

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY, TEMPLE OF SETI I, ABYDOS
EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY
AND
THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO.

EGYPT EXPLORATION SOCIETY'S CAMP
ARABAH EL MADFUNAH
BALIANA, UPPER EGYPT.

March 5th

Dear Mother

I posted rather a scappy letter to you yesterday as time was limited. To-day our guests have exhausted themselves plodding through the sand to the temple & back, & have retired to their rooms to rest. The situation here is decidedly comic. Nannie hates Miss C's intended with a venom truly oriental, her feelings are shared by Sardic, who goes round with a face of gloom & has taken to shadowing me. This morning in the temple he came & begged me to say I would return next season & Old Ahmed & Mahmud Ziraia added their entreaties, I said "Inshalla Allah." (If God is willing) which brought forth smiles & exclamations of "Allah is good & great." The loyalty of these people gives one a tremendous feeling of responsibility. They come with their troubles etc in the firm belief that you are able to help them if you wish & if help is not forthcoming it is only because you can't be bothered.

I promised to tell you about the end of Ramadan. In the morning all our servants wore new galabias & greeted us with, "May all your years be prosperous, & we touched their hands, & said, "And may yours be also." Our nice patient Mahomed was waiting to have his hand dressed & he too wore a new galabie of blue & white stripes, when we had got him nicely bandaged up, I got my camera out, as I wanted to get a picture of him. He was delighted to be photographed, but Oh dear the effect on him was awful. One can put boiling hot dressings on him, & cut big lumps of bloody^{sic} flesh & stray bits of tendon off, & he just smiles sweetly & says it doesn't hurt, but just show him a camera & he becomes as stiff as a ramrod, tightens

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his facial muscles up to such a degree that it is difficult to believe he is the same beautiful graceful creature. I would he thought he was showing what a really fine man he was, & I could not hurt his feelings by saying I did not like the effect, so I took the photograph, but I shall try to get another some time when he does not know he's being taken. I have been attending to him in the mornings lately, but if Miss C can take it on once again I'm going to try to get a snap then, I shall pretend to be taking her picture.

After the hospital parade was finished we did our usual mornings work in the temple, but Miss C & I took the afternoon off & visited all our friends. We set off with all our servants as escort & started at the north end of our nearest village, we went first to see Ahmud Ibrahim, our chief guard & very good friend, we wished him & his wife & family many years of prosperity, we sat on the divan & were offered feast bread, dates, cream, sweetmeats etc. we each accepted a tiny morsel to "bring a blessing". (our servants had a good tuck in) & then went on to the Omdah, whose house was next. here we partook of dates & coffee. Then to Sardic's house, his wife gave us tea, spiced feast bread & nuts, & showed us three fine new dresses he had bought her. & so we went on, from house to house in order to bring prosperity to all our nice people & bless their family's & their food. It was quite dark by the time we had finished, & we were feeling tired, dusty, & rather sick. As we left the last house we suddenly remembered poor Mahomed had been waiting about two hours, so we rushed back as fast as we could, got him attended to & sent home. his village is five miles away so he has to walk 20 miles every day to be attended to. we hope soon one dressing a day will be enough. I must tell you a funny story about him soon after we took him on. When we returned from the temple in the evening we found him sitting by the gate as usual with another man & we thought "Oh dear, another patient", & asked who he was & what he wanted. Mahomed explained he was a friend who had come

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2

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to save him from the afreets on the way home. he said
the night before as he went by the ancient fortress in the desert
a dreadful afreet. Twice the height of a man, black & terrible
rose up in front of him. then it took the shape of a dog, a fox,
a sheep, he uttered all the names of Allah, & still it remained
before him. then he said Oh Blessed One permitt me to leave
you" & it made an awful noise Ki-yi-yi-yi & he was overcome
with terror. he says these afreets haunt lonely places & way lay
lone travellers. they never appear to two together, so he had
persuaded a friend to accompany him. I am afraid we both
roared with laughter at this tale, & told him his eyes were seeing
what was in his mind, & that there was nothing to be afraid
of etc. It seemed rather brutal to laugh at him, as the poor
man was in a dreadfully weak condition, what with fasting, & the
sleepless nights with the pain of his hand. I really dont wonder
he was seeing things. but sympathy would certainly have reduced
him to a nervous wreck. we told him if he saw that afreet again
he was to come back here, & one of us would go alone & drive it
away. as English women wont stand any nonsense from such
silly things. it had the desired effect. Mahomed is'nt going to be
laughed at any more, even by such superior beings as the English
ladies. the gentleman friend is left at home & we hav'nt heard
anything more about the afreet.

We are very pleased with M^r Little. he is like his name
very thin & delicate looking. he is very much like Harold & has the same
rather shy manner. he draws very well, has some knowledge of hieroglyphs
(self taught) & is out to learn all he can so altogether he is a very
welcome addition to our camp. he had been working at a camp in

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Syria & had been obliged to give it up on account of Malaria. Sardinia is most awfully funny when any one new comes, he is extremely proud of the high standard of the work the society produces, & makes a point of personally examining the efforts of new comers. he visited Mr Little's scaffold yesterday & respectfully requested to be permitted to see his churning, he had a good look at it, discussed it with Ahmud, & said to Mr Little "May the Lord be praised" He also "Praised the Lord" on account of my churning soon after I started work, but Beazley troubled him exceedingly, he said to me once, the Kawargeh (gentleman) does not understand the custom of the work here.

Yesterday Ibrahim the weaver brought home the white table runnes he has made from the fleece of Ahmud's white sheep. it is a wonderful piece of work, at present it is stiff with the rice flour which was used to stiffen the warp, but when it is washed it will be soft as linen. It is $2\frac{3}{4}$ yards long with a fringe 10 inches long at each end, & 17 inches wide, I expect it will shrink up a bit when it is washed, one cannot order any special length, one sends so much wool to be woven a certain width.

March 6th Had a great day to-day. we gave an Arabic party. we had the tip top nabout stick man from a village some way from here & invited all the men in the neighbour hood to come & try their skill. they came from about 8 villages, & we reckon we had 500 guests. they formed a great circle in the desert & the nabout men perform in the centre. the play is rather like quarter staves only the sticks are longer about 5 ft. the performers strike attitudes rather like fencers & leap & twist & turn whirling these long sticks with marvelous agility. they hardly ever touch each other or clash their sticks. they make a movement of attack & the other instantly falls into a position of suitable guard. it is a series of very rapid postures, directly one fails to make the proper

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guard the game stops. of course sometimes they rap sticks together
but only to make it look more spectacular, & sometimes they
loose their tempus & go at it in real earnest. This happened once
this afternoon, but the guards rushed in & separated them.
they have the drum & zumara as an accompaniment, & their
movements keep perfect time with the music.
The guests were provided with cigarettes, & the omdah & several other
more important people had tea with us in state.
It was a great success & we are told that for some time events
will be dated by it, as happening the week or the month after the
great nabout party.

Today I received your letter with the pencil note
to say you had received my long letter about the great adventure.
I shall look forward to the next to hear your comments on it.
I always like to know what you think about my various doings.
I hav'nt heard about the work yet, but parcels take 3 weeks to
a month to get here. I have notified Cooks & shall hear in
due course.

Lots of love
Your affectionate daughter
Myrtle.

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