

Oct 30th 1929.

Arabah el Madfunah.

36

Dear Mother.

I had just sealed & stamped your letter yesterday when Sa<r>dic came in with the mail & there was your letter & newspaper for me. I am sorry to hear M^{rs} Childs lost her father so soon after his move to Watford, I am enclosing a little note with this, will you give it to her please.

I am glad to have the photos to show the others here they were very interested in the Pip & Nannie loved our mulberry tree, there are lots in Syria where she comes from. M^r Beazley always steals the crossword puzzle out of my Observer & retires to his room with it, then at intervals we hear shouts, "I say what can so & so be?" he most eagerly awaits the arrival of the next paper with the solution.

When we returned from our morning's work in the temple our patient with the gash in his leg was waiting. he is progressing most favourably, we sent him off with a dry boracic dressing, he takes the keenest interest in all the proceedings.

In the Temple we have a little tent fixed up with a sand closet & wash bowl, of course all the

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36/2^a

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Oct 31st We went to the Temple as usual in the morning rested all the afternoon. it is so hot that one perspires all over just lying on ones bed. When it got dusk we set off to the temple again. Capt G got the engine working & the wires connected up & we did a couple of hours tracing by electric light, we have a projector which throws the image from the negative onto a drawing board. we trace the outline & so get the whole picture correctly spaced out very quickly.

Abdullah brought our supper down to the temple & we sat among the mighty columns & eat omeletes bread & butter & chocolate mould. our white robed servants waiting on us like attendant priests. it was a weird scene. We saw a big spider scuttling out of the light so we asked Sandic what it was called in Arabic. he told us it was the "dog of the ceiling" - nice name dont you think?

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36/3 a

We have not yet heard when the Zar ceremony is to be. we hope they have not forgotten to ask us.

I had another letter from you today. it is jolly getting so many letters, all the others here ~~are~~ have no home ties, & are surprised at my correspondence. They just hear occasionally from friends

I am enclosing the prints that Capt C made of our camel ride. I think you will be able to recognize me on the tallest camel, Miss C is on the other, & Nannie was heaved up on a donkey so as to be in the picture, you can see Sardic holding ~~her~~ on. the others are some of our servants. camel men. etc. it was a great occasion.

Nov 1. Today being mosque day Miss C gave all the men an hour off to go to the service, when they returned they said "Blessings on you Oh Lady for permitting us to go to pray" Imagine what the British workman would say if he were told to go & say ~~these~~ ^{his} prayers.

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36/4

Nov 3rd Yesterday Miss C & I visited Sardic's house in the village. his buffalo has presented him with a calf so of course we had to go to see this new arrival. it is just 3 days old, very black & glossy & generally adorable, they live in the inner courtyard of the house. I wanted to take a photo, but there was rather a lot of shadow. so Sardic said he ^{would} take them outside into the sunshine, to reach the outside they had to pass through one small room & the front door. Ma Buffalo thought we were playing a trick to deprive her of her infant, & promptly stuck in the front door. the entire Sardic family reinforced by his cousins & his sisters & his aunts all came & pushed & pulled till finally Mrs B & Child were got outside. then I took the picture, after that I had to take a picture of all the little boys & girls. squeals of delight from the crowd. hope to send you prints soon.

After bidding a polite farewell to Mrs Sardic & relations friends & offspring we were escorted by Sardic & his small son to see the weaver at work.

I wish Father or Miss Collins could have been with me

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36/5

I have never seen a more ramshackle affair, also. I have never seen finer results, their work is really wonderful. I have all ready given two orders, one for a table runner & one for a curtain, but before the weaver is employed much has to be done. I have to go to the market examine all the sheep, choose one black sheep, one red sheep & one white sheep. Then the owners of these fortunate animals wash the fleese before it is cut then shear it & weigh it, & you pay according to weight. then armed with your three fleeses you employ the most skilled spinners from numerous applicants; These, chiefly tiny girls spin on whorls while tending the flocks. when all your wool is returned, & you have paid the spinners, you take your yarn to the weaver & he weaves it for you for a certain price. This is the only way this special cloth can be got. they do not understand selling by the yard or metre, consequently it has not got spoilt by tourist trade which is ruining so many of the native crafts. But to continue my description, I was unable to take a photo as the loom was in a dark corner of a tiny

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36/6

courtyard, so I have made a memory sketch. all the woodwork was just sticks as they are cut from the tree & all tied together with string. the reed only showed signs of more scientific constructions. The warp is about 1 ft off the earth & is tied to a post. a hole is dug to admit the pedals, & the weaver sits on a plank across the hole. I forgot to mention that one has to give the weaver a certain amount of ~~flower~~ flour with the spun wool. this he makes into a thin paste & dips the warp into it. the flour stiffens the wool, prevents it breaking, makes it possible to beat it up tighter, & keep the selvedge more even. & when the cloth is taken off it is washed & comes out very soft & nice.

The skein winder & warping mill are of equal simple construction & look as if they were made out of odd packing cases.

I would very much like to have any photos of the Eastcote weavery that Miss Colling can spare. also will Father collect for me samples of carded wool in bright colours, a little bit of natural fleese^{sic} uncarded, also any odd length of spun wool & bits

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I am going to try to send Miss Collins a hank of white spun wool some time.

Dont^{sic} send more samples than will come letter post if the supply is very generous make it into 2 or 3 envelopes full# parcel post here is the very devil - You will be glad to hear all our patients are progressing favourably.

I think it is time for me to fold up this letter. I am glad to hear you are sending my news on to Uncle Jim & Kate.

Love to you both
Myrtle.

Tell Pat I find the desert much more attractive than the gay life in Cairo. She need not be alarmed.

PS. I have just heard that the original name of the Elephant & Castle was 'L'Enfanta^{sic} {Infanta} di Castille.'

36/7

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