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Haifa, Palestine

Jan.24, 1895

My dear Parents;

It always affords me pleasure in writing you; especially when my health is good and the way looks clear before me for the fulfilling of my missionary duties. When I wrote you last I was about, as I thought, to take up my abode with an Arabic family. But I was unable to find a respectable place where they wished to accommodate or where they would accommodate me- earnest though my persuasions were. Though I would have been sacrificing a great many comforts nothing I thought, would be more comforting than a knowledge of the Arabic language. A missionary is most miserable, as you might know, when he cannot talk. "Weeping because there were no more" Germans or Englishmen here to preach the Gospel to would have done no good of course. I dropped German almost entirely-I am obliged to use it in the performance of my duties and placed most of my attention in Arabic; have succeeded pretty well. I have reached the oasis, as it were, in the dreary desert of the Arabic language and am now enjoying the melodious sounds of the tongue, and can gaze on the realities instead of mirages, or optical illusions, so often see by those who pass over the desert. Cannot yet express my thoughts freely; but after he makes a good beginning in a language and can read it he is able to advance quite rapidly. It did not seem that if one can learn the Arabic characters he can do most anything, but after we pass through an ordeal we feel, or we should do, that it was our own weakness that made the trial seem so hard.

My health is splendid; and I am feeling well.

Mother, your letter of Nov. 28 was received and its contents, enjoyed of course. It came to me the day after Christmas. I passed a very pleasant Christmas. Of course "there's no place like home"-The narration in your letter of "that" buggy ride was given in your spoken language exactly and I had to laugh right good. The rest of your letter was just as interesting. Maria's young son and Ova's daughter are doing nicely I trust.