheh & the desert  
 north to the Ahnas cemetery: so I  
 hope soon to be able to begin work.  
 On reaching Deshasheh, I stopped  
 at an Arab hamlet where the tomb  
 guard lives, who is a very decent fellow.  
 This place is called Egh Ghigha, which  
 is unpronounceable without practice, &  
 may be anglicised as Er Riga. I found  
 a good flat sandy bit at the end of  
 a dune, just hidden from the noise  
 of the hamlet, close to the canal &  
 as near our work (2 miles) as any  
 available place. The Sheikh had  
 just made 10,000 bricks, which he  
 modestly asked double price for  
 ( $3\frac{1}{6}^d$  a 1000), & which I agreed for, so as  
 to save time. I left my builder  
 lad there, marked out a six roomed  
 house, & left two men & a boy beside,  
 with my baggage, taking only my  
 blankets. Ali & I then went off to

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(14) Bibeh to get the train south so as to  
 save a day. The road however was  
 very winding  thus, & on a  
 high embankment with ditches at  
 the sides, so that no short cuts were  
 possible. So ten miles direct, became  
 fully sixteen, for I walked hard for  
 four hours in hopes of saving the  
 train. However we saw one train go  
 when we were 3 miles off, & another at  
 a mile off. Now the wisdom of the  
 railway administration is to run two  
 trains half an hour apart, & no more  
 all day. So we had to wait from  
 12 to near 5 p.m. when we got a  
 lift in a goods train. Meanwhile Ali  
 bought wood for our roof, & engaged  
 it to be sent over. The theory of the  
 goods train is that passengers may go at  
 second class fares in the guard's van. The  
 practice of the majority is to get into the  
 van, & pay the guard about half a 3<sup>rd</sup>  
 class fare; and I saw a lively wrangle  
 as to the amount of tip that he would  
 take. At last we got to Beni Mazar,  
 3 hours for 32 miles, mainly spent in stoppages.

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D)

D) By that time it was long after dark, & we set off full speed for Behnesa, Ali carrying the lump of blankets on his back. The road is level half the way, but covered with mud chips, which hop into one's boots, & have to be shaken out every five minutes. Walking on peas is nothing to it. The rest of the way was stumbling over field paths & ploughed land. Ali's way is to never speak to any one, so that any one seeing him may stand in dread of him as an unknown quantity. We raced on past sundry startled folks in the fields, & had at last to go through a village. The first guard challenged us to no effect; the dogs flew along yelping at our heels; & we came to the main guard sitting by a fire of embers. "Who's this?", "Whoose this?", in abject tones they shouted as we came on. We brushed past them, full speed, in silence; "Take them", "Stop them", "Fire at them", "They are efrīts", were the terror stricken orders & remarks; & as we went out into the silence of the fields, we left a confused babel of terrified guards muttering & howling behind us.

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(76)

At last we got to Sandafah opposite our house, & saw lights still in the rooms: jumped into the ferry boat, rowed over with my measuring sticks, & got up to our rooms without once disturbing the guards. Altogether about 26 miles of walking that day: I was quite fresh after it, only my feet felt a little knocked about from the rough ground. So next morning I lounged over some skull measuring; for Grenfell & Hunt are getting hundreds of skulls, & to save time & secure results I have got Hunt to take up doing all the principal measurements on the spot (10 on each), after which only the best or remarkable ones need be packed.

They are clearing hundreds of Roman tombs & some already plundered ones of XXII dynasty; but nothing tempting for me has turned up. That afternoon I packed up, & next morning loaded a boat after interminable rows over prices with the boatman. The people here do not

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(77)

understand a bargain; but after a matter is agreed they will at the last moment try to bargain again or throw it all up. Ali took security by a punting pole, & held the boat with a guard till we loaded it. At last I got off, but the wind was so cold that I could not write up this journal on board as I intended. I had to get out my thickest clothes, wrap up in a blanket, & just endure existence. The gale was right against us, & it was only Ali's undaunted manner which kept the boatman up to towing in the teeth of the storm all day; often he would go & tow alone. So it took us 48 hours to go just 48 miles. At night I pitched tent ashore for sleeping.

