

No. 1. of 1931.

Ber. Lmo. H. 1931

January 18<sup>th</sup> 1931.

Dearest lady Maude,

"Nimanoa" turned up here on the 6<sup>th</sup> without any warning and with the Auditor from Fiji on board. Mr Eastman sent a note over about 3.30 p.m and at 4.20 we sighted the yacht. Mr E. merely said that "Nimanoa" had been heard talking to Ocean & they thought she was at Aroae. Harry had been out until nearly 4 p.m & he just had time for a meal when he had to go out to meet the yacht. We didn't know who was on board but suspected that the Auditor was. Harry was in fits as the office wasn't ready for inspection & I was worrying about dinner, there wasn't any fish nor anyone to catch it & no time to kill a chicken. About an hour later Harry returned with Mr Hamilton (the auditor) Mr Clarke & Dr Young. I had tidied the office & fortunately Mr Hamilton went to see the Scribes office first so Harry had a few minutes to get ready. The safe very nearly balanced & everything else was quite as it should be so the auditor was very pleased & said so. He was very different to Mr Clarke who makes a point of never praising anyone and swearing on every

possible, and impossible, occasion, the result being of course that most people send him bad work. The dinner I concocted consisted of Tomato soup, (Tomatoes from a tin) Salmon Mould, Tongue & peas, fruit salad with "lê ran-i-ben" (the cream made by squeezing the milk out of grated coconut.) as you see everything came out of a tin but usually I use very few tins it was simply that I hadn't time to make anything. They left again at 9 p.m. and we went out with them. The tide was ebbing and as we went out the tide rip in the passage was fairly swift, however we went out with it which was most exciting, usually we are let out on the end of a rope but that is when the tide is lower. We just went to "Nimanoa", were presented with a lovely bunch of bananas from the Ellice & a couple of tins of milk as I was running short. (Ocean failed to send my order) When we got back to the passage the tide was of course lower & the rip a great deal swifter, also it was very shallow except in the middle of the rip. They grounded the boat just outside the passage, all the police got out & then pushed us into the rip & the police proceeded to pull us into the lagoon at the end of a rope. I thought at first when they were pushing us into the race that we were going sideways when of course we should have gone over & over

but they pulled us round & we got safely in. It  
 must be a terrific job to pull in a heavy boat  
 against that swift current. The entrance is  
 known as "the side of a house" because of the  
 way the sea pours in & out & actually it is  
 uphill work going in on an outgoing tide.  
 I developed the flu two days after the "Astoria"  
 had left us & was in bed four days. I got a  
 streaming cold first but almost immediately it  
 went to my chest & although I wheezed I don't  
 think I really had asthma, after that I had a  
 wretched cough. Fortunately Harry didn't get it.  
 The day before I got ill I had M<sup>rs</sup> Eastman  
 over for the day. I fetched her in the launch,  
 which I can manage but I always take a boy  
 in case the engine stops, it behaved quite well  
 only banging occasionally because of some water  
 etc put in the petrol! Going back in the evening  
 Harry decided to come too & not to take a boy so  
 we started off gaily about 5.30 p.m. Half-way  
 to Rongorongo the engine stopped & nothing would  
 persuade it to start again so Harry had to row.  
 We discovered later that we had run out of petrol!  
 By the time we had landed M<sup>rs</sup> Eastman and had  
 had several vain attempts to start the engine it

was nearly dark. This lagoon is a mass of sandbanks & odd coral heads & has to be "navigated" & I was wondering, as I had to steer, how times we should sit on a sandbank when I saw a canoe going in our direction & suggested that we should follow it. It was a beautiful moonlight night & I kept it in sight most of the way although they went faster than we did, gliding along beautifully. We didn't stick at all which was wonderful I thought. Last Thursday I went over to see Mrs Lovett - the engine didn't bang at all so I suppose we have got rid of the water. Mrs Lovett has two children Monica who is 5 and Doline who is just a year old - a lovely baby.

Berika has put a sail on our small canoe now and we are endeavouring to sail. Harry tried first by himself as I was sure it would collapse & I've never seen anything so funny. Teikarawa put up the sail with the canoe in shallow water, as a matter of fact there wasn't any deep water as the tide was low, Harry took the rope & the paddle for guiding and started off. He sailed admirably for about 5 yds & then he gently slid off on to a sandbank & looked absolutely ridiculous. He soon got off it by wading beside it but he repeated the performance several times

before reaching the jetty. Then, in trying to get to the shore he got too far round into the wind and the whole sail mast and all collapsed on top of him. We have been out several times since then & although we are not exactly expert we haven't upset the canoe yet. The reason for this I'm afraid is that when the sail becomes unmanageable we get out & stand in the sea!

The fillings have begun coming out of my teeth now isn't it a nuisance? Harry has two huge holes & I have one small one. It seems to me that all our teeth will have to come out when we get leave. We have now got a thermometer & our temp: is nearly always  $82^{\circ}$ . On a cool wet day it goes down to  $78^{\circ}$  & on a nice fine day it goes to  $86^{\circ}$  in the middle of the day. Not an awful lot of variation! The office typewriter has arrived & is a beauty & I'm teaching etc to type correctly. We also have 25 lovely files & a small cross index so we are busy arranging things. Mr Sumble should be coming down before long & we want everything to be ready by then if possible.

A ship is supposed to have arrived at Tarawa from Sydney so perhaps we shall get some of our missing letters in a few weeks. We shall very

probably go to Arorae or Tamana on the next ship if the weather keeps good. It hasn't been really bad since Christmas but the westerly season isn't over yet.

Yes, I wish I could get too for Gilbertese but I can't. I am now writing recipes in an exercise book in Gilbertese for Mia. It is a great help & I learn quite a lot of words. He is now making flaky pastry which I taught him having found that it is about the best to make here. Short pastry is very difficult because the butter being so soft makes it too "short" & difficult to handle. Will you see if you can find any kind of powdered milk that is as good or better than condensed or tinned milk? Also of course less expensive. It would be so much more convenient & less bulky to carry round.

Feb: 14<sup>th</sup>

A sudden chance of a mail so I'm sending this off. Had a good mail on the new John Williams which is now here but I'll tell you all about it in my next letter which may arrive at the same time. Most letters have turned up & we are glad to hear you are settled in Queensy. It is 11 p.m. & Harry must be up at 4 p.m. to take the mails out to meet the Macquarie who is merely passing & picking them up.

Much love from us both

Yours Honor

No. 2 - 9/1931

Beru,

Central Pacific.

15th February.

Dear Family,

As time is short I am typing two copies of this so the main part of my letter to each family will be the same. It may interest you to know that the new L.M.S. ship, "John Williams V" has arrived and poor Harry is having a fearful time with the Mission over her Passenger License. She came via the Ellice, and Funafuti was to be her Port of Entry into the Colony. Unfortunately, for us, Mr. Anderson, the D.O. of the Ellice had gone off on a tour of the Phoenix, he is only able to go about once a year, and Dr. Macpherson couldn't do anything for them. They arrived here on Wednesday, to-day is Sunday, and proceeded to tell a long tale of woe to Harry. He is unable to give this partic lar license and anyhow this is not a Port of Entry, so he wired Mr. Grimble and he said he could give the J.W. an interim License if all was in order according to a particular Ordinance. Here the trouble started for they proceeded to ask for a License for 103 passengers. Now when they first asked for a license, before the ship left England, they wanted 24 passengers as a general rule and 43 extra up here as they put on an extra boat or two. Fiji refused and said they could only carry 24, the number they were entitled to carry with their permanent Life Saving Equipment. They informed Harry that the boats they had here were going to be permanent so that that was all right but as Harry says he doesn't know whether their boats would pass a Board of Trade examination, also they counted the launch as a Life Boat and Harry doesn't think they can. Anyhow he then discovered that they had only 40 life jackets for 123 passengers and crew! It was nearly time for Mr. Eastman to "be on the air" with Ocean so they rushed Harry off to Rongorongo to wire to H.H. (Mr. Grimble) He wired that there were insufficient life jackets and the

answer was that they could only have the same number of passengers as there were life jackets, and again said that the terms in the ordinance must be strictly adhered to. Mr. Eastman was and still is, furious and blames the Govt. entirely because he can't get on with his work, in fact the ship is useless. Really it is the Captain's fault, he should have seen that everything was in order. There are several other things too which are wrong, he lost two life belts in the Bay of Biscay and has not replaced them so he is two short. He admits, though Mr. Eastman wouldn't, that our regulations are practically the same as the Board of Trade Rules. \* Mr. Eastman is breathing fire and thunder but I don't think he has a leg to stand on. He does not seem to blame Harry which is a mercy but he loathes the Government. The latest letter from him came this morning and now he wants Harry to put in writing why he won't give them a License for a few passengers, I think 18 is all they could have at present. It is most unfair because they want this letter to show to the authorities and if written as they obviously want it done, it wouldn't mention the main source of the trouble i.e. that they asked for a license for 103 passengers, which they had no right to do, and that they had only 40 jackets. However, Harry isn't going to be done like that, he is going to make a full report in the letter with all kinds of Enclosures etc. They don't really want the license for 18, its no use to them at all but they want the reason for refusing the license to be as petty as possible. Bit mean? I hate the whole business as we are on good terms with the Eastman's and usually stick up for the L.M.S. but I don't think they have treated Harry quite fairly, they could easily have gone to Ocean when the trouble started, as it is they talk of going now having wasted nearly a week. Harry suggests we go too if H.H. gives us permission and Mr. Eastman will take us, just for a few days it would be rather fun. It really is amusing to think that this ship which I imagine is fairly well known by

\* Mr Eastman's chief grievance is that Jimanua broke all the regulations, it is perfectly true, she did but, judging from H.H.'s telegrams I imagine Suva had something to say in the matter & so he is being more strict.



religious people in England is being held up by Harry at Beru! As a very junior officer and one only deputed to give the license with instructions to adhere to the regulation, I don't see that he could have acted otherwise. The Rev. Captain, did you know he was a Rev? is not in the least a missionary. He is a regular seafaring dog and very portly, Harry says the only noticeable thing about him is that he doesn't swear. He was put on the Rongorongo staff by the people in England because Mr. Eastman said he must have extra help. He won't be any help at all obviously as he can't leave the ship too much and anyhow he is only here for a few months in a year. Poor Mr. Eastman is dreadfully overworked and is absolutely fed up with his Headquarters as well as ours. Well, enough of Missions, I hope you haven't been bored but we have thought of nothing else the last few days.

Harry went out to meet the Macquarie early yesterday, there was no sign of her when they left the shore and she didn't turn up until about 8 a.m. Harry in the meantime had been on the John Willie which is anchored out there, and I watched everything from the shore. I saw the Macquarie come swishing through the water and stop fairly near the other ship, then the Govt. boat, with Harry and the Capt. of the J.W. went across, Union Jack flying and looking awfully fine; the police row very well now. Then they returned to the J.W. to breakfast and the Macquarie steamed away with the mails. When all the mail arrived here on the J.W. it was brought ashore for transferring to the Mauno, we discovered that all our mail had been put in the Tarawa Bags and Harry didn't dare open them, there were 24. He wired Mr. Clarke and he said we could, otherwise I should have had to see my letters going on to Tarawa with no hope of seeing them for at least two and probably three months! I think all my missing letters have turned up now, the last ones were written in the middle of November. A number of Christmas letters came, all wondering what sort of a Christmas we should

have. you will know by now that it was pretty mouldy as we were not even on the same island. I helped to sort out the mails, we started at 7.30a.m. and finished at 10a.m. there were seven of us but at the end I felt as though my eyes would pop out of my head, I should not like to be in a Post Office. When Mr. Eastman was at the wireless the other day Tarawa asked him what sort of a mail there was, Mr. E replied 24 bags. This exciting conversation was too much for the Macquarie who was at Tamana and they butted in, how many bags for the North, Mr. E replied, after consulting Harry who was over there, 6 bags. The Mac. then said she would call at Bera and pick up all the mail if Harry would be outside the lagoon by 5a.m. and not later than 6a.m. These little episodes quite brighten up our existence and are the topic of conversation for days. The Macquarie brought some horrid news, that there had been a very bad earthquake in New Zealand and two towns, Napier and Gosbourne, completely wiped out. The worst of it is that that is all we here for months and the bare statement is most upsetting, it always makes me feel that I don't want to hear from the outside world at all. We had news of the R.101 disaster, an earthquake in Italy and the eruption of Vesuvius ages ago but have no papers about them yet. No papers came with our mail, though Mr. Eastman got some, so I suppose ours went to Ocean. Australia seems to be in a pretty hopeless mess and Fiji says we are to be paid in Australian currency for the time being so we lose about £100 a year. I'm afraid a petition would be no good, there are too few of us and as most of them can't see that we lose and the rest don't care it would be a washout. Mr. Clarke insists that we don't lose but as he is going home this year perhaps he will find that we are right, unless he gets the Crown Agents to send all his money home for him in which case he won't but I wonder who pays that? The Auditor agreed with Harry and said something should be done so perhaps it will. Harry is busy as usual, I have spent days typing for him and even written letters and drawn plans but there

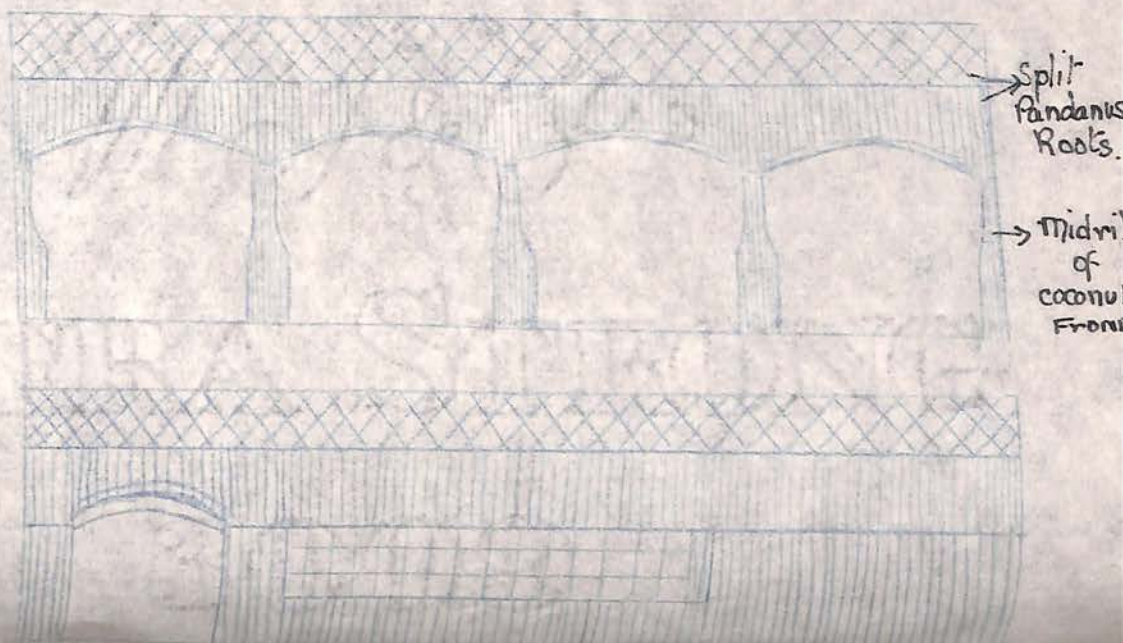
seems to be no end to the red tape, forms and returns in this Colony, it gets worse and worse. Mr. Grimble just loves making new forms to be filled in, he sits on Ocean designing them and we have to struggle with the beastly things, half of them are worthless.

