

1938

LETTER FROM A.F. GRIMBLE

Letter from A. F. Grimble (later Sir Arthur) covering events in the Colony during the first year of our residence there (we arrived on Ocean Island on 16.10.29). Also details of Grimble's plans after discussions with the High Commissioner (Sir Murchison Fletcher) in Fiji, few of which came to eventual fruition.

Andrew Armstrong was the only other cadet in the colony and was six months senior to myself. He later transferred to Nigeria.

The rough sketch of the Colony Badge was approved and is still used by the Republic of Kiribati with of course the deletion of the crown and the substitution of a Gilbertese motto for the Latin one.

The exam result mentioned was my Gilbertese one conducted by Grimble himself; the district report has gone to you already; the Onotoa business is detailed in the "Swords of Gabriel - A study in Participant History" in the J.P.S in 1967 which you have.

This letter shows clearly the close relationship between Grimble and his cadets.

①

P.S. Colony Service tie was ordered
— some months ago. Should be Ocean Island
arriving soon.

30. x. 30.

My dear Maudie,

I am due to depart again for Fiji
on the 8th November, and hope to be back
before Christmas. I shall not return in
"Nunianoa", as her audit tour will take
more time than I can spare. My quickest
way will be Suva - Sydney - Ocean Island

Hope you like the first-fruit of my
recent visit to Suva, i.e., the new scale
Salaries which H.E. is prepared to back.
He was not easy at first, but I flooded
him with quotations from my memoranda
about service conditions. He thought they
were unprompted utterances, and gradually
began to sit up and take notice. I saw
him twice at some of the purpler passages
but he was very sporting and took no
offence. Finally, he agreed to the proposals.
The next day, he astounded me by suggesting
that the "long scale" should go up to £750
instead of £720. But he also stipulated
(a) that it should begin at £350 instead of
£375, and (b) that all increments should
be twenty-fives. Hence, the modifications.
There are many points about the scheme
that I should like to talk over with you.
My plan is to bring Andrew down to Bera
just before Christmas and dump him on

you and Her Honor. Unfortunately, shan't be able to celebrate the season with you, but can call back for Andrew about New Year and send him (via Ocean I.) back to Butaritari.

H.E. has agreed to increasing Medical Staff to five officers: — S.M.O. (Tarawa and travelling); M.O., Ocean I (full time); M.O., Tarawa Hospital, Lepers, etc.; M.O. Southern G.; M.O., Ellice. A new Cadet is also going to be appointed, to be trained as Secretary: he will be, of course, Assistant to Leembuigen. The great thing about the "long scale" salary is that pay advances quite independently of the job a man is required to do.

Incidentally, my poor Henry and Andre you also in the dim dark future will have to do a year or so each in the Secretariat when the new man has been fully trained — so that any of you may be called to act as Govt. Secretary at a moment's notice. My somewhat malignant eye is, in fact bent upon your devoted self as the first probable victim.

I saw Goepel at Suva. H.E. said I could have him here if I wanted him but I decided against that, though he

is the sort of man I want. He is a little bit senior (by date of appointment) to yourself and Andrew, + it seemed unfair to pull them in. So I chose Nightingale instead. A new arrival. Very quiet and unassuming, and a worker. Christ's, Cambridge; second class honours, I believe. He will return with me from Suva, if all goes well.

H.E. wishes Headquarters to remain on Ocean Island. That is a great disappointment, but taking one thing with another it is probably sound policy. More about this when we meet.

The next matter on the agenda is the improvement of leave passage-grants. I was able to start the ball rolling during my last visit to Suva + H.E. is ready to consider concrete proposals. I am asking for a grant of £175 to bachelors and £350 to married men (accompanied by wives) after six years' service. This would just about cover second-class return tickets P.O. or Orient, or first class Blue Funnel. Free passages Colony - Australia of course thrown in over and above the money grant. No extra allowance for children. Colony's finances won't go beyond £350.

I chanced my arm some months ago and wrote privately to H.E. to the effect that the parting of the ways had now arrived. Either the Colony must break away from the High Commission and govern itself, or else the High Commission must establish something more than an arm-chair control of our destinies. H.E. took it in the best of spirits. He asked me to write an official memo. about it at Suva. Result is that he is backing proposal to appoint an Assistant H.C. from among officers who have served in Western Pacific. This man will not be senior to R.C.'s, but will be a Staff or Liaison Officer travelling round periodically and linking the various Territories (a) with each other (b) with Fiji. Salary of post to be £1000. Here is another chance of promotion to which you can look (if S.S. approves scheme).

