

1 FEB. 1937

Wete,

Pemba,

6<sup>th</sup> January, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We had two letters from you this mail, one from you + one from Sir Walter. You say "Father is better" but we did not know he wasn't well, anyhow I hope spring will come quickly & be mild. Do you think you will ever come + see us? You couldn't come in the cool season because that is when fever is bad but it really isn't too bad at present but I think Aug. Sept. + October all the best months & not much danger of fever. November we get rains & mosquitoes & several people have been down, including little Phyllis Thompson who is only 6, I'm sure her mother spoils her, she has no control over her & she won't stay in bed. We are taking quinine regularly & being careful, it's surprising how careless people are, they are so used to getting fever that some take no precautions whatever. Harry is getting quite fat, we must try & find some scales to weigh him, and I'm sure he has more flesh on him than he has had since I knew him first. We have now hired a cow + have lots of milk & cream. Mrs Baker arranged the whole thing for us + her boy is looking after our cows as well as hers. It makes such a difference, I

was afraid of the village milk, the people are so dirty & Mrs B. has seen them diluting the milk with all kinds of things, which isn't safe. I'm told that Dr Leeth objects very strongly to cows on the Government station but I don't see why he should, they are only brought near the house for half an hour or so night & morning to be milked & the rest of the time are grazing some distance away. The boy cleans up after taking them away so it shouldn't attract flies. Anyhow Dr Leeth has about 3 women & 10 children living in the boys quarters which Dr McCarthy <sup>(the malaria expert)</sup> disapproves of as he says the children are all carriers of malaria, the mosquitoes bite them & come straight in & bite us & there we are with a dose of malaria, also Harry was sent here for fresh milk & I'll see he gets it. I am sending for a marvellous bread mixer which Mrs Baker has shown me, & then I can make the bread, this mixer kneads it & everything & dry yeast can be obtained from a lady in Kenya who makes her living by preparing & selling it. Mrs B.'s bread is lovely, I notice Harry eats twice as much when she gives us a loaf. She is awfully kind to us, when we came back from our last safari she had a special milk loaf for us & lots of milk and fruit. I've just been introduced to "balungis", a huge citrus fruit which is lovely, Harry thinks it is

The Indian "baal", we both love it.

We didn't get back to Wete as soon as we expected, the hired car didn't turn up & we were awfully late getting to Mkwana & had to spend two nights there. It was jolly nice there but we missed a party at Wete that we had promised to go to, I rang up in the morning & said I was afraid we wouldn't be able to manage it & hope they weren't offended. It would have meant driving 80 miles at night, in a hired car which was too expensive & too tiring after a hard day's work. Harry was taking his first court & we have just been told that one sentence he gave he hadn't the power to give! He is a bit worried about it but it wasn't his fault, no one here tells one anything & there is no handbook as he had in the G. & E.

He is working hard in his spare time at Swahili exercises but can't be persuaded to speak a word, he has no ear at all for languages, even now it takes about 5 minutes for the greeting to enter in! I've no doubt he'll pass the written paper on his head but he is quite despondent about the oral which sounds much stiffer than the Gilbertese & has to be done within 1 year. Higher Swahili, which no other transferred man has to pass, sounds awful, Pakenham who speaks Swahili

very well, only just scraped through. There is no doubt they wanted a cadet here + so have relegated Harry to that position. He is even junior to a man who came in 1930, in fact is the most junior here. We thought our increment had been docked so as to make us the same as Pakenham who is a 1929 man but he is getting what we would have got plus our increment of £25.

Tomorrow the Sultan + H.E. come up to celebrate the Sultan's silver jubilee. Harry goes to a show in the morning + I go with him in the afternoon to a tea fight, I shall be petrified but glad when I have done it once. We have to look to the Sultan + I must ask m<sup>rs</sup> Poncea just what is done.

With much love from us both.

Your loving,

Henry

P.S. We were very sorry to hear of Uncle's Harry's death, I wish Harry had taken me to see him. Harry says isn't he a bod-child else why is he called Harry?

9 FEB. 1937

Wete,

Pemba.

13<sup>th</sup> January, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We had such a disappointment yesterday, there was no home mail at all, evidently there had been no ship at Zanzibar. When there are no ships one doesn't seem to mind not getting letters but when a ship comes in with no letters it is horrid.

The Sultan had a great reception here and was very pleased with everything. There was a big meeting the first morning at which various speeches were ~~given~~<sup>given</sup> & presentations made, including the Sultan's Silver Jubilee medals. Only men were allowed at this meeting so we watched proceedings from a near by verandah. They ended up with coffee & a sort of Turkish delight. Harry said it was revolting as the cups were used several times & you had to drink after a bearded Arab! After this the Sultan, H.E. & Prince Abdallah went to Poncia's house for morning tea before proceeding to lay a foundation stone & returning to the ship. I was invited over & was presented to the old man who is rather nice & then I was put next Saffid Abdallah & was relieved to find he spoke English.

I scored over Harry who wasn't introduced at all, merely turned up to the various shows! In the afternoon there was a small garden party here which we quite enjoyed + after dinner fireworks + an enormous bonfire. On the second day we only attended a tea party at Chake. Chake, Miss O'Shea drove us down, I was lucky again + sat on one side of Prince Abdallah with M<sup>rs</sup> Kingdon on the other side. Poor Harry + M<sup>rs</sup> Kingdon's young daughter had a table full of Arabs so they just talked to one another. Coming home the car broke down but a bus driver soon came along + made things better + we got home after some difficulty + having run up one long bill, I gave out half way because I couldn't help laughing. The road to Chake, 19 miles, was decorated practically all the way + Chake was a mass of people, it was a good show all round. I thought everyone here would be very smart but they weren't, in fact some of them were disgraceful I thought, for once in my life I felt well dressed + was the only one even carrying gloves.

As a result of the Christmas party there has been one bust up in our small community. I think I told you that the Kingdons, from Chake, didn't turn up as it was pouring wet + neither of them expert drivers? Well, M<sup>rs</sup> K. says she couldn't get through on

the phone that night so she phoned next morning & M<sup>rs</sup> Poncia slammed down the receiver, wouldn't listen to her excuse or apology & now won't speak to her. M<sup>rs</sup> K. says she must apologise & M<sup>rs</sup> P. doesn't seem to think she should, in fact that she was justified in being beastly rude, so there we are. I didn't know anything about it till M<sup>rs</sup> K. told me at the tea party.

I am busy spring cleaning the other flat before moving in, the furniture is in rather a mess so I'm having it all thoroughly scrubbed with carbolic soap & then polished, it looks quite nice when finished. The garden there is lovely & I've discovered a huge bed of gorgeous zinnias in full bloom, it was hidden by the house.

Harry hasn't been very well the last three days, tummy again, I'm sure he suffers from a sort of delayed constipation & I'm going to put him on to Bemax. He is perfectly all right for some weeks & then everything goes wrong & he feels rotten. I think he is improving now & will be all right by tomorrow. He has more work now that Pakenham has gone & old Poncia doesn't seem to do a thing. H. sent him one letter from the whole mail yesterday & when he went into his office Punk said, "I'm not much good at this sort of thing, will you write a draft answer for me"!

Much love from us both

Your loving Honor

Wetë,

Pemba.

20<sup>th</sup> Jan: 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I'm afraid this paper looks a bit odd because I have had to cut it, it was evidently put in the machine badly as the lines were not at right angles to the paper. We received a letter from you yesterday, I'm afraid you will be sorry to that the Seychelle job didn't come off. Harry is fairly cheerful & is kept busy but is no nearer liking the work. Poor dear, he just signs his name umpteen times a day & never has to draft any letters or have an original thought.

There has been a war about the cows already, I<sup>3</sup> Leeth has a tink about them, & now we have to remove them to the bush, an awful nuisance & Bakers are furious. If the doctor was really keen on cleaning up the town etc: one wouldn't mind, we are just waiting to see if he clears out all the hundred or so cows belonging to the natives. The water supply which is supposed to be pure is simply full of some horrible greasy black smuts, I've shown the doctor the cloth I filtered the water through &



he just isn't interested. We have a wonderful source, clear as crystal & he is too lazy to go & see that the power station & tanks are kept properly. The other day the Bakers found a whole family of Indians cooking & eating on top of the water tank & dipping in their dirty saucepans to get water; in another place the natives have obviously been doing their washing. The place is walled in & only needs a lock on the gate to keep out trespassers but I<sup>d</sup> fear they won't even go & see. We haven't quarrelled with anyone yet but it is all very irritating & makes one edgy.

Today we leave after lunch for a 5 day "safari" to Chake & Mkoani, we have a hired car & drive ourselves, it is a big new Ford & lovely. We haven't done anything about buying a car yet but will have to soon. It is a pity we weren't kept in Tiji because Harry says he can understand these people talking Hindustani & it is coming back to him. I do hope there won't be a bust up because he can't learn Swahili more quickly, other men seem to talk it in no time but he can only write it in spite of working hard.

We were so sorry to hear about the

Collings, I'd no idea she was anything but overworked & therefore ill.

Harry was very bucked that Muriel thought St. Helena lovely, he has always wanted to get a job there.

A new cook came up this mail, young & clean looking but very inexperienced & I'm only paying him 30/- a month to begin with. The old one got 60/-. My old cook stays another week & finishes his month so he & the head boy come on safari & Kassim & Tuma, the new one, are to finish spring cleaning & move over boxes etc. before we return. The lounge & kitchen have been re-painted for us & we are indulging in a couple of large rush mats. And skell no news of our effects.

Must go to post & pack up for safari.

Much love from us both.

Your loving

Honor

Wete.

Pemba.

27<sup>th</sup> January, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

Poor Ann, she must have had an awful tossing, & only hope it didn't frighten her, it was bad luck for her first crossing. I hope the Atkinsons find that Peter's bride is really a nice girl though however charming she may be I should think she will have a rotten time with other naval officers' wives & it does seem a funny choice on his part. Miss Bunnett, who was headmistress of Mount Pleasant Preparatory school, did more or less the same as Janie Othard, she married a labourer, goodness knows what they had in common.

We have had a fairly strenuous week on "safari". We have gradually to visit every part of the island so on Thursday we had tea at 3.15pm & collected M<sup>rs</sup> Kingdon's daughter, Nancy, & then drove about 6 miles & went for a long walk. That evening we had dinner with the Kingdons & played "comette", a rather good card game. On Friday we drove to Mkwani but on the way tried to drive to an old port called Jambangome, the road however was so appalling that we left the car & walked about 5 miles there

and back. We had no afternoon rest & didn't reach Mkoani till after 6 p.m. & I was completely done in. The mosquitoes were awful so I went straight to bed. The next day Harry was in bed etc. all day & we had dinner with the Heaths, Quaker missionaries, who live about 5 miles from Mkoani. On Sunday, which I think should be a holiday in this climate, we had to go to Tufuni to present a shield to the boys school. We left by launch at 10.30 a.m. reached Tufuni at noon & then had half an hour's walk to the school. The boys were very attractive mostly & the school an excellent one. We returned at 3.30 p.m. & then had the Kingdons & M<sup>rs</sup> Campbell for afternoon tea. On Monday we returned to Wete, arrived here at 4 p.m. & moved into Pakenham's flat which we like very much. My new cook is now operating, he can't speak a word of English & it is maddening not being able to talk to him in Gilbertese, I keep on doing it of course!