When I got to Er Riga I was glad to see our house built, & all the boards ready for roofing. I had walked on a-head for the last few miles, & I found two unpleasant men waiting about here. Yusuf told me that one was

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78  
 the brother of Ali's wife. Now A. had told me about them; the mother & two brothers are all thieves, one is now doing three years sentence, & Ali particularly wished to keep them from coming near him, as his wife was a far better character. So I ordered the men off at once, but they would stay to feed first. I watched them eating, & watched the boat drawing on toward us, & tried to move them on but they would not. At last the boat came in, & I told Ali to hurry his folks up to the house. The brother came forward, & I barred him. He waited, & then went in a rage to the village, as I saw by his walk. Women came up to talk to Ali's wife, no doubt from the brother. Then the brother sent to borrow a dollar, Ali referred to me, & I said he should never have a farthing. At last I sent Ali to the village to warn the people that we had no responsibility for the men, & only wished them to go. At about this

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E)

E) point Ali's wife slipped out, & bolted to her brother, which of course upset everything. A. went over with our men, & told her she must take her choice between him or the brother, & she chose to stay with her brother. I thought he would have been broken down at this; but his view seemed to be "If she is so bad, it is well that she goes". Then a little later they passed our house, the brother leading off his sister. I turned away, as it seemed too hideous; & yet I looked again, as men will look at a house on fire or a sinking ship. Ali however exclaimed, "but I will have the bracelets for they are mine"; he followed, & in the path there, he stopped her, & took from her wrists the bracelets, & brought them, & put them down in my room for safety. Things which to us would seem to burn our hands to touch, or our eyes to look at, were to him but so much silver. They lie before me now, & I look at them as I

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might at a dead body. Yet this is the  
 same man who for a few kind  
 words at parting from me will sob  
 so that he cannot speak. It makes  
 one realise for once the ancient Greek  
 view of the friendship for men & for  
 women. I really believe I was far  
 more shaken at the afternoon's  
 results than any one else, & felt as  
 if I had such a blow that there was  
 no breath left in me. In the evening  
 I told Ali to come in to feed with me, &  
 had a long talk with him. These  
 people it really seems have no trace  
 of affection left if they once distrust  
 the character of any one. At one point  
 he was shaken; she had carried off the infant  
 about eighteen months old, just beginning  
 to eat & to be intelligible, & Ali was  
 very fond of the babe. He came to me &  
 said, - should he go & claim it? his little  
 cousin could look after it, & it would eat  
 now. He was afraid its mother would be  
 careless of it, & he would rather it  
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would never do to leave it to a thoughtless little imp of about 11 & take care of it, & dissuaded him. (81)

The morning after this he was greatly cast down about the maintenance orders he might have made against him by the Qadi; & so after much dole he went off to Illahun to get first word, pay whatever was needful to square that judicial authority, & be quit of future claims.

I was very sorry to leave Behnesa; the place was one of the pleasantest I had ever been in. The palm groves round the house, the splendour of our establishment of 9 mud brick rooms, all made me ready to lament like the Moorish lament on leaving Valencia. Here at Er Riga we are absolutely bare without a tree near, no minarets to look at, but only some fields & sand dunes. Yet it is quiet, clean ground, & good water, & our row of

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82  
 six huts is quite good enough for  
 the time we are likely to be here.  
 The peace of life consists in learning  
 not to trouble about what is  
 not essential.  
 So soon now as I can get de Morgan's  
 orders I shall begin work. At least  
 I have done a good stroke already  
 in a full survey of the sites along  
 90 miles of country which was  
 scarcely at all known as yet.  
 My address will now be Bibeh  
Upper Egypt. Of course letters to Beni  
 Mazar will be sent on, as the Egyptian  
 post is very good at this.  
 Little Yusuf comes in & squats in my  
 doorway just for society, now that  
 Ali is away. I beg my friends' pardon if  
 I give too large a dose of Arab affairs;  
 but it is very seldom that one can see so  
 far into their minds; & nothing is more  
 fascinating to me than getting inside  
 the thoughts of another race of men.  
 Please forward to F.L. Griffith, Riversvale, Ashton  
 u-Lyne; Dr Walker; F.C.J. Spurrell, Bessingham,  
 Norwich; Miss S. Harvey, Milford, Godalming;  
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11 Jan. 1897 -

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(83)

For three days I have been writing letters, journal, report, &c; all the stuff which everyone seems to expect, but which very few seem to think worth acknowledging. A journal is something like presentation copies of a book, a sort of spontaneous product of nature, sufficiently impersonal for anyone to thank Providence & pass by on the other side. I went over to see a reputed Kom, which I found had existed, but was long since all dug down & built over with a village. Meanwhile I was waiting

for permission.

