

Cairo May 15th 1937
With Nancy.

Dear Mother.

Here we are in Cairo again after the most exciting of adventures, I must anticipate a little & tell you of the really scandalous adventure we had in Hurghada, I know that Father will enjoy relating it to Pat.

Amice & I 'eloped' with Hanafey into the mountains for two days & had a gorgeous time, we both agree he is a delightful person to have a 'night out' with, & he does not snore!! Now having dropped that bombshell I will go back & begin at the beginning. As soon as Joey was ready we said goodbye to our kind friends the Roches & started on our journey, we reached the Frontier's Police Outpost by sunset & spent the night there & got up at 3:30, had breakfast, packed

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I was on the road by 4.30 at the first
 glimmer of dawn. we rested for three
 hours in the heat of the day & arrived at
 the Crosslands by 7 o'clock that evening.
 The next morning we went off to see Hanafey
 & found him full of plans for our entertainment.
 He said he would take ^{us} up to Mons Claudianus
 (the ruins of the Roman settlement) when
 ever we liked, so we said we were ready
 any time & would leave all arrangements
 to him. so he said the best plan would
 be to start off directly after lunch, arrive there
 in the cool of the evening, take our camp beds
 along & sleep there & get up at dawn to
 clamber up & explore everything before it got
 too hot. we thought it an excellent plan
 & agreed to have our bedding etc all ready
 by 2 o'clock, there was a young ~~man~~^{navy}

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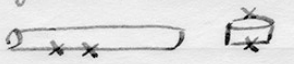
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officer (Egyptian) staying with the Crosslands
who was longing to come as well, so
as Hanafey said there was room in the
lorry if he did not mind bumping in
the back, we told him to collect his
blankets & come along, so off we set
we two English females with the two
Egyptians & Sardic & the mechanic Ali
on an 80 mile journey into the
mountains, we arrived at our destination
about tea time & had a picnic meal
before starting to explore, there was
quite a town there in Roman times
& quite a number of the houses are
standing with most walls intact, some
were roofed with great stone slabs.
There were the baths still with cemented
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for building fires to heat them, there were even niches in some of the walls for statues or busts. We scrambled up one of the big rocks to watch the sunset which was grand & then came down to arrange our camp for the night. It was the navy officer's first expedition into the desert. He was an awfully nice boy & I am afraid we all ragged him unmercifully^{sic} but he seemed to thoroughly enjoy it, he had been trained in England so was probably used to it. His name was Badr which means full moon. Sandie had set up our camp beds all ready & we selected our position with our heads to a great fallen column of granite thus -

 the first two x's represent our camp beds. we expected the two

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men would return to the further side of the wady & leave us in undisputed possession of the column, but not so Hanafey, he evidently considered us under his care & did not intend to let us out of his sight. he left a decent interval between & set up his camp bed at the foot of the plinth of the column where you see the 3rd x.

Badia who had no camp bed but only a mattress & blankets, decided to sleep on top of the plinth, as he was scared of scorpions, we hinted that they were encroaching on hareem preserves but our remarks fell on deaf ears so we left it at that & all helped each other with the bed making & had great fun & arguments over the best way to fold blankets, then we had supper & after

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supper we amused ourselves making
 bonfires of the dried camel thorn &
 scrub that was growing in the valley,
 it was quite dark by then & we had
 a glorious blaze & we all got our hands
 scratched collecting the ~~few~~ thorny
 bushes to build up the fire, then
 Hanafey got a bottle of paraffin & some
 car rags & some bandages from his
 first aid outfit & laid a trail from bush
 to bush & lighted the wind ward end
 & we had a line of blazing bushes all
 down the valley which looked most
 weird in the light of the flickering
 flames, we amused ourselves in this
 way until 10 o'clock & then decided to
 go to bed. Amice & I retired to the
 end of the column furthest away from

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the plinth where we removed our outer garments & slipped into bed in our dressing gowns & in a very few minutes were fast asleep. We were awake at the first light of dawn, Hanafey was already sitting up & taking notice but Badr was still sound asleep, we got up slipped into our skirts & blouses while Hanafey was fetching a jug of water from the lorry. He insisted on helping us perform our ablutions, pouring the water for us in the proper Arab fashion while we washed our hands & faces, he then filled our two mugs & ~~said~~ told us we had better brush our teeth while he went off to shave, by this time Amice & I were in a state of helpless giggles, Hanafey acting nurse maid was the funniest thing we had ever

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seen. We completed our toilets & still
 Badr was fast asleep. He had
 wrapped himself head & all in his
 white blanket & was stretched out
 on the plinth, & Amice said he looked
 just like a patient on the operating
 table. so Hanafey got a large knife
 & dressed up in Amice's overall to
 look like a surgeon & Amice got her
 camera to take a photograph of an
 operation being performed, he was
 just posed with the knife ready when
 Badr sat up. you can imagine
 how astonished he was when he
 saw the scene we had staged, we
 made him lie down again while
 the photograph was taken, & then
 Hanafey rolled him off the operating
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breakfast which consisted of tea,
eggs - bread & cheese & oranges &
apples.

It is now nearly eleven o'clock
& I must post this tomorrow morning
so will continue the account in my
next letter.

All here join in lots of love
to you both.

Your affectionate
daughter
Myrtle.