Something must be done to get Harry out of this place & if possible back to somewhere in the Pacific. Doesn't Sir Walter know anyone who could help? The further 5 years of examinations is nearly driving him crazy & Poncia is giving him all the office work & now says he must go & live in a tent in the bush as soon as one mail is finished & return

in time to do the next one. When is he going to learn Swahili, he can only learn from books. I suppose we shall have to wait until the C.O. says definitely that we can't return before worrying them again, the only trouble being that the people here are persuading themselves + the C.O. that Harry is settling down all right + of course he loathes every minute he has to stay here.

With love from us both,

Yours loving,

Honor

B.M.A.R. 1937

Wete,

Pemba.

2<sup>nd</sup> Feb: 1937.

Dear Sir Walter,

Thank you very much for your letter, we were very sorry to hear that Lady Maude had caught that beastly 'flu. Sybil is working in Selfridge's ("Beauty Culture", department) now & she says that 200 employees were absent in one week with flu. I hope Lady Maude is quite well again & that you escaped it.

I had letters from all three sisters in Natal this mail, Muriel seemed better & was thoroughly enjoying Mooi River & gathered. Maudie says that quinine has been discredited in Natal & need we take it as it is very lowering & often leads to blackwater fever. Here they say (at least one school of thought say) that constant use of quinine prevents the possibility of blackwater but spasmodic use of it leads to blackwater, so what are we to believe? Maudie, of course, says they use "Atabrin" or "Plasmoquinine" but she doesn't say whether any prophylactic doses are taken & I must find out from her. The doctors here certainly inject quinine if you have to go to hospital & it is the Boans, who

are treated with quinine only when they have malaria, who are most prone to blackwater fever. The mission people have to take quinine, it is taken in Kenya & several other colonies advise their officials to take 5 grs. every day. Here the healthiest people are the Bakers & they have taken quinine for years. Do you think Dr. Dick knows anything about it?

It was sad that Harry felt he couldn't accept the Seychelles post, he wanted to so much. However, I had a letter from Mr. Mayhew (Advisor on Education to the C.O. & who was in Honolulu with us) this mail, very cheering & kind. He says the C.O. thought Harry wanted Africa (they had no reason to suppose any such thing) & thought that his first application for the Seychelles must have been sent off before he heard of Zambezi, so they took no notice of it. Mr. Mayhew adds that the C.O. now clearly understands the position, that there has been a lot of misunderstanding on both sides but that they think as highly as ever of Harry & he is sure they will do what they can to meet his wishes. It was he who revived the Seychelles job & I only hope he will not be hurt by his refusal of it. I don't think he should be as Harry wrote to him saying that he had refused only because he felt he hadn't sufficient qualifications & out of loyalty to Mr.

Grumble who might have been put in a very awkward position in having to back an inexperienced man against the well trained & exceedingly critical P.E. priests.

We heard from Fiji to-day that the Government will buy the wireless set & also the beautiful little engine we had ordered, it is all to go to the Solomons & we are glad to get it off our hands & hope it will be satisfactory. M<sup>r</sup> Bennett did not send us an account & I believe you paid for it for us but you did not tell us how much we owed you?

We went on a short "safari" this week-end to the north of the island & I am a mass of sand-fly bites as a result of camping, & sleeping in a tent. We left here by launch at 2.30 p.m. on Sunday, arrived at the camp, which had been prepared for us by the "mudua", (head man) of Wete district, at 4.30 p.m. & proceeded to the house of an arat for tea which was followed by a meeting to discuss the drying of copra. I was left with the arat while Harry went to the meeting & I found I could say quite a number of things to him in Swahili & he was anxious to teach me new words. I actually managed to ask him if he wanted to go to the meeting & when he asked me the time was able to figure it out.\*

On Monday we left camp at 8.30 a.m. on donkeys & rode & walked back to Wete, it took us 3 hours & as it

\* 5.30 p.m. is 11.30 p.m. in Swahili time, we begin 7 a.m. at 1 o'clock & go up to 12 at 6 p.m. & then 1 again.



was a very sticky morning & later rained we were somewhat messy when we arrived. We came along the proposed route for a new road, it should be very pretty, and had to walk some distance where it was very steep & as it was rather heavily wooded it was exceedingly hot & humid. I rather like trundling along on a donkey but Harry's tummy does not seem to like it all.

We had quite a party here last night, we asked M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Poncia, Miss Holdaway (who lives with them) & D<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Nicklin, in to drinks at 7 p.m. & they stayed until 9 p.m. We think it's a vile habit to have dinner so late so when there's a party make a meal of hors d'oeuvres & then it is quite enjoyable. Ponk got through quite half a bottle of whiskey & I'm glad Harry kept him on his side of the room! D<sup>r</sup> Nicklin wants to sell his car, a Morris of some kind, quite a nice model with a collapsible hood, a pretty shape & red in colour, he has come down from £120 to £85 & he hasn't done 4,000 miles & I want Harry to buy it, we should lose so heavily on a new car if we were moved.

My love to Lady Maude.

Yours affectionately,  
Honor

9 MAR 1937

Welé,

Pemba.

9<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1937.

P.S. The note paper r  
Khanwo just as.  
many thanks, we  
shall take Khanwo  
in safari as it  
saves it. Wherever  
did you get it?

Dearest Lady Maude,

When you wrote, 10.1.37, you say it seems  
ages since you heard from us so I looked back & find  
I wrote every mail from Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> to Jan. 5<sup>th</sup> when I missed  
a mail. This week your letter was 10.1.37 & Mother's 18.1.37,  
Mother missed a mail & yet I got a letter each week but  
I shall probably get none next week, the ships must be  
rather irregular at Zamjibar. We are glad you were  
up again & better & that Sir Walter escaped infection.

We haven't much news this week I think. Harry  
managed to persuade M<sup>rs</sup> Poncia to let us stay at home  
for the week-end so we went for our night's camping  
on Thursday. Much better, I do hate tramping round on  
Sunday & here we really need the rest. It is a  
terribly sleepy place, we both sleep late on Sunday  
mornings, until 8 a.m. & I have an hour every afternoon.  
I never stayed in bed in the Gilberts after ~~at~~ 6.30 a.m. but  
here cannot get up early without a struggle. We  
went to camp on a nearby islet, Sundo, half an  
hour by launch from here. We left here at 4 p.m.  
& took M<sup>rs</sup> Poncia, nurse & child for a picnic tea.  
They returned at 6 p.m. & we came back the next

2.

morning at 10.30 a.m. I tried to cover myself up more adequately from sandflies & borrowed a pair of Harry's pyjamas, with rubber bands on the sleeves, but the result was masses of bites on my face, neck, hands & feet & I was very miserable & irritable for two or three days. Unfortunately we can't go inland because M<sup>r</sup> Ponce won't give us the money for carriers in fact he only pushes us off in the launch because he has to report how many days Harry sleeps out of wete. It does no good because we go after office one day & return next morning fairly early!

On Friday we motored down to Chake with D<sup>r</sup> Nicklin to go to Nancy Masey's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party. The drive took an hour each way, we got home about 12.30 a.m.! The doctor's car went beautifully but Harry still has not suggested buying it. M<sup>rs</sup> Nicklin went to Zanzibar on Wed. & on Sunday her baby boy was born so she cut it pretty fine. We spent Sunday evening with the doctor, who plays the piano, so he & Harry tried some duets. Harry is having lessons in Swahili every evening now & will I hope say a few words before long instead of only writing them.

We hear from Cartwright that M<sup>r</sup> Barley is trying to get Harry for the lands work & I wonder if he will be successful. I'm afraid Harry's dislike of Africa, its dirt & diseases is even stronger

than the "pull of the islands", he would go anywhere to get out of it. I wonder what began his hatred of Africa, it isn't a new thing.

D<sup>r</sup> Leeeth, under whom we now live, has been on the racket rather. Drinking gin & then rowing his boys, he kicked one down the back stairs, which are just outside our bedroom window at midnight one night & the following night crashed into a table full of glass ware! I understand he does this periodically & at present seems to have recovered. His wife refused to come out & when he ordered her to she went to a solicitor & got a separation which cost him about £300. He is furious & sits & broods about it & drinks gin & never reads.

Coming back from Nancy's party we had quite an unusual experience. About half way home we saw a bundle in the middle of the road so the doctor pulled up & we found it was a native sleeping peacefully right across the fairway. He wasn't drunk, the natives like the warmth & I expect he thought no more cars would come along at that time of night. all the same it was lucky for him that D<sup>r</sup> Nicklin is a good & cautious driver.

With much love from us both.

Your loving

Honor

Pemba,

Zanzibar.

1<sup>st</sup> March, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I crooked up last week after a too strenuous safari & so missed the mail. We received Sir Walter's letter of July 29<sup>th</sup> sent on from Honolulu via the Gilberts. In it he tells us of Arthur Thickett's visit, I wondered if he had been to you & what you thought of him. I gather Sir Walter had 'flu after all, your last letter says he is better again, so we hope you have both kept well since then. We could easily spare you some sunshine, it is too hot now to go out in the middle of the day but it's quite bearable indoors. We don't feel the heat as much as the rest who can talk of nothing else & we think it's because we don't eat heating foods, we are practically vegetarian, I have been studying the subject seriously & Harry has responded to the diet marvellously. I believe I shall cure him of constipation which I have long thought is the cause of most of his troubles.

Will you please send me Walter's address?

Doris sent us a card for Christmas & I would like to write to her but don't know the address.

Also, whilst I remember, you ask Harry which of your things we would like kept for us if you sell. I would very much like the round carved table & screen to match & Harry would like the music cabinet kept. The big glass fronted book case in the drawingroom Harry would also like if possible. He says that if we go the West Indies, which he has asked for if the Pacific is refused us, we can furnish properly & have a real home.

All our luggage has arrived from the Gilberts at last, some of it very battered & one china case stove in. I only had one day to look at things as we are at Mkwani again, & I unpacked my sewing machine & gramophone. The machine is in perfect condition, even the needle not rusty, that is a good advertisement for 3 in 1 oil & vasoline; I cleaned & re-oiled it immediately & it looks as good as ever. The sound-box of the gramophone was rattling about inside the machine having come off the arm but to my surprise & joy was quite unspoiled. I peeped at the linen, some is rather spotted but considering that it is almost 2 years since I packed up it is in very good condition. The china I haven't opened, I'm so afraid it may be broken though I did pack it properly, books too we haven't looked at yet. A huge bundle of Gilbertese mats came

too, bringing the smell of the islands with them & we now have some to sleep on which is so much cooler than a mattress. I shall have the boxes re-painted & mended generally, some re-packed too before the rains begin I hope. One air-tight trunk looks a bit battered & loose inside the lid, it will be an awful nuisance if it isn't air tight any more.