The weather has been quite nice lately so perhaps we have got to the end of the westerlies. Everyone says that Beru has not been so green and flourishing for years and as they have been having rain for some years we shall probably have a dry cycle now and all my beautiful plants will die. In a drought one can't even water the plants with the well water unless it is fetched from the centre of an island as it gets absolutely salt. We have rain water tanks here and a big new cement cistern but there is nothing on our other islands. At Nilunau one of the traders very kindly supplied us but there are no traders at Onotoa, Tamana or Arorae so we have to use the well and has a peculiar smell at the best of times and even tea tastes vile. I suppose Cicely Hazlett would think I must be mad to put up with such a dreadful life but I must say I prefer it to living in a town anywhere. As for not having the water laid on we don't miss it at all and I rather like our sand lavatory, anyhow it is hygienic which is more than a good many others are. I don't think toger is harmful at all, the doctors say it is jolly good for one. We drink it absolutely fresh and diluted, sour toddy is bad but the only harmful effect I know of is that one is powerless to move ones legs! You simply sit until the effect has worn off. The only danger is that the cantharides bug may get in and I believe it proceeds to eat ones inside, but unless carelessly cut it does not get in. A very good drink is made by boiling it to a syrup and using it as a cordial.

When we come home I am going to bring you all panama hats. Harry was given one for me at Arorae, it is just the right size and I have put a plain ribbon round it, it is

beautifully made. I suppose you would pay at least a guinea for it in England and here, if it isn't a present, we pay from 2/- to 4/-. As you can imagine they are very much sort after by visitors from Ocean Island.

Did I tell you that we have started repairing the house? The dining room is being done at present and also a sort of butler's pantry which is next to it. I have designed the new room which will consist chiefly of arches. There will be four arches instead of walls opening on to the garden verandah but the other side which faces north west and gets a lot of wind and rain, will have one small arch, one long window and the rest wall. Like this:-



The actual arch is made from a best coconut palm. We had to cut down two, they cost 8/- each, and we had the salad from the new shoot, it is awfully good. A few days later we found a fallen tree which will die in time and which is absolutely worthless to a native so we bought it for a shilling and had another salad. One tree salad lasts about three days. Since then we have found two more fallen trees but haven't eaten them yet, I'm waiting for someone to bring me a crayfish. In Suva I'm told it is considered thing for visitors to eat and one is charged an exorbitant price for a tiny portion. It is known as the millionaires salad.

We had Mr. and Mrs. Eastman to dinner the other day,

I think they liked coming. Mrs. E said she was very grateful as he will never leave the station and works all the time and she was glad to get him away. We had chicken soup with dried vegetables in it, cold chicken with coconut palm salad and mayonnaise sauce, oh! fish first, sort of souffle in Pyrex glasses, apricot flan which was a great success this time, it looked nice and jellyfied and I managed to make a mock cream which could be put through an icing machine so it was decorated with little roses, and then we had oranges! I haven't told you about the oranges. I ordered a case months ago and in October a case arrived at Tarawa but the oranges were all bad so they didn't send them on. This time they arrived in good condition so were sent down from Tarawa on the Macquarie which is quicker than the Mauno, and only 2 doz were very bad; I made orangeade from 1 doz that were on the verge, sent 2 doz over to the three families at Rongorongo and kept about 5 doz which we are still enjoying, they are a treat. I don't know what they cost yet, about 30/- bob I expect but they are worth it occasionally. I forgot to order onions so we haven't had any for months, anyhow half the last lot were bad and I swore I'd never have any more potatoes as they were practically all bad. We can always get pumpkins and for a long time we had breadfruit but we are now waiting for the next crop. I am still surprised that the bean growing beautifully, it was about 6 ins. high and then one morning I found it dead the beastly woolly aphid had eaten through the stem. Now I have some tomato plants, one is about a foot high and still in a tin, I do hope I manage to get a few tomatoes. The seed goes bad very quickly even when kept in a tin and Parsley and Mesembryanthemum I have not succeeded in getting to the seedling stage. The Smylax which Mrs Eastman gave me is doing well, I very bravely divided it some weeks ago, the sort of tuber I had to cut with a knife which rather frightened me but a week later both halves were sending out new shoot

shoots. Mrs. Levett has given me nine plants of various kinds which are all growing. We paint all the empty sugar, rice and flour tins and use them as pots for the verandah. So far we have only enough for the front verandah but by next year I hope to have many more.

The Onotoa business is not finished yet, Mr. Grimble now talks of coming to finish things himself and to try a few people under English Law. He doesn't say when he is coming but I expect soon and I suppose I shall have the pleasure of feeding and housing him at Onotoa. I love having people here but it is very difficult when away from home, we can't cart all the saucepans and various other things but I don't think H.H. will mind.

I haven't told you the great news yet, Harry has been made a Deputy Commissioner for the whole Colony. Isn't it ripping? I wish Mr. Grimble would make him a proper D.O. but he won't until he has passed all his exams. At present he has no time to study law and I can't think when he will pass his exam.

I think that is all the new this mail.

Heaps of love from us both to you all,

Yours affectionately,

*James*

No. 3. of 1931

Berlin,

Feb: 16<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

Harry is awfully sorry he hasn't written yet but I can promise you it isn't his fault. He has written screeds to Mary about coming here & we are most excited about it, I do hope they come. Thank you ever so much for the bag & sunshade it is delightful, also the blue silk & the duchesse sat it is awfully pretty. Also many thanks for all the magazines & crosswords.

I enclose a list of things we want please. Do you like the plan of the dining-room? The mosquito room fills up one archway & the dining room has really three. I want the curtains etc. to be the same as the lounge in case we are moved, it will then be easier to adapt.

We now have letters all about the move, I wish we could see the new house. I am so sorry Mo & Jo didn't pass the exam for St. Pauls. Their letters were most amusing, how independent they are! Bobitt too

is growing up. She wrote me a sweet little letter which I shall answer next mail.

Mary sent me a gorgeous rug from King Otagalpa, simply lovely colouring, and Haria sent two brass mugs as a wedding present. Wasn't it nice of him?

I enclose a Samoan stamp for Mona.

Much love from us both

Yours affectionately,

Hono



1 No 4. 7/1931

Tabuki-ni-Beru,  
Island of Beru,  
22<sup>nd</sup> February, 1931.

Dearest Mother and Father,  
I thought I was never going to be able to find time to write again as more and more work kept piling up - there seemed to be no end to it. At Christmas time comes all the yearly Returns, as well as the Semi-Annual Returns, Quarterly Returns and Monthly Returns, consequently we were kept busy for a long time trying to get them finished. And then, in the middle of January the "Humanoa" suddenly appeared off the island with the Auditor for the Western Pacific on board, a Mr Hamilton from Suva. They hadn't let us know they were coming, I expect on purpose, so we were all unprepared and I had to get all my accounts up-to-date as best I could and hurry out to the ship. Mr Hamilton is a very nice man indeed but of course insisted in counting every thing he could lay his hands on, including all the money in my safe - about £500 and practically all in shillings. The safe, of course, wouldn't balance, as I had just had a frantic number of transactions in and out and no time to get things straight. However there was only 15/4 too much in it, and I had to pay that into current revenue, a nuisance as he said discovered the money was my own. As District Postmaster I have to keep a fairly large stamp stock in all denominations but luckily they all balanced out correctly. As District Licensing authority I have to issue, if required, some twenty different kinds of Licences all of which have to have their own

special books - ranging from Auctioneers and Estate agents to Dogs and Bicycles - luckily these too came right so Mr Hamilton went away happily and complemented us on the way the books were kept. We both gave a sigh of relief when he left especially as I hear that Mr Martin, a man from Fiji, who was Acting District Officer for the Central Gilberts at Tarawa, has got the sack as a result of Mr Hamilton's report on the Tarawa books.

I'm very glad indeed that Mr Martin has gone as he was one of my grievances. We were very short-handed here in 1929 and had to ask Fiji to lend one of her men. Naturally they wouldn't send any one good and at length sent Martin, who is a man of no education and was a second-class clerk in the Colonial Secretary's office in Suva earning £250 a year. He's about my age. Without consulting us the High Commissioner made him a Deputy Commissioner, a title which is only usually given to one after considerable Judicial experience, and an Acting District Officer, at a time when even Armstrong was only allowed to call himself temporary cadet in charge, and gave him a salary of £480 a year - Armstrong and I were getting £375. Having arrived in the Colony he promptly applied for a full District Officership over the Heads of no Cadets and would have got it quite possibly if he hadn't proved so incompetent and had to be sacked.

Mr Bryer is another case in point. He is an adventurer pure and simple and left England some four years ago. He drifted to Canada where he got a job on a farm in British Columbia. Getting tired of the life he got a letter of introduction to ~~some~~ the High Commissioner from

some friends and landed at Suva with, he told me, 3d in his pocket. He went to the High Commissioner with the letter and was found a job as a schoolmaster in a Fiji provincial school. He soon left that and was sent by the High Commissioner to Ocean Island as no job could be found for him in Fiji. On telegraphic instructions from the H.C. he was given the job of acting District officer, Northern Gilberts at Butantari over the head of Armstrong who had been some time in the service - this was a month or so before we arrived. Soon after we arrived he applied for the post of District officer, not as cadet, mind you, but as full-blown D.O., a job which I, as a cadet, may hope to attain to in some years time after passing stiff examinations in Law and Native Languages. Once again I was informed by the then R.C., Major Swinburne, that he thought he'd obtain the job through influence with the H.C. but luckily the H.C. retired before the application went through. I heard two months ago that Bryce too has been dismissed from the service for: - (a). Having relations with the native women of his District. and (b). Lying for a week in a native house in his District in a state of drunken stupor.

So I think one may say that the Colony service is gradually being cleaned up, it certainly is about time. Now these two interlopers have got the sack Armstrong is left as acting District officer, Northern Gilberts, Spain as A.D.O., Central Gilberts and myself as A.D.O., Southern Gilberts. Spain was a cadet in 1919 or about then but has never managed to pass his exams and so his appointment as a cadet was terminated a year ago and he was made

Temporary Relieving officer - he has now been definitely told that he must leave the service by October unless he passes his exams. Of course he couldn't pass exams, indeed he never gives the matter a thought, and so I suppose he'll go in October to the immense benefit of the Colony. Drink is his trouble and he's getting steadily worse, indeed I believe he's usually intoxicated nowadays. When Major Swinburne comes back from leave in a few months time he'll take over the Central Gilberts with Spain as his assistant. Anderson and Baverstock, the Colony's two old hands, have got the out-lying Districts of the Ellice Group and Fanning Island respectively. Baverstock, whom we met on the Lake Galewood, is very nice indeed and so, I believe, is Anderson.

I don't know if I ever told you that we are to have a medical officer for the Southern Gilberts. He has been sanctioned by the H.C. and has been on order from England for some time. Unfortunately they are having great difficulty in getting anyone for the salary, £650 per annum, though it's princely compared with ours. Gumble has, I believe, obtained another cadet from Fiji. He went down there and was offered two older ones but very decently refused them on the grounds that they would be senior to Armstrong and me. He finally selected one by the name of Hitingale who is about 6 months my junior and not yet a Passed Cadet. He is to help with the Headquarters work at Ocean Island. Mr. Clarke tells me that the Treasury are also to have an Assistant Accountant who is being transferred from the Leeward Islands

5

The Colony Staff is thus increasing daily. About a fortnight ago we got the following telegram from the R.C. — "You are appointed a Deputy Commissioner for the Western Pacific with jurisdiction throughout whole Colony as from 23<sup>rd</sup> January, 1931." It was a nice surprise as I had not expected it for a year or two more. It of course makes no difference to my salary or anything but means that I can now try all cases under the Pacific Ordinance in Council or in other words that I'm a local Judge of the Supreme Court of the Western Pacific. Most cases here are native cases and are tried by the Native Court but now, should any trouble arise with Europeans, I have to sit as a Court and try the case, whether it's criminal or civil, according to ordinary English Law. As a Deputy Commissioner I am also a Commissioner for Oaths and a Probate Officer as well as various other things.

I went round my District on the M.V. "Astoria" as Government Recruiting Agent in December. We had the most frightful weather and I was twice left on an island without food as the steamer cleared off — once on Onotoa for two days and once on Anoroa for three. I couldn't get back to Bevu till the 27<sup>th</sup> so Hona had to have her Christmas alone. Onotoa seems quiet as do all the other islands — we simply must go and stay on Tamara and Anoroa as they badly need a visit from some white person. No white has ever lived at Tamara and they are still in that stage of curiosity when they sub one's arms and neck to see if the colour comes off. They left me alone, being a D.O., but the Recruiting Doctor nearly had his clothes torn off in their anxiety

to see how he was really made. I guess Honn will have a terrible time for the first few days but they'll soon get used to her. I was besieged with applications for Divorces but was unable to grant any as by some mistake no Divorce Register has ever reached the Island. I am convinced that easy Divorce is very necessary for the Islanders now that the Missions have undermined the natives own strict code of morality. If they don't get their easy Divorce nowadays they will, as they are apparently doing at Anoa, live in a state of promiscuity, which is bad from a Governmental point of view as it tends, as far as my experience goes, to result in a lower Birth rate.