Suddenly a man said "there they are"; I caught up the telescope, & saw Ali, and the man whom he had taken as witness, and - another figure, - the penitent Fatma, - following behind. Ali went prepared to pay up anything in reason, to be quit of her; but was talked over by an inspector of police, two chief shekhs, & the Qadi. The Inspector told him that a new regulation decrees that ladies who flee to their ancestral home may be brought back by a posse of police: I rather suspect it was a pious fiction of his to sooth Ali. Fatma protests

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(84)  
 that she only went in dire fear of her  
 brother giving her a drubbing, a fiction  
 also I rather think, as she went to  
 him herself. Perhaps as effective a  
 cure as any in the case is that (as Ali  
 reports) her reprobate family are near  
 starving & filthy dirty. A condition of  
 things that extracted a dollar from A., which  
 was really the bait that brought the  
 man over here. However it all came  
 about, matters seem re-settled; and above  
 all we have the strict injunction of the  
 police & shekhs to seize the brother or any  
 of the family that come round, bind them,  
 & send them under escort to the mudiriye.  
 How some English folks would bless the law  
 that allowed them to handcuff an importunate  
 & impecunious brother-in-law, & hand him  
 over to the High Sheriff in the County town.  
 I must confess that from the Muslim point  
 of view - I was a trifle sorry to see her turn  
 up again, since she can't be trusted. However  
 as she is the breadmaker, & my prospective  
 cook as well, I suppose prudence must rejoice.  
 At last I got a reply from de Morgan  
 saying that he had telegraphed to me (I never

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85  
 got anything) & also to the Inspector in the  
 Fayum, that I might work here, & has  
 written to Ghizeh so as to avoid any hitch.  
 When I want to go to Ahmas I am to  
 give him a week's notice & he will order  
 that also. So tomorrow I must go  
 recruiting for good fellows in the  
 villages, as I do not want to have too  
 many Arabs of our hamlet, for they  
 will not be tough like the fellah. I noted  
 a good strain of lads in the next village.  
 The real name of this hamlet is Er Righa  
 (إريخا) as I now hear it in other mouths.  
 Here it is.

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The real name of this hamlet is Er Righa  
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Here it is

[photograph missing]

(86)  
 The [ 𐤒 ] was muddled with the [ 𐤓 ] as I first heard it; though I could hardly believe in [ 𐤒 ] as I never heard [ 𐤒 ] assimilated before [ 𐤓 ]. (This for F.L.G.). As for our house, well - I have not the courage to portray<sup>sic</sup> it, it is so dolefully utilitarian, thus-wise ; & so it exemplifies what I always say, if there is an ugly house, live in it, & then you can't see it when you look out. At last I began work on the cemetery. One obvious well of a tomb we have been two days on, & are not yet at the bottom about 30 ft down. One went down 10 feet & there stopped with a flat clean bottom, no chamber & no burial. Another went 15 ft, & ended likewise; another about 4 ft, & equally blank. Another had a good chamber, with a dozen Ptolemaic burials put into it. A tomb in the hill side looked very promising. It had a passage & antechamber, all full of quite undisturbed original filling. But the chamber had been burgled from another tomb shaft at W, as we found after spending nearly

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B)

B) a day on cutting out the toughest (87)  
concreted gypsum stuff. So even when  
you have a 10<sup>th</sup> dyn. cemetery, it is  
not all prizes.

The most interesting matter is finding  
a new mode of burial. New that is to  
me, & to any record; though I find that  
the men employed to plunder by the  
Museum know all about it. The  
surface of the rock, under the top gravel,  
is seamed with wide cracks, about 9-10  
ins wide. One of these cracks has been  
scraped out, bones laid in it, & heaped  
over with bits of loose surface stone.  
The state of the bones is the strangest point.  
The skull was cut off with only 2 vertebrae  
& lay on its R side, face S, above the bones.  
The bones were all disjunct, & laid parallel  
in the rock crack, the heads of the humeri  
& the top of a shin being battered off with  
blows of a flint(?)  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch wide. The pelvis  
lay back up with four vertebrae attached,  
but the thighs removed. The ribs were  
nearly all broken at both ends, as if the  
body had been violently cut up. There  
were only 14 of the 24 vertebrae, & no lower jaw.

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(88)  
The skull is of a very low type, with low retreating forehead; but it has the upright face & very prominent nose characteristic of the Libyans.



Some of the vertebrae are battered to pieces; and it is evident that the bones were buried as loose & separate, after violently cutting up the body. It is in fact just an extreme case of that mutilation which we found among the new race.

I have for the last few weeks taken to half native dress, & only wish that I had done so long ago out here. I expect I shall find the return to trousers rather miserable after the comfort of the wide calico bags that I now wear, which are far better for walking & riding, & the only dress in which one can sit comfortably cross legged. Socks of course I never wear here; & a pair of scarlet leather

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(8.9)  
 slippers finish off my dress below. I stick  
 to the black jacket above, as being  
 much more convenient than flowing  
 robes.

As I came back from the first day's  
 work I met Miss Oldroyd & her  
 nephew strolling out. They had not  
 waited for the boat, as time  
 was getting short, but trained to  
 Beni Suef, & slept there; & then come  
 on here next day, so as to divide  
 the long amount of road. We had  
 not yet got our roof on, but luckily  
 the straw had come, so we could  
 put it up.

