

Arabah.  
March 7<sup>th</sup> 1931

Arabah. 122<sup>1</sup>  
March 7<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dear Mother.

Last Wednesday I had another thrilling day I started off on the camel at 8 o'clock & rode South across the desert until about 11-15. Then I saw a wonderful cleft in the hills, there must have been a mighty torrent pouring down from there at some remote period, it had cut a deep bed for itself some way out into the desert; ever now the trace of it remains, I rode up the wady as far as I could go, part way it divided, so I kept along the right hand fork, & when I came to a part where the camel could not go, I dismounted & made camp, & leaving Mohammed to look after the camel & the lunch etc. I went with Sanduk & Ahmud back to the fork & explored the left hand cleft. It led up a beautiful wild valley, tall cliffs with bastions like a giant's fortress rising on either side & the way strewn with great boulders as if the giants had been playing skittles, in parts our way was blocked by a great shelf of rock stretching from side to side of the valley like a portcullis. Then we had to go back & hunt for some cleft where we could zigzag

Dear Mother.

Last Wednesday I had another thrilling day I started off on the camel at 8 o'clock<sup>sic</sup> & rode South across the desert until about 11-15. then I saw a wonderful cleft in the hills, there must have been a mighty torrent pouring down from there at some remote period, it had cut a deep bed for itself some way out into the desert; even now the trace of it remains, I rode up the wady as far as I could go, part way it divided, so I kept along the right hand fork, & when I came to a part where the camel could not go, I dismounted & made camp. & leaving Mahommed to look after the camel & the lunch etc, I went with Sardic & Ahmud back to the fork & explored the left hand cleft. it led up a beautiful<sup>sic</sup> wild valley, tall cliffs with bastions like a giants<sup>sic</sup> fortress rising on either side & the way strewn with great boulders as if the giants had been playing skittles, in parts our way was blocked by a great shelf of rock stretching from side to side of the valley like a portcullis. then we had to go back & hunt for some cleft where we could zigzag

122<sup>2</sup>

our way up. After the men had to go ahead & pull me up after them. at last we came on a great surprise. a vast amphitheatre of rocks, & in the middle standing quite alone was a rock shaped like the sphinx. The men exclaimed, "As Allah lives. it is the Father of Terror himself." (their name for the Sphinx) It was weird, one felt as if one had trespassed upon one of the scenes of the Arabian Nights & stood before the man who was turned into stone by enchantments. I felt I could not tear myself away from the wonderful place I expected to see a jinn any moment. I took two photographs & not knowing the magic word to restore the rock to his original human form I had to leave him.

It was nearly 1 o'clock when I got back to our camp. there I had a lovely lunch of little meat pasties, tomatoes, date cookies & oranges. The men (as I knew later) made their meal chiefly of onions. I rested until a little after two & then Sandu & Ahmed & I continued on foot along the right hand wady, this proved even wilder than the over<sup>sic</sup> & it got more & more exciting

our way up. often the men had to go ahead & pull me up after them. at last we came on a great surprise. a vast amphitheatre of rocks, & in the middle standing quite alone was a rock shaped like the sphinx, the men exclaimed, "As Allah lives. it is the Father of Terror himself." (their name for the Sphinx) it was weird, one felt as if one had trespassed upon one of the scenes of the Arabian Nights & stood before the man who was turned into stone by enchantments, I felt I could not tear myself away from the wonderful place I expected to see a jinn any moment. I took two photographs & not knowing the magic word to restore the rock to his original human form I had to leave him.

It was nearly 1 o'clock<sup>sic</sup> when I got back to our camp. there I had a lovely lunch of little meat pasties, tomatoes, date cookies & oranges. This men, (as I knew later) made their meal chiefly of onions. I rested until a little after two & then Sandu & Ahmed & I continued on foot along the right hand wady, this proved even wilder than the over<sup>sic</sup> & it got more & more exciting

122<sup>3</sup>

we passed lots of wolves dens with heaps of bones from their meals & we saw their paw marks. but did not catch a glimpse of the beasts themselves much to Sardic's disappointment - as he had his gun with him as usual. We were more than an hour working our way up & we came to a place near the top where it became very narrow & very steep, there was only one place where there was a crack leading up. I was looking for possible footholds when Sardic became very interested in a small cave just beside it, he said to me, "it would be best to go back now, for this is the house of a very big fierce snake" There was his track on the sand of the floor of the cave so I thought it wisest to follow Sardic's advice. I took lots of photos, & as I had my two cameras with me I taught Sardic how to use the Brownie & he has taken two with me - he was awfully pleased with it. We got back to our camp in nice time to have tea before starting our return & arrived home at dusk.

