

Monday, Nov. 9th.

Dearest Richenda, *after lunch*

Yesterday, Dan'l and I went ahuntin'. We borrowed carbines from two officers and begged 18 rounds of ammunition from the Ordnance Dept. We caught a jeep ride for about 10 miles and then hiked about looking for rabbits. We followed a ravine for almost a mile and came to a fork. We took the right fork and kept climbing. The countryside looked quite like any valley back home, except that upon close examination the soil was very rocky and badly eroded.

We passed little communities of perhaps 10 or more families. The houses were made of flat rocks and plastered with mud and clay. Around the houses were "hedges" of giant cactus of the pear shaped "leaf" variety. The plants have no distinct trunk, but they grow to 7 or 8 feet high. The native Arabs use these cacti and some very spiny ~~bam~~ ~~ble~~ to form fences around their property. Boone and I scouted several of these cacti enclosed patches, but we saw no rabbits, only signs where they had been.

About 4:30 we decided to turn back, but I saw an interesting vill atop a hill about 1/3 mile away and I noticed a weather vane on one of the buildings. Let's go and investigate, I said, maybe we can get something to eat. By this time, we couldn't get back to the field in time for supper, so the idea appealed to Dan'l. We went up the road and approached the villa from the rear. It looked interesting because of the hedge enclosed yard with olive trees and the high wall that hid everything else from view, so that we had to guess what was behind it.

We turned left around the wall and came up heaps of farm machinery parked against the wall and around the entrance *leading*

into the courtyard. Just in front of the entrance was an army car belonging to the French. As we came up a Captain stepped down from the car and asked what we wanted. We said we were out hunting. He saw our carbines and admired them. Boone let him shoot his and the Captain, an ordnance officer in the French Army, proceeded to fire four rounds. That hurt Boone, because we only had 9 apiece.

Finally we asked him if we could visit the villa. Could we buy some bread, too? Well he would see and we entered the courtyard in search of the occupant. The family living there were tenant farmers and referred to their "patron". We wanted to buy a turkey and that started the conversation. He would have to ask his wife, he said. At this point the Captain left.

The buildings looked attractive from the outside. They were of the stucco type and looked quite roomy. We visited the stable and saw some very ordinary horses chomping on hay. They didn't pay any attention to us.

From the stable we went around to the kitchen and the peasant called his wife out. The wife was pretty fat, but I could see she must have been a very attractive girl in her days. We tried to talk with her and she got quite a kick out of our stumbling French. She seemed quite intelligent, but her husband looked sort of dumb, or as Dan'l says, maybe he didn't give a damn.

The couple had three little boys, but only one was home, because he was just a baby. The baby looked to be about 7 months old, but the mother said it was 18 months. Looks kind of idiotic, says the Doc. And indeed it did. The only interest it showed was for the candy Dan'l gave it.

The kitchen was very dark and the only source of light visible was a little tiny bulb, about the size of an auto lamp. The power system was out of order we found, so I presume they used candles.

We were invited to some of the inevitable French wine and it was very good. We were given some coffee cake and altho she apologized for it, we found it excellent with its eggs and corn meal. I felt guilty about eating it, for I knew it must have been a treat to have. (They didn't have any bread to sell us which made it worse.) Boone liked the cake very much, too, but he wasn't backward about it. I ate mine slowly to make it last longer and then told him we had better leave a little money for the baby in compensation. Boone said the cake was very good, he must have the recipe. Very good cake he said. So of course we were offered more. I could have kicked him, for I didn't want to take the cake, yet I didn't want to offend them. I think now that I shouldn't have eaten the second piece. Dan'l didn't care though. We did leave them some money for the baby.

We still wanted to buy a turkey. They had some fine healthy looking chickens of several varieties--some which I had never seen alive, only in pictures--and some ducks. The woman gave us a long talk, but all I could catch was You wish to buy ----- and then soap, but even then I caught on. She wouldn't sell but she would trade some soap or coffee for a turkey. Then she said for anything to eat, for everything was rationed.

After leaving this little villa, we walked back about the way we came, except that we took the other fork back to the road. We followed the highway for about 2 miles until we came

to a town. We heard some American soldiers singing and asked them where we could get something to eat. By this time it was 7:30 and we were tired and hungry. We went with them to a little French restaurant that was dingy but fairly clean. Anyway we were too hungry to care. After waiting about half an hour for a vacant table, we sat down to a dinner of a meat broth, a vegetable stew of white sweet potatoes, string beans, and some kind of nuts, a small steak, and two fried eggs. There were 7 of us including a French sergeant. The six of them drank 5 bottles of wine.

The serving of the eggs was interesting. Fourteen eggs were fried in one huge iron skillet. It was about 8 inches deep and fully 18 inches in diameter. The handle itself was 18 inches long, too. The eggs were fried together and the part of the egg whites were raw, but we were still hungry <sup>every</sup> after the steak and plenty of heavy, dark, bread. One thing about the eggs we eat in the local restaurants is that they are very fresh and consequently extremely tasty.

Toward the end of the meal, the boys started to sing so the waitress told us that there a sick baby in the house. When the boys said here's a doctor and pointed to Boone, we thought she was just kidding, for she ducked and ran. Then we saw her talking with an older woman and later both beckoned to Dan'l who went in to see the baby. I followed too.

About all the family had to live in were two bedrooms, for the rest of the house was taken up by the big living room, the kitchen and pantry and the bar. We went thru the panty into in bedroom and thru into the other. There were a pile of blankets on t

ets on the double bed in each room. The little blonde baby girl was in ~~the~~ bed all piled with blankets. She looked plump, but very pale. Her very handsome father was there with a young baby in his arms. He was rather slight and blonde. The older sister of about 5 was there and the ~~baby~~ sick baby was 3. The mother was also small, but dark and she looked very worn and tired. Boone gave her some sulfa pills that he had with him (all of us carry them in our first aid kits) and left instructions as to how to use them. His instructions were quite ingenious. He wrote very simple directions--Nov. 7, 6 AM--one half tablet; Nov 7, 12 noon--one half tablet, et cetera. He was profusely thanked to say the least. On the way out we found an American soldier who could speak French and he found that the sick baby had just returned from the hospital and was not fully recovered from diphtheria. Then she caught a cold and her tonsils were infected. Boone advised the mother to keep the baby in bed for 6 weeks. He told me later, that diphtheria leaves the heart very weak and if the patient does not rest it a long time after all outward symptoms disappear and insists on playing or exercising, the heart may collapse suddenly. He had one such case before.

Tomorrow, we are going hunting and now that we know something more about the countryside and have found out where pheasants is and ain't, we may have better luck. We intend to visit his little patient again.

As you have probably gathered we didn't find very much, but I did shoot at a hawk and Dan'l killed a turtle.

*With all my love,*

*Lawrence*