The third day we got an undisturbed tomb  
 of the Old Kingdom. A rectangular box-  
 coffin 4 cubits long, 1 cubit wide (82 x 20½ ins)  
 containing the body wrapped in cloth; &  
 with a wooden head rest, of which the  
 pillar was fluted. There were no beads  
 or ornaments; & this is closely like some  
 of the Medum burials. I brought away

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(90)  
 the whole coffin & skeleton, as I know they will like to have it at Philadelphia. In another tomb there remained the life size foot of a ka statue. Just below that we found a sloping passage, with wood still at the sides of it, down which the ~~sarcophagi~~ coffins had been slid. The whole was covered with intact filling, & for two days we worked with great zest in prospect of an untouched tomb. At last I got in & found a thick plain square coffin (like the previous one) much rotted & fallen in; it had been placed in a pit in the chamber floor, cut to fit it. There was not even a pot or a head rest in the whole place. I began to preserve the skeleton, which was a woman's, when I was astonished to find that the hands lay on the chest, the knee caps lower down, & the feet on the stomach, while there were no traces of such members in the right positions. The hands & feet had been cut off at the ends of the long bones, & the knee caps excised, before burial: otherwise all the bones were in articulation.

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C)

c) We then pulled the stones out of an inner doorway, & found another burial in <sup>(91)</sup> another chamber exactly similar, but a man's. There were no hands or wrists in position. The radii were in articulation to the humeri; but both ulnas were removed, & placed side by side with their humeri, one right way & one inverted. One foot was nearly all in the pelvis, only a few heel bones being left on the leg; of the other foot the toes were removed. The ribs were all loose, but about in position, while a large part of the spine had been cut out & inverted. One knee cap was in the pelvis, the other in position. Fragments of pottery found in the filling are precisely like the finest Medum pottery. These extensive mutilations, in elaborately closed tombs, prove (as I had always believed) that the other ~~the~~ displacement of bones at Medum were original. And they naturally link to the later Libyan mutilations of the New Race. The absence of all funeral objects with the mutilated bodies is also as at Medum.

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(92)

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Gower St W.C.

Dr Walker

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Miss S Harvey, Milford, Godalming,

A. L. Lewis, Esq, 54 Highbury Hill, N.

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19 Jan. 1897 - 25 Jan.

19 Jan. 1897 - 25 Jan.

(93)

More strange burials turned up. One is a link between the cut up burial in a crack & the Egyptian. In the cemetery, in a regular square pit tomb, 4 ft square, we came at  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ft down on three rough blocks lying across the bottom. On lifting them a trench was found which only contained leg bones, an arm bone, a finger, 2 vertebrae & a scrap of the face. So this shows that the crack burials are of the same general age as the pit burials in the cemetery.

One pit tomb contained a good stock of pottery, almost exactly the same as at Medum. The burial was in a wooden coffin, & looked at first as if it was a normal Egyptian body. A head rest lay in the coffin beyond the head, not touching the coffin at sides or end, & so proving that it was arranged as it stood down in the tomb; as any tilt in getting the coffin in would have slid it to one side. The body lay on the left side, & - like all others here - with head to N. The head was all right, with four vertebrae in place. Then came a plug of cloth for 4 or 5 inches long, in place of a neck. Then a long jumble of loose vertebrae in every position, & loose ribs. Two kneecaps & toes in chest. The hands were cut off, & laid upon the fore arms. The pelvis was cut to pieces

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94  
 which were roughly laid in order, but the thighs 3 inches out of articulation. The legs were separately wrapped round in thick masses of linen cloth, <sup>as also was the body</sup>. The kneecaps had been excised, but the splints were in place on the shins, shewing that the body had not been reduced to bare bones. At the end there was no trace of ankles or feet, though there were 3 inches of spare space in the coffin.

Another untouched burial in a coffin had only 5 vertebrae attached to the skull; two were above it, & the rest in 3 groups beside many loose ones, all disconnected. The hands & feet were however entire in place. Two flint flakes lay between the legs. These strangely mutilated burials are by no means of poor people. They are in good places in a finely selected cemetery, cut 20 or 30 ft deep, with a large chamber in the rock; & the body is put in massive wooden coffins, 2 ins thick, which must always have been costly. We had a south wind which broke up in a furious sand storm. One could hardly stand against the wind, which hid the country in

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a cloud of sand. It wiped off half of the straw covering of our roof, which had to be replaced by little Yusuf on the top. (95)

Another curious burial, not mutilated, but in a large coffin cut out of a single trunk of a tree, 84 x 23 x 20 deep. The old lady in it was very powerfully built; had broken her right thigh just over the knee when a child. So that it was 2 ins short, & walked therefore with a stout stick which lay beneath her; & was very demonstrative, wagging her head so much that the pivot vertebrae is greatly worn away. I am keeping all the skeletons of early date, & marking all the bones, so that we shall really get a firm knowledge of the details of the early Libyo-Egyptian. This solid coffin was in good state, & I have brought it away.