Sorry, no time for more. Best of wish to you both. You have done well so far at Beva, for which my thanks. H.E. was considerably struck with your exam results. Your District Report was excellent, has gone forward to Suva. This Onotoa line light should be very
Yours very sincerely
H.E.

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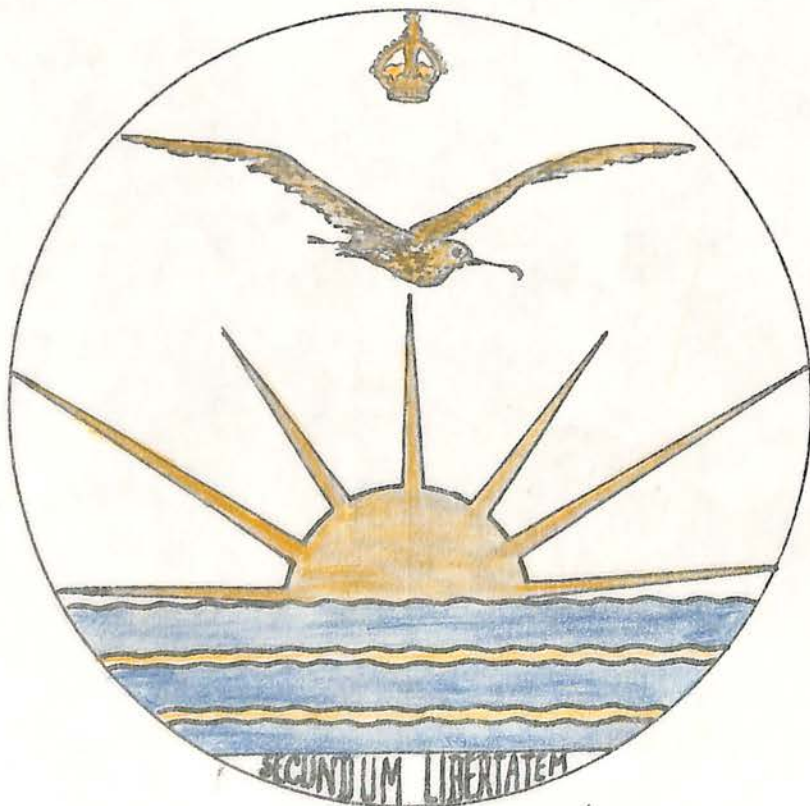
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P. 8.

H.C. is willing to approve Colony
Badge if design is laid before him.
Rough sketch of design enclosed. Frigate
bird, symbol of liberty + space. Symbol
of Kingship also in native mythology. Half
risen, half setting sun — farthest East
& farthest West from England. Sea +
Crown explain themselves. — Hope you
like it. It had to be simple for
purpose of use on flags.

Spent two hours watching frigate
birds in flight at Solomon's Point last



Sunday. They are ragged looking ^{creatures} on perch, with long necks, but compose their bodies into stream lines when on the wing.

R.

First idea of Device was "Propriis volat alis"; but felt this was too boastful, & changed it to more modest and rather more spacious "Secundum libertate".

4 - LETTER FROM RICHARDS TO MAUDE

This is an important letter showing how the Phoenix Island Settlement Scheme came into being i.e. as a result of my initial reports recommending it (which you already have) and the enthusiasum of Sir Arthur Richards.

4



GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

FIJI.

12.2.38.

My dear Maude,

I have been so pleased with your reports on the Phoenix Islands and also your general survey of Christmas Island, Washington & the rest, that I feel I ought to write personally & express my appreciation. They are very good indeed & leave little more to be said. I have written to Burns, Philp & have told them

we want the islands back & hope
to arrange it amicably. The
S. of S. is also being asked to
give general sanction to the
scheme & to finance its initial
stages from surplus funds.
That is all I want from him
at present. It seems clear to
me that the only person to
take charge is yourself. I hope
that you will be willing to
do so. The whole scheme is
yours in origin, in conception &
in practical elaboration. It is
only fitting that you should see

3.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

FIJI.

it through. I should propose,
if the S. of S. agrees to the
scheme being proceeded with
& financed from surplus funds,
to give you carte blanche up
to x thousand pounds to
make what arrangements you
chose without having to get
sanction for anything. You might
sometimes want help & at
intervals you would inform the
R.C. & myself about your progress.

but for all practical purposes
you would be invited to use the
powers of the High Commissioner
without reference. I am sure that
no one could make a real success
of the job without such ample
powers & independence.