M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Drake are now at Mkoani with two children, one 5 & one 9 months, both awfully nice children & the baby so sweet & friendly. The Drakes are ever so nice, both South Africans, we go there for tea & bathing & have also been to dinner. M<sup>r</sup> Drake & Harry talk land matters by the hour, the former being a surveyor, & M<sup>rs</sup> Drake & I have much in common so I look forward more than ever to our trips to Mkoani. Last week Nan came & stayed 3 nights with us here & we spent one day exploring islands by launch & the next day went for a walk which turned into a very hot, long & exhausting tramp, it laid me out for 3 days but Nan recovered by the next day. It was very foolish, I wanted to turn back when I knew I'd had as much as I could stand but as Harry thought we were nearly at our objective, the point of a promontory, I went on & then, having rounded the point we had a much worse walk home, up hill & down dale until

we were all tired + I felt awful. We visited a tiny islet just off Mkwani which has intrigued us ever since we came here first + decided to walk across it. However we discovered that it was a mass of dead coral pinnacles about 15ft high, awfully hot + sharp + brittle + almost impossible to traverse. It was very like parts of Ocean Island only worse! We went a short distance + gave it up. One false move on a brittle edge + a ship would have resulted in some very nasty cuts.

Harry lost Dr Ticklin's car, much to my disappointment. The doctor sold it to a native for less than we were prepared to give, I can't think why if he understood we wanted it. I'm sure he'd had too much whiskey the night Harry talked to him about it + probably didn't remember properly. Poncia's had a drink party on Sunday evening for the Ticklins, + we drank the new baby's health in Champagne. The next night there was another party but we got out of it as we had to come to Mkwani.

H.K. comes up next Thursday on his way home to retire, he only stays one day so there won't be very much in the way of entertainments. Harry has to meet him + he hasn't done anything about his uniform so he'll probably get a tick-off. He hasn't got a sword or helmet, the sword never came +



the helmet he wore out, he hasn't the correct buttons either.

I'll finish this after the mail comes tomorrow.

2.3.37.

A most exciting mail, thank you ever so much for our presents which arrived safely to-day - things fit into my sea chest beautifully now, all the dishes are in use tonight - Harry is awfully pleased with his stand & foot rest & his guitar looks ripping on its stand, he was grinning like a child as he opened the parcel! Please thank Sir Walter for his letter, I'll write to him next mail. Thank you so much for thinking of the spare lid -

With much love from us both,

Your loving,

Honor

10 APR 1937

Wete,

Pemba.

21<sup>st</sup> March, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

A very short letter this week I'm afraid as I am up to my eyes packing & now we go on safari. At last the unpacking is finished, a good deal of sorting done, the boxes all being mended & we have actually begun to pack again. We have thrown out so much stuff which would have been precious in the islands but isn't worth the freight & hope to reduce our luggage to a more reasonable amount. The two Marshall Trunks have had extra slats put on the lids & have been repainted & look like new, they were rather knocked about & one lid had a nasty gash, now there is very little space between the slats so they should be all right. We had an awful time with carpenters. We got the best man here & he left the work to a boy with very elementary knowledge of carpentry & we thought at first he had summed two trunks so he was sacked - we got another who has made a good job. The first man was furious & spent most of one morning rampaging

round the office! Tonight, Wednesday, we go to Chateaux & have dinner with Kingdons, we go on to Mykoin on Friday & return here on Sunday night or Monday morning. I shall be glad to get away from these beastly boxes for a few days!

Do my Gates is really going, what is the name of the new house & what sort of a garden has it? Sorry, I see you have given us the name in this week's letter. Aunt Minnie certainly seems to be letting herself go, what on earth does she want with a place like that? I love one room divided in 3 for maids whilst she has bedroom, dressing-room, box-room & sitting room to herself. I should think she'd better have married couples to look after her. I think after all this moving about I shall either dig myself in somewhere & refuse to budge or else reduce my personal effects to the barest of bare necessities!

With very much love from us both,

Your loving,

Honor

Pemba,

Zanzibar.

6<sup>th</sup> April, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

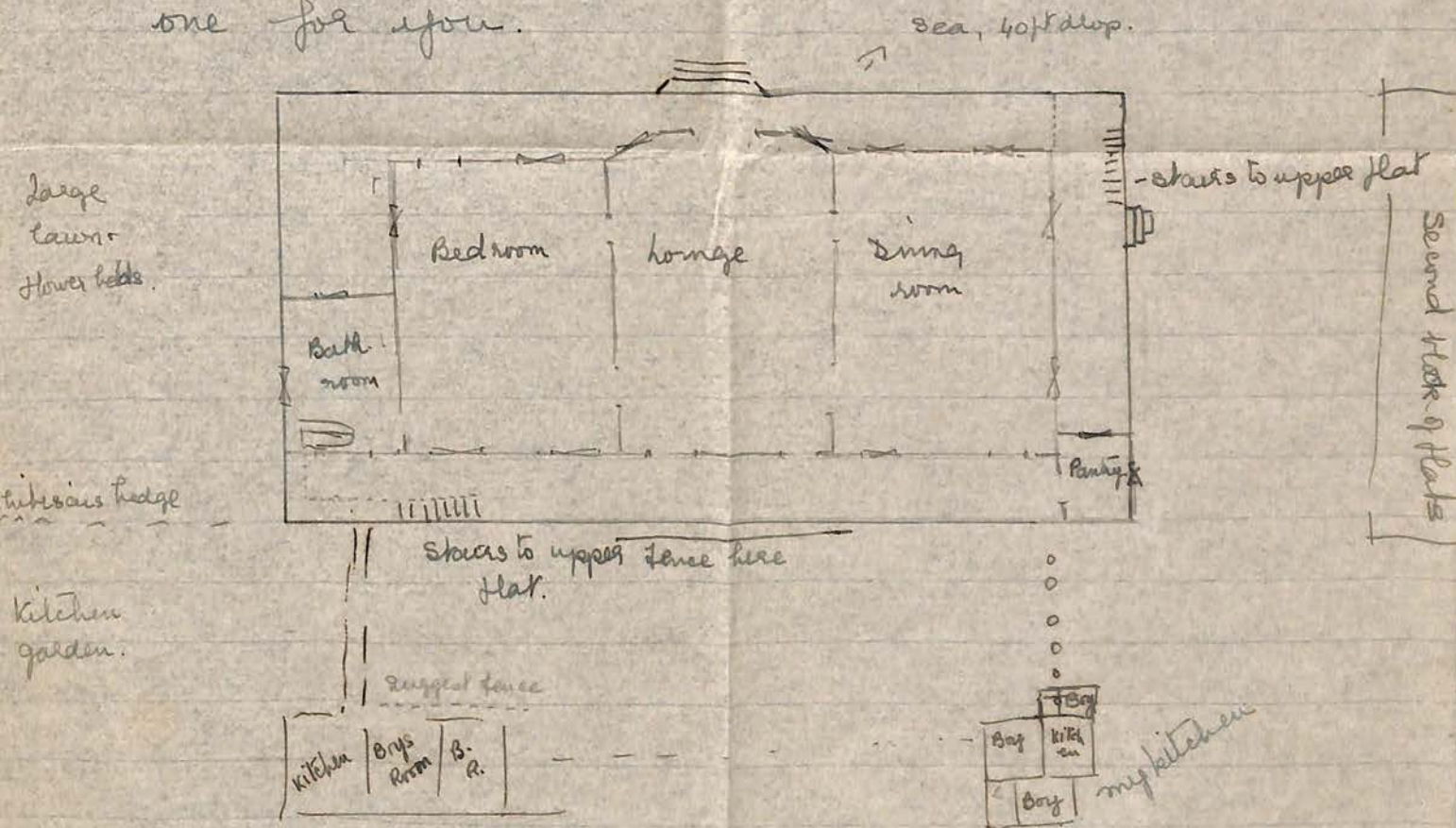
No English mail at all this week so I suppose we shall get a big batch next week. No more news about our departure so it seems fairly certain we shall go in the middle of May.

We haven't done anything exciting this week but the rain continues with hardly a break. We had one fine day & we motored to Chake & Mkoani, spending a few hours in each. Nan went with us from Chake to Mkoani & back & she & I left the car 3 miles from Mkoani & had a good walk with tea at the brakes afterwards. Coming home after dark the lights failed about 14 miles from Wete & we messed about for an hour or so before a bus overtook us & the driver eventually put things right.

My finger is much better, only a little tender now & I can pack again. We have had some very close & oppressive weather which brought on my asthma a bit,

horrible breathless damp heat, but it is fresher again & I feel all right though we all feel dreadfully slack.

We have packed two boxes of things for storing & Harry now thinks it would be best to leave them in Sydney. Everything has been brought into the dining room so we live in the lounge. The boxes got soaked one night with the rain driving in. Here is the plan of our flat, I don't think I ever made one for you.



As you can see there is nowhere for boxes, the verandahs are quite open, not even a projecting roof to shelter them.

You can also see how the bottom flat is overlooked by the boys & also by anyone going upstairs. Dotted lines show my idea of getting a little privacy with wood partitions.

With much love from us both

Your loving,

Honor.

10 APR 1937

(By air mail)

Wete,

Pomba

21<sup>st</sup> April, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

Thank you very much for your Air Mail letter, it was the only one we got as there was no ordinary English mail this week. Thank you also for sending on M<sup>rs</sup> Thickett's letter, I have been very bad about writing to her since we left N.Z. but have written now. I think M<sup>rs</sup> T. is a selfish pig, he doesn't seem to consider his wife at all. When she was in N.Z. he never wrote & told her where he was or what his plans were & she was quite unhappy about it.

I think it would be a good idea to send magazines now to Ocean Island & later on to Bevu. Harry isn't sure that he won't be kept for a time at Ocean Island. Harry now says he will store things we have here in Sydney. If you have other things for us Ruby has a good loft or attic in her roof where I am sure she would put them.

We haven't decided about a wireless but will probably have another built in Australia, they know the conditions so well that

it should not be difficult. Anyhow I'm going to try & get some moose on the ships, I expect I've forgotten most of it by now!

I've got another bad cold & asthma at night, it's sickening. My nasal passages seem to be permanently inflamed & it affects my nose & eyes which irritate horribly, my eyes this morning looked as if I'd got pink eye, & it also affects my breathing. During the day I am fairly all right & yesterday went for a long walk with a spant at the end! Harry is quite a different person nowadays, very cheery & always busy. He has taken up Gilbertese study now that he doesn't have to do Swahili & says he has learnt a lot more. We shall miss Ete, who has died, very much, he was an excellent interpreter & lands clerk though neither of <sup>us</sup> had much opinion of his character or morals. It was he who kicked his wife out of his house for no reason at all, except I'm sure that he was tired of her, & then he more or less gave away their little boy, I was so angry with him. We are not at all sure that we shall have Teikarawa either so we want our Gilbertese to be really good.

We are off again this afternoon on our monthly



visit to Chake + Mkwani. We shall probably return on Saturday evening. The bishop is up here + is having a service at 7 a.m. on Sunday. I'm not quite sure whether to go or not, this mission ~~is~~ is terribly high church + use incense + change hats + vestments but I'm told the bishop will be all right at such a small service.

