

Aventino  
Crete -  
Nov. 22<sup>nd</sup> 1930.

Dear Mother.

Having a wonderful time, today has been a real thriller, but I must first tell you about our experiences in Greece.

I got up extra early in the morning to see the boat go through the Corinth canal. it was very beautiful & the islands & the coast line are all lovely, we arrived at Pyreas about 11 AM. As Amice does not know any Greek we thought it best to engage a guide through Cooks. we went ashore in a small boat & took a taxi to Athens.

I am sorry to say modern Greek towns are the most depressing, revolting places I have seen yet. & they are not improved by thousands of refugees' shelters & their accumulations of rubbish. our first glimpse of the glory that was Greece was the sight of two graceful pillars arising out of these awful eruptions. Then the gate of Hadrian & another Temple. next we saw the reconstructed stadium, an impressive place but very new.

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Our next visit was to the British School, where  
 Amice <sup>had</sup> several introductions from Oxford friends.  
 we were very hospitably received there & one of the  
 students offered to take us over the hill of the  
 Accropolis, an offer we very gratefully accepted  
 as our Greek guide knew less of Greek history than  
 we did & was simply bubbling over with the wrong  
 sort of information. You have seen the pictures  
 of the Accropolis & the Parthenon & the Temple of the  
 Caratydes. (cant remember how to spell the wretched things)  
 so I cannot really tell you anything more about  
 them except that they are far more beautiful than  
 one can express in words & pictures, I enjoyed seeing  
 them & admired the exquisite workmanship, but  
 I cant feel the same thrill & enthusiasm as I do  
 for things Egyptian. Our kind student friend  
 could not spare more than two hours, so we  
 bade him farewell very regretfully, as he had been  
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to Daphne to see an old Bysantian church; Once we had left the awful town behind, we began to see Greece as it really was. The lovely hills with the sacred groves. The olive trees & the cypruses & the goats & sheep wandering about with tinkling bells on their necks. The Bysantine Church was very picturesque with a very charming courtyard. The church contained the remains of some very fine mosaics but nothing else of interest.

It was getting near to sunset, so we had to hurry as we still had to visit the Temple of the Eleusian mysteries. Here we saw the remains of an amphitheatre which must have been ~~very~~ very fine, some of the marble chairs still had the names carved on them. The rest was chiefly ruins - but we could hardly grumble at Nature for destroying man's handiwork, for she gave us a sample of her own, in the most glorious sunset I have ever seen, we stood on the site of the ancient temple & watched the sun set across the Sea of <sup>Eleusis</sup> ~~Eleusys~~. Then reluctantly we were driven back to the horrors of modern

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Athens - &amp; so to our boat

We still had half a day in ~~the~~ Pyreas. (the port for Athens) so - as we knew the lie of the land a bit we set off on our own. The Captain had given us detailed instructions what to do, we took the electric railway into Athens & followed the stream of people to the main street & soon found our way to the National Museum where we spent all the time we had at our disposal. It was like the Greek department in the British Museum on a larger scale.

When we arrived back on our boat we were delighted to find that we had some more fellow passengers - but alas - they all get off to-day at Crete. I must say our Captain improves with acquaintance he is really quite a dear but he is funny. Yesterday a rather attractive French woman came on board. she was very much made up - but she was good looking. - we asked him if he admired her, but he pulled an awful face. "No" he said "I do not like that red stuff on the lips it is not good for the kiss -" (Amice & I are considering using

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lip stick for the rest of the voyage). we laughed & said that perhaps the lady had to wear it in self defense, but he did not see the joke.

The other passengers are an English lady & her husband, he is building the harbour at Candia. & a lady from Crete (a native) who has revived the ancient art of Cretan weaving & embroidering, she found one old lady who was doing it in a crude sort of way, got her to attempt some finer sort of work & from that built up a regular industry, they work the wonderful designs from the temple at Knossos, also some of the ancient peasant designs, the patterns are worked in, as the material is woven. she invited us to go & see the work when we reached Crete.

That evening we had a regular riot. after dinner we all played dominoes, it was a real romp & I am afraid we all ragged the Captain - he simply loved it, & we were helpless with laughter most of the evening. he had some wonderful theory of his own ~~that~~ & while he was involved in calculations Amice & I whet[?]/<0>

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Nov 23 - The next morning M<sup>rs</sup> Calucci (the Cretan lady) went ashore at Canea as soon as the boat arrived, she sent the launch back for us at 9 o'clock; when we reached the quay a car was waiting to take us to her house. From our first glimpse of Bieté we both fell in love with it, a lovely island with simple peasant people, courteous & quite unspoilt, the quaint narrow streets of the little town were gay with fruit stalls & flowers & most of the people wore the old greek peasant costume, knee boots, very full breeches, baggy white shirt & embroidered <sup>stunelux</sup> waistcoat & a round cap. An all too short drive brought us to M<sup>rs</sup> Calucci's house, she took us to her store room & there we revelled in the most wonderful designs & patterns I have ever seen, I have bought you a cushion cover with strange bulls & buds & lions woven in it, also a ~~felt~~ few

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little gifts to bring back with me. Amice as usual fell heavily, she bought Xmas presents for most of her friends, bead<sup>sic</sup> {bed} spreads for her father & steppie, & her sister in law, dressing gown for her sister, small oddments for various friends & a few treasures for herself. We stayed until we had to return to the ship, where we had great fun showing our purchases to the Captain & the officers, they made us dress up in them & give a mannikin<sup>sic</sup> parade.

We arrived at Candia after dinner Major & Mrs De Lacy went ashore there & they invited us to go with them & see their house & their dogs. we went in their launch & had a jolly time playing with two wire haired Terriers Bonzo & Pincher & a darling bull terrier Nipper. They were wild with delight to have their own dogs back again after two weeks absence but they were polite enough to give us a little of their attention also. We were back on the boat again soon after 11 o'clock & sailed at midnight. Tomorrow we reach Alexandria.

I am very much afraid someone has won

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my pen, I feel quite sure I put it in my bag when I finished your last letter as I intended to wash it out to refill it, but when I came to look it was not there, I inquired but no one had seen it, I may have left it on the desk in the writing room & again it may turn up among my things when I unpack. I shall be very sad if I have really lost it.

Amice is a lot better but gets tired very easily. I expect tomorrow will be a very trying day, but I expect Mr Tatton Brown will meet the boat to see us through the customs.

I think this is all my news at present.

Lots of love to you both in which Amice joins, also to Mr Childs & Pat.

Your affectionate daughter  
Myrtle.

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