Christmas Island will be a later
development. For some months
now I have been squeezing Rouzier
& as time goes on I shall hope
to get him out. As you say,
if we could buy the place at a
reasonable price it would be
a most suitable use of surplus



GOVERNMENT HOUSE,

FIJI.

funds. The matter of ^{recognition} of the Tokelans will also be taken up simultaneously with approval of the settlement scheme but not so as to hold it

up. These negotiations generally take an interminable time.

I propose to discuss it all with the R.C. in May when he visits Suva. In June I am off in a sloop to look at Christmas Island and Washington - inter alia. If it

were not for wanting so much of
your time getting to I for
should have liked you to come
too.

With best wishes to you both

Yours very sincerely,

A. Richards

[ie RICHARDS]
5 - GARVEY LETTER

This letter written by Sir Arthur Richards after he ceased to be High Commissioner for the Western Pacific on transfer to the West Indies. This copy was kindly sent to me by Ronald Garvey, then acting resident commissioner of the G.E.I.C.



29.5.39.

My dear Garvey,

Thank you very much for your letter & all the information about the Phoenix & Line Islands settlement schemes. I am very grateful to you for sending the news because, as you know, the scheme - especially the Christmas Island one - was very near to my heart. Push on with it & give Maude all the support and encouragement you can. It will be a grand achievement if he brings it off.

and one worth dying for - if die he
must. Picture me amongst a race
of slaves with the souls of curs,
mean, lying, cowardly, contemptible
in every way - I wish we could
give the West Indies to Germany.
It would do them all a power of
good. We have every kind of trouble
economic, political & moral &
racial, and no hope whatever of
doing anything with them. The
peace has been preserved by a
mixture of dexterity & luck, but
one is playing a losing game, with
whatever skill, & the end must be



a crash. It's working up now.
The fact that we have contributed
to the mess by 300 years of
incompetence & misgovernment
is no consolation to me - the heir
of such ages.

You have no idea how lucky you
are in Fiji. Our best wishes
to you both

Yours sincerely
A Richards

7/9
HADDEN TO MAUDE

this letter from A.C Hadden, the distinguished British Anthropologist who had done some excellent field work in the Torres Straight Islands and was at this time retired from his position as professor of Anthropology at Cambridge University, concerns my transfer from the G.E.I.C. to Zanzibar in 1936.

Kingsley Roth was a Senior Administrative Officer in Fiji and had himself suffered the same fate of being transferred to Zanzibar but managed to return.

I had naturally been most unwilling to go to Zanzibar, allegedly on health grounds and continued to press for my return.

(7)
3 Cranmer Rd. Cambridge

12 Nov. 1936

Dear Maude,
Kingsley Roth told me about the way you have been treated, and Miss Nicol Smith has also written by the same post as your letter so I feel I am now conversant with your case. At first I did not see very well how I could intervene, but now have seen my way to write to the C.O. I enclose a copy of the letter I sent to Major Furse, whom I know sufficiently well. I have not yet had a reply. There is no need to say how much I sympathize with you and your wife. So far as I can gather you have been treated abominably and without regard to the true interests of St. Gilbertese.

I feel strongly that you should for the present lie low. I doubt, should you resign, that you would be taken on again. If you resigned and came to Cambridge for a year to write up your thesis for the Ph.D. you would get the degree. Whether you would get grants in aid for future research is by no means certain - though you might. But where would you be on their expiration? You would have high qualifications, but ~~what~~ ^{how} and where could you make a living out of them? Teaching posts are very few indeed and most seem to be booked for years to come. You certainly might chance it, but if there was no post suitable for you, you would be on the rocks.

