

Sohag.
April 9th 1934

Dear Mother

Just returned from my long trek^{sic},
I have had a perfectly wonderful time &
feel very fit in spite of being absolutely
tired out.

The first day after I arrived I went over
to Akhmim, where I saw the weavers & the
looms & Sheikh Sarbit met me there
with his friend Sheikh Hussein, & we all
took coffee together & discussed the weaving.
then we mounted & proceeded to Su<w>amah {= el-Sawamah Sharq}
which is Sheikh Sarbit's village. At his
house, Sardic & the Ombashi stayed below
in the mens^{sic} apartments & I went up into
the hareem, & was received by the wife
& his mother & other ladies of the family.
I was offered refreshment & invited to remove
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then Sheikh Sarbit proceeded to attire

himself in his house costume, & as
 the wardrobe, being considered a
 handsome piece of furniture was in the
 receiving room I was able to watch
 operations. He first removed his outer
 guftan of a light weight blue cloth.
 under this he had a galabia of shantung,
 coloured native silk, then off came his
 shoes & socks & a small boy brought him
 his heelless slippers. Then he disappeared
 & I gathered from the sounds that he was
 having a good wash. Then he reappeared
 & put on a clean cotton guftan over his
 silk under robe. In the meantime one
 of the women had brought me a basin
 & ewer & poured water for me to perform
 my ablutions, Then after a little conversation
 they brought lunch, & every one departed
 leaving me to eat in solitary state with
 the Sheikh's wife to wait on me & keep

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the flies off. the meal was brought in on a large metal tray, & it consisted of a dish of gravy with chicken's liver in it, a very young chicken about the size of a pigeon stuffed with savory rice & beautifully roasted, a dish of risolles with a very strange & powerful flavour, bread, feast cake, dates & oranges. I attacked the chicken & eat a good half of it with bread which I dipped in the gravy in correct Arab fashion, I also tasted the other dishes & finished up with an orange.

Sheikh Sarbit was evidently acting as host in the mens apartments below but came up several times during lunch to make sure I had every thing I needed & was delighted that I had tasted every thing & had praised the cooking & serving & did not press me to eat more than I wanted

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After lunch, several other members of the family came to greet me & I enquired about the possibility of making a long track along the desert, & got quite a lot of local information to assist me in my plans. I had some of the magic transfers in my bag & I showed them how they worked. They were delighted with them. Then the Sheikh's wife showed me all her dresses & ornaments & took a great interest in all I was wearing. By then it was time to depart, so I made my farewells, as I wanted to climb up the cliffs on the way back & examine some of the Tombs there. Sheikh Sarbit & his uncle (who had given me most of the local information) came with me. We had about an hour's ride, & then left our mounts & proceeded on foot. It was a great scramble & I was absolutely blown

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in spite of frequent rests on the way up.
(it was rougher than the last lap up
Snowdon) I had a look at the tombs
& realized there was more to see than
I had time for that day, & decided to
make another expedition there.

then we scrambled down, it was funny
to see Sheikh Sarbit shed his dignity
& go bounding down like a small boy
released from school. at the foot of
the cliff we said good-bye & Sardic &
The Ombashi & I continued to Akhmim.
I found when we arrived there that the
last launch that conveys animals
across the Nile had left, so I went
to the military outpost there & asked
permission for my camel & Sindgab
to spend the night with the camel
patrol, this was readily granted, &

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with the officer in charge & accepting
a bunch of flowers, I chartered a
special launch & returned just in
time to have a hasty bath & change
for dinner.

Further adventures I must have
for a more favourable time for writing
as Betty wants me to help her cut out
some shirts for Derick, & Derick wants
me to play ping-pong with him - & so on.
I return to Camp to-morrow so I doubt
if I shall be able to add anything
more to this letter.

Lots of love to you both
& to Pat.

Your affectionate
daughter
Myrtle

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