

Arabah el Madfunah.
March 28th 1937.

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Dear Mother.

When I opened my writing block I found I had not torn off the final page of my last letter, you must have wondered why it ended so abruptly. I am enclosing it with this. Now to continue our holiday adventures. When we woke up the morning following our strenuous day we expected to be very stiff but praise to Allah we did not feel a bit the worse, we had a swim in the sea before dressing, & after breakfast we went in to Hurgarda to fill up with petrol ready for our return journey, Hanafey had made us promise that we would not go off the regular track without telling him exactly what our plans were & how long we expected to take on the return journey, so that he would know when to come to look for us if we did not turn up at the Frontier Outpost within the stipulated time. So, after getting our petrol & some provisions from the stores we went along to make a polite call. He has such a jolly bungalow right on the sea shore, & instead of being furnished with the awful ornate French furniture that most Egyptians love it had bedouin^{sic} rugs & low divans with saddle bag cushions & simple wooden lounge chairs & a few pieces of arab

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embroidery hanging on the walls, he lives there all alone as he is unmarried, he says he could not support a wife & live the life he likes as well - so prefers his liberty. we discussed our plans for our return journey & he gave us instructions & sketch plans of how to reach the places we wanted to see on our way back, we were talked of the possibility of our returning to Cairo at the end of the season via the Red Sea & Suez Road. The way from Hurgada to Suez is one of the desert stretches that single cars are not allowed to go on without special permission, but Hanefey said he would give us a permit as he considers we are experienced in desert travel, he was amazed when he saw the provisions we had made for any emergency & I thought he would never stop laughing when he saw our emergency water ration in hot water bottles. (rubber) He produced a collection of minerals & rocks & shells & let us take what we liked from them, I am afraid our polite call extended into a stay of over an hour & we had to rush back to the Crosslands in time for lunch. We left the Marine Research station about 3:30, the Crosslands are very anxious that we shall visit them again they say it is not

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any hotter than in May than it is in Cairo as there is always a good breeze on the shore. so we are seriously thinking of going that way.

We had planned to reach the foot hills a little before sun set, so as to make a sketch at sun set & dawn of the great range of the "dukhan" from the East. we had to be very rapid, in fact could only take colour notes & hope to make a picture from them & a photograph at a more leisured time. We found a nice stretch of sand & made our beds & eat our supper. (fried fish) by star light. I had a very peaceful night, but Amice was disturbed by a desert rat (jeraboa^{sic}) it got in her blanket under her feet first, & then came & crept under her neck, it startled her so she sat up & frightened ~~he~~ it away. we saw its tracks in the sand in the morning & were so disappointed as we have so longed to see a live jeraboa. We were up before dawn & had our paints all ready for the sun rise. it really was marvelous. but impossible to really paint, the colours changed every minute. We continued our journey leisurely until lunch when we sat under the shade of a desert tree, its name is Yser

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but we call it the Hair tree as it has long green tendrils instead of leaves (this is due to lack of moisture) after lunch I made a sketch of the tree & Amice wrote a fairy story about it. Soon after we left the valley of the hair tree we came to the place where we were going to go off the track & follow a wady that led into the heart of the pink granite mountains called the Quattar we bumped & waddled along this valley for about 5 miles & then we came to the head of it, it was a sort of natural amphitheatre, here was an encampment of Bedouins they had a well, & there was a little earth so they were able to get enough food for themselves & their ~~cattle~~ camels. At one time some prospectors had done a little mining for graphite but all that remained of their occupation was a tumble down hut & a heap of stones, the Bedouins were delighted to see us, we had brought them sweets & cigarettes both of which were very welcome. they showed us the best place to camp & invited us to drink tea with them after we had eaten our supper. we prepared our beds & eat our evening meal as the sun set, it turned the pink granite to flame & the whole valley was aglow. darkness followed

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very rapidly, the Bedouins had lit a fire, & after a little while Amice & I joined the circle, we squatted on the ground in the place of honour beside the chief, all the others grouped round. The flickering flames lit up their faces as they bent forward to push twigs & sticks under the kettle, the dogs formed an outer ring. we exchanged scraps of conversation, the chief told us he was quite content to pass all his days there, his father had died there & his grandfather before him, & as long as there was sweet water & enough earth to grow food he would be satisfied & not wish to visit the outside world. we told him that he would have to go a very long way before he found a more lovely spot. he told us there was a very beautiful well up in the mountains an hours journey on foot & offered to guide us there in the morning, we were delighted at the prospect. so next morning we started off at the first streak of day light, we left Sardic to pack our bedding etc in the car & set off alone into the mountain pass with ^{the} Arab chief. we went through the most magnificent scenery, the pass led up & up, part of the time we were clambering over huge boulders or walking along rocky ledges, we found strange

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little plants growing here & there, our old guide knew their names & their uses, there was a herb that had a very strong pungent odour, we asked if it was used for medicine & he said no, only for the scent & went on to explain further thus. "If a little child should make a mess, the people crush the herb in their fingers so that there is only a pleasant smell." we were very amused with his explanation.

When we reached the end of the pass we saw a truly marvelous sight, a clear pool stood at the foot of the rocky wall & the water dripped into it from above & the whole of the rock was a cascade of maiden hair fern. To see such a thing in the midst of the stoney desert was miraculous & we at once decided that this was the place where Moses struck the rock & the water flowed forth. Little birds came & drank from the water & dragon flies darted to & fro.