The weather has been finer for the last week, we had one lovely day in which we went inspecting police. We drove about 100 miles, had a picnic lunch + thoroughly enjoyed the day. Now it is raining a lot again. Poor Harry got stung by a centipede one night in bed! He lay on it + it objected, the silly mutt thought he had lain on a needle, hopped out of bed for iodine + of course by the time I had wakened + asked what was up the centipede had gone, however I killed 1 in the bedroom + another in the bathroom in the morning. He said it hurt horribly for hours, I put on aramonia. We kill at least one per day, big ones mostly too, the rain seems to send them indoors.

We hope you are all free of colds etc now + having some sunshine. Much love from us both

Yours

Honor.

MAY 1937

Wete,

Pemba,

28<sup>th</sup> April, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

You seem to have had a wretched winter & we do hope you are both quite fit again & having some sunny weather. Here it rains half heartedly & we doubt expect the rains proper to commence. Residents of long standing now say they don't think the rain we have had was heavy enough & that a real downpour will come. We had several very close, hot days with thunder all round & now have a gale of wind all day & still nights but no real rain. Yesterday morning while I was brushing my hair in front of a mirror there was suddenly, without any warning, a terrific crack & a blinding flash across my eyes & then a little thunder. Harry says he saw a ball of fire falling, close to the house, which burst asunder with a loud report.

I quite like the new stamps though the letters are small. I'm not addressing you there yet as I expect you are still at "Swif Gates". The money from Uncle Harry is certainly a wonderful surprise & we mean to invest

whatever we get, where we don't know yet.

We quite enjoyed our "safari" & ended up with a large party at Mkwani. The Headman was celebrating his fourth marriage! We were very amused to see the Quaker missionaries there, imagine Mr Eastman's face. We had tea, with a dance in progress just outside which made it impossible to talk, <sup>perhaps</sup> ~~which~~ it was just as well as Harry was at the head of the table with the first wife on his right & the fourth on his left & neither could speak a word of English. There were 6 other Europeans there & after tea we sat on the verandah & watched the dancing which is most uninteresting & very noisy as there are only about 10 ft between audience & performers.

Last night we had a party here as a last effort. There were 7 guests, just for drinks & hors d'oeuvres, & it went off quite well. Now I'm doing the last bits of packing & looking packed up.

With much love from us both.

Your loving

Hono

Wete,

Pemba.

5<sup>th</sup> May, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maudie,

I do hope we shall get another air mail letter from you before we go, as we have two more weeks here, but you seem doubtful whether we should get this <sup>week's</sup> letter. Air mail takes only 9 or 10 days. We were ever so glad to hear you are all well again.



The new doctor, Lister, & his wife have been trying to camp in this pouring rain, orders from Zanzibar. They stuck 3 nights & then everything was soaking so they came home & now Mrs Lister is in bed with a temp. of 102°. Sent it a shame to send them in the rains, they say they were walking over their knees in water to visit villages & the rain dropped on them at night. Apparently no one has ever attempted camping in the rains before & everyone is furious with the S.M.O. who gave the order, he must be batty. The Listers are sure to have fever in a week or so. So much for centralization which is supposed to insure officers from fever.

Practically all our heavy luggage has gone to the wharf & we are going to move into the other flat to let the two Colchesters come straight in here. They come next week & we go the following mail. I wish you could see Harry now, it is quite difficult to believe that he is the same person! His tendency towards neurasthenia has practically disappeared & he is so awfully happy about going back to the islands. We see in the latest Pacific Islands Monthly that Mr Barley has visited Christmas Is. & the warship has also been there & dropped a wireless operator & seven other men, hoping no doubt to convince America that the island is really British. It has been part of the U.S. S.C. for years anyway. Mr Barley also went to the Phoenix islands which makes Harry green with envy as it was he who first suggested taking Gilbertese there; there are no inhabitants & they would be an excellent place for our surplus population. We wonder what Barley & Barton said to each other when they met in Suva, as they must have done.

There is nothing much on here for the Coronation, all the festivities are in Zamtara.

There are to be Police Parades here, Harry is to take the one at Chake, + sports + fireworks. No European party as Mrs Poncea goes on the mail on the 12<sup>th</sup> + we shall be camping in the next flat + Colchesters will have just arrived + not unpacked. Having had two celebrities up quite recently, first the Sultan + then H.E., Mrs Poncea was afraid that any attempt at a native gathering would fall rather flat with only him whom they can see any day.

My black nail is hanging by a thread + I have stuck it on with plaster as I hate the idea of a nailless finger! However I expect it will <sup>te</sup>off in another week. Harry still has a large piece of plaster <sup>on his back</sup>, as a reminder of his centipede bite + he won't let me remove it. I found a large centipede dead in one of my drawers + I should think it was probably the one that bit him. We kill at least one nearly every day but so far haven't had any more in bed.

We have just been presented with an awfully nice little Pemba table. Its a job to pack but is worth the trouble. The top is a hide + the legs are coloured in rings  like that, very strong but heavy. The Electrolux  still has to be

packed up but Mr Baker is going to help me, as he has done several before. All our luggage looks so nice, freshly painted & marked, I borrowed stencils, also from Baker, & had a grand time with black & white paint. Harry has had a case made for the two new Guitars, it is a bit bulky but at least it means less hand luggage.

With much love from us both,

Your loving,

Honor

7 JUNE 1937

Wete,

Pemba.

18<sup>th</sup> May, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I'm afraid I missed the mail last week but we were really very busy until the last minute, clearing out of the other flat & then had the Colchesters for a day & the following day was Coronation Day. We went to Chake early as Harry had to take the Parade at 9.30 a.m. It poured on the way down & the flags with which the car was decorated dripped red all over us & made rather a mess of Harry's white suit. However it was fine for the Parade which was quite a nice ceremony with the Chake brass band to play God Save the King. We arrived back here about 12.30 & dashed in to say Good-bye to M<sup>rs</sup> Poncia who was leaving that day & found them all listening in to the Coronation. All thoughts of mail flew out of my head & I stayed there till 4.30, had my lunch on a tray, & heard everything, even the King's promises quite clearly, it was awfully thrilling. We had fireworks in the evening but didn't hear the King's speech.



M<sup>r</sup> Colchester took over from Harry a few days ago, he comes from Kenya & so does his wife, they have been married only 2 months. He doesn't seem thrilled with the work here, any more than Harry was, as he is used to district work but he is only seconded for 18 months. M<sup>rs</sup> Colchester refuses to wear mosquito boots which horrifies us all, especially as she has had fever very very badly in Kenya, including a touch of black water fever, & the malarial mosquitoes are bad just now. M<sup>rs</sup> Dister has been down with a nasty go of fever but is quite well again now - We all think M<sup>rs</sup> Colchester will go down very soon & probably will have to go home, we have all expostulated with her but she only says boots don't look nice with evening dresses!

Thank you for your last letter, I am sending this to Petit Tor as you may be there by now. The snaps are delightful & the view superb, we hope you will have a lovely summer there. It looks a marvellous place for a rest cure & should help to put Sir Walter right again.

The tailor here has made Harry two very nice suits, one of cotton 18/-, cloth & everything! The other a lovely silk which cost us 27/- & making 10/6.

He also altered a tweed coat & skirt for me. I hated the thing & now it is very nice & he only charged 4/30. I wish I could take him with us.

We leave here at 9 a.m. tomorrow, go to Chake & Mkoani on the steamer & eventually sail from Mkoani at 10 p.m. We arrive in Zanzibar on Thursday morning & sail on Friday at 4.30 p.m. for Colombo. I will post again from there & then Semantle.

With ever so much love from us both,  
 Your loving  
 Honor

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4 JUNE 1937

m.v. "Seipingo"  
at Mombasa.

East Africa.

22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We left Zanzibar a day early & have had 3 days in Mombasa. It meant an awful rush in Zanzibar as we didn't know until we arrived in Z'bar that we were to sail the same day. We did our duty calls & shopping & had lunch at the Residency. Harry had a silk suit made to measure in 3 hours! The suits he had made in Pemba are a great success, so now he has 3 light suits & looks very nice & cool in them.

We have a very nice cabin, on the cool side once we start but it's very hot in port. We have been indulging in a little entertainment here, we went to the pictures the first night & took the Chief Officer with us. We know him from our last trip & we are at his table again & very pleased as he is very nice & knows Ocean Island. The Captain is a new man but he says he met us once at Tarawa! Last night we invited two friends to go to an entertainment given by the sloop, it was really very good. One man played about with

an enormous whip & a number of lassos. He made the whip pop crack like a pistol shot & then got a man to hold a small piece of rolled up paper in his hand, protruding about 4 inches & then he flicked it off close to the man's fingers. The lassos he spun round & round, skipped inside one when it was revolving, sat in one while twirling it, made one twirl like a cork screw & was really a stage turn. One man with a concertina was very good & he took the <sup>chorus of the</sup> song, "Yes, we have no bananas" & dissected it, showing where the different bits & even phrases came from, it was awfully clever. The opening is from Handel's "Allelujah", then "O bring back my Bonnie to me" (we have no bananas to-day) the next phrase is another old song but I didn't recognise it, something about somebody's halls, but not Tara's I think, & it finishes up again with "Allelujah".

With much love to you all from us both,  
 Your loving,  
 Honor.

15 JUNE 1937

Galle Race Hotel,  
Colombo.

4<sup>th</sup> June, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We arrived here on the 31<sup>st</sup> + the Skathmaver is a day late so we don't sail until the 6<sup>th</sup>. We had quite a good trip up here though a bit sticky, however we were on the breezy side. We felt quite sad at parting from the Chief Officer at the end, having made two trips with him we were great friends.

The monsoon broke here very early + we had some squally weather + some excitement trying to find the passage through the Maldivé Islands. We found ourselves quite near a reef during one bright period so the Captain turned the ship + refused to return till daylight! I don't think the other passengers noticed anything much, they certainly didn't see the reef as we did, + they were not enlightened!

We found the shops + other things in Colombo very interesting so we have given up any idea of a motor trip. I've been

hunting for new ideas for handwork but  
 most things, & there are a marvellous lot  
 made from the coconut palm, all made by  
 machinery. I have found a new pattern  
 for poyettes & an amazing plaited belt. I  
 think I charge too much perhaps for hats  
 etc. here my  $4\frac{1}{2}$  <sup>mes</sup> are  $1/6$  but on the other  
 hand the natives live very cheaply here &  
 in the bulbeets if they want any European  
 commodity such as cloth they pay an awful  
 price for it. Today we had a lovely time  
 in the native bazaar looking for materials for  
 lavalavas. We found some lovely striped  
 silks but by the time Harry & I have  
 decided which we want for ourselves there  
 won't be much left for Christmas presents!  
 I got a lovely green sarree, 6 yds for 6 rupees  
 but before I bought it Harry scouted round  
 to compare prices & another shop asked him  
**32 Rs.** for exactly the same thing.

It is really astonishing what they make  
 here from the coconut palm, we went over a  
 "coconut emporium" the other day & saw the  
 following, all with a basis of some part  
 of the coconut palm — whiskey, vinegar,  
 rectified spirits, medicines, oil, brooms & brushes

lovely patterned door mats, coir matting, baskets, wooden articles & lots of other things. Unfortunately most of them are made by machinery but I must try to evolve a loom & also a frame of some kind for door mats.

