

Shepherd's Watch. Cairo.

January 8th 1884

ACC. NO. 976/31

REF. 20

My dearest George.

It seems rather foolish
to wish you, a happy new year from
this distance so much of it will have
passed before the good wish arrives. I
need hardly add however that the year
was not so deep as kept in spirit. I ask
that all needed blessing may rest upon you.
accept of my sincere thanks for the wonderfully
pretty Xmas Card you sent me, it reached
me at Naples on Wednesday the 26th & gave
almost more pleasure than if it had hit the
precise day, as Xmas day has been devoted
to business & as you know that is a pretty
full days work so that after having dinner
we were lazy & only chatted & paid a visit
to a Mrs Sheldon Stephens - a monstrous lady who

with his husband. I took little bags and
 spending the winter at the Grand Hotel Habibi
 where we also staid & found it most
 comfortable. She showed us a number
 of nice photos & gave us information
 which after proved useful to us. We
 thought we had reached a very foreign
 place in Naples & enjoyed our stay there
 in everything except the dirt & the beggars.
 But shall we ever forget the scene that
 met us as we coasted anchor before Alexan-
 dria. All around swarmed with hordes
 of men of every shade from light
 tanned to blackest black, dressed in
 flimsy garments of every dye, jabbering & jostling
 letting in what we have heard of being
 languages as it was alike unintelligible to us.
 It was quite a relief to spy a man brandishing
 "Coake's Agent", a Commit. ourselves & one being
 in go by his safe keeping. We were late for the
 first train to Cairo to have time for a drive around

The City, still much revived from the
 bombardment & not her former or attractive
 but the continued pantomime of people,
 like a great show got up to amuse, did
 amuse me - especially the big green men
 juggling by closing on little bits of cloudbugs
 with now nearly a week's familiarity
 with these, they are just as dull as at first.
 The Camels have a solemn supercilious air
 that checks all unity at their expense, indeed
 they seem to oversee their masters for while
 they hear & obey the cloudbugs I have not over-
 observed a stick lifted even to a refractory Camel.
 Pape has hitherto considered our progress
 through Italy as a mere highway to the begin-
 ning of his travels so we have nearly two
 weeks for Cairo & are dawdling accordingly.
 We have however done Cheops pyramid.
 It is about nine miles from the city wh: we
 accomplished luxuriously in a good carriage
 & pair, over an excellent road, shaded the
 whole way by a species of dark thick foliaged acacia
 with quantities of lighter green lead pods. The monument

a Carriage ^{at the base of the pyramids} steps it is launched by the
 often described means - Arab guides - I count
 ed forty two claws around us struggling & equalling
 to be heard, we got off with nine personal
 attendants, two or three water carriers & a host of
 antique benches. Paper was hurried aloft
 with appalling rapidity. Ever followed but
 I was not hurry till I had settled my con-
 ditions. I succeeded in obtaining a hearing
 & said - "you are not to hurry me" - "you
 are not to speak" - "you are to stop as often
 & as long as I please". So we started & with
 the help of one man at each hand the climb-
 ing was not really very hard. but to my own
 great mortification when up about the
 height of Notre Dame Cathedral tower I became
 so giddy there for a time I felt it would be impossi-
 ble either to go up or to get down. In vain
 the three men shouted that I was brave. "never
 fear. Madame will go!" "be not let her fall" & so
 forth. I shouted up to Ever "adieu". mustered
 all my firmness, telling them emphatically that
 I was not take another step upwards & with
 difficulty crept ignominiously down, taking my seat

in the carriage & quietly watching paper
 & even diminishing to specks & absorbing, as
 you say, the immediate surroundings. The
 dunes of the Nile bright green & the yellow
 desert sand stretching as far as eye can
 reach, the border between the two as well defined
 as a sea shore. It surprises us to see rich
 fields of clover & wheat nearly a foot high
 & the temperature so cold. Oranges are
 hanging ripe on the trees, pinks & carnations with
 their gorgeous & scarlet bracts, palms, banians
 & numerous new & beautiful plants flourish-
 ing while we are still clothed in
 Canadian winter garments & in the evening
 find a seat near the parlour fire not
 unacceptable. We are told that January is the
 coldest month here, the thermometer ranging
 between fifty & sixty. I was quite disappointed
 with the celebrated specimens the place is
 hardly mutilated requiring a lively imagination
 to conjure up its superhuman expressiveness of
 Countenance.

neither did its bustness impress me.
 Your father is particularly much here
 to interest & please him. He thinks he
 understands how the Nile delta was
 formed, & having been so fortunate as
 to have got introductions to Col: Ardagh
 who has the charge of making horings on
 the delta & has shown me the maps he
 is preparing, also to a Mr Schulporth? who,
 although his speciality is botany, has also
 some knowledge of geology & is acquaint-
 ed with all the interesting localities around.
 Tomorrow they are going together to the
 Makattan hills: besides he has also got
 an introduction to the gentleman who is arrang-
 ing the collection at the Bûlâc Museum
 which contains ~~the~~ ^{the} best of what things for
 plates. It is interesting even to a superficial
 observer like myself. Col: Moncrieff - who
 is Chief Engineer (or some other important
 office connected with the Red Canal) has also

aided in planning an expedition to the
 district of Country, & at present Japa proposes to
 leave here on Thursday night to be absent till
 Saturday night.

In regard to the safety of such expeditions
 & of our going up the Nile, our military friends
 say that affairs cannot remain for any length
 of time as they are at present - there is the greatest
 discontent in the minds of the Turkish men in
 high places at the enormous cost of the British
 protection & the complications of difficulties is such
 that application has been made to the government
 in England to know how the beeps here are to be
 protected or aided in case of sudden outbreak on
 them. As things are now & so long as the troops
 are not recalled English writers are safe enough
 but no one can tell what a day may bring forth.
 There was a grand Annual religious Ceremony
 today - the bringing in a holy Carpet from Mecca
 which was thought a critical time as hosts of pilgrims
 come to the City to take part in the festivities but
 so far all seems peaceable. Our births are de-
 cided for the steamer that sails on the 15th. It
 accommodates 25 passengers & the number is complete.

Some of these are at this hotel & we begin
to know a few of them. We will be so long
on board that I am looking forward to make
quite a hoard of our stateroom - pinning up
our photos & Christmas Cards & I am sure your
wife will have a prominent place for it is by much
the prettiest I have got - indeed it is one of
the best I have ever seen. Eneas too is sweetly pretty
& she asks me to send her loving thanks & all
good wishes to you.

We have not received letters from home
since Wednesday the 26th & we cannot ascertain
with any certainty where we ought to mail
to connect with the Allan line. It is most
probable that our letters while we are either
here or in Palestine will be irregular altho'
we are trying to keep weekly communication
with Anna.

I believe in justification of myself, as not
being on a shopping tour, in one of my letters to you
& boasted having passed through several cities without
making a purchase. I don't think we have kept
strictly to this, but as a farther haunt we have been
nigh a week in Cairo & have not visited one Bazaar
to believe me ever to be your obedient loving
Mother