

Arabah.
April 7th 1931.

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Dear Mother

We had quite a surprise Easter Sunday, we decided to take the afternoon off & have lunch with Nannie in the house, evidently she had been telling Sordie & the others that Easter is a very great feast in England. for after lunch a great crowd of people came from the village, to wish us a happy feast. was'nt it nice of them, we had to hastily open a tin of sweet biscuits & hand round. we had to do something as the people ~~are~~ ^{were} so hospitable when we visited them for the first after Ramadan. Even our two old antique men came. I purchased 6 beads towards the carnelian necklace. they have now gone off to hunt up some more

The little boy with the burnt leg is getting on splendidly. he is so plucky. he makes the most extraordinary chokes & guggles in his efforts not to cry. the other day Amice was carefully loosening a bit of lint that had stuck & the little beggar siezed hold of it & ripped it

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off himself. He is very proud because I have given him the leg of an old silk stocking to wear over the bandage to keep it clean. we have used up lots of old legs of stockings this way. they do splendidly.

There are a lot of cases of ophthalmia among the babies. Amice is going to report it to the authorities of this province as it is so very infectious & with all these flies about will become an epidemic in no time. The people's superstitions make it very difficult to deal with them, of course our supply of bandages is limited so when it is a fairly long case we use two bandages & tell the women to wash one in soap & water every day. but they will not use soap in connection with any form of illness. they consider it highly dangerous. directly any one is ill or hurt they throw away any soap they may have & will not allow any of the people to use any at all they say if soap is near a sick person he is sure to die - & if his clothes are washed with soap he

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is as good as buried - isn't it a hopeless state of affairs - And they encourage the flies in the children's eyes because they say they protect them from the evil eye - The women all wear their clothes trailing in the dust behind them, because they blot out the trace of their footsteps in the sand - this is to prevent an evil spirit following them to steal their children - really life must be very complicated for them -

Yesterday the inspector of antiquities for this district came to Baliana, so as a matter of diplomacy we invited him to dinner, we had pigeons. we eat them with our fingers, otherwise the poor man would have had a very ~~poor~~ ^{poor} meal

It is fairly hot now. we are working from 7 till one & then resting in the afternoon we found we were getting too tired staying all day in the temple & then doctoring the people in the evening.

I wonder if Father has got his shoes

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 a pair of orange ones to wear in the house. they
 are quite comfy -

A few days ago we had an eclipse
 of the moon. the people in the village were
 in a great state of mind. they prayed to Allah
 to deliver the moon from the spect that was
 swallowing it & beat drums & shoot off guns
 to frighten it away, Sardic was very upset
 because Amice would not allow our gun to be
 discharged. Nannie pretends to laugh at all these
 ideas, but in the back of her mind she has a
 feeling that there may be something in them,
 nothing would induce her to go to bed until the
 moon was visible again. Amice remarked
 on the way the shadow wobbled before the total
 eclipse & we wondered what caused it, was it the
 movement of the earth, or suns rays flickering
 or what?

Just had your letter mentioning the
 Swedish Exhibition, I am glad you enjoyed it.

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The garden seems to be doing very well. our garden here is getting burnt up.

I wrote to Floss a few days ago & sent her prints of some of my photos. I hope they arrive safely.

I had a letter from Eric to say he was pleased with the stamps. from the tone of it I gathered he was rather depressed. I do wish he was able to enjoy life more than he does.

Lots of love to you both. also to Pat & Mrs Childs etc.
Your affectionate daughter
Myrtle.

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