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

Brief von James Edward Quibell an Adolf Erman

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Geantw. 30.1.23

Heliwan, Egypt.

Dear Professor Erman,

On the 31st of December, being on a boat in the Adriatic, I reflected that I had intended to write to you for the New Year & send a minute token of goodwill, further, that I was late, also that I had little idea what the token should be. The presents I had received myself were little guide: a niece gave me a book of Massfield's poems: one sister gave me a lamp which gives a little light if one keeps on squeezing it; another a box of sealing wax and various people sent little calendars, pleasant reminders of their affection but otherwise quite useless. There is nothing to imitate. You see the difficulty. I might do my best in selection and then send you something on which you would have to pay duties and which would serve no useful purpose. So I have decided to trust your charity boldly and to send the most convertible kind of present and to beg you earnestly not to take this as an impertinence in me but just as an expression of good wishes and my genuine regard. Enough about that!

We are just back in Egypt after a leave which was not enjoyable. I had been dyspeptic for 3 years from some obscure cause and determined on a thorough overhauling, so went to a kind of sanatorium in Scotland where I was X rayed elaborately, was lent a breakfast at 8 o'clock and made to return it at 9³⁰ so that the doctors might see what I had done with it, and made the subject of many other humorous tricks. At the end the physician sent me to a surgeon who did an abdominal operation which will, in time, we trust have wonderful effects. I shall be as supple as an ostrich and diligent as a beaver, but these good results have not yet shown themselves and I am taking a month's sick leave in Egypt, slowly recovering strength. All this has made the holiday a very poor one for my wife.

If the German papers have rivalled the English in their excitement over the Tutankhamon tomb

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If the German papers have revealed the English
... the ...

You will have heard enough about it for the present. Evidently there is a great mass of stuff and we shall have some difficulty to show it in our already crowded museum.

Egypt is not so pleasant a land as it was, but the climate is unspoiled anyhow and there are some real improvements: the children play as they did not 25 years ago. and effendis often take their wives, neatly dressed nowadays, with them in the trams.

I saw last summer one pleasant survival of an earlier world: I remember wishing at the time you could see it. Firth & I were coming away from the Museum one hot day when we heard a brass band playing "God bless the Prince of Wales," very slow like a dragging hymn tune. You might not think of this air as suitable for a funeral march, but these excellent people did (perhaps because the Prince was that day in Cairo). A funeral it was anyhow, band in front, the gentlemen in red &

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yellow aprons, the blind storks in green turbans,
 the straggling crowd of indifferent mourners, carriages,
 the bier carried high on men's shoulders but
 not carried straight, sidling crabwise with
 hurried step, then more carriages and last
 of all — yes, it must have been — Isis!

She was in the form of a hard-faced woman of
 the streets, sitting on the back of the carriage
 with her feet on the seat. Her reddish hair was
 down ("artificial", said Firth, but how could he know?)
 and she lugged at it, first on one side and then on
 the other, turning now to the left & now to the
 right & evidently appealing to the passers-by.
 No one seemed surprised, but I had never seen
 this before.

"May the devil remove people who write long letters!"
 you will be saying.

Pray remember us both to Frau Erman very kindly
 and believe me to be as always,
 Yours very sincerely

J. E. Quibell

P.S. My greetings to Schäfer, too, please!