Miss Oldroyd & young Borwick left after a week's stay here, which they seem to have enjoyed, in spite of our having no cook. On consideration Mr Ali seemed so much under the wicked brother's influence that I could not be satisfied at leaving all our premises at his mercy if he came over again,

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96  
 as we are all out all day long on the hills.  
 So I sent up to Grenfell for a Behnesa  
 boy who would cook & guard here.  
 He sent one - whom I thought desirable -  
 but the urchin was utterly despondent,  
 declared he could never cook, & was so  
 fearfully mournful that I sent him back.  
 I have now got another who seems to  
 take to his work fairly well, & is very  
 attentive. We want someone, for I have  
 to sit watching the pot boiling for breakfast  
 while I mark skeletons, & divide my attention  
 between vertebrae & eggs, ribs & coffee.  
 Alas! the new boy suddenly turned  
 off, & the guard here came forward saying  
 that the boy would not stop here,  
 to which the boy assented. I told him that  
 he must stay for a day or two, & went  
 off to the work. Geere & Ali tried to  
 keep him by all persuasion possible,  
 but he bolted & was not seen again.  
 Such a repeated affair shows that there is  
 some one here making mischief. I have  
 been talking over all possible causes for  
 such a scheming, and Geere & I can only  
 imagine four possibilities, of which three  
 will be settled by the removal of Fatma from  
 this place. So next week's work begins by

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B)

B) setting Geere to work at the Roman (97)  
 town about 3 miles north of this, with Ali  
 to support him, & of course Fatma  
 packed off there as well. Then I have  
 asked Grenfell to send me down a stout  
 man to do guard (day) & cooking here, &  
 then I shall see whether I have thus  
 crushed this affair, whatever may be  
 the cause. The night guard here is in  
 the working of it; both boys were tractable  
 till he saw them; he acted spokesman  
 for getting the second boy away; & he has  
 told a futile tale of excuse for him since.  
 So we have our diplomatic amusements  
 here.


An interesting reburial was found, of about  
 XVIII dyn. in an old IV dyn. tomb, the first  
 tenant of which was pushed on one side.  
 The new comer was not mutilated in any  
 way, but lay at length. At his head two  
 large jars one on either side, & between  
 them two small painted Cypriote jars.  
 At his right side lay a cubit measure, of  
 13 inch foot found before at Kahun,  
not the Egyptian cubit, long or short. A four  
 stringed lute had been broken across, &  
 lay half on either side of the body. While

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(98) on each side was a throwstick. The neck of the lute was inlaid with  in ivory so I suppose the man's name was Aah-dad. All the wood was much rotted, so that it could not be lifted, except in short lengths of two or three inches. I first measured the cubit, & then packed all the pieces <sup>of wood</sup> in a tin box, filled with sand to keep them from drying & splitting in the outer air. At night I opened it & took them out, much reduced to bits under an inch long, & then dipped every scrap in melted wax. Now they are all safe, & can be mounted up on tablets in England complete.

Another important tomb stood on a prominent spur of the hill. It looked as if it must have been plundered, so obvious, & with a hollow on the top, & a large ring of rubbish around it. However some way down the filling was all quite clean, large stones & chips. At about 30 ft down we reached a walled up

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doorway. And in the corner of the  
 well by it were many beads, - a <sup>(99)</sup>  
 necklace had been dropped in before  
 filling the well. On taking out some  
 of the walling I got in & found the  
 burial quite untouched, of the regular  
 18<sup>th</sup> dyn. type, with half of a coarse  
 hand-made pot of that time on the floor.  
 The large wooden coffin had fallen  
 to pieces. On moving off the boards  
 I found the skeleton bare without  
 any trace of cloth or ornaments. A  
 fine wooden head rest lay under  
 one leg. The feet, hands, & kneecaps  
 had apparently all been cut off, & lay  
 in wrong places. Strange to say though  
 there were no ornaments in the coffin  
 the chips & dust under it were full  
 of beads. These glazed pottery beads  
 I cannot doubt are of the early 18<sup>th</sup>  
 dynasty, the only ones known so far back.  
 They are pendants  green & black,  
 long tube beads & short beads, green.  
 Such would make just the collar which is

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100  
 shown on the neck of Nefert's statue  
 from Medum, so far as I remember it.  
 So all this hangs together.