No sooner had we got the Returns and Auditor finished than the new "John Williams" turned up with a long tale of woe. They had been unable to get their Passenger License at Funafuti, their Port of Entry, as Anderson was away visiting the Phoenix Islands which are in the Ellice District. I obtained permission to give them an interim Passenger License from H.H., but when I came to enquire about their Life-saving Equipment I found, of course, that they had a totally inadequate provision of life jackets and lifebuoys. There was a fearful muddle, as they kept in hiding things from me and asking me to wire H.H. for exceptions to be made in their case but after they had lain off here for a week I had to finally refuse their License, H.H. having by this time become really annoyed with the whole business as I could tell by his telegrams. So on Tuesday they are going to Ocean Island to kick up a fuss there and if necessary to Fiji to worry

the High Commissioner. I expect in the end all sides will blame me but I really cannot see how I could do otherwise than refuse to License the ship. In any case I shouldn't be expected to have anything to do with ship Licensing, Bem not being a Port of Entry.

Mr Eastman's methods of dealing with the Government are all wrong - he's always threatening. He informed me a fortnight ago that he was no longer able to give a good report of the Government to the important people and conferences he was going to address when he got home and that he would have to inform them that the Government was no longer working with the Mission. He means, of course, the Colony Government as a whole, as he and I get on very well together and he has, at the moment, no grievance against the administration of the Southern Gilberts. I am beginning to like Mr Eastman more and more as a man, he is totally one-sided in his ideas and intolerant but a real worker, but I hate having advisory requests to me prefaced by remarks such as, "I hope you will be able to do what we ask as I should not like to have to inform any of our influential and important members at home that what I'm sure they would consider a reasonable request had been refused by you." and so on ad lib.

Eastman's supreme hatred, however, is centered on Roman Catholics. He simply loathes them. And Armstrong and Spain are both bigoted Catholics and so I suppose as, although no-one in this Colony knows anything about my religious ideas, Mr Eastman does know that I'm not a Catholic.

Three days ago we decided we must have a rest and

a change of scene, consequently we packed up and went to our Bungalow on the northern tip of the Lagoon. I did nothing but laze for two days and felt a bit better and we started back yesterday morning in the Launch. However the beastly thing gave out after a bit and I had to row the Launch home across the lagoon in the heat of the day. Consequently we both had slight temperatures last night and feel rotten this morning.

We get very little news of the outside world - my last Times is dated September the 4<sup>th</sup> and it's now February - but what we do hear is most worrying. The Government insist on paying my salary in Australian money into an Australian Bank in Sydney and as the Australian £ appears to be worth 15/- or less we lose 1/4 straight away. The High Commissioner has said that he can't - or won't - do anything for us.

I now get the princely salary of £400 a year from the Government which, being paid in depreciated currency, is worth £300. From this the Government take a compulsory £24 for a widows & orphans Pension Fund, leaving me with £275 a year to live on and support Honor.

It would be hard enough to live on that in England but here we have to pay English prices + a long freightage + an Australian Pirmage duty of 12¢ + a Colony Duty of 12 1/2 ¢.

It would be all right if we could ~~not~~ grow anything on the islands but nothing will grow except coconuts and so everything must be imported at enhanced prices.

When the "Mauvo" was here last week Burns Philp informed me that they would not take my cheques any more unless I pay 5¢ above cash prices on all goods as they won't



have anything to do with Australia - and they're an Australian firm! I'm very worried about the future as there's no way we can economise - we don't smoke and we don't drink and our food is the plainest imaginable. We can manage, I think, if we both keep healthy and don't go on any Leave, but if either of us got ill or anything unforeseen turned up we'd have to touch Capital and our Capital, being in Australia, is only realizable at an enormous loss at present. It's so disheartening, after making a really hard year's work for the Government and after living only on bare necessities with no luxuries, to find one's no better off than when one started. However everyone else appears to be in debt so we are relatively fortunate.

The only thing I won't give up books and Honor quite agree - Life would not be worth living without them. I am ~~not~~ enclosing a list of a few Books we're particularly wanting at the moment so that you'll know what to tell people who want to give us a Christmas present. Don't, unless there's something very exceptional about them, send us any books by Modern Authors - there are some Modern Authors I like, among them being Aldous Huxley, D.H. Lawrence and James Joyce, but generally speaking there's nothing in them and nothing gained by reading them. If you can will you please send me The "Hubbert Journal" - we'd prefer it to the "Grand", "Hindoo" or "Royal"

We had a lovely letter from Mary and Arthur ~~English~~ Tuckey asking how to get here and saying they'd try and come and see us. I wrote very fully giving every possible route and we do hope they can manage it - it would be wonderful.

The "John Williams" is leaving today for Ocean Island so I must stop and get the trail ready for her - Today being the

3<sup>rd</sup> March. The days absolutely fly and there is always an awful amount to do. I'm afraid this is a dull letter but we've been too busy lately to go near the natives and so there's nothing whatever to relate. Please excuse the way the ink has gone through the paper - I never noticed till I had almost finished.

with lots of love for  
your loving son,

H. D. D.

No. 5. 7/1931

The Old Residency,

Tarawa.

24th March, 1931.

Dear Family,

We have been having a most interesting time and our programme changed from day to day. Mr. Grimble and the Secretary, Mr. Leembruggen, arrived at Beru last Saturday week, spent the day ashore and in the evening we all left for Onotoa. The idea then was that after the work at Onotoa was finished Harry and I were to be dropped at Tamana and the others were to return to Ocean. However in the course of one night everything was altered, Mr. Grimble decided to make Harry Census Officer, which means a complete tour of both Groups, and invited me to stay on Ocean with him while Harry is away, about 2 months. We left Onotoa again on Friday night, arrived at Beru on Saturday morning, went ashore and I collected what few glad rags I possess for Ocean Island and we left again about 5p.m. We were then on our way direct to Ocean but the next day Mr. Leembruggen said that it wasn't much use going direct to Ocean as the ship which is bringing fuel for the census trip was not expected at Ocean until Friday and Nimanoa wanted three days at Tarawa to decarbonise, so our course was altered slightly and after a few hours we arrived at Kuria. Do you remember we went there on the way down to Beru? We had a few hours ashore there and left Census papers and sailed for Tarawa at 6p.m. We got here yesterday morning and decided to camp in the old Residency for three days but a wire came to say that the Astoria, with the fuel, is at Ocean and the Manager of the B.P.C. is leaving on her on Thursday and Mr. Grimble has to

see him before he goes. We are therefore sailing at 2p.m. and making a wild dash for Ocean but whether we shall arrive in time I do not know.

It will be a lovely trip for Harry though he will have to rush down to get to the last island before the 26th. Fancy going to every single island in both groups, I wish I were going in a way but I'm not very fond of Nimanoa, she is too skittish. All the same I was not ill from Beru to Tarawa, two days, but I lay down most of the time. Harry doesn't mind it at all which is a good thing.

I have very little time to write this as it must be posted here but as I am to be on Ocean Island for some time you should get some more letters soon. Please tell anyone who expects a letter that I really will write on Ocean but the last month has been very full, first preparing clothes etc. for a tour, then packing up my household goods and now spending nearly two weeks actually touring round.

We got a few letters on Nimanoa which I will answer next mail.

When Harry returns from this trip we go back to Beru and prepare for the visit of the High Commissioner who is supposed to be coming in July. I expect it will do be a lot of good to be at Ocean again but I'm sure I shall be jolly glad to get back to Beru. Koura is coming with me, he is a very good traveller and thoroughly enjoys it all.

Much love to everyone from us both

Your loving,

Honor.

No. 6. of 1931

The Residence,  
Ocean Island.

March 29<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest daddy Maude,

A lovely mail arrived on Friday but all the parcels have had to go to Tarawa as they were in that bag & there wasn't time to sort them. However I got the letters out of the Tarawa mail & don't mind waiting for the parcels, Harry will bring them with him. He left at mid-day yesterday & will be away for at least 7 weeks & probably longer so I am feeling very lonely. Everyone is awfully nice & M<sup>r</sup> Gumble is a perfect dear but I'd rather be at Bern with Harry than here with a crowd. We had a full day yesterday for which I was very glad. I saw Harry off, returned here to lunch, it is about  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. walk up an awful hill, then changed & ironed my evening dress; tea was at 3 p.m. & at 3.30 p.m. we all went down to the jetty to say goodbye to the Manager of the B.P.C. & his wife who have left for good. After that we went to the Sinclair's house for a cold drink, back home, a good walk this time, dinner, change & off again to a dance! The dance was great fun & I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I was booked up about 6 dances ahead most of the time & of course we all got fearfully muddled. It is nice having a large surplus of men. I wrote a short letter at Tarawa which you will probably get at the same time.

We had a record trip from Tarawa here; it usually takes 36 hours & we did it in 27 hours. We had good weather & the wind & current with us. I hope Harry will get a photo of "Yimansa" this trip so that you can see how tiny she is. I am very proud as I wasn't ill all the way from Bevu to here & even got up & sat on deck & had meals. We arrived here on Wednesday evening, about 7 p.m. & were able to get ashore at once. Koua absolutely hated the flat case & howled dismally. I don't think he could understand the ground rushing along when he wasn't moving himself. M<sup>s</sup> Gemble had a dance on Thursday evening for the McIntocks farewell. It was awfully nice until mid-night but then one or two men got a bit messy & I didn't like it a bit. Fortunately M<sup>s</sup> Gemble came along & told me to slip away whenever I'd had enough so I went to bed. It is quite unusual I'm told for anyone to be drunk, there was nothing of <sup>the</sup> kind last night but I was thoroughly scared at <sup>the thought of</sup> being left here before I knew it wasn't the usual thing.

Thank you ever so much for all your lovely presents, I love the bag with the sunshade & so does everyone else! The embroidery you sent me to do is very pretty & also the material for pyjamas. Harry was very pleased with the books. All the parcels, except those mentioned in this last lot of letters, have arrived, I don't think anything is missing. It is good of you to send us so many things & we love

mail days. This last mail we got 1, 2, 4, 5 of this year, I don't know where 3 is, probably gone to Tarawa. No. 6, posted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February got here on the 27<sup>th</sup> March, wasn't that good? I have just remembered that No. 3. was written by Sir Walter & not numbered so they have all arrived. The big calendar arrived & is a beauty, thank you very much. The Liberty silk is sure to be in the Tarawa bag & I shall get it two months hence, I only hope it doesn't get spoilt. I'm so sorry Dorah has gone, she must be mad if Jim has actually told her he doesn't want her, especially as he has made no attempt to save anything to make her a home. Imagine marrying a man who doesn't want one! Does the R. C. church object to engagements being broken? I can't see why. The holdall sounded delightful & Harry managed to <sup>open</sup> one parcel bag open & there on the top was the holdall. We both think it ripping, thank you ever so much for it. Harry is using it this trip & I know it will be invaluable. I am longing to see the woolworth things, the list looks most exciting. I am writing this in the island room & M<sup>s</sup> Grumble has been practising on the piano but at the moment is interviewing a woman who hit one of the orderlies with a bully beef tin & gave him a nasty cut! The High Commissioner sent Harry a ripping letter about his exam, at least it was sent to M<sup>s</sup> Grumble who was asked to inform Harry. He even noted the high percentage he got so Harry is very bucked. He is going to read law this trip & I hope soon gets that over.

Ever so much love from

Honor.

P.S. Harry will be having a glorious time more or less boss of the yacht! I only hope they get round quickly but the Captain is very trying. He is so afraid of running into an island that he usually misses them altogether or turns up somewhere else & wastes hours finding the correct one. The other day we were to go to Nukunau & then Beru, they are very close, but he arrived at Beru next morning & there wasn't time to go back to Nukunau!

I enclose negatives of the Beru house & garden <sup>from the negative</sup> also some new ones. Please take what you want, & forward to mother as she has not seen them yet. You won't give any snaps to anyone who might write articles using our photos will you as Harry is going to use them? I am sending one lot of prints, so that you know what is what.



No. 7. of 1931

The Residence,  
Ocean Island.

April 9<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

Harry has been gone very nearly two weeks now & is still in the Gilberts. I sent a short message to him to-day by wireless & hope he will be able to send me a word but the boy on "Nimanoa" is pretty hopeless. In a few days they will be out of range & for a month I shan't even know where Harry is. Two months separation with no letters is horrible. When we get back to Bevu, we shall only have about a month together & then Mr. Gumble intends to take Harry to Onotoa on the warship with the High Commissioner. I do think warships might carry women in a place like this as I shall have a month alone on Bevu. I am having a glorious time & have such heaps of time to do that I haven't much time to feel lonely but I hope Harry won't be more than two months. Ocean Island is very nice for a short visit but I don't want to live here. There are heaps of dances on nowadays & picnics & I am typing the Estimates which take up most of my day, so I am kept busy. Mr. Gumble & I go for a walk most days after tea, he is a dear but not very well & gets very depressed. He has been waiting for a transfer ever since he came back & I wish, for his sake

that he could get it soon.

What an awful mess Australia seems to be in. The British Phosphate Commission is in a bad way now owing to the depression & they have sacked 20 white men this week, some of them quite old hands & goodness knows what will happen to them. 250 Chinese are also to go, notices were served on them to-day & the mechanics refused to take them; there may be trouble but I hope not. Our revenue, naturally, is sadly depleted owing to this reduction, just as the new scheme of salaries were coming in too.

Harry had two letters from Col. Hodson last mail in which he says that if Harry wants to try for a Ph. D. They will allow him 2 years field work + 1 year at Cambridge. He is very keen on it but Mr. Gimble wonders if it would not be better to be called to the Bar. I suggest he does both, I expect they will discuss it on his return. If he decides on the Ph. D. I reckon that we shall be leaving here about July 1933 - taking about a year's leave. Mr. Gimble is trying to get us a better passage grant which, if it is passed in Fiji will entitle us to £400 after 6 years or £200 after 3 years resident service, which is jolly good. We used to be under the impression that we could never have more than 10 months leave even if we had earned more but it is quite wrong & I don't

know where Harry got the idea from. For the purpose of examinations they let one have 2 years, but without pay after the 1<sup>st</sup> year. His being made Census officer was ripping wasn't it? I know M<sup>s</sup> Grimble thinks a lot of Harry, says he is dependable & a hard worker. I wonder if Armstrong minds Harry getting the job as he has been here 6 months longer. He is nearly out of the Gilberts now, I had a note from our Wireless Office to say they were on the way to Nukunau.

M<sup>s</sup> Grimble has reported to the H.C. that "Nimanwa's" propeller is wobbling & also that the copper plating is in a bad state & the H.C. may order them to Fiji from the Ellice for repairs. Something is always going wrong with that ship, its absolutely sickening when you think of the price £24,000. If she does go to Fiji M<sup>s</sup> Grimble says Harry will have to come back via Sydney, a nice trip for him!

Heaps of love to you all from  
Honor.

