1905

Gardiner, Dr. H. K.

Susan Hale

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March 29, 1905
Dear Doctor,

I have been very bad about writing all winter, and so punished by losing several of your kind letters. On the Nth it was almost impossible to write, and the best I could do was to keep up my home letters. In Russia it was awfully cold. I slept every night under my fur-cap and shivered all day except in the warm up on deck. I wore awfully of these Sahelians. I was awfully sick about my throat & chest, and fully expected to be done with bronchitis at any moment, but I am pulled through wonderfully, and except for coughing a little, feel myself and have taken a bath, and as I have not felt well these 12 days, it must be a trip

old lady.
Otherwise it was a delightful experience. I had no more eleven weeks on our own dahabiya (sails, no steam,) going up the river to Asyut and Assuan and Cairo, from again. There were just four of us, Me and Mrs. Eliza Longfellows, Miss, Mr. and Mrs. Eliza Longfellows, and myself, my lady Mrs. Perkins, and myself as cook and I cooks to to, the waiters and the servants and the eight foot beds, all Arabs or Nubians. There was also Mrs. Longfellows' maid, Nelly, an excellent person. Jack I guess who had the time of her life flirting with Abbas the waiter in Arabic. It was a languid dawdling life on the deck watching the Nile go by, the deck, watching the Nile go by, the palm trees, camels, embanks, huts, occasionally, catching at Reindeer temple and caverns, or visiting native towns.
To Dr. H. K. Gardiner.

March 27, 1903.

Dear Doctor,

I have been very bad about writing all winter, and am punished by losing several of your good letters. On the Nile it was almost impossible to write, and the best I could do was to keep up my home letters. You know it was awfully cold. I slept nearly every night under my fur-cape, and shivered all day except in the sun up on the deck of our dahabieh. I was awfully scared about my throat & chest, and fully expected to be down with bronchitis at any moment; but I have pulled through wonderfully. I must be a tough old lady.

Otherwise it was a delightful experience. You know we were eleven weeks on our own dahabieh (sails, no steam,) going up the river to Luxor and Assouan and coming down again. There were just four of us, Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Longfellow, my lady, Mrs. Perkins, and myself. We had 2 captains, 10 sailors, a cook and 3 cook boys, two waiters who also made the beds, and a dragonman, all brown Arabs or black Nubians wearing turbans and blue nightgowns. There was also Mrs. Longfellow's maid Nelly, an excellent person, Irish I guess, who had the time of her life flirting with Abbas the waiter in Arabic. It is a lovely dawdling life with nothing to do but to recline on deck watching the river go by, the palm trees, camels, donkeys, natives; occasionally looking at Ruined temples and carvings, or visiting native towns. I had a tiny cabin with no conveniences for writing in private, besides it was cold, cold, everywhere but in the sun on deck. I had an ice cold bath every morning at sunrise, dressed and got on deck as soon as possible—(it was slippery one morning, not real ice but something very much like frost) to see the beautiful lights on the river as the Sun climbed up into the sky. We met a good many people, had lots of jokes and fun together (I was very funny they say,) and got very fond of our sailors who are just like children, working hard, (they had to row or track on the shore when there was no wind, i.e. most of the time) always singing a weird song, and in the evening doing strange dances for us on their deck, round a little fire of coals thumping their strange drums & instruments. It is all very picturesque, unusual, wonderful—still I am glad I am out of it, and out of Egypt which is an uncanny country all tombs and dust of ages. You know I was there before 35 years ago, when in fact I hated it.

This is a very pretty place high up among the hills, with pure air, fine scenery, far away from railroads, towns, noise, dirt. There are sulphur baths, and my Mrs. Perkins is trying them for her hands which are sort of Rheumatic, with joints. She is perfectly well in every respect, with absolutely no other symptoms of gout or those things—I think it's rather silly to fuss over her joints, in fact the Doctor here says they will never be any better; but you know women love to be fussing about something. Mrs. Weedon also goes every morning and sits up to her neck in a warm tank of nasty smelling water. The two ladies chin together and have a beautiful time, and then lie an hour between blankets after it. I thought of having a swim in the tank with Polly;—but people with any heart troubles are warned off, and I thought it more prudent to keep out of it, especially as I hate warm baths, it would be foolish to have to be fished out in a limp condition.

I have enjoyed my trip much, but I guess Jamaica is a better place for Old Ladies, I have often longed for it when I was quaking with cold in the night.

Affectionately yours,

Susan.