There is a pretty good wind blowing from the S.W. but it hasn't been much rain, the worst seems to have finished before we arrived. I shall have to post this before we leave as the air mail closes tomorrow & we don't sail until the following day.

With much love from us both,

Your loving,  
Honor.

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20 JULY 1937



P & O. S. N. Co.

S.S. "Strathnaver".

14<sup>th</sup> June, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We are due in Fremantle first thing tomorrow & so far have had a very good voyage. It isn't awfully cold yet but we hear the temperature in Melbourne has been 32° & they have had a series of dense fogs. We hope they will have a bit of a heat wave before we arrive there. We think travelling on the "Strathnaver", very disappointing, the cabins are not as good as the Isipingo cabins. The sports deck of course is marvellous & the lounges are lovely but that is all. There seem to be a very funny crowd on board, those who have travelled all the way don't even know one another's names & they aren't a bit friendly. There has been a tournament since we left Colombo but it was very difficult to get people to play. The deck steward says they have been like that



all the way, an awfully dull crowd. Harry & I got 3 prizes between us but mostly I think because so many people scratched.

I can't think why the Govt. send us P.O.; this time they have sent us a bill for £17 for excess baggage, we are not going to pay it but send it to the colony agents. It's a scandalous charge, our luggage takes up a corner of the baggage room & the shiping didn't charge a penny extra.

I've caught my usual cold but it isn't a very bad one. Harry is very fit. We are going to try & phone Melbourne to find out when we sail & from which port. We shall also try to find Barbara Agis who is married & lives in Perth.

With ever so much love from us both.

Your loving,

Honor.

18 JULY 1937

S.S. "Skathnaver"

19<sup>th</sup> June, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

Here we are at Adelaide after a wonderfully calm trip across the Australian Bight, like the Bay of Biscay it doesn't always live up to its name, thank goodness. It is very cold but to-day it is sunny & nice. Harry has gone up to Adelaide city, about 20 miles inland, but as I have a rotten cold & am inclined to wheeze I'm staying on board. I sent you a note from Fremantle but Harry sent it ordinary mail so this will reach you first.

Melbourne is having a bad time with a series of ~~thick~~ dense fogs, yesterday was the eleventh! We may be held up there a bit. We phoned through from Perth & were informed that there is no ship going to Ocean Island for about a month, or at any rate until the end of the first week in July, that means 2 weeks which would just do nicely. I want to ferret round & find out just what I can get tinned.

Melbourne. 22.6.37.

We arrived off Melbourne at 8 p.m. on the 21<sup>st</sup> but the fog came down fearfully thick before

We could get down the harbour so we had to anchor for the night & were able to get in at 8 a.m. Harry went up to town & found that we are to sail on July 7<sup>th</sup>, on one of the new boats, the "Triaster" which has accommodation, I believe, for 40 passengers & also a laundry & ironing room. We are going to Sydney on the "Deathnavor", & returning by train but all our luggage we have left here.

My cousin David had dinner on board with us last night, apparently Uncle was over here a fortnight ago, a pity we just missed him. It is really very cold, even in bed! Everyone goes about looking shrewelled up but at any rate it looks as though we should have clear weather to get out of the harbour as it is nice & sunny.

I must post this as it will be just in time for the air mail.

With ever so much love from us lots,

Yours lovingly,

Honor

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18 JUL 1937

Wentworth Hotel,

Sydney.

28<sup>th</sup> June, 1937.

I discovered too late that I couldn't post our mail letters on board so I have had to wait for this mail. We had quite a good trip from Melbourne, there was a good sea running but it was more or less behind us. A number of people were sea sick & I was very proud of myself as I felt perfectly all right. Boats going to N.Z. at the time had awful seas & were 24 hours late so we were lucky.

Mary Collier came to meet us which was awfully nice & we have spent a day at D<sup>r</sup> Elkins home in the suburbs. Miss Wedgwood comes to dinner tomorrow & we have several invitations. At present we are fully occupied chasing round warehouses for stores, seeing wireless sets & the dentist. To-day we had a hunt for cheese; we have never had any that was satisfactory, so our m<sup>r</sup> Robinson, who has always looked after our orders for us, sent us to a warehouse where we saw masses of cheeses & tasted quite a number. The man in charge says he eats 2lb a day, tasting, & he looks extraordinarily fit on it! He took

4.

us to see butter being put up in pkts & tins & we were very thrilled when we found that it was actually the butter we always use. It is great fun going round these places & the men in charge are usually awfully nice & helpful. Yesterday we had to go by underground & of course had to ask the way to our platform; the inspector immediately asked if it was our first visit to the underground & then showed <sup>us</sup> all over the station, it's a very good show.

We are looking for another wireless set & it looks as though the one used by the Inland Medical Mission is just what we want, it has a pedal generator & needs no petrol. Mary Collier's cousin is mad on wireless & in the Police Wireless Patrol & is going to help us find something reliable & suitable. The vegetarian people here have quite a lot of tinned & bottled stuff which is just what we need & I think we shall have a much better diet in future.

It is fairly cold here but the hotel is centrally heated & we have a small sitting room adjoining our bedroom. It is very wet & apparently has been so for several weeks - all the Sydney people are fed up.

Ever so much love from us both,

Honor

HOTEL



WINDSOR

MELBOURNE C.I.

7<sup>th</sup> July, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We sail in a few hours time & should be at Ocean in about 12 days time. An awful blow is that we shall arrive just in time for the High Commissioners visit & once again Harry hasn't got his complete uniform. I begged him to get it in 2' bar but he was sure he wouldn't need it!

We have, I think, bought most of the things we want but haven't decided about the wireless. Mary Collier's cousin who went round with us looking at

different sets advised us not to buy the very expensive one as we should only be paying for the name & he thinks we could have a better set than the Inland Medical Mission pedal set made for us by an amateur here. We met Mr & Mrs Cookson from Ocean Island & they say they were told that we were to go into their house for about 2 months.

We got two second hand bikes at \$5 each; they are what they call "built up", & almost as good as new & quite good enough for island work. To-day we finished up our shopping by getting about 600 marbles & a lot of balloons to take back for the children's sports

HOTEL



WINDSOR

MELBOURNE C.I.

pages.

On Saturday we spent the day with the Elkins & Mary Collier - drove up into the Blue Mountains, it was a perfect day, cold but sunny, & we had wonderful views. The rock formation looks like pictures of Colorado, we took snaps & will send you some later if they are any good. On Sunday we went out in the afternoon with Miss Wedgwood to a 'forest' to look for flowering shrubs for decorations, but it was rather cold & we did not stay out late.

On Monday night we left Sydney & had a sleeper to Albury where



we had to get up at 6 a.m. to change  
trains, ghastly in this cold weather!  
Melbourne is very cold but it's  
fine & sunny. This afternoon I  
went out driving with Mrs Maynard,  
who used to be at Ocean Island, &  
we had a lovely drive into the hills.  
Last night we had dinner with  
the Maynards & went to the pictures,  
Jack Heelbert in "Take my Tip", quite  
good & funny.

It seems unlikely that Amelia  
Earhart will be found now, such a  
pity but it was rather foolhardy  
to try to find a speck like Howland.

We are both very fit & have  
enjoyed our stay in Australia.

With ever so much love from us  
both.

Your loving,

Honor

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M.V. "Triaster".

17<sup>th</sup> July, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We may get to Ocean Island this evening & the ship is not staying there long so I must have my letters ready. We have had a very good trip on the whole, it was quite calm round the S.E. coast of Australia but on the fifth day we ran into rough, wet weather & had two very uncomfortable days as we rolled almost as badly as "Himanoa". The accomodation on this ship, the newest on the run, is really wonderful, we have a lovely two-birth (bedstead) corner cabin with three square windows, a basin with running cold water, a chest of drawers & two cupboards, & it is larger than our cabin on the "Skathnaver" & considerably cleaner! The vibration is rather noticeable, especially in the lounge which is further astern than the cabins. It is a nice little room with four settees, tables & chairs. The great advantage I think of cargo boats is that all the accomodation is above deck, I do hate those cabins & long corridors in the bowels of passenger ships. There are only 5 ladies on board & we have two beautiful bathrooms with h. & c. salt water, showers over the baths with h. & c. fresh water & an extra shower,

in a separate little room, the water is very soft too which is a joy. We also have a small laundry so we are really very well off. We have deck golf on the lower deck & deck tennis & quarts up above.

After passing through the sticky Solomon Islands weather we are now back again in the balmy air of the islands. The nights are marvellous, so clear & bright that the clouds are reflected in the ocean.

I began the trip badly by wheezing at night, as I had been doing in Sydney, so I asked for a kapok pillow <sup>had</sup> & no more signs of asthma. I believe there must be something in this feather pillow idea as I've tested it several times now. The Chief Steward is going to post this on Nauru so that you will have some different stamps for Aliek or whoever wants them. We have the same Captain, Chief Engineer, Chief Steward as we had on our first trip to Ocean Island.

It seems highly probable that we shall be on Ocean Island for 6 weeks or so & after that in the Southern Gilberts so will you address us at the latter place & don't specify any particular island. We made inquiries about

a private mail bag from Sydney & it is only £1 per annum ~~once~~ after the initial outlay in purchasing mail bags. We are going to sound the Ocean Island P.O. people & if they are amenable will probably have a private bag, it would save time & trouble.

I have done quite a lot of the tapestry handbag you gave me this trip & I'm very thrilled with it now that I've got the hang of it & even Harry is interested & helps with the colours. I was afraid Harry might get nerves as we neared our destination but so far is very fit & happy.

M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Barley sent us a message of welcome yesterday which was nice.

With ever so much love from us both.

Your loving,

Honor.

14 SEP. 1937

Wireless Station,  
Ocean Island.

29<sup>th</sup> July, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude.

There were two letters from you when we arrived here, the latest being 8.6.37. We do hope you have had a lovely summer in the new house. Where did Muriel eventually find a house?

We arrived here on Sunday the 18<sup>th</sup> & just in time for the doctor to board, he refused to come out if we arrived after 6 p.m. We eventually got ashore about 8.30 p.m. & found the house all ready for us, beds made & essential stores in the cupboards & ice chest. Mr & Mrs Barley would have come to meet us but it was doubtful whether we should arrive in time. There was quite a crowd of Beer boys on the wharf & it was so nice to see them again. Ocean Island is very much changed, there is a new cement jetty & a boat harbour to begin with & the old Government station is mostly phosphate fields now & there are a number of new roads in consequence. The new station

is progressing, two houses are finished & the Residency, a large, two storied building, is in course of construction. Barleys are living in one of the new cement houses which are very nice & cool & quite pretty. We find this wooden house rather hot in the middle of the day but this morning at 6 a.m. the temp. was only  $74^{\circ}$ , however by 7 a.m. it was  $84^{\circ}$ .

There is a Government lorry now which makes a tremendous difference, before, all our luggage had to be carried up a long & very steep hill. We are very glad we have our bicycles as everything is very spread out now & it takes ages if you have to walk besides being jolly hot. Harry has used his a lot already but I am waiting to have my brake fixed up, unfortunately they forgot to put in two essential clamps & I've no desire to break my neck on Ocean Island. We have been for several walks & it is lovely to be back, the smell of Ocean Island is delicious, there are some very sweet scented flowers besides the general smell of the hot sun on the leaves & earth.