Amice & I removed our shoes & stockings & sat on a rock with our feet in the water, but it was so icy cold that we couldn't keep them in long, we stayed there about an hour & then had to return in order to continue our journey according to the programme we had arranged with our friend Hanafey Bey. Sandic had everything ready when we returned. He was

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very relieved to see us, he did not at all like being left behind while we went off with a stranger. We said good-bye to our picturesque guide & his dogs & set off. We made several pictures on the way so our progress was rather slow & it was past seven & quite dark when we arrived at the Kena Frontier Outpost, we had a letter from the Governor of the Red Sea Coast to the Seargent in charge telling him to give us the Rest House for the night & generally look after us. We sent a Telegram to Hanafey to announce our safe arrival & then had a good wash & our supper & passed a very comfortable night. We were off again early the next morning & arrived in camp in time for lunch, very fit, very sunburnt & generally pleased with ourselves.

I am enclosing a few sprigs of the maiden hair fern from the dripping well for you to see. We seem to have more papers than we can deal with now so would you stop sending the Observer, it seems a pity for it to come & for us not have time to do more than a cursory glance through. I do not think we shall finish here before the 1st week in May so do not expect me home before June this year. Love to you both. your affectionate daughter. Myrtle.

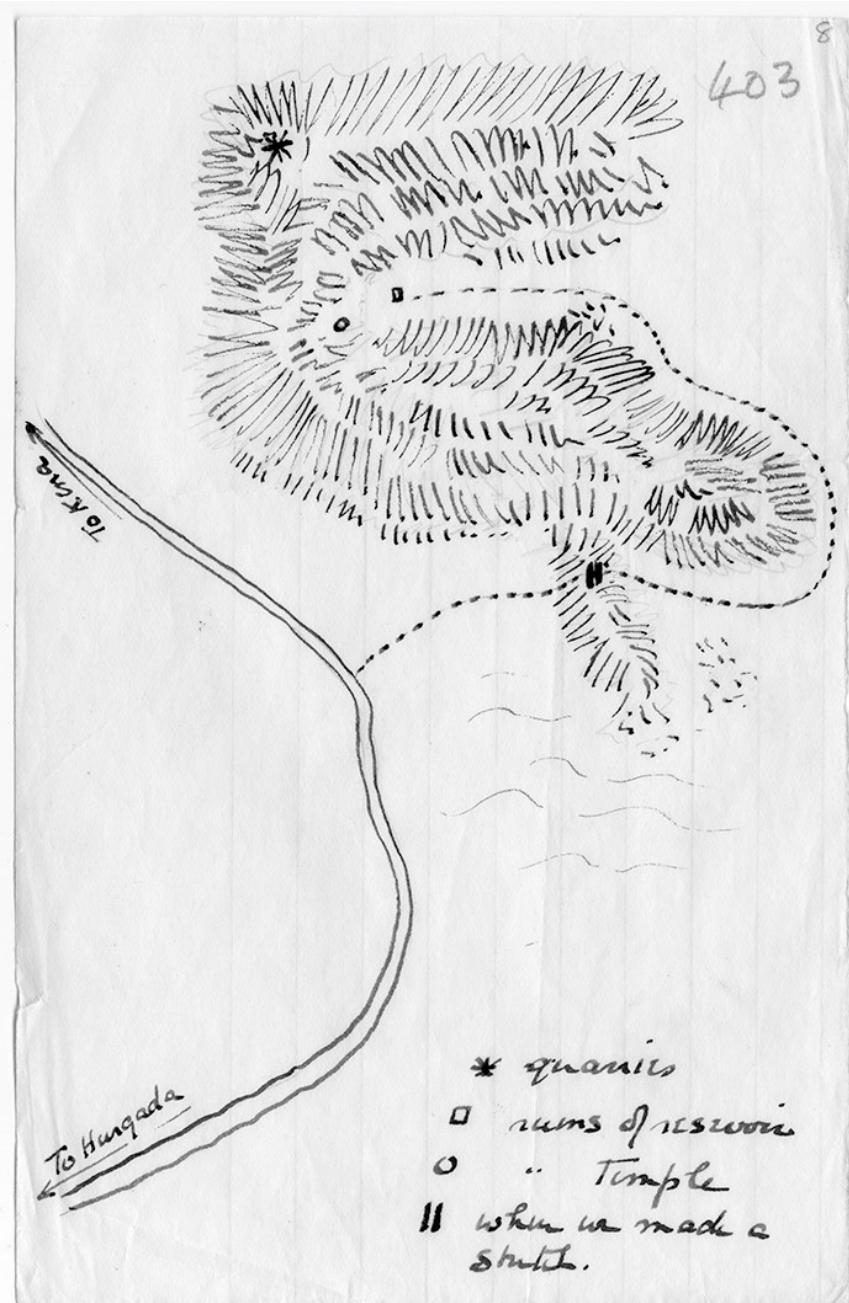
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Lots of love to you both. your affectionate daughter. Myrtle.



[ॠ]

To Kena

To Hurgada

quarries
 ruins of resevoir^{sic}
 " temple
 where we made a
 sketch.