Then I have found the long façade of  
 a great tomb; plundered, but - I hope -  
 containing sculptures, as the fore part  
 has remains of figures & hieroglyphs.  
 The whole front must be over 50 feet  
 wide, if it is symmetrical.

All this however must wait awhile.  
 I have been trying to get the keys of the  
 two painted tombs here, to copy them.  
 But though I have permission, & the  
 inspector at Medinet is authorised  
 to let me in, he would not give the  
 keys to my messenger, & has not  
 come himself as he said he would.  
 So all I can do is to stop work in the  
 hills (2 miles off westward) & leave enough  
 tombs to go on with while I am copying  
 the sculptures; and until the keys come  
 take work hunting late cemeteries  
 along the desert edge northward.

For F. L. Griffith 75 Ridgemount Gardens, Gower St, W.C.,  
 Dr Walker, F. C. J. Spurrell, Bessingham, Norwich,  
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26 Jan. - 1 Feb. 1897

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The cemetery to the northward proved very interesting. Some Ptolemaic burials, or possibly earlier, in gross wooden coffins, with barbaric carved faces, & doubly done figures of the goddess Amentit on the bottom. One big well was found, which they have not done in the day, & must be finished. At last the keys of the tombs came over, and I hope to begin copying at once.

Here are the portraits of the oldest beads known, probably of IV<sup>th</sup> or V<sup>th</sup> dyn.

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[photograph missing]

[📷] [📷]



102  
I had a joke with laying down a couple of the flat pendants on two here figured, & asking one of our fellows to pick up the pottery one. He is not short sighted, but he put his head within six inches to see the pottery from the drawing, & then made a mistake between them once out of three trials.

I am delighted to say that I have got out of the Railway Administration the full compensation of £ 4-17-0 for Ali's donkey which was stolen by the officials last spring. They mis-sent it & would not return it. This is the most substantial remainder out of poor A's fortune of last year.

I saw Geere off today to stay at the next village, near the Roman town to work that. Ali goes with him, & the dubious Fatma follows her lord, so I hope we shall have fewer complications for a time.


On opening the tombs I find that they are of the beginning of the VI<sup>th</sup> dynasty, having the name of Teta, if indeed this is

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


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not the Teta of the III<sup>rd</sup> dynasty. The style is  
 most like the early V<sup>th</sup> dynasty. The tomb  
 which I began upon is of Shedus  (103)  
 "Shedus surnamed Teta". Shedus  
 is determined by a water skin apparently.  
 I find that Shedus will take 84 sheets of  
 paper (about  $18 \times 24$  ins each), & the other  
 tomb probably 100 or 120. I got through  
 13 sheets today; but I see that it will  
 take me all the time I can manage  
 to finish these before I go to Ahnas.  
 Of course much or most of the area is mere  
 blank, of damages & weathering, or I  
 could not do 13 sheets in a day. I greatly  
 wish one of my copying friends was  
 here, for this will stick me for the  
 rest of the season I fear.

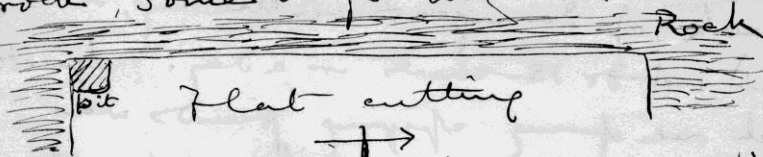
Our last new cook has arrived, a sober  
 man, who knows somewhat of cooking  
 & washing. So now we shall see  
 what happens. I have warned him  
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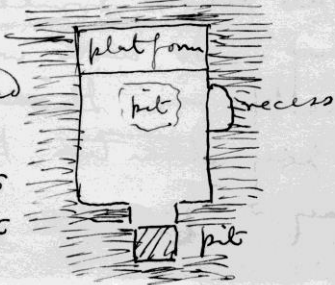
<sup>(104)</sup>  
 The next day I did 14 sheets of copying:  
 then 12 after that, and  
~~and~~ the day after that I was reckoning on  
 a long pull, & had done 10 in the morning  
 when suddenly everything went to the  
 right-about-face. It was thus-wise.

For the last few days a party of men  
 have been pegging away at a spur  
 of hill on which I noticed a large  
 quantity of chips thrown below, clearly  
 from some great rock cutting. All  
 that we could find was a scarp of  
 rock, some 60 ft long. Plan thus.



In the corner of this they found a pit  
 a few feet deep. This led into a  
 chamber about 10 x 16 ft, with a raised  
 platform along the back, & a recess  
 in the side.

A long slope of sand  
 led down from the  
 doorway & almost  
 covered a large pit  
 in the floor.