This is not a cheerful letter, but I think it is common sense. It seems to me that you should avoid showing pique. I know very little about official etiquette and methods, but I imagine that it would be wise not to antagonize those in authority by posing as a martyr.

I hope that Major Furse, or someone else in the C.O., will give me an opportunity of pleading that you be reinstated in your former job.

Let me know of any developments. With kind regards to your wife, whom I hope to meet in due course

Yours sincerely -

A. C. Haddon

HADDEN TO MAUDE

8
This is a follow-up letter to the preceeding one and shows that Hadden had written to Furse by giving the gist to the letters reply.

To the best of my rememberance I never did write myself to the Colonial Office, as recommended by Hadden and Furse I think because on official letter from Garvey, then Resident Commissioner of the Colony of G.E.I.C. stating that the Phoenix Island Settlement Scheme could not be preceeded with because I was the only officer who could undertake the project. Incidentally Furse was the permanent head of the Appointments Branch of the C.O. and was responsible for my original appointment to the colonial service after interviewing me personally.

3 Cranmer Rd.

Duplicate of

UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
OF ARCHÆOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY,
CAMBRIDGE.

TELEPHONE,
CAMBRIDGE 4937.

23 Nov 1936

Dear Maude

Major Furse has written as follows:

"I am sorry that I have been so long in replying to your letter of the 9th of November about H. E. Maude. A case of this kind does not come within my province, and I had to consult the authorities concerned, as a matter of fact I had already been in touch with them in consequence of a talk which I had recently with a colleague of Maude's in the Western Pacific who came to see me and told me about Maude's troubles.

Obviously, however, the first thing for Maude to do is to write in officially putting his case, and we understand that, in fact, an official letter from him is on its way home.

I understand that Maude's transfer to Zanzibar was arranged entirely in what was believed to be his interests, but you may feel sure that any representations which Maude makes officially will be carefully and sympathetically considered when they are received."

The fact that others are interested in you and your desires must have weight with the C.O. and it depends, I expect, on the case you can make out for yourself - I do not see how your friends can do anything more. It would probably annoy the C.O. if more outsiders chipped in.

With all best wishes

Yours sincerely -

A. C. Haddon.

3 Cranmu Rd.

UNIVERSITY MUSEUM
OF ARCHÆOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY,
CAMBRIDGE.

LOUIS C. G. CLARKE,
CURATOR.

TELEPHONE,
CAMBRIDGE 4937.

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Yours sincerely -

A. C. Haddon

JAMES NORMAN HALL

This letter is included here because of the fame of the author, James Norman Hall, who by himself or together with Charles Nordhoff wrote more excellent books on the Pacific Islands than any other modern author. He attaches an original poem of his own which makes the letter especially valuable.

James Norman Hall
130 Dartmouth Road
Box 167
San Mateo, California

March 5th, 1941.

Dear Mr. Maude:-

Please accept my warmest thanks for your letter and the splendid collection of Pitcairn stamps. I can scarcely tell you how deeply I appreciate your kindness and thoughtfulness. Your letter is dated October 15th, 1940, and it reached me only last week, having been forwarded from Tahiti. I left Tahiti just a year ago this time, intending to make a two or three months sojourn in the U.S.A. where we have two children in school. But the war has upset my plans as it has those of everyone else, and here I still am. However, if all goes well, I expect to return to Tahiti in May. I find that the peaceful happy life we dwellers on islands in the South Pacific love so much unfits one for life elsewhere. I have been constantly homesick for Tahiti ever since the day of my arrival in the U.S.A., and a happy day it will be when I am at home again.

What a fascinating time you must have had colonizing the uninhabited islands of the Phoenix Group! I do envy you that experience. I have never visited your part of the Pacific but I still have dreams of visiting some of the islands in that part of the world. If ever I do, I shall certainly call at Beru Island to see Mrs. Maude and yourself. Nothing could give me greater pleasure than to visit some of those islands in your company. But heaven knows if I shall enjoy that opportunity. Meanwhile, if you should come to Tahiti, it

James Norman Hall
130 Dartmouth Road
Box 167
San Mateo, California

would give me the greatest pleasure to have you come to stay with us there. We live in the district of Arué, three miles from Papeete. I can assure you that this offer of hospitality is no perfunctory one.

