

4

Tema -
Dec 5th 1927.

6.

P.S. I hope you are not having to pay over weight on my letters. I don't^{sic} know the limit for 10oz. & could'nt^{sic} weigh it later.

Dear Mother & Father.

I suppose it's about time to wish you both a Happy Xmas. I wish I could send you a little of this real unadulterated sunshine & glorious air. I am wonderfully fit - up at sunrise every day without the slightest effort - & very full of beans. More amusing things have been happening. I think I told you in my last letter that Mahomed Hassan el Gerzawy had invited us all to visit his uncle yesterday evening - Well we left work early & pushed up & waited - but no Gerzawy & no armed escort. so we wondered whether he might have been knifed by the relations of one of the men he's been arresting lately. he's quite expecting such a thing to happen.

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6/2

& such things really do occur out here quite as a matter of course among the natives, the Arab who comes up to keep guard at night has asked permission to carry a rifle, because his brother recently killed a man in the village here & the whole family are waiting for the next move. no one seems to think anything of it. in fact when one lives among such primitive people ones values change absolutely. - but to continue - I am glad to say nothing happened to our friend. for this morning a most attractive Arab servant arrived from him carrying a tortoise as a peace offering, & a message to say that he had been detained in one of the villages he was visiting, & did not get back until midnight

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6/3

& he hoped we would accept the tortoise
& not be very angry with him.

Of course we were delighted with
the gift & very much amused, I wish
you could have seen the messenger.
He was simply beautiful. He might
have stood for a picture of ^{the young} Christ
preaching to the elders.

Arab etiquette is delightful, if a
servant brings a message he never
goes until you give him formal
leave to depart by saying "masalaam".
ie. "go in peace". Also if one
meets an Arab he greets you with
"May Allah bless your day." & you
reply. "May your day be good & blessed."
or vice versa.

It will be very funny when
we see Gerzawy next to hear all
the story of why he did not come to

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6/4

fetch us. I expect he will be along
in a day or two with some of my
photographs. I finished a roll of films
the morning we spent in Qau el Kabir,
& directly he saw me take it out of
my camera he took it from me &
dispatched it by a messenger on
horseback to Assyut to be printed.

My watch stopped a few days ago
& I was in an awful stew about it.

so I posted it to Mr Wainwright in
Cairo & asked him to take it to a
good watchmakers & get it seen to;
he writes to say that the report is
that the balance is bent, & it wants
cleaning!!! & will cost P. 50. ie. 10/3.
he is keeping it for me till I get to
Luxor & will send it registered to me
there.

The other evening after dinner we

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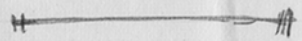
6/5

all sat out in the moonlight. I have never seen anything like it. you would see to read easily. the stars hang in space here like little lamps & do not look like holes in the sky like they do in England.

The birds here are beautiful, in the evening we have a flight of storks pass over here. the Arabic name for stork is Abu Sard.


I think the prettiest name I have ever heard is their name for the perky little wagtails. they call it the father of promenading.

There are the most enormous hornets here. they look alarming at first.. about as long as this

 but they really are very harmless & friendly. we have

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6/6.

one that visits us in our tomb
at meal times. we call her Henrietta
she got into the empty treacle tin
today & got her legs sticky, & had to
be helped out with a spoon.

I carried Timothy the tortoise home
in my satchel from our working
tomb, & when we had climbed up
our cliff I showed him to Mahomed
& he thought I wanted him to cook
him for dinner. One day Gerzawy
gave us a plover he had shot. in
fact he shot the plover to attract our
attention, he loves doing spectacular
things like that - we were not all
pleased really, but we had to accept
the bird with a good grace, & he
really was a blessing for Mahomed
made him into the most wonderful

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7.

soup. We have native bread. flat brown cakes, very nice when new, rather gummy, but tough when stale. —————

If the small Santa Maria with the world on the lid is not sold, will you send it to the following address. M^{rs} Lionel Tufnell, 21 Onslow Square London - S.W.7.

I expect Father will devise a means of packing it for the post. I am glad to hear my things are doing so well at the Eastcote 'bish -

I am writing this during our breakfast interval, & from our perch on the cliff I can look across the whole width of Egypt. There are lots of white sails of dahabeas on the Nile this morning - I shall be very sorry to leave this place, camp life is simply glorious. we do have such fun. All the party are trying to persuade me to go on to Palestine with them. I'd love to go but
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I don't see how I can manage it 6/7
 this year - for one thing I have written
 to Uncle J to say I shall probably be
 returning the 2nd week in Jan. but
 I think I may perhaps come out
 another year - everything is so
 absolutely beautiful - it makes one
 feel happy simply to be in a place
 like this - I wish you could both
 be here with me. Life here is so
 simple - one's needs are so few.
 The work has been getting on splendidly
 certainly, have earned my keep. We think
 we shall be finished by the 15th then
 we all go up to Luxor. The others for about
 3 days, & myself for about 10 or 14. I shall
 write to Tema to have all letters forwarded
 to me at Luxor.
 The Bruntons are at a site about 12 miles
 from here & we are trying to fix up to meet
 half way one day & have a picnic.
 We propose all going on excursions -
 Give my love to all friends & pass on
 the news. I hope to send some P.C's from
 Luxor, I shall not like hotel life after
 this glorious freedom.
 Henrietta the hornet had a feast of blackberry
 jam today. she is so friendly that we all let
 her walk over our hands. - your loving daughter
 Myrtle.

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