

No. 1. of 1935.

Ben Island.

Gilbert Islands.

10<sup>th</sup> January, 1935.

Dearest Lady Maude,

Such a glorious mail came the other day, we hadn't had any for about 4 months so it was a large one, we had no less than 12 letters from you & Sir Walter! The last one written on board ship. I hope the good weather continued & that you had a good trip all the way out.

We were very glad to hear of Mabel's marriage & hope she will be very happy. It is topping that her health has been so much better. We are looking forward to hearing about the drive up from Capetown, I should think it would be wonderful. I'm so glad Mother & Sybil had their trip before Grandpa was caught, I'm afraid they won't get anything in that way nowadays. It was rather a

shock to hear Grandpa had actually got married. The family say the lady is most objectionable & more or less forced the marriage & I have also heard from old friends who are all furious with Grandpa. Ruby says she feels sorry for the old man, he must be well over 80 you know, but it is rather hard on Mother especially if G. leaves this woman his money. Mother says she has a small income as Grandpa gave her some shares a short time ago so I hope she will be comfortable at any rate. I know she wouldn't want to live with any of us at any rate not until she is really old, as she has always said it causes friction in the household. I wish some nice person had married her when she was young but I suppose 4 hefty children would put any man off! Personally I think she should be very happy, she can do just as she pleases, go where she likes, when she wants to & be

quite independent, as long as she doesn't worry about Grandpa. He nearly had a fit when she said she wouldn't stay, assuring her he couldn't get along without her & wanting her to stay & keep house for them. His mother can't bear the new wife she said she would have a holiday first but she has no intention of returning, the position would be impossible for both I should think.

Poor old Snap, we were very sorry indeed to hear of his accident & Harry says home won't be the same without him! We did hope he would last another year but it is rather nice that he didn't become senile & his end must have been very quick. We still have not heard about the disasters in Japan, & as our Times do not come (our sub. must have run out) we shall have to ask Mr Eastman for his.

The shirts for Harry came this mail, 4 khaki & 2 flannel, all of which were badly needed

Thank you very much for sending them. Harry is delighted with the zip fasteners, they look awfully nice as well as being so convenient. We loved all the note books etc. & I have punched 3 of them already, one for my Letter Register, one for orders for native handwork & one for things we want to buy when we go home. The quilts are all topping, it will take them some time to break those I imagine.

Harry seems to have tucked up a lot the last few days & I hope he has at last shaken off all his different complaints. He has had a nasty time, such an exasperating time too. It has been practically all digestive trouble brought on I suppose by the nervous breakdown. Mr & Mrs Eastman have been so good & kind, we have been very fortunate in having them so near.

Having had quite a nice lot of rain we have been gardening hard, even Harry has been taking an interest in it & usually he says

I'm an out as I shall hate having to leave my plants! However, the police looked after everything so well all the time we were at Tarawa, especially considering there was a drought, that I don't mind leaving them so much. I've actually got enough flowers to pick a few for the house. It looks as though we shan't have any "westeries" again this year, it is so late now, & I doubt whether the small amount of rain we have had will affect the coconuts, if it doesn't I'm afraid the natives are in for a hard time. So often the clouds gather in the west & it is as black as can be but it must all pour into the sea because it seldom gets to land & the wind persists in blowing from the east.

119

Sowani, the Fijian Doctor who has been up here for years & is now on his way to Fiji, has rounded Harry & says there is nothing organically wrong with him, that it is entirely

"too much brain", in other words overwork, which is causing all the other ills & he says he must take an absolute holiday for the rest of this month - no deep reading or writing or lands work. We shall try to pay a short visit to Ocean Island next month when "Himanoa" may be passing through, Eowane thinks it would be a good thing & we have already been invited by the Res. Com. I am so relieved we haven't opt to take short leave, it would have ruined everything! I think now that Harry will be quite satisfied if he finishes Beem, I don't think it would be wise to attempt to stay too long.

With heaps of love from us both,

Your loving,

Honor

No. 2. of 1935.

Berlin.

Central Pacific.

15<sup>th</sup> February, 1936.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I'm afraid there is only time for a short letter as we had a very unexpected wire from the "Imanwa" yesterday to say she would be here at noon to-day. We don't know where she comes from, where she is going to or why she is coming!

Harry I am sorry to say is no better, he tried to start lands work but cannot do it & is feeling very rotten again. Dr Stenson will be here in three days & I sincerely hope we shall get away from here by the end of the month. Harry is applying for long leave so there is just a chance we may be home for the summer, I don't think about it too much unless we get only short leave.

One thing is quite certain, Harry is useless to the Government at the moment, he can't fit to do a stroke of work. He is suffering mostly from pains in his head & every now & then his inside gets upset completely, it is very trying.