I dont mind going off on my own a bit, it

we passed lots of wolves<sup>sic</sup> dens with heaps of bones from their meals & we saw their paw marks. but did not catch a glimpse of the beasts themselves much to Sardic's disappointment as he had his gun with him as usual. We were more than an hour working our way up & we came to a place near the top where it became very narrow & very steep, there was only one place where there was a crack leading up. I was looking for possible footholds when Sardic became very interested in a small cave just beside it, he said to me, "it would be best to go back now, for this is the house of a very big fierce snake" There was his track on the sand of the floor of the cave so I thought it wisest to follow Sardic's advice

I took lots of photos<sup>sic</sup>, & as I had my two cameras with me I taught Sardic how to use the Brownie. & he has taken two with me - he was awfully pleased with it. We got back to our camp in nice time to have tea before starting our return & arrived home at dusk

I dont<sup>sic</sup> mind going off on my own a bit, it

122

4

is rather a good thing to have to depend entirely on my Arabic. + the men look after me splendidly. they do so enjoy an outing.

Abdullah is being very busy in the garden at this moment, he is killing locusts. he catches them by their tails + cracks their heads between two stones, if they escape him he curses them roundly, it is an occupation he very much enjoys, + quite necessary as they destroy the garden.

The people here do use strange expressions, Mahommed said something very venomous sounding to his camel the other day because it wanted to exchange greetings with another camel. I repeated it to Nannie afterwards + she said he called it "the son of a dirty rag -" meaning - of a bad woman.

The L.H.J. + the Humorists have arrived + are being enjoyed. Your letter containing the list from the Bushey Shop arrived by to-days mail. Thanks for the Persian pictures, I am glad you enjoyed the Exhibition.

Our baby chicks are thriving wonderfully

is rather a good thing to have to depend entirely on my Arabic. & the men look after me splendidly. they do so enjoy an outing.

Abdullah is being very busy in the garden at this moment, he is killing locusts. he catches them by their tails & cracks their heads between two stones, if they escape him he curses them roundly, it is an occupation he very much enjoys, & quite necessary as they destroy the garden.

The people here do use strange expressions, Mahommed said something very venomous sounding to his camel the other day because it wanted to exchange greetings with another camel. I repeated it to Nannie afterwards & she said he called it "the son of a dirty rag -" meaning - of a bad woman.

The L.H.J. & the Humorists have arrived & are being enjoyed. Your letter containing the list from the Bushey Shop arrived by to-days<sup>sic</sup> mail thanks for the Persian pictures, I am glad you enjoyed the Exhibition.

Our baby chicks are thriving wonderfully

122

5

our men have made them a play ground out side  
the kitchen quarters, I took them out some digestive  
biscuit crumbs <sup>to-day</sup> & they came & pecked out of my hand  
crowding on it & pushing each other off, when  
nearly all the crumbs were gone one enterprising  
chick began scratching like a grown up hen  
I am afraid it produced nothing, but it did feel  
funny.

Please tell Pat I have received a  
letter from her today & thank her very much -  
I do hope she soon gets something interesting  
to do.

Lots of love to you & father  
your affectionate daughter  
Myrtle.

P.S. I am enclosing some stamps for Eric  
give him my love & tell him I hope his  
tummy is all right by now.

our men have made them a play ground out side  
the kitchen quarters, I took them out some digestive  
biscuit crumbs <to-day> & they came & pecked out of my hand  
crowding on it & pushing each other off, when  
nearly all the crumbs were gone one enterprising  
chick began scratching like a grown up hen  
I am afraid it produced nothing, but it did feel  
funny.

Please tell Pat I have received a  
letter from her to-day & thank her very much -  
I do hope she soon gets something interesting  
to do.

Lots of love to you & Father  
your affectionate daughter  
Myrtle.

P.S. I am enclosing some stamps for Eric  
give him my love & tell him I hope his  
tummy is all right by now.