No. 8. of 1931



RESIDENCY,

OCEAN ISLAND,

GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

If you don't get two letters by the same mail you will get them very close together. Mr<sup>s</sup> Grimble & the High Commissioners are still arguing about whether "Nimanoa" is to go to Suva or not. If she doesn't she is bound to get very badly worm eaten but that is his look out. I naturally do not want them to go to Fiji as I don't know how long Harry might be kept waiting for a ship. He must have reached the last of the Ellice Islands by now & in four more days will be starting back and should reach here by the end of May.

We had a small dance here last Saturday for the "Cactus Club." It is only a rag but great fun. Capt & Mr<sup>s</sup> Holland & I were initiated into it at the dance, the ceremony is a wonderful one. Two of the men do the dancing, one is dressed in

very loud check trousers things, a black coat, a  
huge red bow + a tea cosy + the other has  
a collander tied on his head with red  
ribbon, a large yellow ruff, raggy white trousers  
+ a cooks apron with a beer bottle opener +  
two huge sausages appliqué'd on in red + he  
holds a toasting fork. The latter does all the  
speechifying etc. + the former is as solemn as a  
judge the whole time. The new members stand  
in front of this pair, (the one with the fork stands on  
a chair) + each person is given a plate, a sausage  
+ a dollop of Tomato sauce. After swearing various  
mad oaths the sausage rolls are eaten + the  
new members <sup>are then</sup> brothers of the club. The whole thing  
is done with much ceremony + shouts of  
laughter + is really rather funny.

This next Saturday there is a dance at Uma,  
one of the B.P.C. villages + the following Saturday  
Mr. Gemble is having a Piffama + Flannel dance.  
I am making a blue + white pair of piffamas



RESIDENCY,  
OCEAN ISLAND,  
GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

blue trousers & a white blouse piped with blue. When I was getting my things ready to come here I showed Mr Seimble the Chinese pyjamas you sent me & said we ought to have a pyjama party. However, he didn't say he would & I thought it was <sup>no</sup> use bringing them here where they might get spoilt so I left them behind! I couldn't bring my marshall trunk so I left most of my silk things behind.

We have made a papier mache' tray, it is very easy & most effective. We have painted it black with a yellow design.

Something like that

Yellow flowers with orange centres? →



Mr Seimble wants to me to make some bowls. He is a perfect dear & is always thinking of

things for me to do (& he always helps) so that I shan't have time to mope. Koura did a

wonderful thing yesterday. I was going out to tea & I did not want him to come, unfortunately just when I thought I had escaped unseen he came tearing down the path. I just turned round & said, "No, Koura, I don't want you, go home," & he didn't attempt to follow me, he watched until I was out of sight & then, I suppose, trotted back. I have never told him to go home before so it was very good of him.

The new Treasury man, Mr English, has arrived & is terribly nervous. He even put a match in his mouth the other day instead of his cigarette he was so dithery! He is rather nice all the same. We had quite a good picture show on Monday & I thoroughly enjoyed it, except for the mosquitoes.

No news I'm afraid, I'm longing for Harry to come back, it will be 4 weeks on Saturday since he went & I expect he will be away another 6 weeks.

Heaps of love to you all

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

No. 9. of 1931



RESIDENCY,

OCEAN ISLAND,

GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

May 20<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

A Mr<sup>s</sup> Smith who is on his way home is posting this for me in Hong Kong which should, I think, be a fairly quick way home. The B.P.C. are sending a whole heap of Chinese labour back & there is a direct boat. I hope the postmark, if you look at it, doesn't give you a shock! Harry is back at Tarawa and should be here on Saturday or Sunday & I am endeavouring to keep calm. I have thoroughly enjoyed my visit & have had a ripping time. I missed Harry horribly at times but Mr<sup>s</sup> Grumble is such a dear, & lonely too, & he always finds a way of cheering me up. We have done a lot of handwork, he makes ripping designs & loves making things so I have had a great time. He says he will go & see you when he goes home, early next year he hopes, and I'm sure you will love him. I know that we shall be very, very sad when he goes. He is always saying nice things about Harry, not only to me & it makes me very proud



of him. <sup>(Harry)</sup> He calls us his two children & I am his fifth daughter!

I have had quite a lot of tennis, I brought out over our ring & made a court here. This afternoon Mr & Mrs Cookson are coming for tea & a game. I have also played Ping Pong & had several jolly bathes. Did I ask you to get me two more rubber "Kovis"? I should like them very much.

Amail arrived last Sunday but I did not get any as there has been a ship wreck to Tarawa but Harry will bring them over to me. I am looking forward to my parcels too which I have waited so patiently for. I have been very bad here & written very few letters but there was always something else to do or someone to talk to & the feeling that one hadn't long here. I don't want you to think that I don't want to go back to Beer, I do, but it has been nice to see people again after a year away from everyone. I think it has done me a lot of good -



RESIDENCY,

OCEAN ISLAND,

GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

I shall go back refreshed. I hope the trip has  
 done Harry good but I am afraid it must have  
 been pretty hard work. Any how he must be  
 brown by now. The poor dear sent me a wire  
 when he got back to Beem & asked me to reply  
 unfortunately I didn't get it until after a  
 second wire, from "Nimanoa", in which he was  
 getting rather alarmed, however I answered the  
 second one within a few hours so I hope he's happy.  
 They have had to spend several days at Tarawa,  
 cleaning the engines & waiting for the ship to  
 bring up fuel & I expect Harry is very fed  
 up but it couldn't be helped.

The weather is keeping fairly nice though  
 squally at times. Monday night was very stormy  
 & when we got back from the pictures, in the  
 pouring rain we found the house in absolute  
 darkness & had no electric light that night,  
 we had to use candles.

21st

There was great excitement last night with the Chinese & a bit of a fight. Poor Mr Grumble got a flying stone in his mouth which knocked out a tooth & he had to have a stitch in the gash. The watched coolies got hold of a chunk & tied him to a post & proceeded to kill him. The European in charge of the location rang up H.H. who dashed down with about 30 police fairly close behind him. However, he arrived first & began to untie the man, the Chinese pulled him off & then the police arrived & there was a general scrimmage. They rescued the man & got him out of the location & it was not until Mr Grumble was making his way out that he got hit. The row started about 6 p.m. & we didn't get to bed until nearly 12 p.m. it is only 6.30 a.m. now but I couldn't sleep so I got up to finish this. We had no electric light again last night



RESIDENCY,

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GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

which was a nuisance as they were not sure whether there would be any more trouble. They have to get about 300 Chinese on board to-day & we are wondering if there will be any trouble, a lot of them do not wish to return to the land of their birth!

We had a very pleasant tea party yesterday afternoon. I couldn't get any eggs to make cake until about 2.30 p.m. but I hurriedly made some then & they were quite all right. We were supposed to go out in the evening but couldn't of course. Mr<sup>s</sup> Lookson, who was here, & I went down to Mr<sup>s</sup> Methuen when the fun began & later Mr<sup>s</sup> Holland turned up there & we all waited together. What a din those Chinese put up, shouting, yelling & banging gongs!

I have collected 25 different kinds of plant to take back & hope I get them home in good condition. They are all in tins & boxes & well started but there is no shelter on deck.

I have made several frocks for myself & for  
Mrs Methven & really think I am getting  
better at it. Binding etc. seems to behave  
better nowadays, and the flared skirts turn  
out quite nicely.

Please forgive such a scrappy letter.

I hope you are all flourishing & enjoying  
a really warm summer by the time this  
reaches you. I have missed Sir Walter's  
birthday I'm afraid but please wish him  
many happy returns for me.

I am hoping that Harry will be ready  
to take his first Law exam, it would be  
lovely to get that over.

Heaps of love to you all  
from

Your loving

Honor.

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10a-10. of 1931



RESIDENCY,

OCEAN ISLAND,

GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

May 28<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

Harry arrived on Monday morning looking very fit indeed & having thoroughly enjoyed his trip. I believe we are to leave for Beem direct, to-morrow & should be home again on Monday. Harry has all kinds of exciting things for me at Beem, presents from the Ellice, & I am longing to see them all. I shall have two visitors for a week or ten days so there will be an awful scum as everything is packed. Mr. Blackie, the Headmaster of Bairiki school is coming ~~back~~ down to talk to Mr. Eastman & Mrs. Podmore & her baby are also coming to Beem & all return on the "Mauno" which is expected about the 8<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. P. is the Engineer's wife.

I have received one or two parcels now but there are more on the ship. The liberty silk & the bag have come & I don't know how to thank you enough. The silk is perfectly lovely, I am going to make it up to wear for the High Commissioner's visit.

it is just what I need. M<sup>r</sup> Grumble wants it for  
lamp shades, perhaps I'll give him the oddments!  
the bag is lovely too but the colours in the silk are  
gorgeous. Thank you ever so much for all the  
salt & pepper shakers, scissors, ribbon, sponge bag etc:  
I don't know what I should do without you to  
get these things for me. I haven't seen the  
Woolworth things yet I think Harry dumped  
them at Beem on his way down.

My dance last Saturday was a great success  
M<sup>r</sup> Grumble says. We had 30 guests - I did the  
whole thing, supper included with the help of  
H.H.'s cook, Kiew Kireua. It was my first attempt  
& I was glad it went off all right. I hope  
the High Commissioner's lunch is a success too, I  
feel awfully nervous about it. I shall have to  
train a couple of boys to wait but they are sure  
to lose their heads at the last moment. I badly  
need some training in the duties of a hostess though  
H.H. says I'm perfectly all right but I shouldn't  
be so nervous if I had more confidence in myself.  
When they come ashore all the Mission people are  
to come to meet them, I think I can manage  
drinks all right, then they go back to their



stations & we have lunch,  
I haven't room for everyone as  
my table will only seat 6.

RESIDENCY,

OCEAN ISLAND,

GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

Then the H.C.'s party go to Rongorongo for tea & to  
the R.C. station after tea, & I suppose we might  
go out to the warship for dinner but I don't know.  
Mr Gemble is coming to spend a few weeks with  
us on his way back from the Ellice after the  
departure of the H.C. & then we shall probably  
all go on the recruit in September & H.H. will  
return to Ocean Island.

May 29<sup>th</sup>

How do you like my new pen? We went  
down to the store yesterday & found some Parker  
Duofold pens & pencils so Harry gave me a pair  
of blue ones for my birthday, I rather like the  
thin ind.; it is a medium one too, not fine.  
I am writing on the bed so don't judge by the  
writing! We are really off tomorrow I think  
& I shall be very glad to get back to Beem  
though it will only be for a couple of months.



Then I am to be deprived of Harry for about 3 weeks, he and H.H will return together & then we shall on go on the recruit. Those are the arrangements at present.

I have been very good and have written about 10 letters but still I am behindhand. Please thank Maudie for her last letter I will try & answer it soon. Harry is at the office most of the time & the rest of it he is chasing some officer or other. He has promised to write to you by the next mail.

Heaps of love from us both

Yours affectionately

Honor.

No. 12 of 1931


Tabuki ni. Beru,  
Beru.

July 5<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

The L.M.S. expect their ship the "John Williams" in a day or two & they will take our mail to Fiji. We have been back here a month & we had Mr. Blairie staying with us for 3½ weeks. He was a very nice person to have in the house as he was very useful & also he had a good appetite & wasn't fussy about what he ate. He sandpapered <sup>friends</sup> & polished our dining room table & it looks quite nice. We are very busy getting the place ready for the High Commissioner's visit, the whole place is in very bad repair & will take another year to mend but we are trying to get the worst bits put right. The kitchen is simply falling to bits but our Director of Public Works is such a slow bird that it has taken him a year to order the material. It should have been built by now but we shan't get the new stuff until September at the earliest. The perforated zinc for the mosquito room has arrived but the D.O. Tarawa hasn't sent on the timber so we can't build that either! We have had a new vegetable garden made & also an extension to our flower garden & a very pretty archway leading from one garden to the next. I am planting tuberosus cuttings in the new place & I do hope they will grow well. I have tomatoes, sweet potatoes & a melon growing in the vegetable garden but everything seems to grow so slowly. I have at last got some mesembryanthemum

seedlings but they seem to have come to a standstill. However they are still alive & perhaps I am impatient. I also have zinnia, petunia, escallia, portulaca & phlox seedlings but they don't seem to grow much. We had over 100 little pink lillies out last week, they are rather like large snowdrops & I brought them from Ocean, they grow very well but they always make a good show for three days & then there are no more flowers for about a month.

We have moved into the new lounge & are very pleased with it. The rafters have been painted black & we hope to have coloured Gilbertese patterns painted on them later on. I have had two screens made from Ellise mats which have brightly coloured designs woven into them & they look ripping. I have made a large blue dumpty with coloured rounds of green, yellow & orange appliquéd on the top & stuffed it with two Gook. pillows, a lot of pandanus leaves & a few newspapers. I am now trying to make a lantern lampshade but it is a bit of a job. We are also painting the oars of the Gook. boat with the Gook. colony colours, they look rather nice, like this . Harry wants some blue covers for the seats & I think the whole outfit should look quite smart.

We have collected & bought 70 chickens now but still only get from 2 to 4 eggs per day! Mr Blaikie is going on leave in September & has promised to send me some white leghorns which will make a lot of difference.

All the woolworth & de Poidevin things have arrived, thank you very much. Some of the toys got rather smashed but everything else was all right. I gave a ball, a month organ, the sea-plane, two

pencils & two lavalavas ~~away~~ as prizes at the children's sports we had on the Prince of Wales' birthday. They were rather fine sports really & Mr Blackie, being a school master, gave invaluable help. Uria made about 20 large doughnuts which we smeared with treacle & flour for the bun eating race. Harry took a photo just before the race started, I wish he had taken one a little later as it was the funniest thing I have seen for a long time although the kids were absolutely disgusting! I think the onlookers enjoyed it more than the competitors, they shouted & roared with laughter. We had a three-legged race, a wheelbarrow race, musical bumps for the girls, a pillow fight on a pole over the water & a blind race. In the latter everyone was blindfolded & then Teikarawa rushed about the beach calling "Yakomai" (come here) he dashed to & fro among the children & the child who caught him won. It was quite good fun. There were canoe races for the grown ups & as usual, everyone agreed that the person who passed the winning post first did not win. It always seems to me that in a Gilbertese canoe race the canoe that gets home first never gets the prize, they always argue for hours about who has won. Usually they want to have the race a second time but they are not allowed to because if they had it twice they would want it a third time & so on we are told.

Harry is badly in need of some more khaki stockings, they are not worn out but each time he leaves me & natives wash his stockings they shrink them hopelessly. He likes his woollen stockings better than anything & even wears them with trousers!