We have spent 3 more weeks at Rongorongo & he seemed to be much better but trying to work has put him back again. I am packing hard in the hope that "Tumanua" will be coming back for us in a few weeks so please forgive such a scribble. I am so thankful that I have kept very fit & I'm sure it is due to Kalyana, its marvellous stuff.

With ever so much love from us both.

Your loving,

Honor

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11 JUNE 1935

3.3. "Port Brisbane,"

first day out.

26<sup>th</sup> May, 1935.

Dearest Lady Maude,

It must be an awful time since I wrote to you but until we heard that we were about to be picked up there was nothing to write about & since then there hasn't been a minute in which to write. Harry applied for leave at the beginning of January & was told to wait for Dr Steenson to examine him. The doctor arrived at the beginning of February & said he must have immediate & prolonged leave but we heard nothing more until the end of April & were actually picked on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May. We shall be able to tell you everything more fully when we get home but apparently Mr Bailey also had a nervous break-down, or worse & he drinks like a fish, which accounts for our being left so long. We all had such high hopes of Mr Bailey but I

doubt now whether he is going to do anything for the Gilberts. Ocean Island seemed to be in a ferment & about 6 people have been ousted from the service, you never heard of such a clearance!

However, to return to more personal matters, we sailed up to Tarawa in record time, 30 hours, & spent 3 days there waiting for our ship, the Hauere Chief, to arrive at Ocean Island. From Tarawa to Ocean Island we had a simply wonderful trip & I attended every meal! We got to Ocean Island at 1 a.m. one day, & transhipped to The Chief the same day & left again in the evening for Hauere. We had a whole day at Hauere while the ship loaded under their wonderful cantilever jetty. We went ashore in the morning to call on the Administrator, Commander Garcia, to whom I had sent a lot of our Gilbertese handwork, & we were invited to lunch. The Commander took us for a drive in his car & showed us a good deal of the island. It is quite

different to Ocean Island & really very pretty. After lunch M<sup>rs</sup> Garsia took us for another drive & also took us to see the girls' handwork class which was very interesting. Then we had tea & began to think it was about time we removed ourselves, however, the ship was longer than they expected in getting under the jetty & the Garsia's wouldn't hear of our going on board whilst they were still loading so we stayed to dinner which was the wedding dinner of a girl who arrived with us & whom the Commander married about 6:30 p.m. We of course couldn't dress but no one seemed to mind & an anthropologist, Miss Wedgwood, who had been staying with the Garsia's & who was leaving with us, couldn't change either as she was all packed up. Altogether we had a pretty marvellous day & thoroughly enjoyed ourselves.

We had a pretty good trip down to Australia except for two rather rough & very muggy days & we had a very nice party on

board; strange to say, out of 7 of us only one was an Australian. Everyone went mad on patience, started by us, we had some round card game every evening & during the day quilts & a queer kind of golf which was jolly good fun. By the time we got to Port Kembla Harry was ever so much better - the food on the Chief is simply wonderful, more fresh fruit than we could eat & salad every day. We got to Port Kembla last Sunday & went up to Sydney the same evening.

We had four amazingly hectic days in Sydney, by Wednesday we had decided to come on this ship & we had to leave on Thursday as we sailed from Brisbane & it takes nearly 24 hours to get there. The ship is a cargo vessel of about 10,000 tons & has accommodation for 12 passengers but as a matter of fact there are only 3 of us & a doctor. It is a Commonwealth & Dominion Line ship & absolutely first class. We have the best cabin

on the ship, nicer than our P. & O. cabin, on deck of course, the food seems excellent & everything is done so nicely & all for £200 each steaming.

We inquired about an Orient Tourist ship & they wanted £100 each or £87 if we each went into a four berth cabin with others! We are

going via Torres Straits, calling at Townsville, staying at Wyndham for 6 days to load & then go straight away to Port Said & Hull or possibly London. We were very glad to

get away from the cold as we both got beastly colds & couldn't keep warm. We could have waited for a week & gone on the Port Caroline from Sydney & arriving in England about the same date as this ship but we wanted to get away from the cold & the expense of staying in Sydney & also the necessity of buying more warm clothes.

We had a perfectly gorgeous mail before we left & the piece of tapestry work arrived just in time. Thank you very much for it, I shall be able to do it on

The trip, I have begun it & it is most fascinating work. We also had letters etc. from Muriel & Mary but haven't had time to write yet. I took Harry to see a nerve

specialist in Sydney as the rush in Sydney made him rather worse again & he was most cheering. He gave him some medicine & said he would be all right again after a rest. We have only got 8½ months

leave altogether so we have to be back in the colony by the end of January which means that we shan't have Christmas at home unless we ask for more leave. I've just realised that this paper is a bit

heavy for Air Mail so I'll squash things up a bit! I'm posting this at Townsville so as to catch the Air Mail & the Captain says I can post again at Port Said & it should reach you about a week before we arrive. I did hope we should get home for my birthday but we shall be 3 days too late!

