

Arabah el Madfunah.
Nov 5th 1929.

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Dear Mother.

Yesterday we stayed late in the temple to work by electric light so our supper was sent to us. we choose to partake of it on the roof as there was a cool breeze & a glorious slender new moon, pale green in colour, floating in an opal sky. we clambered up ladders & over enormous blocks of limestone to the highest part, & there our attendants spread a cloth & set out cold chicken pie, fruit salad, rice & melon. you see we do ourselves really well out here.

Today we went to market. I purchased the little caps I am sending you, they are worn by the small boys. the stitching is all done by hand & it cost the enormous sum of 7½^d they are rather quaint so I thought you might like one. I have another which I think I shall send to Buffles. If you think of anyone who might like such things let me know & I will get some more.

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the actual purchases through the servants, because if it were known we wished to buy a quantity the price would go up. Miss C is having a large native blanket woven also, we shall keep the weaver fairly busy. The poor man has 9 people to feed on his earnings.

When I got home the post was in, I have made a note of the measurements you sent for studio carpet, & passage rug. of course it will be the most extraordinary luck if I can secure what we need, so don't really expect to see me arrive with either. but without measurements it would be useless for me to look at the merchants stock with any intent to purchase. I am glad to have Father's idea of price, of course should I fall in love with anything special I'd splash a bit with some of my salary.

I was very pleased with the picture of the St Bernard dogs, we had great fun with it our old water carrier Semman is called Abu Kelb (ie. father of dogs) so we showed him the picture & asked him if he knew what they were. he said

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They were monkeys, another servant guessed a kind of pig. Then our little house boy got very excited & said they were elephants. They were all amazed when we said they were English dogs. Semman then said "Surely such an animal must be the King of dogs." he was delighted when I gave him the picture to keep.

We had told the people here that Nov 5th was one of the English festivals which was celebrated by lighting big bonfires. So they all got busy during the afternoon & collected all the rubbish from the packing cases. & all the old straw & shavings that were lying around. & after supper we had the Father of Bonfires. & the men all danced round & threw stones in it to make the sparks fly up. it was fun.

Nov 6th Ahmud washed his white sheep today. he told us it took a whole cake of soap. Then he clipped it, & brought the fleece into the temple & laid it out on the limestone floor in the sun to dry. I selected a little bit to

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enclose in this letter, he was very proud when I told him it was to be sent to England.

Nov 7th Old Ahmud brought his shorn sheep to the Temple for us to see this morning. he had made her a jacket out of an old sack. she had the sweetest little lamb with her it was jet black with a tiny white tuft to its tail. there was also a red sheep with all its wool on, it will not be sheared until its lamb is born in a month's time. these sheep are quite tame & all sleep together in the house

I am busy drawing in the Isis chapel of the temple it is about the size of our house & there are 5 of these chapels to be done as well as a courtyard & many pillars & various passages with small rooms leading off them. so we have enough to keep us busy.

The weather is delightful now, the hot spell with the horrid S wind is over. it is quite cool in the very early morning. we now rise 5-30 instead of 5-15.

Nov 8th Your letter of Oct 31st arrived today. It came very quickly. I am sorry M^r Childs is so poorly. please remember me to him & tell him the hot sand out here would soon cure his arm & shoulder

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all home news seems doubly interesting when one is so far away. I also like to hear your comments on my experiences, so you may be sure I read your letters many times.

I do not know of anything I would like specially for Xmas, the parcel post here is very bad so lets wait & celebrate on my return, we'll have a festival on Midsummus Day instead.

Later on there may be a few little oddments like hair nets or hankies that I might be glad of, but only things that can come letter post.

Nov 10th Ahmud Ibrahim, a village elder called this evening, he came to tell us that the Zar to which we were invited cannot be held, because the lady, for whose benefit the ceremony was arranged, is in a worse condition, it is not ~~an~~ possessing spirit that has entered into her, but a wicked Jinn, in other words, she is quite mad, when she gets excited she throws things about, & when told of her brothers death she burst out laughing; holy men are now reading the Koran over her.

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Ahmud brought me a sample of the white wool spun on a spindle. I am sending a sample of it to Father, I am also enclosing the little bit of the newly cut ~~fl~~ fleece ^{in his letter}, as I think your letter is going to be rather bulky as it is.

Will you send me two calendars for 1930 size to go in envelope, I want one for my room & one for the ~~den~~ living room.

I hope this letter with the cap will reach you safely. They are all laughing at me for trusting to the post. they say its sure to be pinched.

Lots of love
your affectionate daughter
Myrtle.

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