

Dec 26<sup>th</sup> 1927. Thebes Hotel. Luxor. 11. 1

Dear Mother & Father.

I had such a lovely Xmas day, on the breakfast table there was a greeting card from Mr & Mrs Meade, & the Bey gave me a box of chocolates I spent the morning writing. I have fixed to go to Cairo Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> & applied to Mr Jackson of Cooks to get me a berth on the N.Y.K Japan Mail boat leaving Port Said Jan 10. & reaching London in 13 days, via Naples & Gibraltar. I hear these boats are very good. stewards etc English & the crew Japs. 2<sup>nd</sup> class fare £22. I hope I can get a berth. I should like to see Naples & this is the only all sea way line that goes there.

The afternoon I spent in Luxor Temple & after dinner & went to the Winter Palace to a dance with an English man from this hotel. The Winter Palace is the Ritz of Luxor. I had a gorgeous time only missed one dance. (Tell Pat there were several tangos.) I am going to night again to a fancy dress dance. I got the Bey to take me to a drapers shop & help me buy some mosquito netting with which I have made a huge ruffle & pom-poms, so as to transform my black dress into a black & white Pierette. It is the best I can do at a moments notice. I can tie my striped silk handkerchief over my head.

A few days ago I went for a climb up the cliffs here with the aforementioned English man. He is a gay bachelor of 65. a real sport & very keen on mountaineering. He reminds me of Uncle J. It was a wonderful experience & I got some good photo's. we reached the highest ridge (1600 feet from the desert level) where we had lunch. On our way down we found a mummy's head

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which we carefully buried with its face to the west. <sup>put</sup> a suitable inscription on a stone over the grave.

The Bey still follows me when ever he can. & mopes when he cant. Today I accepted an invitation to go for a sail on the Nile with him. I had'nt a suitable excuse, & really the invitation was rather tempting. he questioned me on English customs - specially those referring to marriage. & cooly announced his intention of divorcing his wife & coming to England to marry an English girl. it was very nearly a proposal. & on the Nile too. I am invited to go to Assuan with him!! needless to say I have renounced all hope of going there now. I should not have a moments peace -

I shall probably pay a farewell visit to the desert & Gezawy & the horses before I come down to Cairo. Gezawy has written me several letters in his quaint English. he is the nicest Egyptian I have met, with a real philosophy of his own & so anxious to exchange ideas about things. I have been able to give him a few new points of view. he told me my personality was like a magnet. (was'nt it a pretty compliment.) the other Egyptians I have met here are rather uninteresting. Fancy. I am the only woman in the hotel except Mrs Meade. & there were 8 men to dinner Xmas day. I did have a time. they gave us soup. fish - vegetable, Turkey, sausages. cauliflower, Xmas pudding, brandy-cream-sauce mince pies. & fruit & coffee. it was a feed.

Dec 27. The Carnival at the Winter Palace was a gorgeous affair. I have never been in such a cosmopolitan crowd before. there were people of every nationality East & West. some of the costumes were superb, many genuine, Howard Carter was there judging costumes for prizes.

Thanks for enclosing Uncle J's letter. I am sorry it could not be arranged for him to come out, but I was afraid there would be no time. my letters have to follow after me as it takes so long for letters to get to you, & I only know my new address a few days ahead

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Cecil House Cairo. Jan 3. ~~Thebes II~~ 11/2

The first part of this letter got miss laid, so you will probably receive the one I wrote at Qau-el-Kebir before this, unless el Gerzawy forgets to post it. I arrived here yesterday after having the most wonderful experience of my life - it was more like an exciting drama than real life. I will try to describe it, but I am afraid any description would give a poor idea of the real thing.

I think I told you Gerzawy offered me the hospitality of the police outpost for as long as I liked to stay.