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Now to continue our scandalous adventures with Hanafey. We spent the rest of the second day visiting the quarries & other Roman ruins in the neighbourhood, & had to do quite a lot of climbing, our sailor boy soon died on us & was content with what he could see from the car but Hanafey was quite tireless & encouraged us to attempt more & more exciting scrambles, I shall have to tell you later of all the things we saw that day as I can only write in odd times as there are so many things to see to. We had a jolly lunch at one of the Roman wells & a tea party up a wild rocky wady & arrived back at Hurgada by 7 o'clock. We spent the next day with the Crosslands

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 & making preparations for our journey
 to Suez, Hanafey had fixed up everything
 for us with the Frontier Police in the
 most tactful way, we were allowed
 to go alone because Hanafey himself
 was following us a day & a half later
 & a government lorry was following
 him two days later, so if we had
 had a breakdown, or got into trouble
 there would have been help coming,
 wasn't it kind of him, he had
 delayed his own leave so as to be
 able to do this for us. We set off
 in good time Tuesday morning along
 the lonely track that runs between
 the mountains & the sea the distance
 between Suez & Hurghada is 380 kilometres
 & with the exception of two lighthouses

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is utterly desolate & waterless (except for
 sea) we made one or two sketches on
 the way but painting was not easy as
 there was a strong north wind all
 the day which kept us comfortably
 cool but also made it hard going for
 Joey through the sand. We reached
 Garib the first light house soon
 after 7 o'clock, we had a permitt^{sic} to
 stay the night there & the two men
 in charge were delighted to see us,
 visitors are a rare treat, two lone
 Englishwomen a complete novelty,
 they have a really lonely time, their
 only communication with the world
 is by boat from Suez once a month.
 they made us tea & we sat & talked
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spoke fair English. We were up & off again early in the morning & arrived at the second light house Zafaran before dark having completed the most dangerous part of the journey without any miss hap. Zafaran light house is in communication with Suez & is much larger than Garib there were three men in charge also some of the Soudani Camel Corps are stationed there. We received a very warm welcome & had a merry tea party with the three men. Then we went up to the top of the light house & saw the light working. You can imagine what a thrill it was to Sandie who had never seen a light house before.

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14
 It was coronation night & they had
 got a radio & we were invited to listen
 to the King's^{sic} speech. can you
 imagine the scene, we two English
 women sitting with the three Egyptians,
 & a group of camel men all solemnly
 listening to our own King speaking,
 when the National Anthem was
 played of course we stood up & all
 the others politely followed our example,
 I can't tell you how delightfully
 friendly it all seemed.

I have forgotten to tell you one incident
 on the road that day that caused
 some fun later. We were of course
 wearing our oldest clothes & had had
 rather a joke with Hanafey as to
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& in the morning we left the first light house
 Amice decided the shirt she was wearing
 was no longer decent, so a few miles
 along the coast we found some flotsum
 & jetsum which we gathered & made
 a glorious scarecrow which we set
 up by the side of the track with one
 arm pointing the way we had gone
 & in the other a message written in
 my best Arabic to convey our greetings
 to Hanafey when he passed that way.
 Just after the conclusion of the king's
 speech Hanafey arrived at the light
 house having done our two days
 journey in about eight hours. his
 first remark to us was, "Why did'nt
 you put the date on the message?"
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16

It had evidently caused him a lot of amusement
 he had Badr along with him, so our
 merry party was united again & we
 had a most uproarious supper together
 & did not go to bed until past eleven,
 we gathered again for breakfast at
 5-30. Hannafey & Badr were pushing
 on to Suez & Amice & I were staying on
 another day to visit a Monastery^{sic} of St
 Antonious^{sic} in the neighbourhood,
 we took two of the lighthouse men along
 with us & spent the day with the monks
 who were most hospitable. we arrived
 back at the lighthouse in time for
 supper & went to bed early & continued
 our journey ^{early next day} & arrived at Suez quite
 safely Friday night & got to Cairo
 Saturday morning.

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17

Our kind Dr Junker gave a supper party for us at his camp at the Pyramids & Hanafey was one of the guests. we had invited people keen on desert travel & showed our sketches which made a very good impression, such a thing having never been done before, we are being pressed on all sides to do some serious desert painting & are even playing with the idea of coming out on our own next winter for a couple of months & combining with Hanafey in producing a descriptive publication with coloured illustrations of the geology of the Eastern Desert & Red Sea Coast. would it be fun.

Yesterday Hanafey gave us lunch & took us round some of the mosques

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18
 & Old Cairo & gave us a lovely time
 & we said good bye to him feeling we
 had made a very good friend, I hope
 you will see him some time as he has
 promised to come & stay with me next
 time he comes to England,

We are leaving Cairo tomorrow &
 are going to visit our friend Oliver at
 Bourg el Arab for a few days, it
 will be lovely by the sea. the weather
 is keeping wonderfully cool for May
 but Cairo is very stuffy & we shall
 be glad to be off into the desert.
 Joey is having a new hood made
 so that he will be waterproof for
 the journey across Europe.

Will you address the next letter
 you write after receiving this to.

PTO

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Post Lagende
 Haupt Post
Budapest
 Hungary

and the next to —
 Post lagende
 Haupt Post
Wien
 Austria

Love to you both from both
 of us, also from the Englebachs.
 Your affectionate daughter
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