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**DFG-Projekt "Digitalisierung und Erschließung des Nachlasses des
Ägyptologen Adolf Erman (1854-1937)"**

Brief von Norman de Garis Davies an Adolf Erman

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Cross Creek. April 28/20

My dear and beloved brother Wm,
man,

Unless your memory is suppletted and does not
go back more than a year or two, you may
remember that you sent me some time ago
your literature des A. A. E. It is now in my very
exclusive Handgefaelt and I propose to read
the second half of it among the sunny islands
of Greece, among which I hope to be making
my leisurely way in a day or two. The first
half of this most interesting book, which calls
up, page by page, all the long achievement of
Egypt was consumed by me in the sandy waste
of Kharga. So it is still performing the ancient
task of Egypt and spreading civilizing influences
in the dry places of the Mediterranean area.
I scarcely like to write to you from here lest
it should seem like the cruelty of a Satyr
sitting in the shade of a tree and sucking a
lemon in full view of a thirsty Tantalus. But
it may be too that at the right the mouth of
Tantalus might water a little bit and give
him a little fancied relief. At any rate I

Can't help myself for if I can't write to you
 at all it must be from sheer I am. And, every
 one great exertions, for I am. Also to my
 own great fear! for it seems to me that the gods
 must be fattening me up for sacrifice. However
 if a Polyglot's ring is demanded from me
 I am determined not to turn your literature
 overboard.

My wife went to Geneva with an elderly
 and very young back in a motor-car but to
 Marseille. But I refuse to travel on a French
 boat or go through France if I could possibly
 avoid it. So I take the opportunity to come on
 here, where there was a probability that life might
 be so rough that a lady could scarcely endure it.
 Thanks however to two ~~very~~ good friends, Mrs
 Arthur Evans, who is a neighbour of ours on
 Fern Hill, and an American R. B. Deager
 who has a house near Geneva in the town of
 the island I have had a most delightful
 time, first by perambulating over the mountains
 in miles and riding on the way the car
 of Dole, and then staying with Deager on the
 sea shore at Pacy-sur-Saône. Hence I came back
 by steamer to the Herminette (Lacuse) and went

Cannot help myself for if I am to write to you at all it must be from where I am. And, to my own great astonishment, here I am. Also to my own secret fear; for it seems to me that the gods must be fattening me up for sacrifice. However if a Polycrates' ring is demanded from me I am determined not to throw your literature overboard.

My wife went off to Jerusalem with another lady and was going back in a Messagerie's boat to Marseilles. But I refused to travel on a French boat or go through France if I could possibly avoid it. So I took the opportunity to come on here, where there was a probability that life might be so rough that a lady could scarcely endure it. Thanks however to two ~~good~~ good friends, Sir Arthur Evans, who is a neighbour of ours on Booro Hill, and an American R. B. Seager who has a house near Gournia in the east of the island I have had a most delightful time, first by journeying over the mountains on mules and visiting on the way the cave of Dicta, and then staying with Seager on the sea shore at Pachyanmos. Hence I came back by steamer to ~~the~~ Heraklion (Gaudia) and next

day set off by myself right across the island,
 first by automobile to the site of Gortyna and
 the next day by mule to the Minoan palaces
 of Asia Triada and Phaestos. The weather was
 glorious and the sites deeply interesting so
 that the memory of the panorama and cultural
 conditions in which the life of the ancient Minoans
 must have been lived will dwell eternally
 in my memory - bright sunshine, deep blue sea,
 green valleys, and great arid mountains
 towering high in the background and all the
 fields full of bright flowers (roses, tulips,
 gladioli, arums, asphodel, oleanders, anemones,
 etc., etc.). Existence was rather difficult in the
 Greek villages where there are no inns at all or
 such as make one prefer to lie out all night
 under a hedge. I know but a few words of
 modern Greek too. In addition to this it was ^{the} Greek
 fast before Easter and I could obtain nothing
 but bread & water and eggs. I met some Germans
 here Prof. Boschor of the German School at Athens
 & Prof. Deubner of Driburg and we heard that
 they had had to leave the inn at midnight
 and walk through the night, undressing now
 and then to disembarrass themselves of the
Zoa they had given hospitality to in the first