I was a little dubious about accepting, so I wrote to the missionary at Assiout & he replied that it was quite true that the police outposts did entertain any <sup>European</sup> travellers who were visiting the villages & English ladies invariably received the utmost courtesy - although of course such visits were rare. so I thought I should always regret missing such an adventure - so I accepted for 2 1/2 days on my way from Luxor to Cairo.

It sounds a pretty desperate adventure when you realize that I was the only European woman for miles. In a very law less outpost. the guest of the only English speaking Egyptian in the whole village - but el Gerzawy is, in the full sense of the idiom "an officer & a gentleman" & I was as safe in his house as I am at home. As he was unable to be at Tema himself to meet me, he sent his servant & an armed guard. I was driven in an arabia to the river. we crossed the Nile & continued our journey on donkeys. Gerzawy was waiting to receive me at his house. he showed me where I was to sleep & all the accomodation, which was of a very primitive nature. the house was just a square divided like this, a plan

Cecil House Cairo.

Jan 3. [1928] ~~Thebes II~~

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[\*Almost certainly Broome letter 12.]

is the simplest way of explaining it.



The walls outside were mud brick, white washed inside. the roof was constructed of wooden cross beams, palm branches laid over them & plastered together to form a ceiling & loose straw laid over the outside to keep it cool. all flat of course. no need for sloping roofs where there is no rain. This is the principal house of the village, & is used by the officer in charge who pays rent to the Omdah (chief man). After I had tidied myself, the servant pouring water for me to wash. we had lunch: stuffed pigeons & native bread. (eaten with our fingers of course) After lunch

came the afternoon siesta. Gerzawy changed his uniform for a flowing galabia & heelless slippers of course we had to wash again after eating. & as I had had such a long dusty ride, Gerzawy advised me to remove my shoes & stockings, & he washed my feet for me himself while the servant poured the water. for about an hour & a half we rested on divans, & then we received company. all the head men of the village came to be presented to me, & as a special favour were allowed to sit on chairs in el Gerzawy's presence - (usually they all stand unless he specially invites them to sit with him) of course Gerzawy had to translate all the conversation, (except a few phrases) I showed them English money & all the odds & ends I had with me - also sketches & photos. & then as they seemed so pleased & interested, I asked them if they believed

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[ ₹ ]

Walled Garden E C

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I could cut a hole in a postcard big enough <sup>1/3</sup> for El Gerzawy to slip through. they said it was impossible. no one could do that. so I did it with my little pocket scissors right in front of them. & they clapped their hands with delight like children & said it was magic when they saw the officer slip through the long chain that I had made by cutting the card in a special way, after that of course I had to do all my paper stunts, rocking horses. boxes. boats etc. & never have I had such an enthusiastic audience. it was funny to see a dignified old Arab going into raptures over a paper toy. they hoped I would live for a thousand years & spend them all in Qau el Kebir & they would serve me in any way I liked. Gerzawy said they really meant it. & that any time I went to Qau, even in his absence the head men would treat me as if I were a chieftainess & I could stay as long as I liked. The Omdah of Qau told Gerzawy that he knew I was of high birth & great importance in my own country. You can understand how I felt as if I was living a part of one of Rider Haggards novels. the lamp lit interior & the circle of turbaned Arabs sitting in a circle round me.

Supper was brought in. only Gerzawy, a captain from Badary & the Omdah <sup>myself</sup> partook of it. The others withdrew to a respectful distance as their rank did not permit them to eat with the chief officer.

When our visitors had departed. I was allowed to retire. very comfortable divan sort of bed. quilted covers & mosquito net.

The next day when Gerzawy had attended to his official business we went for a ride.

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That evening I received a deputation begging me not to depart the next day. two of them asked me to take them back to England, one offered to sell his land for £300 so that he could accompany me. & one of them offered me his little daughter to be my servant. can you really believe it really happens now-a-days? I have never been so popular in my life. & Now. To crown it all Gerzawy has asked me to marry him. It has been frightfully difficult to

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 I got my baggage from the luggage room & got a taxi  
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 This morning I went to the Museum & saw the  
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