These High Commissioner arrived after we had been here 3 days & stayed here for 3 days. I didn't attempt to unpack or clean the house whilst he was here as we all helped by making savouries & sandwiches for various functions & I couldn't get a wash girl so I had to get our gala clothes ready. Fortunately I had an electric iron & a new ironing board.

We were all asked to go down to the wharf just to make a crowd to welcome H.E. ashore. It is a long way from here, a good 2 miles I should say, & just as we were starting the only rain we have had since we arrived came down in sheets. We didn't wait & were simply drenched as it rained until we were about 2 thirds of the way there, & our shoes were squelching. We dried a bit however before H.E. came ashore. That afternoon Barleys had a reception & H.E. shook hands with us all & I was one of about four to go & talk to him for a few minutes. He had heard of us of course & was very amused at our getting away from Africa & also he

he travelled with Uncle Carrick from Fiji to Auckland & apparently got to know him quite well. I gathered H.E. hasn't much time for Mr<sup>s</sup> Barton & his tantrums & chuckled when he told me how angry Mr<sup>s</sup> Barton was when he said we could come back. He was awfully nice & everyone seems to like him. Mr<sup>s</sup> Barton does not seem to be at all popular in Fiji, he was known as the rudest man in Kenya & does not seem to have improved.

On the second day of H.E.'s visit we went to a cricket match between the warship & a mixed Ocean Island team, & had tea. H.E. came for a short time & we had the Ocean Island brass band which is a new & very enterprising innovation. One of the B.P.C. men trains the boys in his spare time & they are really good. In the evening there was an official dinner, owing to the absence of some of the senior ladies I was the senior Govt. lady & right in the midst of the vice-regal party! After dinner there was native dancing & they put on a very good show which all enjoyed I think. H.E.



apparently liked his stay here & we hope he likes the Gilberts as much. The natives are all wearing flower wreaths again nowadays & it does look, & smell, so nice.

On the last day H.E. had a cocktail party in the Billiard room near the wharf. We had to walk so allowed ourselves an hour & arrived in good time nice & cool. H.E. greeted everyone & then came & talked to me, I suppose he thought I'd be the easiest to start on but I'm afraid I shall not be popular with the rest of the ladies! Mr Barley has been awfully nice to us but made a bit too much fuss of us, it is a bit embarrassing. However he has gone with H.E. & will be away a month & then everyone will be used to our presence here.

The mail soon closes so I must keep any other news for next mail.

Ever so much love from us both, it is just as nice as we thought it would be to be back again.

Your loving,  
Honor,

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28 SEP. 1937

2.

Ocean Island.

Central Pacific.

14<sup>th</sup> August, 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

The mail comes in tomorrow but as it is Sunday we have to post our outward mail this morning.

There was great excitement here the day before yesterday, a ship coming in from Japan to load went up on the reef & we all wondered if Ocean Island was to claim another victim. It was the Capt's first visit here & so far we don't know quite what happened but he came straight for the island instead of making a wide sweep, he overshot the mooring buoy, just missed one of the cantilever jetties & was more or less broadside on to the reef with her stern well & truly caught. She lay between two jetties, it's marvellous that she didn't damage either of them, & eventually they got ropes to two buoys & pulled her forepart round & at high tide, 11 hours after she struck, they got her safely off & away. The trouble was that it all had to be done by pulling on the precious mooring buoys, an awful strain, as

there were no other ships near to help & the launches haven't enough power.

Sad to relate I've lost my beautiful tapestry bag, plus my silver thimble & <sup>new</sup> scissors. I took it down to the beach & on the way home it must have dropped out of the haversack. We have hunted high & low all over the route several times & let the natives know about it but so far it has not been returned. I'm very much afraid a Chinese may have found it.

We have been having a bad time with boys. The first one, a very nice boy, was booked for the 1<sup>st</sup> Aug. so he had to go & I was left with two young village lads who knew absolutely nothing. One of them got a swollen eye & departed, then we got a very nice ex-school boy who at any rate has a few elementary ideas about working in a European house but the second village lad I'm not sure of. He has had two days holiday, supposedly sick leave, but I fear he was only tired! He has come back but has to be chivvied too much for my liking, he hasn't the remotest idea of doing the ordinary routine work & every now & then hares off

to sweep the bedroom before he has done the sitting room or just sits down for a rest almost before he has begun work.

It is very, very dry - we are hoping for rain, the only rain we have had was that  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour downpour when we got soaked going to meet the N.C! We are being kept well supplied with pineapples, they are small, we eat a whole one between us at one meal, but they are very sweet. Oranges, apples & lemons are always procurable from the store but green vegs. gave out after 3 weeks, however we shall have more tomorrow.

Our wireless station is closed for the first time for 18 years, one man is on leave & the other is in hospital with a very bad ulcerated leg. He tried to carry on & is in an awful mess, in fact I'm afraid they are quite worried about him. All our traffic has to go by telephony through Hauser which is an awfully slow way of doing it.

We went out to dinner one night this week - suffered agonies trying to wade through 5 courses, being idiots we ate all our soup & fish & then stuck, it was

really painful. It was more or less American + after a large bowl of soup we had fish, joint + vegetables, then salad which seemed to be walnuts + olives chopped up + very difficult to get down + then a weird but awfully nice pudding with more nuts, raisins, dates + sort of cake crumbs + cream.

Ocean Island is very hard on ones feet + my old corn is playing up again + I'm afraid is vascular - I don't know the name of the acid for treating it but will go to the B.P.C. dispenser + ask his advice. We use our bicycles a lot + go for walks only in the bush. Yesterday we took two of the women who came up with us on the Traster + they seemed to enjoy the walk very much.

M<sup>r</sup> + M<sup>rs</sup> Barley are still away but I think they will be back in another week.

With ever so much love from  
us both

Your loving,  
Honor.

Ocean Island.

7<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1937.

Dear Sir Walter,

Three letters arrived from you & Lady Maude this last mail, for which many thanks. I have sent off by this mail, Mr<sup>s</sup> Ellis' book on Nauru & Ocean Island but I have addressed it to Mooi River in case you are there. Harry wrote a Review of it in J.P.S. for June, 1936 & he is mentioned in it but I have lost the paper on which I made a note of the page. Mr<sup>s</sup> Ellis, you may remember, was on the same ship as we were when we went to N.Z. for our first leave & he is rather a friend of ours.

Harry sails in "Nimanoa" about the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month for the Gilbert, Ellice & Phoenix Groups & will be away 6 or 7 weeks. He is awfully bucked of course, it was just what he had longed for. It is hoped that some of the Phoenix islands will prove suitable for settlement by Gilbertese, Harry suggested it some years ago & was rather laughed at so it is all the more thrilling

for him. I do not think I shall go with him, the idea of 7 weeks or so cooped up in "Himaua" appals me, especially as there would be some fairly long periods when I couldn't get ashore & unfortunately "Himaua" reduces me to a wreck, both physically & mentally. It is a great pity I'm not one of those tough people who are never sea sick & don't mind rough weather & being upset in the surf but as I am not I might only spoil the trip for Harry & I dare say a holiday apart won't hurt either of us. I'm hoping to go to Hauru for part of the time, to collect the string figures, but at present the only ship going across is one sailing 5-day & I don't ~~what~~ <sup>want</sup> to leave so much before Harry. With any luck there will be another before long but they keep on switching the ships round. It would be very nice to have a few weeks on Hauru & I jolly nearly went 5-day, I sent a wireless <sup>message</sup> to the Administrator but now the station isn't working so I've had no reply.

The three new Cadets arrive in about a week & one of them is to go with Harry, he will be jolly lucky. It does seem

unfair, a few years ago only men with good honours degrees could get into the Colonial Service, Macdonald had to stay a 4<sup>th</sup> year at Cambridge before a vacancy occurred, & now these men come with no degrees at all. One, as a matter of fact, is a Bachelor of Law, one comes from a laundry & the third seems to have tried most things & ~~the last~~ <sup>latterly</sup> was helping someone else to farm in south Ireland! One of them is to learn the Police job so as to relieve our Inspector of Police who is due for leave, one goes to the Secretariat & one is to help Harry.

M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Barley came back a week ago & stay here until Harry returns when they go for a trip to the Felice Islands. We are wondering if we shall have a bad westerly season this year, we are having quite a lot of odd showers at present & some people say it means that the westerlies are coming. Harry should get back before they break, I hope so, but M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Barley's plans may have to be altered. It looks as though we shall be here until January as Harry will have to finish his work here when he comes back.



We are so glad you are thinking of going out to Natal again & hope you found a good cargo boat. Harry says there are a number of really good ones, but the agents are hopeless, we found, at getting information about them.

I sincerely hope that Harry will write to you whilst on this trip & if he doesn't I shall be really annoyed with him, but I think he will have lots of time.

With much love from us both to you all.

Yours affectionately,  
Houri.

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Ocean Island,

Central Pacific.

23<sup>rd</sup> Sept. 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

Enclosure herewith is for Sir Walter from Harry, a sample of "Brighter Secretariats" as run by Cartwright, it arrived a few hours before Harry sailed for the Phoenix Islands.

Harry left on the 18<sup>th</sup> & it seems very strange to be all by myself. I'm afraid the first two days of his trip must have been very rough, there was quite a gale here & I was quite thankful I wasn't on board "Timanua". I am still hoping to go to Naeu but so far have not found any accommodation but I may get a letter by a ship which comes over from Naeu to-day. There is a ship going across from here on the 30<sup>th</sup> & it will be very disappointing if I can't go.

M<sup>r</sup> Macdonald & his wife have come over from Tarawa & the latter is a very bright & awfully nice girl. She is keen on walking so I shall have a companion sometimes for my afternoon exercise. Macdonald, who has been laid up with plebitis for about 3 months, is just beginning to walk about, considering all things he looks very fit.

I have started work again on my string figures. There are some proofs to correct & the next instalment to finish. Doing them makes the hours fly & so far I've had very little time to feel lonely but 6 weeks is an awful long time! My bike is a great blessing & I go out on it most afternoons to see people.

With so many mails it is difficult to think of any news!

With much love to you all from  
Your loving,

Honor.

S.S. "Forthbank",

off Ocean Island.

30<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1937.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I am actually on board ship waiting to sail for Nauvu. I didn't know until after 11 o'clock this morning that I could go & I had to be on board at 4 p.m. so I had a terrific rush as you may imagine. I had prepared to a certain extent as I knew I might go but I was beginning to ~~lose~~ heart as it seemed so difficult to fix up accomodation. Goodness knows when I can come back but if I get some good string figures it won't really matter. There has been no word from Harry which is very disappointing as he has been to Bevu but M<sup>r</sup> Moore says the Bevu wireless wasn't working well so his message may have been held up. I feel very desolate as he has been gone nearly a fortnight & I sent him a message a week ago. Now we cannot communicate till he reaches Sunafuti about the 6<sup>th</sup> Oct.

Harry's birthday tomorrow, his

itinerary says he should be at sea but I fear he is a little behind hand so he may celebrate at Aroae which is a very nice, cheerful island.

