

Arabah
Jan 23. 1934


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Dear Mother.

Amice & I had quite an exciting time today we went to Girga to see the silk weavers. it is about 20 miles from here. we had to leave Joey in Mahomed Kheir's charge & we went with Sardic down a narrow lane, then through a stable, up a ladder, through a hole in the wall, & down a rickety ladder on the other side & there we found three weavers at work, two weaving silk & one cotton. the looms were the same primitive affairs that I described to you before, with the weavers sitting in a hole in the ground, one of the silk weavers was making a pattern in red, black

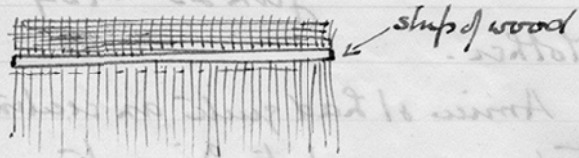
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and white, using three shuttles
at once. He was working a border
in black and red like this  (black)
it was wonderful how
he threw the red shuttle
just so far. & then made the black
shuttle meet it, Amice & I each
purchased a length about 6 yards
for about 25/- the pattern is
not the same all the length.
there is a plain piece of red with
striped edge. then stripes all
across, then the diamond pattern
along the edge & so on. this
type of weaving is only done in this
district, & these weavers are famous
for their work, they have a very
clean device for keeping the width
exactly the same they clip a strip
of wood on the part just finished

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which holds it out taught like this



They damp the threads of the warp
in front of the bumper & fan it
until it is just just the proper dampness
before proceeding with the weaving.

they say this makes the work lie
flat & even, it certainly is absolutely
even & regular & one ^{hardly} ~~cannot~~ believe
it possible that such work can
be done in such a primitive way.

They were of course delighted with
our visit & purchases. Then we
went to purchase leather. we had
to drive through a lovely bazaar.
the road was all roofed over,
& there were colourfull stalls on

which holds it taught like this

[] (strip of wood)

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 on each side, one felt most out
 of place in a motor car there.
 we saw some exciting mats of
 wool all gay stripes & we each
 purchased one, then we visited
 the leather merchant & with the
 aid of Mohamed Kheir we purchased
 skins, I have two lovely green goat
 skins, I do not know what I want
 them for. but I could not resist them.
 Amice bought some to cover her
 cushion & make book covers.
 They came to about 2/- for a goat
 skin. they are sold by weight,
 Mohamed Kheir enjoyed himself
 enormously he was soon surrounded
 by a pile of skins that he rejected
 as being "not nice" & when finally
 he had selected for us skins that
 he said were "not very bad" there

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was the excitement of weighing them
 & settling the price, of course all
 the passers by had to stop & assist
 in the argument & when they pushed
 too close round us Mohamed Kheir
 drove them back with his whip.
 we are hardened to these onslaughts
 now, they are not as terrifying as
 they sound, the lash just beats
 some of the dust out of their galabears
 & may perhaps catch a boy on the
 leg & make him squeal, but after
 a few minutes they are all back
 again.

We arrived home with our
 purchases all very pleased with our
 selves & had much needed
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 evening meal. Amice is so sleepy
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a lesson to prepare for tomorrow
Sheikh Sarbit will be back & I do not
want to disgrace myself at the first
lesson with him again, especially
as he told me to "pull up my
socks!!!" before he left ~~last~~ for
the Ramadan holidays -

Lots of love to you both
your affectionate
daughter
Myrtle -

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