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 [ R ] (pit - flat cutting - Rock)

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 platform along the back, & a recess  
 in the side [ R ] (platform / pit - recess / pit)  
 A long slope of sand  
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B)

B) Of that I know nothing as yet, for all my attention was taken by such a sight as I never saw before. Five ka statues of coloured limestone lay strewn in the room. Two standing statues lay on the platform, headless, & I anxiously looked for the heads. One was on the platform, the other in the back of the recess, & both absolutely perfect, without a chip or scratch on the faces!!! Then a seated figure lay on the others, & I picked up its head in the recess. Then another seated figure lay on the floor, I heaved it upright, & its head was still on.

It was most curious to see how every figure was mutilated, & yet the most important heads were without a bruise, & about a dozen heads & pieces were placed in the recess.

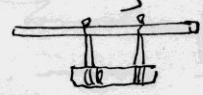
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(106)  
 Stock of calico, two massive ox  
 yokes, &c. to pack & move the things.  
 <beside confiscating a quantity of the workmen's clothes.  
 We wrapped & slung the statues  
 from the poles,  four men  
 carrying them each.  
 The inventory so far is thus: -  
 <(amending it by later clearance)>  
 1 Statue 50 inches high or 3/4 life size,  
 front foot gone, but head perfect.  
 2 Statue 50 high, feet gone, head perfect.  
 3 Seated figure on square block, 3/4 life size,  
 head on, but one eye struck away.  
 4 Seated figure on square block, 1/2 life  
 size. Head perfect, except end of nose.  
 5 Cross legged figure, holding scroll,  
 1/2 life size. Head lost, & part of scroll.  
 6 Group of two figures, man & wife, 2ft  
 high; in 9 pieces, & man's head & shoulder  
 not found yet.  
 7 ~~Head, perhaps of 6,~~ <sup>left arm, & head(?) of a cross-legged figure, 2/3 life size</sup> face knocked about.  
 8 Pair of statues of man & wife, made




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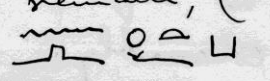
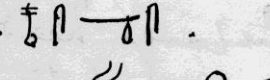

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




separate, & inserted in one base. Only <sup>107</sup>  
 bases & lower legs <sup>of woman;</sup> & man's ~~body yet~~ <sup>figure complete.</sup>  
 found. About 1/4 life size  
 9, figure of a boy from a group, ~~head~~  
 gone, 10 ins high ~~without head~~  
 10, middle of figure of a boy, about 1/4  
 life size.  
 The whole of the figures, so far as  
 inscriptions remain, (none on Nos 1 & 2)  
 are of  Nenkhetefka  
 & his wife  Nefersemis  
 He was  Prince of the  
~~town of the southern town of the oryx.~~  
 There are two pieces of inscribed bases,  
 the belongings of which I do not know.  
 I fully hope to find the rest of the  
 broken figures in the sand heap in  
 the chamber. So far I have only  
 taken out what was visible. And  
 we could not yet get the seated figure 3.  
 soon that night, it took so long  
 packing the statues, & going to & fro,

separate, & inserted in one base. Only  
 bases & lower legs <of woman;> & man's body yet <figure complete>.  
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9, figure of a boy from a group, head &  
 arm gone, 10 ins high without head

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 packing the statues, & going to & fro,

(108)

about 2½ miles to the house.

But as they now stand I see that they are worth a good deal more than all that my coming out will cost the Fund this year. We shall not get all out of the country; but as they have plenty of such figures at Ghizeh, while we do have not one equal to these in England, I hope I may get off tolerably.

The work of the large heads is very good; I should say better than Ra-hotep, & only exceeded by the Paris scribe. The eyes are not inlaid with crystal; but I think these stand as high, or higher, than any other limestone figure without inlay. The heads & bodies are beautifully fresh & clean, with the paint unspilled.

So I have scored this year after all, though things did look bad; & I have another month to improve the record yet.

about 2½ miles to the house.

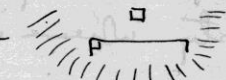
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So I have scored this year after all, though things did look bad; & I have another month to improve the record yet.

C)


C) The next day they cleared over all the sand in the chamber, & got some <sup>109</sup> more pieces of figures; but only chips of the bases of the large statues, which seem as if they had been broken up. Another cross-legged figure, headless, 9 ins high, was found. Possibly we may get the pieces still missing by hunting all the sand about the mouth of the pit.