I am reading "The Bible, Christ + Modernism" but when Harry starts to argue I feel absolutely helpless. These books do not carry their arguments far enough + I have not the book knowledge that Harry has + once he has torn ~~to~~ shreds the facts in the book under discussion I'm absolutely finished. What I need is some of the books from which the quotations are taken.

12th

I meant to write lots more but simply couldn't get time. Your mail is just closing + H.F. has been + gone. They arrived late + we had an awful rush but he + everyone ~~else~~ was awfully nice + things went well. He is now at Rongorongo. Have not had time to open mail but have looked at Mary's + she says they are coming in Feb. Perhaps we'll go to Sydney or perhaps they can come to Ocean + we shall all come back here together. H.H. is casting us to Ocean in about 3 weeks. We might even go with Mary for a short leave, we shall see! ever so many thanks for junk which I have looked at. I'm afraid I usually start on the parcels! Enclosed is a list of B.I. books we already have, I sent for some. Also enclosed is a plan of our boat station.

Heaps of love from  
Honor.

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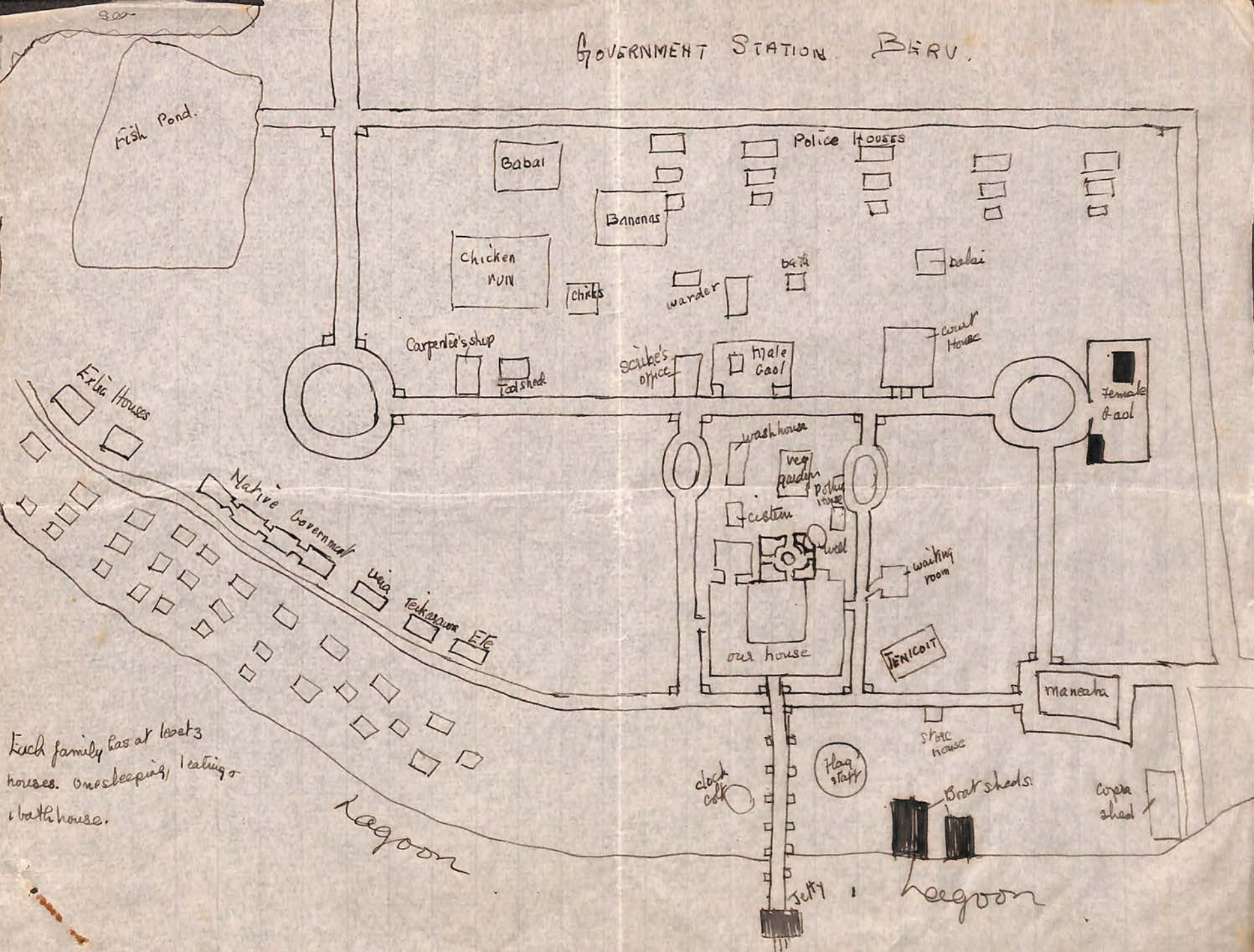
No. 13 of 1931

July 18. 1931

The John Willie did not come after all but is expected by the end of the month, I believe she has gone to Samoa first.

Work has progressed marvellously since I last wrote & we are beginning to feel that the Govt. station is really worth looking at. It is so nice & clean, quite bark like & the Police houses which are being rebuilt as they were all in a very dilapidated condition are shooting up & look ripping. We have confiscated two Babai (pronounced bob-eye with the accent on the first syllable) pits from the Native Government as they wouldn't have them seen to & we have had them planted out & generally cleaned & tidied. My old vegetable garden too is being remodelled & is once more a banana pit. We have also been trying to find the sea wall along by the Native Government houses, it was absolutely buried beneath piles of leaves & rubbish! It looks fine now but only after days of work & numerous bonfires. They are a dirty lot & we get awfully tired as one of us has to see what they are doing, practically the whole time, you almost have to tell them each time what bit of rubbish to take. I will draw you a plan of the Govt. station. I don't think I have sent you one before. We have had an awful week counting various figures in the Census papers, we are very nearly counting in our sleep.

GOVERNMENT STATION BERU.



Fish Pond.

Babal

Bananas

Chicken Run

chicks

warder

bati

Dalai

Carpenter's shop

Tool shed

scribe's office

Male Cool

Court House

Female Cool

wash house

veg garden

posting house

cistern

well

our house

waiting room

TENICOT

maneaba

Shack house

Brat sheds

Cocoa shed

clock colt

Flag staff

Jelly

Lagoon

Lagoon

Each family has at least 3 houses. One sleeping, eating or bath house.

Native Government  
via  
Tehkaxoon Etc

Eria Houses

No. 14. of 1931

Tabuki-ni-Beru,  
Island of Beru,  
7<sup>th</sup> August, 1931.

Dearest Mother and Father,

You must have been wondering if you were ever going to hear from me again, but I expect Honor will have explained how I was rushed off at such short notice to take the Census of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands. I quite enjoyed the trip, though three months on the little "Nimanoa" is a bit of a strain. We have been busy now for weeks working out the Census results in our spare time and it's a terrific job as I am preparing tables on the Analysis of Races, Age Groups, Religions, Nationalities, Birth Places, ability to read and write and many other facts. As it's the first Census ever taken in our Islands we have to devise everything ourselves and there are no precedents to fall back. We finished the counting of the people by Islands and sexes about a fortnight ago and it worked out at:-

Gilbert Islands = 26,528

Ellice Islands = 4,074

This is a larger total by some thousands than was expected & gives the Colony, including the out-lying Islands of Ocean, Fanning, Washington & Christmas, a total population of about 33,000.

1926 figure

29,950

Increase 3050% in 5 years.

10%

29,950

3,050



Roughly speaking the Races have worked out as follows.

Natives = 26,199  
 Europeans = 93  
 Mongolians = 44  
 Half-Castes = 192

26,528  
 23,428 in 1926  
 Substrata only argument

But actually I have given up the meaningless term "Half-caste" and am in process of classifying all Half-castes as "European-Micronesian", "Mongolian-Polynesian", "Polynesian-Micronesian" and so on. That seems to me to be the only anthropologically correct method.

The Religious Census for Natives has worked out as:-

Protestant (L.M.S.) = 13,610  
 Roman Catholic = 10,992  
 Pagan = 1,597

I cannot imagine where the 93 Europeans are to be found - some of course are merely respectable Beach-combers - they don't live down our way I'm glad to say.

I was very lucked at being given the census job as it should really go to some senior official. However Mr Gumble was good enough to say that I was the one who was likely to make the best job of it. We first went to Ocean via Tarawa where Honor stayed with Mr Gumble, then I went on back to Tarawa alone and did the census, from thence to Butaitau with Armstrong, whom I fetched from Abovarg in a little open sailing boat - we had quite an exciting all-night

sail across the sea from Abauang to Tarawa where we loaded "Nimara" and went north in her. From Butaitare I walked down the Central and Southern Islands from Morana to Arora alone and then cut across to Nanumea in the Ellice Group. From Nanumea I walked through the Ellice to Nui which is a Gilbertese Island in the middle of the Group.

at Nui I dropped Tomniko, whom we now employ as an Anthropological Field-Worker, and very good work he is doing too, now, mostly in Material Culture - but more of him later.

Then to Vaitupu where I met Mr Kennedy, the authority on Ellice Anthropology, who is in charge of the Government School on that Island and thence to Funafuti where I met Mr Anderson, the Ellice Islands District Officer and Dr Macpherson, whom you already know of. Mr Anderson was very nice and I stayed with him for nearly a fortnight, waiting for the Census night to pass so that we could start the return trip collecting the Census Papers which the Native Governments were distributing to each Householder. Mr Anderson's great failing is that he cannot keep off the Gin Bottle - he was so drunk the night of my arrival that he forgot to give me anything to eat and just lay there in a Coma, about two in the morning, I believe, he woke up and staggered to bed with all his clothes on but he was up drinking bright and early

the next morning. I had to<sup>4</sup> pretend I'd had a splendid meal as otherwise he'd have been so upset, being the soul of hospitality, but actually I was jolly hungry.

I sent "humanoa" down to Nukulaelae with Ete, my interpreter, to take the census there and went myself to Vaitupu on the "Makoa" where I spent about a week with Kennedy discussing Anthropology. "humanoa" picked me up there, though not before I'd had time to get a bout of filarial fever - the great curse of the Southern Ellice. He had it about every month since then but each time the attacks are milder since one cannot be re-infected in the Gilberts. In Kennedy's case it has lead, as it so often does eventually, to Elephantiasis, and his leg is enormous at times - but then he has been in the Ellice since 1922.

at Nui we picked up Tomiriko again. The people had made a great fuss of him, coming from the islands they'd left in their canoes ten generations ago, and they'd killed a pig in his honour every third. However he had found time to obtain much of the genealogical and other information that I required.

Up again through Nukunono, Nantamango and Nanumea and then to my own beloved Southern Gilberts again. I was quite glad to be finished with the Ellice as the people are quite overpowering in their welcome. At each island, ~~the~~ except Fuarafuti where they are more or less sophisticated, the programme

was more or less the same and was roughly as follows:-

When the ship anchored the people would all come on board, the younger ones all swimming out through the breakers in a noisy band and the elders coming in their canoes. Everyone would be covered in flowers and wreaths - around their hair, neck, waist, arms and legs and everyone laughing and chattering at the same time. I'd go ashore in the native Government's canoe and usually get quite soaked in the surf. There are no passages through the reef on the northern islands and you have to go straight over on a large wave, everyone paddling and yelling for dear life - with luck the same wave will take you high and dry up the beach much the same as in my own islands of Tamana and Uroae.

Once ashore I'd proceed to the D.O.'s Travelling Bungalow where the business of the visit would be gone through with much talk, after which I'd have to go round admiring their village and babies. When this was finished the entire population would come to give a ceremonial dance of welcome. Everyone would be dressed up for the occasion in their best Grass Skirts and covered in flowers and wreaths. They'd start a dance about a quarter of a mile away and at the end of each dance they'd march forward a few steps. Nearly every grown-up would hold a present in his or her hand, either a piece of Taro, a hat, Grass Skirt, chicken or something similar. When they got near enough during each

dance some girl would dance forward towards me holding a present, or rather waving it around her head, and some one of my party, Interpreter or Orderly, would have to dance towards her and endeavour to obtain the present, she however preventing this by waving her arms and dancing around the place. After a few minutes of this she'd let him get the present and both would dance back again and the whole thing would start once more with the next present.

When all the presents had been given they would gradually dance into the house, the noise getting louder for each dance till when they were all in it was simply deafening. During the final half-dozen dances the girls would be in a semi-circle around me and the men in the far background, this being an embarrassing time as the girls, getting excited in the dance, would invariably try to kiss me on my arms and hands and literally covered me with their wreaths till you could scarcely see me for flowers, chiefly Hibiscus and Frangipani. (I'm told that they don't always want to kiss their guests but that my fair hair and youth proved too much for them!).

Suddenly, when the noise was overpowering, they'd all flop down and some elder would begin a long and flowery speech to which I had to reply in the same orate manner. When this was finished they'd all clear off with elaborate expressions of good-will,

but this wouldn't end my ideals by any means, for the girls of the local school would be sure to want to give a second dance and they were, if anything, worse than the villagers. As the Polynesians are totally devoid of any morals such as one understands them in England some of the suggestions they make in all good faith and innocent faith take one's breath away at first but if one lived among them I should think one would soon accept their happy philosophy of life.

From Anrae we waked back again through the Southern Gilberts, where I took the opportunity to do my District work, and Central Islands to Tarawa where we re-fuelled; thence to Butantani where we picked up Armstrong and brought him down to Tarawa again. Thence to Ocean, where I stayed a week with Mr Gumble and back again to Bera with Honor.

Since we've been at Bera we've been working from morning to night as there are all the aneans of District work to be made up, the Census to be done, H.E.'s visit to be prepared for and all my Anthropological work to be continued.

With regard to Anthropology everything is going fine. I wrote to Hodson about my Ph.D., which as you know is my great aim in life, and said that as the rules of the Cambridge University Research Board necessitated nine full terms residence

at Cambridge I was afraid that I'd have to prepare my Thesis for Glasgow or some American University. I also outlined the Thesis—"The Social Organization and Function of the Maneaba in Micronesian Life"—and the results I had obtained up to date. He wrote back two letters in which he says "I don't want you to go elsewhere but to stick to us for I'm sure you're on a good thing . . . . The thing is well worth a Ph.D." and much else. He also interviewed the Board of Research Studies and we've had a letter from them in which they state that they'll consider, on Hodgson's recommendation, counting 2 of my years out here as 6 terms of approved Research, leaving me only 3 more terms to complete at Cambridge. My idea is, naturally, to complete 2 more years out here and then come home on a year's leave, during which time I can complete my 3 terms at Cambridge and finish off my Thesis. With a Doctorship in Anthropology a future of congenial employment is assured, most probably within the Colonial Service.

