

Arabah.
Feb 17. 1931

Dear Mother.

I can't remember if I told you that an old Professor & his wife & her sister & a friend, all complete strangers (but friends of a friend of Amice's) all wanted to be put up in our camp for a night or two on their way back from Luxor.

Now that Marnie does the cooking in addition to all her other duties we do not think it fair to her to have more than two guests at a time as of course it means a lot of extra work. So Amice wrote & told them that we had a very small camp this year, & could not accommodate so large a party. She suggested that they caught the early train from Luxor arriving here about 10.30, & we would give them lunch & dinner, & they would have sleepers reserved on the night train, which leaves Baliana about 9.30, this would give ample time to see the Temple & the Osirion which Cook's tourists do in about 2 1/2 hours. Or if they needed to stay longer they might apply for the government rest house.

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They decided to do this, & wrote to say Prof Oliver was coming to the rest house on Saturday & the others would join him the following day - so Saturday evening we sent a note to ask him if he would come & dine with us. Sardic came back & said there was no one there, only the guards & they knew nothing of a party expected.

The next day we had a wire: ^{to-morrow} arriving Bal "party of 4 arriving Baliana 2.30, wire if rest house available."

We didn't know what to do, as we have no authority to let people use the rest house, they have to have a special permit from the Department of Antiquities. Well the long & short of it was, these people arrived, without a permit, so we had to put them up as best we could. They were all over 65. They had brought some cold chicken & ham etc with them, also lots of rugs. so we fixed up the camp beds & did what we could. They had about 2 hours to look round the temple before the light went, & then had to tramp

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across the desert to our house, as of course the station cars had returned to Baliana, we carried their bags & umbrellas & wraps & helped them along as well as we could, but it was a hard trudge for them. We spent most of the evening making up the beds, the old professor was very fussy. He said the room was too stuffy & he'd rather sleep on the terrace where we had our breakfast. so his bed had to be made up there, then they all wanted hot water & hot water bottles,

Then in the morning they nearly drove poor Nannie desperate by demanding lots more hot water when she was in the midst of getting breakfast. (it all had to be heated in kettles on the primus so you can imagine the difficulty-) Our meal was somewhat delayed in consequence,

We were rather surprised to find they had arranged for the cars to fetch them to catch the 10 o'clock train to Cairo, we imagined they were at least going to spend the day after making so much fuss, they might just as well ^{have} caught the night

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train to Cairo & saved us all that trouble.
 We are still wondering what it was they came
 for. They certainly showed no interest in the
 temple & they were too old to really enjoy roughing
 it just for fun. People are funny. we are
 feeling a little peeved. as things have to be sorted
 out & put back in to the store again & our work has
 been very much delayed.

Today we had a visit from Abdu Jouat
 our old guide. he came into the temple to say
 how do you do. always an impressive ceremony

The day after tomorrow is the big feast
 for the end of Ramadan, we shall make a round
 of visits that day to wish every one a happy feast.
 I shall be able to tell you all about it in my
 next letter.

Lots of love
 your affectionate daughter
 Myrtle.

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