far from the night. Do I have warning and
arrived that village. In my way back by
Gute Kutsche) yesterday the vehicle broke down
in the mountains and I felt exhausted to
have to tramp all night twenty miles to
Cortina, but fortunately I managed another
a few miles further on and reached here
without further interference but on the way
the Informal Power - a perhaps I was the
informal guru of the case of State that I had
planned by writing to put a 25 machine
one behind it - a stalg notes. No little
privations are our and forgotten and only the
memory of the early summer and the hills
up summit of mountain remain with me and
the snows of the passes also where that
brutal race of men entered the state of
a refined existence which their descendants
have so completely forgotten. Tonight, I have
nature and dead still anthropology here
near as happy countries as in these little hills
and so the accident which was inevitable
This inevitable loss was my first adventure
between the comfortable home of Green and

few hours of the night. So I took warning and
 avoided that village. On my way back (by
Auto Kinebo) yesterday the vehicle broke down
 in the mountains and I fully expected to
 have to tramp all night twenty miles to
 Caudia, but fortunately I strayed another
 a few miles further on and reached here
 without further interference ~~but~~ on the part of
 the Infernal Powers - or perhaps it was the
 infernal gods of the Cave of Dicta that I had
 offended by omitting to put a 25 drachma
 note between its stalagmites. The little
 privations are over and forgotten and only the
 memory of the lovely sunshine and the piled
 up summits of Mount Ida remain with me and
 the low walls of the palace sites where that
 wonderful race of men invented their arts of
 a refined existence which their descendants
 have so completely lost again. Bright, joyous
 nature and dead & dull archaeology were
 never so happily combined as on these little trips,
 and as the anxieties which were inevitable in
 this inhospitable land were only brief adventures
 between the comfortable homes of Evans and

Seiges they were rather amusing than burdensome though, being rather tired after the winter in Egypt, I was not ready for any very courageous raids into the interior. ~~For~~

You must not think that all this sunshine and amusement puts me out of sympathy with you in Germany just now. The conditions & prospects in Egypt are so lamentable and it is so depressing to see civilisation cut short and barbarism recommencing anew, thanks to the insanity of the English government (for there is nothing quite so cruel and insane as philanthropy) that it made me feel, and everyone in Egypt feel also, intensely depressed as you must often (or always?) feel in Germany. I should not wonder if we have obtained now most of the knowledge we ever shall obtain (i.e. the data of knowledge) from Egypt. What is left is likely to be largely lost just when what we wanted was a refined exactness of knowledge to fill up the framework of history with exact detail and recovered nuances and tone. My own work might come to an end too. Not only that Lacau threatens to stop all tracing of ancient paintings. But when the Egyptian Government took possession of Carter's tomb by violence &

had the impudence to send me amongst others an invitation to visit the tomb I was so incensed that I replied to the (native) ~~Minister~~ Secretary of State that I would have nothing to do with those who robbed with violence and broke every law of right and decency. So I expect I am a marked man. The Government has now obtained a decision from the Law Courts that an administrative act of the Government is above all law. We have no defence therefore and must submit to everything; but I will hazard all that I wished to do in Egypt rather than pay the least deference to these brigands. I hope however that the tide of thought in England will turn again before long & that the future will not be so dark as it seems. Gross errors like this however must be dearly paid for.

I hope that the tide has also turned in Germany and that the worst at least is over, and that things go a little easier with you and that as the happy past recedes you will find comfort and hope in an increasingly improving conditions. I have not heard from brother Schaefer for a long time. I am afraid that he may be in revolt again and enduring the hard fate of those that "kick against the pricks".

Please convey my best greetings to Frau Eroman and your family.

Yours very faithfully
N. del. Davies