We now employ, as he's mentioned before, a full-time Anthropological Field-worker, and I find him of the greatest assistance though like all natives, he takes a day to do what we'd do in an hour. We've got all the Old Men of the Island down here with their wives and they've been living for two months in the Maneaba beside us. Whenever I can spare the time we have them in to discuss some

Native Custom or Technical Process and I really believe we are gradually getting as deep into Gilbertese life as any educated European has been. The old men are very happy indeed down here as they sit around in the Maneaba all the time and tell interminable stories of the old days - everyone of them was an adult before the coming of the Government or Mission and so we can get the information we require from them without difficulty.

As the experiment has been such a success we intend it to be a general rule that whenever we land at an Island the old people are to come down to the Government Maneaba as our Guests. Here we have 2,000 Government Coconut Trees as well as my wife's land which she rents and which gives her about 20 huts a day for general household use, and so we have no difficulty in feeding them and we occasionally give them rice and fish and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a stick of Tobacco a day.

Hana has got the Lounge looking really beautiful with mats on the floor and Marshall Island mats on the tables and 2 beautiful Ellice Island Mat Screens - the walls, made of Coconut leaf fronds & Pandanus roots tied together, are covered with string Figures and decorated with Rins, Swords & various native artifacts. The whole room, and it's a big one, is full of objects of material culture and it would be difficult to find a European object anywhere.



Yesterday we took a series of Photographs illustrating Dance Dress and Adornment both male and Female, Fighting Kit, walking out dress male and female & before & after the first Pregnancy and method of scraping Pandanus. We're sending them down by the Warship and I sincerely hope they come out but everything photographic deteriorates so in the climate.

Though I usually use an Interpreter with the old men owing to the technical words they frequently employ I find I am becoming able to dispense with one in the office - I'm simply longing for the time when I can do without one altogether, as does Mr Grumble. Homer is doing very well indeed on the language and manages to get along quite well in an ordinary conversation. I intend to apply at the first opportunity to be examined for my Final Examination in Higher Gilbertese which no one except Mr Grumble has ever succeeded in passing. Talking of Examinations reminds me that I'm sending on a copy of a letter recently received from Mr Grumble re the last one - I hope it will stand me in good stead if ever the question of promotion crops up.

We're fearfully busy getting everything ready for the High Commissioner's visit which is on Wednesday - only 2 more days so naturally we're at our wits' end. We've gone to a lot of trouble over the Station so I hope he'll like it but it is going

to be a terrible ordeal for all of us, especially for Honor. He's to come ashore on Wednesday morning with the Commander of the Warship, Mr. Gumble and Mr. Vossess, the Secretary to the High Commission. He gives a speech to the people in the Maneaba in the morning and inspects the Government Station; lunch with us and then ~~to~~ to Rongorongo & the Catholic station. Then back here and we have dinner with him on "Laburnum".

at present he's at Tarawa from whence has just come the following telegram to upset our happy home:-

"4<sup>th</sup> August. Following from Resident, Tarawa. Begins - On my return from Ellice I propose take you Ocean for special temporary duty Baraban Land Affairs. Your absence Bern District will last not less than four months - Ends."

So once more on our travels - we've never been allowed to stay quiet in any one spot yet, since we've been in the Colony, for more than three months at a time! We're very upset at having to leave Bern again but naturally I'm very lucked at having been chosen once more over the heads of the rest.

The Phosphate Commission are in process of expropriating large tracts of Phosphate Land from the Barabans, who have refused to sell. When the High Commissioner visited Ocean Island last week the Barabans all made a final appeal to him and this telegram is presumably one of the results. The whole question is extraordinarily delicate and thorny though as Land is my

speciality I am glad to be given an opportunity to get on to it so soon, especially as there is no one at the moment to succeed Mr Grumble as Lands Commissioner - everyone seems to imagine they're going to get the job, especially Major Swinburne, <sup>411</sup> but there's absolutely no-one who would spend 5 minutes learning the natives' Land Customs which are intricate and involved.

That is what absolutely infuriates me - nearly every official in the Colony appears to consider that the natives exist simply to minister to their wants and are inferior beings not worthy of the slightest consideration. Mr Grumble & myself are, I believe, commonly referred to as having "gone native" or being "on the mat" whatever that may mean simply because we are interested in the natives as natives and not simply to the extent to which they can imitate inferior whites.

We promised in a written agreement made with the natives in 1892, when we brought the Flag, to respect their Native Customs and ever since then every white official, almost without exception, has set himself out to deliberately break that promise. This example of white man's treachery always makes me boil as the natives are so harmless and, being divided into islands, so helpless. I always think the missionaries are, in this respect, preferable to the white officials.

The missionaries are designedly out to smash all native things in the interests of a Western Religion but the officials do it out of sheer laziness - they simply haven't the energy to

attempt to think from the natives' stand-point but are doomed to think white for ever with all the racial prejudices which that entails.

Hona and I went over to Rongorongo last week for their Annual Prize-giving. Hona gave away the Prizes and afterwards gave quite an excellent speech, at least it presumably went down well as we've been invited to open the big new Mission Church when it's finished.

11<sup>th</sup> August.

To-morrow is the High Commissioner's visit and we are in the midst of the final preparations so I must end this letter and get the Mail Bags and Letters Bells ready as there will be absolutely no time to-morrow.

Mr Gumble will say good-bye to the H.C. at Funafuti and then come back on "Nimanoa", picking us up on the way back so letters should be more frequent in future unless the Phosphate Commission close down temporarily owing to World Depression - they are threatening to.

All the people of the Island have turned up today to camp and wait for the H.C. and the noise is terrific at times in the Naneaba as the old men of the Southern Naneabas are arguing that the Clans of the Northern (Tabiang) Naneaba are new-comers and have no right to have a say in Island affairs. This statement is hotly contested by those of the Clan Buanke who are the leaders of

the north, and are, I suppose, really new-comers since as far as  
I can calculate from Genealogical Tables they arrived about  
1400 A.D.

Love from  
your devoted son  
Harry.

No. 15. of 1931

Bairiki

Tarawa.

Sept. 10<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

I think I told you in my last letter that we were to go to Ocean Island for a few months. We are now on our way, we arrived here this morning & Mr. Gumble expects to stay a week. The more I travel on "Nimanoa" the worse I seem to get, I simply dread it now & it is just nerves I'm sure although she does have a pretty lively motion. I am writing this on my knee in the wind as the Tarawa mosquitoes have found me already.

We had a fearful rush with the High Commissioners, having wired that they would arrive at 8 a.m. They didn't turn up until 11.30 a.m. Poor Harry left the house at 7.15 a.m. as he said he "must be on the spot to meet them when they arrived & it takes about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an hour to get out to the anchorage. He was out in the blazing sun

from 7.15 a.m. to 12.30 p.m. & got awfully burnt, his face peeled for about a week but fortunately it didn't make him ill.

At 9 a.m. although there was still no sign of the ship, the Catholic father & two sisters turned up at the house to meet the H.C., fortunately I had just finished changing.

At 10.30 a.m. a letter came from Mr. Eastman in which he said that he had been in touch with the warship & they said they would <sup>not</sup> arrive until 11.30. I was just sending the letter with some drinking nuts & an umbrella to Harry when the cry of "Sail ah" went up. I was in fits as I had been counting on an hour before lunch when H.E. was supposed to be talking to the people in the maneaba, in which to put a few finishing touches to things in the kitchen. Eventually the party arrived at 12.30, the missionaries were introduced & went away immediately & to my relief H.E. went off to the maneaba saying he would like lunch at 1 p.m. I dashed to the kitchen & found that Uria (or at least 5 other people who were helping!) hadn't got nearly as far as

they should have. Anyhow the party didn't return till 1.30 when everything was ready & although the boys were simply petrified things went fairly well & everyone seemed to enjoy their meal. We had several native dishes, made in my kitchen, for them to try & they were really interested. M<sup>r</sup> Gemble tells me that the H.C. was still talking about them when he left the Ellice! On the day, H.H. whispered as he left that my lunch was most original! We had two kinds of soup, chicken with vegetables in it & breakfast soup, then little fish moulds & green peas. Cold chicken followed with coconut salad, potatoes & beetroot & mayonnaise sauce, breakfast & two native dishes which were much appreciated. Strawberry trifle (tinned strawberries) & Almond Pie & another native dish finished the meal. H.E. tried all the native dishes & wanted to know how they were made. Five men came ashore, H.E., H.H., the Commander, the A.D.C. & H.E.'s Secretary M<sup>r</sup> Vaskey. They were all very nice indeed except the Commander who



appears to have been horrid all through the trip. He wouldn't have us on board for dinner & wouldn't let any of the officers come ashore for tea although he was ashore all day. It was such a rush that I hardly spoke to H.E. except at lunch & he didn't even have time to see all the Government station which was disappointing as we had worked so hard to get it nice. However he was very pleased with what he saw & said that our opera was the best he had seen in the Gilberts. He asked the natives if they had any complaints & they said "no" much <sup>to</sup> his surprise & greatly to Harry's pleasure! Altogether I think it was a success.

Last month I gave away the prizes at Pongorongo school. I had to give a short speech which was rather an ordeal but I didn't attempt Gilbertese. Mr. Eastman translated for me & made the speech about three times as long as I did. I do wish they wouldn't dress the men & boys in coats, collars & bow

ties! They look so horribly smug too but I suppose they do some good. They sang a few songs & hymns very nicely, of course they won't allow the women to shout through their noses as they usually do, & their voices sound quite nice.

Harry held an examination for the post of Assistant Scribe just before we left Beu. Four men entered & didn't do too badly. One man put that Samoa, Solomons, Tahiti, Raratonga, Manahiki & Nanumea were in the Ellice Group! Harry had various kinds of questions, arithmetic, geography, general knowledge & questions which would test their powers of reasoning. One was, what did they think was the reason that the Govt. gave 1d. per rat's tail and one answer was:—"so that they can sell them & make a profit" & another "Truly there is no usefulness in this custom & it should be discontinued"!!! No one gave a sensible answer or thought that it was for the good of the natives & their coconuts.

M<sup>r</sup> Kennedy, the education man from the Ellice whom I expect Harry spoke of in his last letter, is

with us, he is to take charge here while M<sup>r</sup> Blaikie has leave. He is very keen on anthropology, but mostly material culture & he has promised to get string figures for me when he returns to the office. He & Harry talk anthropology all day. We had two days at Tahiteua on our way from Beu, to inspect, measure & photograph a row of stone pillars M<sup>r</sup> Lemble had seen there some years before. We set off for the spot one morning but on arrival found that they had all been destroyed, about 9 months ago the Magistrate said. It seems probable that it was done by the mission & M<sup>r</sup> Lemble & the others are simply furious. This wanton destruction is quite unnecessary surely, we might just as well go & push over & generally wreck Stonehenge. Tahiteua is a tremendous island, about 50 miles long & divided up into dozens of little islets. I was very thankful for the two days ashore as I was feeling pretty desperate & couldn't even manage to keep any liquids down. We had a two hours canoe sail from the boat station to the place where the

pillars were & we went in three canoes. Harry & I went together & had awfully nice natives to take us. We all started off together & we won easily although the canoe threatened to collapse about half way. One of the ribs broke & the sides started to wobble but the boys patched it up. Going out to Nimanwa in the evening we won again, sailing is great fun.

Well, M<sup>r</sup>. Kennedy is going to try & make his speed boat go & I want to join in the fun. He also has a marvellous wireless set which he has made from old kerosene tins & other junk chiefly. He says it didn't cost more than £5 & he can transmit & receive with it! Walter would be interested I'm sure. His wife is in New Zealand & when he was in the ellipse they used to talk to one another every night, morse of course, & he will do so here when he gets things fixed up properly, rapping isn't it?

Heaps of love from us both to you all

Honor.

not 1932 - 1931

1932/10

The Residency,  
Ocean Island.

10th October. 1932

Dear Family,

Time, as usual, is short so I am writing a duplicate letter as you will get more news that way. We are to stay at the Residency at any rate for the present, later on we may go to an empty house, but as Harry is more or less working with Mr. Grimble and I am helping him write up some Gilbertese myths and legends it is much better for us to be here. We like being here of course and H.H. likes it too I think. Every evening H.H. and I do translation, he translates, all his stuff is in Gilbertese, and I type it out. He says he will probably have me in his office presently to take dictation or notes and to draft letters for him, it sounds horribly difficult but will be good experience. He has never caught up with the correspondence since the year that Major Swinbourne was acting when things got into a hopeless

muddle. Harry has started on the Land work but it is a very slow business. Ocean Island doesn't seem to suit him at all, I don't know why, he isn't ill but always seems to be feeling rotten, it is probably because all his interests are in the Group and he hasn't got properly settled down here.

WE went to a fancy dress dance at Una last Saturday night, H.H. and Harry did not dress but I went as a Gilbertese with Grass riri and all the accesories made by one of the women who came from Beru with us. And what do you think? I got the prize for the most original costume! I may state that I went as a modern Gilbertese in that I wore a red all-in-one garment under all my finery. I also wore a necklace of human teeth which was given to Mr. Grimble last time he was in Tarawa; I wore about four other necklaces as well and found them very hot, I am going to have a photo taken.

When is somebody going to send me a fashion book and some patterns? I am nearly in tears as I have not had any for months and months and I must make some

frocks soon. I have asked Mrs. Thickett to send me a pattern for an evening dress as I wanted it quickly. She got a Table Tennis set for us and it is a jolly good one. My yellow evening dress, which I really have not worn very much, has become speckled with reddish spots but it will have to last a little longer. I should not recommend that Colanese material for the tropics, I almost wish I had got the Colanese Ninon or whatever they called it. There is a private dance to-night to which we are invited, I rather hope there will be no more for a little while.

The Bernice Bishop Museum of Honolulu are trying to send some American anthropologists here and Mr. Grimble, Mr. Kennedy and Harry are all wild about it. They may be able to stop them coming as there are three people working here already, H.H. sent a telegram to tell them we had enough men here so we are hoping they will change their minds. They can hardly expect us to give them accomodation, interpreters and anything else they happen to want when they are taking away our one interest .

