

Arabah el Madfunah
Nov. 9th [1931]

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Nov. 9th, 1435

Dear Mother.

Our first day's journey was not a very long one. we stopped for lunch with the wife of one of the cotton ginning factories at Beni Suef about 80 miles out of Cairo & they very kindly insisted on us spending the night there, after lunch Mr Wakeum took us over the factory & we saw how the raw cotton is prepared for export. The camels bring the sacks containing the cotton pods just as they are picked in the fields & these are unloaded in a yard, as large as the Masonic playing field in front of Avalon. & piled to 8 or 10 feet high, with alley ways between. The sacks are then taken into the factory & emptied into enormous trays against the wall on either side; in front of the trays are machines that separate the cotton from the pod & seed. The cotton is pressed out in great masses & collected by natives in trucks running on rails down the centre. These trucks are emptied in another barn like

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room & the snowy masses of white cotton spread all over the floor. Then the arab foreman turns on a fine spray ^{of water} & sprinkles it all over & at a word from him the rest of the natives leap among it with yells of joy & toss it about in a wild sort of dance. It is then sprinkled again, collected into the pressing machine which makes it into huge bales & it is ready to go to the spinning factories. Mr Wakeham explained that the machines that extract the pods & seeds leave the raw cotton too dry & it has to be damped before pressing, otherwise it would be too brittle to spin.

The extracted seeds are all baked to a certain heat to kill insects & then put in sacks ready for the next sowing. It was all very interesting & we were glad of the opportunity to see the actual ginning being done. (I always thought a ginning factory was a sort of distillery -)

The next day was a very long drive & we arrived at Assouit after dark, we

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Stayed the night with our friends the Fosters,
(he is inspector of the railway)

It is very little pleasure motoring in Egypt
one is covered with dust & there are so many
animals on the road that it is a constant
anxiety & the people will not move out of the
way until the car is almost on them, they
take no notice what ever of hooting, the roads
also need close watching, as they are only mud
embankments built up to be above the flood
level & are always crumbling at the sides
& full of ruts & holes far worse than the water-
-way Lady Godiva bumped into, in fact the
jolts were so constant that the luggage grid
carrying our two suit cases was broken & we
had to strap our luggage on the side, on top
of the season's supply of oil & grease etc that
was packed on the running board. but in-
spite of all these troubles we managed to get
a lot of enjoyment out of the journey.
The next night we put up with the Oultons.

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he is the sub-consular agent for this district & we are more or less in his charge. we always enjoy our visit there, they are both delightful people. The following night we reached camp where a terrific welcome awaited us our people fairly tumbling over each other to greet us.

The next day was devoted to unpacking & getting straight & today we started work in the Temple.

Will you look inside the top ^{night} ~~left~~ hand drawer in my chest of drawers, I think there is a hemmed strip of my pale pink silk frock, will you cut it in half & send me half at a time, I have got something on the hem of the dress that has rotted the silk & if I had a bit of the silk I could mend it. there is no hurry for it.

Lots of love to you both.

your affectionate
daughter
Myrtle

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