The captain has turned out of his cabin for me which is awfully nice of him. At present I am sitting in his lounge feeling most luxurious! The cabin allotted to me was certainly hot + next to the pantry + saloon. They hope to reach Haere about 1 p.m. or 2 p.m. tomorrow. We don't sail till midnight so I don't see why I had to come on so early, all the same it was just as well as there is a nasty swell + I'm not over fond of messing about gangways + passages in the dark.

Haere. 3.10.37.

We had a second trip across + I got ashore soon after 2 o'clock. At present I am staying with the B.P.C. nurse, Miss Hoyer. She is very nice + is very glad of my company so I am very lucky. I have been taken round to a number of places already + it looks as though I shall get quite a lot of strong figures. The people

are out of practise but seem interested & last night showed me about a dozen, some of them most complicated, goodness knows how I can describe them, & they all said they would practise & then show me more.

Nauen is so much prettier than Ocean Island & I have quite fallen in love with it. Harry pinched my camera so I shall have to try & get snaps from other people. A message came through from Harry yesterday, it was evidently held up at Beru, he was well & enjoying the trip. The mosquitoes here are truly awful, masses of them & they bite viciously.

Everyone here seems to be very nice & I think I am going to have a nice time here. They seem to be a much more sociable crowd here but I expect I shall have to refuse most invitations except evening ones, else I shan't have time to do stamg figures.

With much love to you all,

from

Honor.

Hawaii,

Central Pacific.

16.10.37.

Dearest lady Maude,

I had a letter from you this mail, sent over from Ocean Island, I do hope you got rid of my Gates at the auction.

I have had no further news of Harry, he should be in the Phoenix islands about now & I don't suppose will be able to communicate. A ship goes over to Ocean Island to-day & I would love to go as I am afraid of being stranded here, but the string figures are going so well & I haven't nearly exhausted the supply. Harry won't return for another 3 weeks so I shall just have to risk a ship turning up.

So far I have spent about 8 days in the villages & have collected 80 figures. These people are really wonderful with a loop of string & have even worked out figures they had forgotten after I had shown them a picture. There are only a few elderly men now who can do any & I think they are wonderful but they say they used to know

many more. I have been given one of the old plaited hair strings they use, it is about 15 ft. long & makes up beautifully. The Administrator was very doubtful whether there were any so I was very thrilled to get one & actually they tell me there are lots about. As usual nobody has ever seen these people doing any string figures but now apparently everyone sees them as houseboys & orderlies are trying to make them! Commander Garcia is very anxious that I should record all that I can find so that they will not be lost & maybe can be taught in the schools, so I feel I can't run away until I have done the job properly.

Hauau is such a pretty island & has about 10 miles of motor road. I am driven out 4 miles to the village I am working in at present, all through coconuts, with the reef on one side & the island rising steeply on the other.

With much love from  
 Your loving,  
 Honor.



The Residency,  
Hauer,

26.10.37.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I came down here yesterday & it is a good deal cooler than up in Miss Hoye's House. I have a bedroom & sitting adjoining which is awfully nice. We have only a few yards to go when we want a bath & I was persuaded to have a dip last night after 10 p.m. The Auditor, Mr. Siggins is also a guest here & he is so enthusiastic about everything. We are going fly-fishing one night & crayfishing another.

Last Saturday I very bravely went to a Whist Drive & quite enjoyed it; there were 9 tables which was a nice number, I meant to get the booty prize but had medium sort of hands most of the evening.

I had a radio from Harry last week, from Canton Island in the Phoenix, saying he was fit & having a good trip still & expected to be back about the 8<sup>th</sup>. I don't know when I can get back, I am hoping that the Triaster or Triona about that time will make the trip from here to Ocean Is.

The string figures are not finished yet & the one old man who is such an expert but who is in hospital is still not fit enough to show me what he can do.

This mail is going to be a slow one I'm afraid, via W. Australia, but there won't be another for a couple of weeks or so. One week here they waded a ship nearly every day & now of course there is a lull.

I've had some lovely moonlight drives this last week, the people stationed on Nauru certainly gain on the Ocean Island crowd there.

We don't get much news of Europe, the excitement here has been the recent Elections & there is a certain amount of interest in the Japanese venture but static is bad & it is hard to get anything but the rather short press news.

With much love to you all, from

Your loving,

Honor

Island of Beru,

2nd November, 1937.

Dearest Mother and Father,

It is literally ages since I last wrote to you and the fault is entirely mine. Honor is, unfortunately, such an excellent correspondent that I always seem to have a plausible reason for postponing my own letter writing.

However I haven't seen Honor for over a month now so I really can't expect her to detail all my more recent doings. I left her at Ocean Island on the 18th September but had a wireless message from her about a fortnight ago in which she said that she was on Nauru collecting "String figures".

As Honor has no doubt already told you I was detailed to lead an expedition to the Phoenix Islands to explore them and estimate whether we could make any use of them. I returned yesterday to Beru and am now awaiting a ship to take me back to Ocean Island so I must seize this opportunity to tell you all about the business.

The Phoenix Group has been for many years more or less under the jurisdiction of the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. Until this year, however, it has not been within the boundaries of the Gilbert and Ellice, or any other, Colony, so there was always a certain amount of doubt as to whether it was really part of the British Empire or not.

As long ago as 1931 I realised the possibilities of these islands and wrote in recommending that an enquiry be held as to whether they would not prove a suitable home for the surplus population of the Gilberts. Needless to say the idea was laughed at as being entirely visionary and unpractical.

While I was on leave with you, however, the Americans woke up to the advantage of the Central Pacific atolls as flying bases in the projected trans-Pacific air route. They promptly pinched Howland, Baker, and Jarvis Islands, all of which had previously been considered British property. On the way out from England I tackled Barton almost daily on the importance of consolidating our claim to the remaining uninhabited atolls of the Central Pacific before the Yanks grabbed them too. He must have been impressed for when he reached Suva immediate action was taken to protect our interests in the islands.

One of the reasons why I was so loth to leave the islands was because when I was passing through Fiji I was shown correspondence ordering the local authorities to take immediate steps to carry my 1931 scheme into effect - i.e. to conduct an investigation as to whether the Phoenix Islands were suitable or not for migration purposes. What they did not show me was the reply from the Resident Commissioner stating that I was the only officer in the service with the necessary experience and

ability to tackle such a ticklish job. In my opinion the Fiji outfit ought never to have allowed me to be transferred - at any rate until the job was done. As it was the whole business, which was naturally urgent, was held up until they were able to get me back again.

Anyway in March the Phoenix Islands were declared, by Order in Council, to be part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, and on my arrival in the Colony the High Commissioner directed me to take immediate charge of an expedition to investigate the possibilities of the islands. Beyond giving me Bevington, one of the three new Cadets just out from England, as Assistant, they left the whole business to be worked out by me as I thought best, H.M.C.S. "Nimanoa" being placed at my disposal for two months.

I chose a tip top native staff - mostly my lands experts - and left for Beru, where I had already reported that there was a considerable degree of poverty. From Beru we went on to each island where we reckoned a state of "land hunger" existed - i.e. Arorae, and Onotoa, in the Gilberts, and Nanumea and Niutao in the Ellice. At each island we investigated the situation and took on board a party of delegates to view the new Group.

From Niutao we sailed to the westwards for five days trying to make McKean Island. However the wind and current proved too strong for us and we were obliged to make for

Gardner. We found this island a perfect little paradise and the delegates were much astonished, never having seen such a fertile island before. We made a camp ashore under an enormous sail and stayed three days. You know how incurably romantic Honor and I are and what the South Seas mean to us, so you can imagine the thrill I got out of living on a real uninhabited tropical paradise hundreds, or rather thousands, of miles from civilization.

The island was full of enormous "buka" and "kanawa" trees, so much so that everyone swore that it was hilly. It was fairly broad, averaging about  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile and enclosed a beautiful lagoon about 4 miles by 2. There was only the one entrance to the lagoon, beside which we camped.

The birds were of course in thousands and so tame that they allowed one to stroke them. The island was also full of enormous coconut crabs and the whole place teemed with fish. The delegates were, of course, entranced with the island and we reckoned that it will, when fully planted, provide for about 2,000. The only trouble was water - we dug wells in various places but the water was not of first class quality. However, it was no worse than dozens of wells in the Gilberts and there is always the chance that we'll find better when the place is properly settled.

From Gardner we sailed for Canton Island where there is

possibly going to be the mid-Pacific air base (This is all confidential). Canton has been a lot in the news lately so I expect you've heard of it. We found two Europeans sent by Fiji there, measuring and surveying etc. and everyone in a fever of excitement lest the Americans land and pinch it from us. It's a great sun-drenched waste, narrow and surrounding an enormous lagoon. I took the delegates around the lagoon by launch, stopping at selected spots. We found quite good water close to the place where the "Eclipse" expedition stayed.

In spite of the fact that, apart from seven coconut trees, there was nothing on the island except a little coarse grass and weeds, the delegates appeared quite bucked with the place and reckoned that it was quite suitable for migration purposes. Certainly, if we can plant it up, it will support a large population.

I sent the first commercial telegram from Canton Radio station - I would have sent it to you but reckoned that it would only worry you as to why I had sent it and what I was doing there.

The big mail steamers pass quite close to Canton as it's the half way point between Australia and America. My word, what a fuss is made of Rostier and Langdale, the two government people there. They've been given every luxury and convenience imaginable - an enormous refrigerator, a broadcast receiver, etc.

and the mail steamers drop them drums of fresh provisions. Fortunately they've got the good sense to laugh at all this hero stunt—half a dozen of us in the Gilberts live far more isolated lives than they do without any fuss.

Honor and I would love the Canton job and I have been making tentative suggestions that they let us go - it's worked on 3 month shifts - but the powers that be reckon we're wanted here and I don't see any prospect of getting it at present.

From Canton we went to Enderbury - quite a nice island but we could find no water although we dug a good many wells. Next we touched at Phoenix, which was small and, extraordinary to relate, covered with rabbits. We brought several rabbits back with us and are endeavouring to get them acclimitised on Beru. However, for some reason or other, they have been dying on us.

From Phoenix to Birney, a minute spot without any water. From Birney to Sydney Island, which has already been planted with coconuts by a European firm. It is hoped, however, that we shall be able to cancel their lease, in which case about 500 Gilbertese could proceed there immediately.

From Sydney to Hull, also already planted. Both Sydney and Hull were very like the Gilberts - enclosing large lagoons, the one at Hull being eminently suitable for flying boats and



a far better island, in my opinion, for a mid-Pacific air base than Canton.

Finally we called at McKean, another tiny islet without water, and thence back to Beru, which we reached in three and a half days from McKean.

At each island we erected a flag-staff and surrounded it with a great cairn of stones. Having hoisted the Union Jack we placed a notice board at the foot of the flag-staff reading as follows:-

GILBERT AND ELLICE ISLANDS COLONY

Administrative Visit

to

(Gardner) Island.

H.M.C.S. "Nimanoa" - October, 1937.

M. L. Singleton,  
Master, H.M.C.S. "Nimanoa".

H. E. Maude,  
Administrative Officer, G.E.I.C.

-----  
Let's hope that will keep out the Yanks, or any other nation. I doubt if some of the islands had been visited, however, for some thirty years or so.