We shall be due for leave in a few days time but we do not know when we shall take any, we shall wait another six months at any rate and possibly longer. We have heard a little news of England since we have been back here, all of it very bad. I wonder if it sounds worse than it really is, if not we are indeed in a bad way. The worst of it is that we hear just a little and then no more for some time and people here don't seem to care at all. It is most difficult to find anyone who will discuss England and yet there are quite a lot of English people here but they are so wrapt up in their own daily affairs that nothing outside seems to interest them. Then there is the other type, like Capt. Holland, who won't let anyone even suggest that everything in the Empire isn't quite perfect. As a matter of fact he is not quite as bad as he used to be but he once reported Mr. Blaikie to the Resident Commissioner because he said it seemed rather a pity that the Duke and Duchess of York should have so much money spent on fitting out a



suite of rooms on a warship for them when the nation was so hard up and they could have gone with out any loss of comfort if they had refused to have had things done so luxuriously. He didn't even suggest that the trip was unnecessary and he seems to me to be quite a loyal man but Capt. Holland is quite hopeless <sup>where</sup> the Empire and loyalty are concerned. Surely we can admit that things are not going well without being accused of being unloyal to our country. Capt. Holland and Mr. Blaikie, both in the Educational service, had an awful row at Bairiki because Mr. Blaikie refused to call Capt. Holland "Sir" at every odd moment. The matter was reported and there was an awfully strained atmosphere for some time. I think there was something to be said for both parties, Mr. Blaikie's manners, in my opinion, are not all that might be desired but I also think that Capt. Holland was an idiot to tackle him the way he did. However you will be bored with our petty quarrels.

The cretonne frock has returned from Beru, thank you very much. I like it but it is a good deal

too big and I have not altered it yet. Please thank  
 Maudie very much indeed for the travelling mirror, I  
 had not seen one like it before and think it is  
 ripping, just the thing for me here. The <sup>negatives of the</sup> snaps  
 which Mr. Boys sent you have stuck at Beru for some  
 reason or other so I have not seen them yet and do not  
<sup>know</sup> which turned out. Did I thank you for the snaps?  
 They are very good indeed and I was very glad to get  
 one of you and Sir Walter.

Mr. Grimble still hopes to get his transfer  
 very shortly and in any case is going home in January  
 so you may see him about May. We shall hate him  
 going, I know I shall weep he has been so good to me  
 and is such a dear. He thinks it most unlikely that  
 Major Swinbourne will be made R.C. in fact says he  
 won't, he may act for a short time but even that  
 may not come to pass. He has told us the next  
 R.C. will most likely be a man from the Solomons,  
 a man he knows and likes and thinks is just the man  
 for here. From what the H.C. said to him it seems  
 fairly certain that this man will get it, it is very

cheering to know that we are almost certain to get someone nice.

I believe there is to be another ship in a few days so you should get another mail very soon. We hope you will all have a very happy Christmas, we are pretty certain to be here and there will probably be a few festivities.

With heaps of love from us both,

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

No. 16. of 1931

The Residency,

Ocean Island.

18<sup>th</sup> October. 1931

Dear Uncle Arthur,

I thank you for your letter of May 23<sup>rd</sup>, it reached me in the middle of August. I spent April and May on Ocean Island while Harry did the census of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands, he went round in the colony yacht and had a sipping tour. We returned to Beve on June 2<sup>nd</sup> but two months later had a wire to say we were to go to Ocean at the beginning of September. We expect to be here until January when we hope to return to Beve once more & Mary & Arthur should be up here in March. It will be lovely to see them and if at the last moment they find they are unable to come up we might be able to go to Australia but it is doubtful if we could get leave, or a boat to take us at such short notice. Harry is doing land work, ownership etc: and liking it very much, it is just the kind of work he loves.

I am sending you a photo taken on Ocean Island. It shows the details of the canoe making rather well & I hope will interest you. You will notice how the planks are sewn together and the way in which the outrigger is attached. It is the most extraordinary outrigger I have seen & must be peculiar to Ocean Island, there are none like it in the Group.

We have been having very dry weather and the islands are beginning to suffer from drought; people here think it probable that we shall have no wet season this year as there have been a number of wet years & a drought is about due. I have not heard from Mona or Joan for a long time, little villains; I suppose they have grown out of all recognition by now.

With love from us both and all best wishes for Christmas and the New year.

Yours affectionately,  
Honor Maude.

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No. 17. of 1931

The Residency,  
Ocean Island.

20<sup>th</sup> October 1931

Dear Sir Walter,

We had three long letters from you last mail, that is the one we received at Tarawa as we have had none since and there is no news of any ship coming up just yet. There is not much doing in the Phosphate Commission these days, they reckon to load one ship a month instead of 3 or 4 and they have sent several hundred Chinese back to China, a number of Gilbertese back to the islands, 20 or more white employees have gone, and all salaries have been cut. Our revenue in consequence is sadly depleted; we lose on the Phosphate and also the tax on Chinese. However I think we are probably better off than most people. Harry was very pleased with the pipes and particularly likes the short stumpy one. People out here smoke a frightful lot of cigarettes and I'm thankful Harry doesn't; it must cost pounds besides being so bad. Most of the women smoke a good deal too but I haven't acquired that habit yet.

We have been here nearly 4 weeks now and Harry has got well started on the land business. At present he is in one of the villages, registering claims and endeavouring to find all the owners of the various "pieces" of land. He takes his lunch, and Kouira, with him and comes back about 4.30 p.m.; he seems to

like the work but it must be a very tedious business. These natives are so horribly suspicious and think the Government want to trick them all the time, just because they made preposterous demands when the B.P.C. wanted to buy their land for mining and they were compelled, after years of haggling, to sell at a fair and reasonable price. The leaders of the opposition are L.M.S. Pastors, isn't it dreadful? Mr Eastman ought to sack one man who is particularly bad but he doesn't; his teachess seem to get above themselves and quite beyond Mr Eastman. Harry is very anxious to get finished here so that we can return to Beeru and get ready for Mary and Arthur. The wretched Census Report isn't done yet; Harry can get no assistance; Ete being useless as he is ten out in every hundred, ~~so~~ we have to count everything ourselves and as we are being given various other jobs the Census hasn't been touched for ages.

You must have been very glad to sell the bungalow but it is sad to think how that bay has changed, it used to be so lovely there. I hope you have a sea side bungalow when we come home. I wonder how it will feel to be back in civilisation again, I think I shall be petrified of the traffic; Harry says I shall want to come back by the first ship & refuse to leave the islands again but I don't think I shall! I am writing to Mary to catch her in Sydney, we think that Burns, Philp's steamer or rather chartered ship, which comes up to Tarawa every 3 months or so is the best for them and there will probably be one in March. Mr Blackie has just gone down on leave, he lives

just outside Melbourne, and as Mary mentioned in one of her letters that they would be going there he has promised to look them up and give any advice he can. He will be returning about March so they may come together, anyhow he can help much more than we can as he is on the spot & knows the people in the offices. He is an Australian & really quite nice, I hope Mary doesn't dislike ~~them~~ <sup>Australians</sup> on principle!

The snapshots Mr Boys sent you were taken at Onitwa. I sent some of Beu and some of canoes sailing and I don't remember hearing if you got them. Last mail I sent you a photo of "Nimanwa", I had only the one print so do you think it could be copied in any way for Mother? I enclose a snap of Ocean taken from the hill above the Phosphate Commission's works, it is a very good picture. Next mail I shall have some other snaps, also Ocean but very good; they were taken by a Mr Croft who sells them, for pocket money.

There is an epidemic of 'flu here at present, only a mild form I believe, ~~and~~ we are not allowed to have the Cinema.

I have had a very tender & aching arm, I'm told it is neuritis so I hope it will soon go again. The jerks in my writing are due to the fact that I have just started to hiccough!

We went for a great scramble with Mr Gimbe a few days ago; we were looking for an old Gilbertese platform of stones which used to be a sort of altar on which various rites were performed, unfortunately we lost the path through the bush and spent about 15 mins. crawling through bushes and over



pinacles, the latter are awful things, all covered in very sharp spikes. Some are huge masses of dead coral quite 30ft. high and most unpleasant things to get lost in. We were fortunate in finding another path but not before I had scratched my arms + legs + broken my walking stick + M<sup>r</sup> Gemble had torn his shirt. Some years ago one of the Government officials lost his way amongst the pinacles just at sunset + he had to spend the night there, I suppose he found a smooth gully to lie down in but imagine the crabs! There are swarms of them.

We have four native girls staying in the compound, all of them are about 22 years of age + they are most amusing. Two are over on a visit to relations + the other two do washing for M<sup>r</sup> Gemble + for us. One of them is always playing practical jokes on people, friends or otherwise, she is very broad, not really fat, has a very deep voice + a very infectious laugh. When we were all out the other day she stood in the passage near our room + called Teikarawa (in my voice I'm told!) and was highly amused when he answered "yes, madam" and went dashing off to find me. She also got a walking stick +, entering by the front door, walked along the verandah very heavily, tapping the stick as she went; when she arrived at the end where her friends had been sitting they all disappeared thinking it was a visitor. When going for a walk she will often say "Now, if I say anything queer don't contradict me", and she tells the most amazing stories

to anyone she meets and they believe every word!

We are having a small dance here on Saturday so I must make arrangements for drinks etc. After living at Beu it is most difficult to remember orders, which have to be sent in by 2 p.m. or we get no meat the next day.

I shall soon be trying to make Christmas cake & puddings but I don't know what to use instead of suet.

With love & best wishes for a happy Christmas from us both.

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

1932/13

The Residency,  
Ocean Island,  
October 23<sup>rd</sup> 1932

Dearest Lady Maude,

I hope you will forgive a short letter this mail as I have been writing Christmas letters, also I think I have given Sir Walter all the news there is.

I have posted a small parcel to you and hope it arrives safely. The small tray is supposed to be made in China but one good lady here has assured me that the things we get here come from Birmingham! I don't believe it as we get the loliest Chinese embroidery, obviously hand made + certainly couldn't be made elsewhere for the price + if we get those why not everything else? I got two "sets" the other day, night gown, petticoat + knickers, hand embroidered silk; the silk is good + thick + the embroidery gorgeous 3/4/- per set, I don't think that was extravagant of me do you? It will be my Christmas present from Harry. I suggested getting some to send home, I thought Mr Seimble would like some for his wife, but he says he did once ~~but~~ and they rotted. He says he had to keep his here for some time before taking them home

and I don't suppose, knowing him, that he had anywhere alright to keep them. I wonder if M<sup>rs</sup> Portius has the same thing, as this store also had those scissors in little cases that she used to have. Of course we don't usually get these things up, only about once a year so I was lucky to be here.

I keep forgetting to ask Harry if he would like the Chamber's Encyclopedea you mention in one of your letters & he won't be back before the mail closes so I'll have to let you know next time. That blue & white frock you sent me with the little coat is proving most useful, I have worn it several times already - usually minus the coat, but we have had several chilly evenings lately, the temp. went down to 75°! Did you get a letter asking you to order more khaki trousers for Harry? The poor dear needs them badly & I hope each mail time that they will arrive. He is wearing the grey suit he was married in, for afternoon affairs & semi-evening, it is just the thing. What a frightful scrawl! I'm so sorry but I've written 22 letters this last week or ten days, some of them fairly long ones. I've got Mary's letter off, full of directions & requests. I hope she won't have

a fit when she sees our shopping list but it is such a blessing to find someone who can get little things, like dental floss, for us. I'm sending shoes to her to be mended too & asking her to try & get me some new ones with them as a guide. I wish they wouldn't keep bringing us back here, shoes last no time at all.

Heaps & heaps of love from us both and all best wishes for Christmas & the New Year.

Your loving

Honor

P.S. We've had some snaps taken, H.H. Harry, me & Kouza. Hope to send you a few next mail.

The mats for Mabel & Maudie are Gilbertese.

I have forgotten to get a cheque from Harry but please will you send 2/6 to each of the following?

$\frac{1}{3}$  Mona. Joan. Bobett. Anne. Alick. Timothy. Doreen.

Betty Hibberd. for Christmas as we can't get P.O's now because of the exchange. Also please send

$\frac{1}{2}$   $\frac{1}{2}$  to The National Magazine Co. Ltd., Good Housekeeping Needlework Department. 153, Queen Victoria Street. E.C.4. I

$\frac{1}{3}$  sent them stamps which they wouldn't accept. And 1/3d.

$\frac{1}{2}/5^0$ . to Barratt & Co. Ltd. Northampton, I sent too little for a pair of sandals. Many thanks.

No. 18. of 1931



RESIDENCY,

OCEAN ISLAND,

GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

November 10<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

We had a good mail from you a few days ago, we have only had letters so far & as I haven't been down to try & persuade Mr Bentley to let us open all the Tarawa mail for papers & parcels. I wish he'd do it without having to be asked as a favour every time; Mr Gumble says there is no reason why I shouldn't have everything, I think it's a bit mean to expect me to wait for months while they send my parcels half round the group. Harry told Mr Bentley he'd do the sorting & everything but he refused to let him, now I've got to try & if he still says "no", Mr Gumble will tell him not to be mean but I hope Mr Gumble won't have to be brought into it as it would be rather unpleasant.

I am enclosing a few snapshots, the views are very good but those of us were taken rather late in the afternoon. Koua is awfully good in the one of us sitting on the steps, he is a bit out of focus in the close up & I don't think he felt very comfortable with Harry hanging on to his tail. I have another snap, a long one, a view of the new harbour they are building at Uma; it is only for launches & cargo boats of course.

You seem to have had a pretty bad summer & some very bad weather. The Jersey papers are full of these floods & the thunder storm. We are beginning to need rain really badly, the large tank here is empty, we have three others but I don't know how much water there is in them. It is very difficult to make the natives realise that they must be careful & I spend half my day scolding about water.

later. Ah, that moment had an awful row with M<sup>r</sup> Gumble's cook who has been on his own too



RESIDENCY,  
OCEAN ISLAND,  
GILBERT AND ELLICE IS. COLONY.

long & resents my presence.

I'm afraid I'm going to have trouble with him although I got H.H. to tick him off and I do hate it so, it upsets me thoroughly.

We have an Archdeacon Atkinson from Tasmania staying with us at present. He is just on a visit but I hope he stays some weeks, he is ever so nice and it is ripping to have proper services again. We had Communion service last Sunday, the first I've had for 2 years. We also had evening service, we have to use the European school room which is rather small but it holds 40 at a pinch. There is no electric light so we had hurricane lamps strung across the room, there is no piano or musical instrument of any kind but as there were 30 of us & the hymns all well known ones we <sup>made a</sup> great noise & I think everyone enjoyed it. Last Saturday we arranged to have tea here for anyone who cared to come & meet the Archdeacon but owing to the short notice (he only arrived the day before) I think most



people were engaged anyhow only 6 people came  
+ I had prepared for 20! It was rather  
a disappointment but we enjoyed the cakes  
anyhow + they lasted a nice long time.

