

Arabah el Madfuna.
March 10th 1936.

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Dear Mother.

We were up bright & early after our first night by the sea & we left Sandic to prepare breakfast while we went for a bathe, when we returned he had an amusing incident to tell us. A raven had seized Amices sponge bag complete with contents & was flying off with it dangling from his beak, Sandic shouted & threw stones at him & scared him so that he dropped it, I do wish we had seen him I wonder if he would have eaten the soap & tooth paste & made a nest with the sponge. however ^{Amice} she was very glad it was retrieved. After breakfast we continued in a northerly direction along the coast, we had a fine view of the mountain ranges on our left hand. & the Red Sea on the right. In a little while we reached Port Safaga this is the port for the phosphatic mines & it comprised a few bungalows sheds & ramshackle native dwellings, the people

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 Empire very attractive, The little settlement
 soon faded away behind us & our next thought
 was to find a nice place for lunch. The track
 we were following had swung inland, so we
 left it & made seawards. I found a lovely
 place among sand dunes where we eat hard
 boiled eggs & oranges. Then we went down
 on to the shore. a wide expanse of firm ripple
 marked sand & we were astonished to find
 the place swarming with crabs. there were
 thousands of them, they were a lovely pale
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in battallions, we ran as hard as we could to cut them off. we did have fun we had never seen so many crabs before. I managed to capture one & took it back to Sardic who would not venture over a shallow pool that separated the dunes from the shore. he has a deep mistrust of salt water. you should have heard his exclamation of horror when I offered the crab the brim of my hat & it seized it in its claw & hung on to it. We were very reluctant to leave that shore, but we had some way to go as we wanted to reach Hurghada by the evening. Hurghada belongs to the Shell Company they have a number of oil wells there. When we were about five miles away we met another motor car & of course stopped to pass the time of day. the other car contained the General Manager of the Shell Company, he said he was looking out for us as Port Safage had sent a wireless message to say a small car driven by two ladies had passed through during the fore noon

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He was going to Safaga. He gave us information
 about the road & offered us the use of the
 rest house at Hurghada. We reached the
 settlement about tea time, we found our
 way to the marmur's house & he sent a
 soldier along with us to admitt^{sic} us to the
 rest house, & invited us to have tea with
 him when we had had a wash & tidy up.
 We had had a very windy dusty drive & were
 glad of the opportunity to change & tidy up
 generally. Tea was presided over by the marmur's
 wife & daughter & was a long ceremonial^{sic} affair,
 conversation was in Arabic. We escaped as
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 It was like the other settlements we had
 passed through only larger & the view of the
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 the oil wells in the foreground. Sardic was
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and the bathing had made us very sleepy. The next morning we went along to the Company's bathing pool which was in deep water & was surrounded with wire netting to keep sharks out. we had a glorious swim there, we had it entirely to ourselves. We had left Joey at the Shell Company's work shop to have sundry nuts & bolts tightened up & a puncture mended we also gathered a little local information. we heard that there was a marine research station five miles along the route where an old Professor was living who was studying corals & who would be delighted to show his collection to any visitors who were interested. so we decided to go along & see him that very afternoon. We had our lunch on the shore & then went on to the marine research station. this was right down on the sea shore. we were made very welcome by Dr Crossland & his wife the old professor imagined we had crossed the Arabian desert for the sole purpose of

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seeing his collection of corals. we were shown every thing & were simply thrilled by the varieties of corals etc in his little museum there. then he told one of his men to row us out over the coral reef so that we could see the corals growing. we went out in the boat & were given two large tins painted black inside & with glass bottoms. we held these on the surface of the water & through them we could see quite clearly all the corals we were passing over, it was like a magic garden. they were the most lovely colours. mauve, yellow, blue pale pink & brown & among them swam strange fish. we were enthralled & quite sorry when we had to go back to tea.

D^r Crossland told us that if we could stay till the next morning we could go out with the native divers & they would bring up any bit of coral we liked to select. we then & then determined to camp on the sea shore but they would not hear of it. M^{rs} Crossland

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I must tell you of further adventures in my next letter. This has been a very busy week getting Amice off. she left Sunday night after the usual harooch[?].

Ever so many thanks for all my birthday letters that I found awaiting me on my return

Lots of love to you & Father

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