

Back again in Camp.
March 25th

Dear Mother.

My account of my adventures ended rather abruptly in order to catch the post. so I will now continue.

Sardic & I left Mout Tuesday evening about 5 o'clock, we travelled in the Ford lorry in state in the front seat by the driver, the other passengers sitting on the baggage etc, The Moon was full & it was a wonderful night, about half way we came upon a camel caravan, they were camping for the night & had made a little fire, they invited us to all come & drink tea with them, we accepted the invitation & gathered round the camp fire, I was provided with a

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seat of state on a roll of mats, it was
 a weird sight. the dusky faces round
 the flickering fire, the kneeling camels
 the moon lit desert with wind rocky outcrops
 & the battered Ford lorry looking completely
 out of place amidst its surroundings,
 although the strange & various bundles
 & baskets that it carried & the mode of
 packing the same was typical of the
 East. such a Ford lorry has never
 been seen upon an English road.

Tea with mint & much sugar was served
 in relays, guests drinking in turn as
 there were not enough cups to go round.

I, as guest of honour was served first.

(of course) cups are never washed on these
 occasions, but who cares for that amidst
 such surroundings. There was much
 talk in which I joined as much as was

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able, my correct replies to the various salutations always cause great delight. We bade fare well to our hosts & continued our journey, the latter part was not so pleasant as we struck a bit of a sand storm as we crossed the sandy stretch that lies round Kharga, I followed the natives' example & wrapped my red silk shawl round my head like a turban & my blanket round my body (only my eyes & nose sticking out.) We reached the Rest House in Kharga by 4 o'clock in the morning, & I was jolly glad to tumble into bed. but I was awake before eight feeling quite fit & ready for fresh adventures. I sent a letter by Sardic to the Marmur to report my safe return

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 & to tell him I was planning an
 expedition to the villages of Bulaq
 & Beris a hundred ~~Kilometres~~ ^{miles.}
 south of Kharga.
 Sardic returned with a letter for
 me to give to the Ombashi in charge
 of the police outpost in Beris where
 I should have to pass that night.
 So I started a little before three
 in the same old Ford that had
 taken me round Dakhla, the driver
 had accompanied the lorry from
 Mout the night before, he had
 collected some passengers for the journey
 & I think he had scented the possibility
 of further custom from me. (& he got it.)
 We also took with us the chief guard
 of the antiquities service in Kharga.
 He was respectable old boy called Hagg
 Rashid, he had made the pilgrimage

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to Mecca. When he heard I was going on this expedition he said, "As the honoured lady wishes to travel I must travel with her in order that she may be suitably served. (as I discovered he had relations in Bulaq I gather that his enthusiasm for the journey was not entirely on my account) as there was room on the back seat with Sardic & the petrol cans & water cans & general baggage I was quite willing for him to come.

The journey lay across a great sandy plain & the surface was so firm & level that the car could travel at high speed, we stopped once for me to see the ruin of a Temple built by the Romans, it was built like a fortress with a high enclosing

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 wall & inside was a regular ruined
 village as well as the Temple,
 quite a little colony must have lived
 out there in the desert in Roman
 times.

We reached Beis about 6 o'clock,
 the Ombashi was over whelmed
 at having to entertain an English
 lady, he had never had to do such
 a thing before, his eagerness to serve
 me was almost embarrassing he
 wanted to act as ladies maid.
 he insisted on pouring water while
 I washed, I had heaved my
 nightie out of my hold all in my
 search for my sponge bag. this
 was promptly seized & carefully
 hung on a peg (it was my best pink
 silk nightie) I finally got rid of him

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 by telling him I wished to change my
 clothes. at that he retired, & I was
 able to have a proper wash.
 I had freshly boiled eggs & native bread
 & oranges for supper.
 The Police Outpost consisted of four
 whitewashed rooms of mud brick,
 three for the mens^{sic} use & the other
 kept for the Police Officers going
 their rounds, government officials
 & privileged travellers. It contained
 two camp beds, a camp chair, a wash-
 stand & a strip of matting. bedding
 consisted of a mattress, a hard
 bolster sort of pillow & a blanket
 & a mosquito curtain. every thing
 clean & in good order.
 There was a nice little garden & a
 place where the camels were teathered^{sic}.

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 place where the camels were teathered^{sic}.

The next morning I went round the village & saw a very large spring that supplied all the water for the people & the fields.

Then I went to Bulaq. on the way I saw another spring right out in the desert. Sardic was very distressed when he saw all that good water running to waste, it was amazing to see it bubbling out of a great cleft in a rock.

We reached Bulaq about noon.

Here I visited the Omdah & had ceremonial coffee with him, he wished me to have lunch with him, but Hagg Rasid had already claimed that honour.

He gave me four fresh boiled eggs & a loaf of new bread & dates, then

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being no time for a more elaborate meal to be prepared (thank goodness.) I arrived back in Kharga about 5 o'clock & the driver of the car asked me to take tea with him before returning to the rest house. He presented me with a fly whisk & a wall ornament made of plaited straw & beads, & I gave him a Woolworths butterfly brooch as a present for his wife.

The next morning Sardic & I returned to the Nile Valley by the train & Amice met us at Kara with Joey. The train journey was very amusing. The driver of the car was also travelling by it, & the postman & they came along & talked to me when the engine stopped to take in water.

The Omdah of Kharga also was on

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 the train & he came & sat with
 me part of the way & at lunch
 time he offered me two pigeons
 & oranges. I accepted one of the pigeons
 & two oranges. & thoroughly enjoyed
 my lunch, I had of course provided
 my own, but it would have hurt
 his feelings if I had refused.

Amice was delighted to see me back
 looking so pleased with life, & we
 buzzed home across the desert
 each full of news. & so ends a
 glorious adventure

I hope these two fat letters
 will help make up for the dearth of
 news while I was away.

Lots of love to you both
 your affectionate daughter
 Myrtle.

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P.S. I found lots of letters from you
waiting for me.

Thanks very much for the cottage it
will be fun putting it together.

The records that were up in the loft
were put in one of the collecting
sacks for a hospital as far as
I can remember. There are some
of the old ones that I haven't
the heart to part with, in a square box

under my oak chest in the studio.
the end near the door.

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