We took the Archdeacon to see the native dancing  
on Saturday evening. He asked if he might  
accompany ~~to~~ us as we were going + of course  
we were delighted, it will be ~~so~~ such a blow to  
the L.M.S.! Well, the old man loved it + said  
he thought it was wonderful + perfectly harmless.

We have the two minutes silence here this  
morning + afterwards drinks here, about 20  
people I suppose, hence the awful scrawl  
as I must get things ready. H.H. is such  
a terror he didn't tell me till this morning + there  
wasn't any beer on the ice, as I was keeping it  
empty for drinks for the dinner for ex. service men  
here to-night.

Hugs of love from us both

Your loving

Hono?

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No. 19 of 1931

The Residency,  
Ocean Island.

Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> 1931.

Dearest Lady Maude,

A mail is just in with two lovely letters from Sir Walter & a ripping lot of snaps. The two houses look awfully nice & what a gorgeous view you had from the holiday one. I don't think I'd know Mona, Joan or Bobbett but the baby is a perfect duck. We have just said goodbye to our Archdeacon & are feeling rather sad, we only had him for 10 days & he was so nice. H.H. & I went down to the jetty & then decided to go on board with him & I've never been up such a gangway, it was almost perpendicular! Coming down I asked H.H. to go first. The ship seemed tremendously high out of the water too about ten times as high as "Pumanoa". However the Archdeacon had a really spacious & very clean cabin & the crew seemed to be very nice. One of them, not knowing who Mr. Trimble was, asked him to smuggle a small parcel ashore for a Mr. Croll & H.H. laughingly consented. I bet they'll tease the man about giving a parcel to the Resident Commissioner to smuggle ashore!

We have had a nasty jar this mail, our gas works debentures have fallen from  $6\frac{1}{2}\%$  to  $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ ! The bank advised us that it was a safe investment & we put everything in it; of course it is safe but it is Lang's government <sup>who</sup> have compelled them to reduce interest as gas is a "public utility"; presumably the government take the difference in ~~income~~ taxation.

If that condition lasts I suppose that will mean another year before we can go home. I wouldn't mind if they made gas cheaper for the poor wretches who are starving but I don't suppose they have. Mrs Grumble, who is still in Suva, was having a very difficult time when she wrote as the French wouldn't accept an English £ note.

Ever since the King formed the National Party things seem to have looked up in Australia & particularly since the election; we have had several ships & know that at least 2 more will arrive during the next month or so. I have not had any parcels yet but hope there will be some for me when they open the Tarawa mail. I went & asked Mr Bentley if I could have papers & parcels & he said he wouldn't open them without H.H.'s authority; I got that all right so I hope there will be no more fuss. The amusing part of it is that when I was here before & Mr Clarke wouldn't let me have parcels, Mr Bentley said he would let me have everything when Mr Clarke had gone on leave!

We have had no rain yet & the natives are all saying they don't expect any; of course, the hotter & drier the island gets the less likelihood there is of rain, it merely passes over, or rather passes on either side, & rains into the sea. The Chinese stole 800 gallons last Sunday, the silly asses, and now they are shorter than ever & they have to carry their ration some distance. The police ration is one kerosene tin of water (about 4 gallons) per day for one man & his wife & one child. The evenings have become extraordinarily chilly; other people have remarked about it;

I had cold feet all one night & I had a blanket over me & my hands are cold most evenings! Captain & Mrs Holland came over last evening & I had the first game of bridge I have played for well over 2 years. I played two hands without going down & my partner & I were up at the end of the evening, so I don't think I did too badly. They play no conventions out here & one only has to remember the fundamental rules of calling & leading.

Harry got a lovely series of string figures for me yesterday & I am going to the village with him to learn it. He says that I have quite a name now amongst the natives because when he said he would bring me to learn the figures there was a great nodding of heads & they said; "Yes, she only has to be shown once & she knows it. she is very skillful at string figures." Wasn't it nice? I can pick them up fairly quickly but I think "once" showing is rather an exaggeration!

We have not heard from Mary again yet & as we do not know when we shall be leaving here we can't give her definite news yet. I think it will probably be best for them to come here.

Heaps of love from us both,

Love loving

Honor.

No 20 of 1931

The Residency,  
Ocean Island.

Nov: 30<sup>th</sup> 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

I'm afraid there is nothing much to tell you this mail. We are very busy with anthropology as we want to get as much as possible from Banaba while we are here, we may not get another chance for years. Mr Gimble is fearfully keen again & is writing up legends & various other things. When we first came he gave Harry all his short or incomplete notes as he said they might help him but now that he is interested again he has taken them all back and Harry is finding it quite difficult to know what subject to tackle. H.H. has scappy notes on practically everything & nowadays he seems to us to be quite jealous & any subject Harry suggests or says that he is doing H.H. immediately says he is going to write it up as he has notes on it. Well it is distinctly hampering & rather worrying just at present as he has changed so but it is up to him to publish quickly & if he doesn't he can't blame us for carrying on. He can't possibly finish everything before he leaves & I don't mind betting that he will never publish half his stuff, he is so undependable. I daresay he'll change his mind again & leave us a clearer field. He is as nice as ever of course & we are both fond of him but he really does seem jealous of Harry where anthropology is concerned.

I have several drawing jobs at present beside my sten. figures, one of them being the various methods of string binding, I'm sure I'll loose my temper over them!

We are still fighting for our mail & Harry has now taken it up officially & sent in a long letter. I expect the Treasury will be absolutely furious & there will probably be a row but it's their own fault & I think H.H. is on our side. Did I tell you that Mr Gemble gave me an authorisation for Mr Bentley to open all mail bags containing mails for us? I got mails that time but when the next batch arrived he said that H.H.'s authorisation meant one particular mail brought by one particular ship. I don't see how he made that out as the authorisation said "all bags" & didn't mention any ship. However I told H.H. they wouldn't give me my mail & suggested that it had better be taken up officially to which he agreed.

Mr Bentley, as chief Postmaster, says that he cannot open Tarawa bags, in fact that no one but Tarawa can open them, so that he absolutely refuses to sort these bags even if a ship is going to Beve direct & then Tarawa which means that quite half the group mail is delayed for several months. If this is the case, there may be some convention, they shouldn't have them addressed to Tarawa, it's absolutely idiotic. As you will see the case now ~~is~~ not merely involves our private mail but all mail for the Southern Gilberts. "Nimanoa is

going to Beere in a few days but they won't get any mail because they won't sort here so Harry has asked if it isn't possible either to sort here or to arrange for a special bag for the Southern Gilberts or Beere from Sydney. You will be sick of hearing about our mail I'm afraid but really the present state of affairs is disgraceful, I think the least the Post Office can do is to expedite mails as much as they can instead of which they just don't care. Personally I feel very strongly about it, I think it's too bad to stick us on Ocean for three or four months & then refuse us our mail.

M<sup>rs</sup> Methven gave an awfully nice Tea & Bathing party last week, those who had beach pyjamas wore them but no-one had a pair of those lovely full ones, do you think Muriel could get me a pair or is it too late now? Anyhow we had a simply gorgeous bathe as the tide was high, it was quite difficult to get in as the waves were dashing on to the rocks but once out on the reef it was lovely jumping off over the breakers. I also went to a tea & game party last week, the game consisted of a list of anagrams, 31 of them, each of them representing groceries sold in the store in lines, for example:—

"A Lamed Ram" = Marmalade.

"Use the Sponges" = Sheeps Tongues.

"Respond Ugly" = Golden Syrup.

I won with 25 & got a bottle of Yardleys Lavender Water, which I always use. & a pair of fancy goggles.

I went up to the village in which Harry is working last Friday about 1.30 p.m. & found them in the middle of lunch. I never saw such a spread as those old men had, plates piled high with rice & a mash of some kind of tinned meat, heaps of mangoes & a number of pineapples. Harry was at his own table eating his sandwiches but he too had a plate of mangoes & a pineapple. He tells me he eats a whole pineapple nearly every day for lunch! The old men sometimes send me some mangoes & pineapples which is very nice as they are difficult to get.

It is now after lunch & I promised Harry I would go to the village at 4 p.m. so I'd better get some drawing done or he will wonder what I've been doing all day.

Much love from us both,

Love loving,

Honor.

P.S. I enclose stamps sent me for change, the cheque for the children's Christmas presents & some stamps Mona might like.



No 21 of 1931

The Residency,  
Ocean Island.

Dec: 9<sup>th</sup> 1931.

Dearest Lady Maude,

This is great luck having another ship so soon. She came in from Shanghai & is going to Western Australia. I'm writing just a week after my last letter, I wonder how soon after you will get it. We have had about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  inches of rain which has improved things greatly but it has been very hot the last week while the clouds circle round & can't make up their minds to break. Harry & I went off to the North side of the island last Sunday afternoon for a bathe & to take measurements of an old terrace. Coming home the rain started & we were soaked to the skin, we couldn't help laughing as we felt so helpless & the rain simply pelted down. Koura pretended he didn't like it and got under the nearest bush then ran ahead & wailed under another bush & so on all the way home.

In the "Pathe Pictorial" on Monday we saw the plane leaving for Guernsey! There were lovely views all down the solent, the Needles, the cliffs, the Casquets & Guernsey. We also saw Glandudno which we both know a bit. We had two long pictures as the first was stupid & quite unsuitable for natives the second was

very exciting & had a lovely abstraction in it.

I am having a tea party & Treasure hunt on Friday & having sent invitations I'm getting rather nervous! I have invited 16 people, all women, so Harry & M<sup>rs</sup> Grumble are going to desert me, I don't blame them really! I've made one fruit cake to-day & will make the rest to-morrow leaving icing & sandwiches for Friday. Harry & I have made up the clues for the Treasure Hunt, you might like to see them so I'll write them out.

The first is given to them & refers to a Proclamation written when the flag first came to the Colony; it is framed & hangs on the front verandah.

The closing of an old age,  
The beginning of a new,  
Is recorded on a document  
Of interest to you.

First among the things you see  
When you come to visit me.

The clues are all very easy as H.H. says that nearly all the women are idiots & couldn't do anything at all obscure. The second clue refers to a small cannon outside the front door which, for some reason or other has a lid on its muzzle.

The Resident Commissioner of  
This island Colony

Has expressed his willingness to give

His personal guarantee  
 that if you wish to find the answer,  
 To this little puzzle,  
 its safe to take the lid right off  
 And look inside the muzzle.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> refers to a large mango tree close by and mangos  
 as I dare say you know, won't bear fruit unless the  
 bunks are slashed with a knife.

"What a curious custom",  
 I hear you remark,  
 "that to make a tree fruitful  
 One injures the bark!"

The 1<sup>st</sup> refers to a small office across the cricket field but  
 might also be the billiard room.

A room + a house  
 You here see combined  
 And nailed to a door  
 the next clue you'll find.

The 5<sup>th</sup> refers to the cricket pitch & the clue will be  
 stuck in one of the holes for stumps.

Here, many a manly hope has died,  
 Killed by an object hard & round  
 Which all defences had defied  
 And "out'd" warriors from the ground.

The 6<sup>th</sup> refers to the cricket pavilion, merely a thatched  
 roof on four uprights.

A merry gathering once a week  
 On healthful pleasure bent,  
 A cup of tea is wont to seek  
 Beneath a roof that's meant  
 To keep the sun + heat away  
 From those who watch the others play.

The 4<sup>th</sup> refers to the flag staff.

An emblem of our Empire flies  
 Where all the isle can see  
 A closer view would show its size  
 And more — if you ask me.

The 7 is the billiard room.

This is no manufactory  
 Of guns, upon the sly,  
 And yet it's possible to make  
 Here "cannons" if you try.

And so that you will find the place  
 I'll give another clue;  
 In order not to loose the race  
 "Don't miss a single cue.

The clue will be on a cue standing apart from the rest.  
 The last clue will make some reference to musical  
 instruments as I'm hiding the "treasure" inside the  
 gramophone but hope they tackle the piano first.  
 I only hope we haven't underestimated their intelligence

\* that it degenerates into a flat race!

Last night Harry refused to have any dinner & upon inquiry I found that the poor dear had had two lunches & was still feeling replete!

I gave him curry sandwiches & he <sup>had</sup> finished the lot & then eaten a whole pineapple when along came the old men to say they wanted to give him lunch as it was his last day in that village. He then ate the following tinned things:- salmon, biscuits, pears, cake & a large pot of tea, fresh mangoes & pineapples. What was left of the cake, biscuits, mangoes & pineapples he brought home at their request.

I'm having an awful time with Koua now as he is getting ticks, & fleas by the score. I spend an hour on him every morning & the rest of the day picking ticks off the walls & cushions! I'd have to stop him going to the village with Harry, he loves it so too.

Heaps of love from us both

Your loving

Honor.

not 1932 - 1931

1932/19

The Residency.

Ocean Island.

Dec: 19<sup>th</sup> 1932

Dearest Lady Maude,

I'm afraid there is only time for a very short letter as I have only just been told that the mail goes out to-day & as Harry is in bed I have spent most of the morning cleaning him up! He started off yesterday about 5 p.m. with a pain fairly high up which he thought was indigestion but the pain went lower & got no better so he retired to bed about 7 p.m. He got gradually worse until at 10.30 p.m. I sent for Mr Gemble who had gone out, the boy met him on the way home so he was soon here & after questioning Harry & poking his tummy said we had better have the doctor. He came about 11.30 p.m. examined him, gave him an injection of morphia & propped him up in bed. He didn't tell me what was the matter, I don't think he knew exactly, but it would appear to have been poisoning of some kind. He felt much worse than he told me last night, he was afraid of frightening me but he says now that he really felt very ill indeed. His pulse was very rapid & he trembled & his throat felt restricted, at one time he kept walking up & down, he says he felt as if he wouldn't be able to breathe unless he kept moving. However, although

he didn't sleep much he is much better this morning though feeling pretty groggy & the doctor is coming to see him presently. No doubt he will be all right again in a few days. I can't think what could have upset him as I have eaten the same food as he except for tea yesterday when he had cake, but I had eaten the same cake the day before without any ill effects. He meant to write to you this mail but he says I'm to tell you that he promises to write for the next one.

I'm feeling very down as I haven't had any mail for over a month & M<sup>r</sup> Bentley says he has opened the tarawa mail so I suppose I must believe him. However you write so regularly & long ago you said you had sent off parcels which I haven't got yet that I can't understand it. The Sydney people may be keeping group mail for the direct ship but I think it unlikely. If they are I shall get no mail until February, most depressing.

We have had a lovely lot of rain though no westerlies yet. Haven't heard from Mary but hope to next mail.

Much love from us both,

Love loving

Honor.