The sum total of my findings is that 4 of the islands - Gardner, Canton, Sydney, and Hull, - are suitable for the

Gilbertese or Ellice. Two of them can be immediately settled and would absorb up to 1,000 between them at the moment. The other two will need planting and so we shall have to send workers and support them until the trees begin to bear.

Well here I am back at Beru - soon after leaving McKean I developed a poisoned foot and have been laid up for the last week - since the 2nd. Today is Friday and we hope to get the "Nimanoa" on Sunday morning to take us direct to Ocean. Mr. Eastman cut my foot open on the 3rd and puss has been oozing out ever since. However last night the Native Medical Practitioner who is dressing my leg seemed to recognize the core trying to come out so I hope for the best.

Honor is, according to a memo I had from her yesterday, still on Nauru, and there doesn't seem to be much prospect of her getting across to Ocean Island. My immediate job, when I've finished this letter, is to write a voluminous report on the Phoenix from every aspect. This will take me, I reckon, several weeks. You've no idea the number of details that have to be gone into before one can undertake the migration of a people from one Group of islands to another. The system of land tenure, what is to be done with their lands here, the system of government, the housing, water supply, food supply, means of transport, medical services and literally hundreds more like these have all to be dealt with in detail before I

can conscientiously recommend the migration. And then, if the scheme is approved, I understand that I'm to be put in charge of the actual migration itself, so it behoves me to leave no detail unsettled lest we be in the soup later.

My immediate plans are to return to Ocean for about a month or six weeks, finish the lands there and the Phoenix business and then set sail for Arorae, or possibly Onotoa, and make a lands settlement of the island. Its hard to decide between the two islands as we love the natives of both and would be very happy at either. Arorae, however, has a reef and no lagoon and so, if we get bad westerly weather around Christmas, it would probably be better to go to Onotoa. My idea is to work steadily up the Gilberts, starting at the south.

I spoke to both the High Commissioner and the Resident about the necessity of my having an assistant whom I could train to succeed me, and they agreed that I should be given one of the three new Cadets. The trouble is that no-one in the Colony will consider the job owing to its difficulty and the hardships and isolation involved in the life. They gave me Bevington to take around the Phoenix as an assistant with the idea that I could initiate him into lands work during the trip. Bevington however, like Armstrong, Cartwright, and Macdonald, politely but firmly announces that he will go back

to England rather than undertake lands work. Frankly, I consider they altogether over-estimate the difficulty and danger of the work but I agree that it is no use undertaking the work unless one is an idealist and has the interests of the natives fanatically at heart. There still remain Wernham and Gallagher, the two new Cadets at Ocean Island - I only saw them for a few hours but Wernham appears to take little interest in natives. Gallagher sounds distinctly promising, the only trouble being that he is a fanatical Roman Catholic and the foreign fathers in this Group may be able to get at him.

Honor told me in a message which I received at Canton that she had collected 50 string figures, including one of the real old ones which they made especially for their competitions. I do hope that she has managed to collect one of these as it will be a real triumph. Nauru is the real centre of the string figure world and for years people have been talking about the extraordinary ones they made for their competitions - some of them with string 16 feet long, taking 6 people to construct and half an hour to complete - nothing in the same street has been found anywhere else in the world. Camilla Wedgewood, the anthropologist who was there in 1935, reported that there was no trace of these figures to be found so if Honor has really got one she ought to be very bucked.

There doesn't appear to be any more news. Having been away from the world for the last six weeks I have talked and thought little else but the Phoenix Islands project, so I'm afraid this letter will be very boring. Anyway, how good it is to be in the South Seas again instead of doing the work of a child in Africa. I have to shoulder more responsibility and do more original thinking in one day here than I ever had to do the whole time I was in Africa, where after 10 years service one might possibly be entrusted with the awful responsibility of counting a few sheets of stamps in some sub post office. Individually every one in Africa was the soul of kindness; it was the system which, to my mind, was wrong. The service is grossly over-staffed so there is nothing to do at all half the time - originality and initiative are severely frowned upon, except on the part of those at the very top of the tree with about 20 years service, and everyone is mollycoddled and pampered. In Africa one is trusted to do nothing right - every action has to be referred to headquarters. I was, as you know, Assistant District Officer, Pemba Island; over me I had a District Officer, resident on Pemba; over him there was a Provincial Commissioner, resident in Zanzibar; and over him the Chief Secretary, also resident in Zanzibar; and finally, over the Chief Secretary, the British Resident.

Quite seriously, most of the work which I have been doing

since my return to this Colony, would, in Africa, be tackled by the Provincial Commissioner, who was getting £1,200 per annum for it, and a good deal would be only undertaken by the Chief Secretary.

All this dope is a rather poor attempt to explain one of the many reasons why we came back here. It wasn't just our love for the South Seas and the South Sea Islanders - from a purely material and practical point of view I reckon we did the right thing to return. Here I am the government adviser on all affairs effecting the natives - what would be termed in larger Colonies the Secretary for Native Affairs - so much so that I see little prospect of being allowed to proceed with my lands work in peace. It would have taken me 15 more years to have worked up to a corresponding position in Africa. Here, however, if my health holds out, I stand a very fair chance of being made Resident before many years are out - provided I don't make a fool of myself in the meantime. Failing that they would have to transfer me to a senior position elsewhere, i.e. with average luck in the Pacific I should rise, within a comparatively short time, to a position far senior and for that matter better paid than any I could hope to obtain in Africa even if I stayed there until I was 60.

Admittedly I kept in good health in Africa but all doctors agreed that eventually we were bound to fall into the

continual round of malaria from which every one else suffered. Malaria every few weeks saps one's vitality to an amazing extent and leads to blackwater and a whole host of other troubles. I consulted a whole host of doctors and they all appeared to agree that I stood a better chance of lasting out in the disease and germ free Gilberts than in Africa, which appeared to have indulged in every known disease under the sun. The general consensus of medical opinion seemed to be that if my health broke down a second time the only wise thing to do would be to leave the real tropics altogether and not try chopping and changing between the devil and the deep sea.

Of course life is a gamble but I do want you to feel that Honor and I did not decide to come back here without weighing up carefully every aspect of the situation - we went into the question fully from the financial point of view, the career point of view, and the health point of view, as well as from every other conceivable aspect of the situation. So it was not entirely from a perhaps mistaken sense of duty that we returned, or from a romantic desire to achieve a probably impossible ideal of happiness.

Naturally if anything happens to our health here everyone will be able to say "we told you so" but they will be wrong just the same. I have consulted the best doctors that money can get and I know now that I stand a 50% better chance of

maintaining good health here than in Africa.

I'm afraid this letter is rather a jumble but I have been typing it straight onto the paper whereas normally I prepare a pencil draft first. I must stop now and get on with the report or there will be a frightful row. Sorry there's nothing of any great interest in the letter but I'm sure you'll realise that it is largely owing to my isolation from the happenings of the world.

I do hope that everyone's keeping fit at home and that the new house is a success. With average luck we shall be able to take a leave to England before long - that is, unless you can come and live with us in the superior climate of New Zealand. The Colonial Office recently told the Fiji authorities that unless they were prepared to improve drastically the salaries, leave conditions, conditions of service, etc. of English appointed officers, they were not willing to advise Cadets in future to enter the Pacific services from Great Britain. We would then have to depend on locally appointed officers of an inferior grade and education. As a result a Committee has been sitting which has recommended very material alterations in our conditions. The report is still confidential but, among other things, administrative posts are to be reserved for Cadets only, salaries are being revised, and we are to get full passages for ourselves and our



wives every 3 years with a trip to Australia or New Zealand in between. Salaries are being placed on a long scale basis, but minus the top incremental range of the African scale. There will be two efficiency bars. We are to get an exchange compensation immediately of  $13\frac{1}{2}\%$  for being paid in Australian currency which is, at any rate, better than nothing, and there is to be frequent interchange of officers throughout the Pacific services, which is not so good.

Well, good-bye for the present. Don't worry about how you address our letters - probably "Island of Beru" <sup>etc.</sup> is best - as we are entering into this marvellous arrangement with the Australian postal authorities by which, in exchange for an annual fee and four mail bags, they are going to make up a private mail bag in which will be put all letters addressed to Honor or me, irrespective of the actual address on the letter. The mail bag will then be sent by the most direct route to wherever we are at the moment. With luck it should save us months at times.

With lots of love  
from your devoted son,

Harry

P.S. We are both back at Ocean Island. I was very lucky in getting a ship which got me here the day after Harry.  
Honor -

The Residence,  
Nauru.

8.11.37.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I expect you will be wondering why I'm sending an Air Mail letter, well, I have some news which I hope will please you as much as it does me. If all goes well I hope to have a baby in June, I have waited some weeks before telling you as I couldn't believe my good luck but the doctor assures me that it is safe to tell you now. Harry doesn't know & I am longing to get back to tell him, he should arrive at Ocean Island in a few days time & I have just heard that I may be able to get across in a few days too.

I hope Harry will be able to stay on Ocean for a few months now as I don't risk a trip on Nimanua & in any case I shall be going to N.Z. in Feb. or March. It is going to mean a horribly long separation but I am so thankful that Harry has kept fit on this trip as I should hate leaving him. I shall try to persuade him to work on

Beau until I get back, the other islands would be too lonely, + I think he will have a Cadet to keep him company. It is all very exciting & upsetting & I only hope Harry won't have a fit at the thought of being left on his own, it will be a bit hard on him.

If this particular ship does not go to Ocean Island I don't know when I shall get back, it doesn't bear thinking of. The string figures are about finished & there will be nearly 100, a lot of them are made with the 10ft string peculiar to Hawaii so I am very pleased with my trip.

I must get this away or I shall be too late.

With much love from  
Your loving,  
Honor.

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Ocean Island,  
Central Pacific.

27. 12. 37.

Dearest Lady Maude,

Just a short letter this mail I'm afraid as I am completely exhausted by the Christmas festivities. There were 3 very nice parties but helping in the preparations & then staying up till 3 a.m. has been rather too much for me. We had a combined party on Christmas evening, 17 of us & two of the men cooked the main part of the dinner & made a marvellous show of it. We played charades which were great fun & sang songs till I'd got a sore throat. If only these people would stop at a reasonable hour it would be more enjoyable. Half of us were quite ready for bed by 1 a.m. but as the Barleys were there had to wait for them to move, & they went on to another house till 5 a.m.! Harry joined in the fun better than I have ever seen him & surprised everyone, Macdonald & Cartwright were roaring with laughter & kept on telling me to "look at N.E.M." At the charades he was told off to impersonate ~~the~~ Major Sumbourne

which meant among other things, an attack of hay fever, & he did it very well. We had to b apple, in the bath, & I actually managed to get my teeth into the apple & bring it out. There is only one more party, on New Year's day, given by the B.P.C., dancing & cards, there will be well over 100 people there so I expect we shall slip away early as Harry won't dance & I won't dance much.

Auntie has sent me material & Plunkett patterns so I am able to begin making the baby clothes. She says they will be very pleased to have me when I am ready to go so that is all satisfactory.

With much love from us both.

Your loving,

Honor.