

Arabah.
Jan 26th 1934

Dear Father

I think it is your turn to have a letter all to yourself. I hear you have had another cold, I hope it is quite gone by now

I wish you could have seen the weavers & the looms we visited last Tuesday they were the most primitive you could imagine but the work they produced was wonderful, the silk was nearly a yard & a quarter wide & there were three different patterns in the width which they interchanged as they went on so that one yard of the silk would have quite a different pattern to the next. the only thing that did not please us was that they used cotton threads for the black, though

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The red & the white are pure silk,
 when we asked why they did not
 use black silk they said "this pattern
 has always been done this way."
 Probably there was some difficulty in
 dying the pure silk a good black
 & they got better results from cotton.
 I showed our purchases to Sheikh Sarbit
 as he comes from a district famous
 for its weavers & he says that in
 Akhmim (near his village) they
 use all pure silk & do still finer
 work than the Girga weavers.
 I am going to ask him if he will
 come with Amice & I to Akhmim
 one day in the car & show us the
 weaving there - it would be awful
 fun.
 My last lesson was the first with
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holidays so we had to say all the
polite greetings suitable to the occasion.
This is the sort of thing
Sheikh Sarbit & Sheikh Jed el Karim
are shown in by Abdulla, & I rise &
& then we each touch hands & lay
our hands over our hearts, & I say
to each, "You are welcome," & they say
"May Allah prosper you," then I enquire
after their health & they say "Praises
to Allah I am well," & I say "May Allah
be praised for your well being." then
they enquire after my health, &
I make similar replies. Then I say
"Of your courtesy be seated"
& we all sit down. then I enquire
after the health of Sheikh Sarbit's
Father & Mother & wife & relations
& on being assured of their good health
I say "May Allah be praised" then

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I am told that they all send me many greetings & I say May the Lord bless you & them. & he says The Peace of Allah be on you also. Then I say. "But your absence left us desolate"! The answer he gave to that was so flowing & complicated that I could not quite follow it all - so feeling I was getting into rather deep water for me I turned the subject to dictation & got busy with my lesson. I forgot to tell you that coffee was brought & as we drank I said "May it benefit you" & the Sheikh replied May Allah give you benefit. There are lots of variations of the polite greetings & the proper replies. I shall have to ask him to teach me some more, an Arab is always delighted

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

if a European gives him a courteous
greeting or makes a suitable reply.
They think us sadly lacking in good
manners. Can you imagine how
surprised one of our friends would be
if after a lapse of ten days we told them
their absence had left us desolate!
Tell Pat that when I return I shall
have to practice^{sic} my Arabic good manners
on her & she can retaliate in French.

I have not yet received the
Income Tax demand note, the
Assessment Paper came some time ago
& seemed all correct. Some of the
letters have been going astray lately
& I rather think I have missed one
of Mothers^{sic} as she speaks of your cold
in the head as if she had told me
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


it, & there was a longer interval than usual between them. I have been getting the Observers very regularly but 4 of the Punches & London Illustrated that Major Calverley sends have never arrived. But on the whole, considering conditions I suppose we ought not to grumble.

Dear Pa Broomie heres^{sic} to wishing you're in the pink as I am now - or I should say red as Ive^{sic} just been for a scramble up the mountain to get warm & warm it is - a proper sweat! Lots of love to Ma Broomie her pudding was a treat! Myrtle is getting married next year & Im^{sic} eloping with a bachelor according to the pudding - ie M got  + I got  + 

Hope you recognize Amice's pictures of the ring that I got. & the thimble

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[addition by Amice Calverley]

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[continuation by Myrtle Broome]

Hope you recognize Amice's pictures of the ring that I got. & the thimble

& button that fell to her share.

Bath time.

Lots of love to you & Mother

Your affectionate

daughter

Myrtle.

I must tell you that there has been a great sending off of the pictures of soldiers in London. Ombashi Ali who so greatly desired one, has been transferred to Cairo instead of returning here, so I could not give it to him as I intended, but I asked Mahommed Kheir to get me his postal address from Sohag headquarters of the camel patrol, & when he brought it, I wrote a letter to Ali in Arabic & told him that you had bought the pictures in London specially for him. When it was known I was sending a letter

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Love from Myrtle.

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