It is simply wonderful to be on our way home & I think the trip is going to be very pleasant. I do hope it will be a nice warm summer.

With heaps of love from us both to you all.

Love loving,

Honor.

5 JULY 1935  
JULY 1935

S.S. Post Brisbane.

In The Red Sea.

27<sup>th</sup> June, 1935.

Dearest Lady Maude,

A few days more & we shall be in the Mediterranean & feeling quite near home. Considering the time of year we are doing very well here, it doesn't seem to be frightfully hot, but there are dust storms about & a high wind which becomes a bit trying.

We were wonderfully lucky coming across the Indian Ocean, we had only 3 uncomfortable days with the monsoon & we might have expected a week or ten days. We are to call at Port Said & also Gibraltar & then, so far as we know, Hull but we were told in Sydney that we would

very likely be switched over to London at the last minute.

Harry is very much better & I don't think he should lose ground again. He realizes now that everything was nervous reaction & not some dire disease & I think that's half the battle. Of course there is nothing to worry him on board ship, I only hope he won't get upset when we get ashore again.

We enjoyed the trip round the north of Australia very much indeed. We called at Townsville & had a couple of days there & then had a week at Weymouth which is west of Darwin & a tiny place. We decided that a week on board would be an awful waste of time so the four of us, D<sup>r</sup> Friend, M<sup>r</sup> Freeman & our two selves, hired a small & rather dilapidated ferry



of sorts, went about 80 miles into the bush. We arrived at Wuyaham one Sunday afternoon late, went ashore the same evening to find out if a car was available & if there were any roads. We finally elicited the facts that although most people considered we were mad, it would be possible for us to go out, there was a track of sorts & a homestead called "Stranhuve" about 60 miles away where we could spend the first night. The following morning, having collected grub, water, lots of good advice & several sketch maps, we set off into the unknown feeling frightfully excited. Before leaving we had been made to promise that we would return by Thursday evening so that a search party would have

time to find us before the ship sailed if we hadn't arrived!

The first thing we did was to get bogged crossing some flats just outside the town! We soon got out fortunately & everything went well for 50 miles or so - the road was nothing but a track where other cars had made a trail across the bush, in parts we went through dry grass about 6ft high but the surface on the whole wasn't too bad. We passed about 100 hobbled camels, they used to be used a lot for carrying stores inland but lorries do most of the work now. At about 4.30 The doctor said he could smell petrol, a moment later the car coughed & was still.

We hopped out & found the petrol streaming into the road from a broken feed pipe. The break was eventually mended with a piece of rubber tubing which the doctor produced but it took us over an hour to get her going again & then it was getting dark. The worst bit of the whole trip was just ahead of us, Button's Gap, a frightful place, the engine caught ~~off~~ fire once but by going slowly & as carefully as we could, our lights weren't up to much, we eventually won through. We went on for some time & just as we were coming to the conclusion that we should have to sleep as best we could we saw a light & a few moments later arrived at the

homestead. We were greeted by two girls who were alone as all the men had gone out mustering cattle. They were quite pleased to have visitors so we took in our provisions & were able to give them a meal which was a treat to them as it would have been to us in the Gilberts. We'll tell you about these two girls when we get home as they are rather a wonderful couple.

We had meant to go another 60 miles or so the next day but thought it a bit risky with a broken feed pipe so we took the two girls & went about 10 miles further & had a picnic by the river. The country there is rather fascinating though very dry, mile after mile of dry grass, scrub & dust & precipitous mountains

dotted here & there. There were heaps of wallabies, parrots & cockatoos. Each morning at Swanhoe we were awaked by the screaming of cockatoos who came to a near by "billabong" (sort of pond) in thousands.

When returning from our picnic I had the shock of my life to see one of the back wheels coming further & further out from the mud-guard! All I could do was to scream "stop! stop! stop! stop!" Mr Freeman hammered the thing in again & we got safely home but we wondered how we were going to do the 60 miles back to Wyndham as every jar loosened it again. However, it was given a good hammering next morning & we got through Butlers Gap & a good way beyond before it came

loose for the first time. We did eventually get into Weymouth but Mr Freeman bogged us again in the same place, only worse, & of course the wheel came loose & we very nearly didn't get the car out again. We all voted the trip a great success & were very pleased with ourselves. I made up this dimerick:—

Three men & a girl from afar,  
 left Weymouth one day in a car  
 They returned 2 days after  
 convulsed by their laughter,  
 with a wheel coming off at each joint  
 with heaps of love from us both to  
 you all.

Love loving,

Honor

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