But though we cannot quite complete all the figures, there is another chance before us. I noticed that a well we were clearing was just behind the middle of this rock scarp, on the crest of the hill 

This is probably Nenkhetefka's tomb well: it is large & deep; & the filling of it is clean blocks & chips of fresh stone, so it has never been opened yet. Luckily one man of the four who were on it did not turn up today. So I immediately clapped in a trusty old hand, Mahmud,

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Fayumi, to do the deep digging,  
 I need the chamber. This quite  
 safe not to be disturbed or raided  
 by him. The great find of statues  
 was made by my best Fayumi boy,  
 to whom I was very glad to give a  
 good lump of bakhshish, as he is  
 quite trustworthy & exceedingly careful.  
 The really responsible man at the  
 bottom of a tomb I give about  $\frac{2}{3}$  of  
 the bakhshish to, & only  $\frac{1}{3}$  among  
 the top hands, who could hardly  
 get hold of things by any chance. The  
 principle being that one pays for  
 honesty where it is needful to have it.

An interesting pit tomb was opened  
 today. At first sight I thought nothing  
 of it, it had been opened before, & some  
 of the usual Roman mummies were  
 lying in it. But I saw a massive  
 wooden coffin, in & on which the later  
 bodies were placed. So I had them all  
 cleared away, & then a few bones of the

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first man were found; a good, perfect, headrest of old kingdom form; a walking stick; & a scribe's paint palette, for red & black ink. There cannot be a doubt that these all belong to the IV-V dyn burial; and so this is the only palette known of that age, & it is made quite differently from any later ones.

Perhaps my friends hardly understand what sort of work this is every day. I spend as much time as I can copying the sculptures, but every hour or two a boy comes to say that a well is opened. I then go over to one of the half dozen groups of men who are tomb digging. There I find a pit open, anything between 10 & 40 ft deep. I see if there is enough cleared for me to get into the chamber: hang the rope ladder down; strip, for it is far too hot to wear anything but light Arab drawers down in the deep holes; & then swing down the rope ladder. At the

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112  
 bottom light a candle, & begin to  
 crawl full length into the hole.  
 Inside I find a small chamber, only  
 3 or 4 ft high, in which I spend  
 half an hour or an hour, clearing  
 sand away, planning out the skeleton  
 to see if it is complete or mutilated,  
 noting the position of everything, sending  
 baskets full of bones & woodwork  
 up to the top & streaming all the  
 time with the exertion & cramped  
 position in the heat. When all is  
 done I come up, dress, & go back to  
 my copying, where I get a few more  
 sheets done before the next well is  
 ready. Some of course are shorter,  
 but others - such as the great find of  
 statues - take several hours.  
 It is all well worth while. For no  
 one has ever yet recorded fully any  
 cemetery of the pyramid age; and all  
 that I am doing is the only information  
 that we possess about such burials.  
 All that has been hitherto done has  
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D)

113  
 D) I find that I must make yet another experiment in the cook line. I totally distrusted this man as soon as I saw him; but hoped, against all experience, that my prepossession was wrong. First my jam had a flavour of sardines, shewing in what order his finger had sampled the tins. Next a few bread crumbs, with which I adorned the jam in the next tin, have disappeared, along with a good lump of jam. And yesterday morning he was drunk with hashish, & began spooning ground coffee into a cup of water far from boiling, & afterwards put out a lot of tea, quite beside himself.

I was wondering what to do, when there turned up a couple of old Fayum hands of mine, two of the best from the work 5 to 8 years ago. One of them is not over strong, & I think I shall make him a cook. Tomorrow morning I clear out the present fool.

The great well, which I think to be that of Nenkhetefka, proves to have been opened & reused in the early XVIII<sup>th</sup> dyn.

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(114)  
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the well; but we are not yet at  
the end of it by a good deal.

A very interesting lot was turned up  
in a tomb well, just as we stopped  
for the night. A pan of the IV-V<sup>th</sup> dyn  
shows the age, & with it were four  
mallets of heavy wood, well worn;  
& eight wooden chisels, much  
knocked over, shewing what they used  
for cutting pits in the hard gravel  
here. There is some rope, & I hope  
yet other things, in the sand waiting  
to be cleared out.

I have nearly finished the copying  
of the tomb of Shedu, one day more  
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115  
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 at Roman town & cemetery  
 two or three miles N. of this.  
 They will probably return here  
 in about a week more. One  
 bit of Greek papyrus of V-VI<sup>th</sup> cent  
 is all worth naming that they have  
 found.

Grenfell is having grand times  
 with Greek papyri, both Biblical &  
 literary. So there will be plenty  
 of glory for the Fund this year  
 between papyri & ka statues.  
 Quibell has got one important  
 old kingdom tomb at El Kab, & also  
 others.

Please forward to  
 F. L. Griffith 75 Ridgmount Gardens, Gower St, WC  
 D<sup>r</sup> Walker (thanks for letter)  
 F. C. J. Spurrell, Bessingham, Norwich,  
 (wanted here for skeletons, &c, ad inf.)  
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