I sincerely hope that you have had no trouble in reaching your home again. In these uncertain days it is all but impossible to make plans with any assurance of being able to carry them through. Although I expect to return to Tahiti in May, further war developments may prevent that. At present we have only a few old cargo steamers of the Union Line which pass by Tahiti, and, in the great shortage of shipping in the Atlantic, there is some reason to believe that even these old freighters may be commandeered for service elsewhere. However, I mean to return to Tahiti this coming summer, if I have to paddle home on a raft!

I had a very happy time at Pitcairn. I had only two days there, but I enjoyed every minute of it. I can well understand your own interest and fascination in visiting that little island world. The Pitcairn stamps are very beautiful, and will be greatly coveted by collectors.

As a very small return for your kindness to me, I am going to ask the publishers to send you a new illustrated edition of the Bounty Trilogy which has recently been issued. I hope it may reach you safely. Not long ago, in a homesick mood, I wrote some verses about Tahiti. One of my great

James Norman Hall
130 Dartmouth Road
Box 167
San Mateo, California

pleasures when at home is biking around the island, and the verses were 'inspired' by the recollection of one of those leisurely journeys. I enclose a copy of them, not because they are worth anything as poetry, but merely to show you how I feel about that crumb of land.

With renewed thanks for your kindness to me and with warm regards,

Sincerely Yours,

James N. Hall

TOUR DE L'ILE

(Tahiti, French Oceania)

This small island is, for me,
Everything a home should be:
As far from any continent
As they are far from discontent
Who, from whatever vantage ground,
Behold the sea that rings them 'round
Lonelier than the morning sky
Where the waning moon is high.

Here no great plantations are
Owned by men who live afar,
But little lands, where those who toil
Own the food and own the soil
With trees to bear them fruit, and shade
Where their fathers' bones are laid.
The sons have no great store of wealth
Save peace, and tranquil minds, and health.

I often think how more than wise
In planting islands of this size
Was Mother Earth, and how remiss
To plant so few the size of this.
A world of lesser worlds could be
Scattered on this empty sea,
Though sea enough should still remain
For isolation, fish, and rain.

Five-score miles, or, better, four,
Should island circuits be -- no more;
So that, when he wished it, one
Could bike around from sun to sun;
Or, circumscribing more at ease,
Loiter 'neath the breadfruit trees
Of his friends, engaged in talk
Of matters pondered on the walk;
For he will walk as much as ride
To look at things from side to side.
Then, moving on, with matter new
To ponder for an hour or two
Until another halt is made,
This time in a mango's shade,
Cool beneath the midday sun,
There to halt from twelve to one;
Or, if Inclination said,
"Why the haste?" to nod his head
And, "Why, indeed?" to make response.
He has a dwelling for the nonce:
Let him make a longer stay

Of half an hour or half a day,
Reading his book till evening comes
And the brisk mosquito hums.

Bordering the still lagoons,
Orion's mirror and the moon's,
Now fares he on, in deep content,
With a silence round him bent
Wider than the dome of night
There for his express delight.
Let him now drop all but peace;
Tell his arrogance to cease
Concern with other-where, or how,
Accepting only here, and now.
Thus his mind is healed and whole
And large as the inverted bowl
Of heaven, it seems, for influence
That comes -- he knows not how, or whence.
Truth the passive spirit gains
That mind may not for all its pains.
Unaware, the seeker tries
Varied paths to where it lies
Or doesn't lie, for even wells
May not be receptacles,
And biking round an island road
May lead to some half-truth's abode.
If not, at least he's bound to come
Back to the place he started from.

Now is heaven bare and wide;
Now through checkered gloom he'll ride;
Here, along the sandy shore
Where the feathering breakers roar,
From the corner of his eye
Meremen's children he will spy
In the surf, and from their tails
Moonlight glancing off in scales.
Farther on his way he views
Children with no tails to use
Leaping from a palm-tree bole
Into some deep water-hole
Where the foam and broken light
Lacquer bodies creamy white
Over brown. . . . Felicity,
The world is far too small for thee,
And all the wide world knows it not,
Or if it knew, has since forgot,
Save children in such lands as these
Lost in the wastes of lonely seas.

J. M. H.

This letter from James Michener is an interesting one and well worth preserving, especially for its first impressions of so many Pacific Islands. As you know Michener wrote two books, as far as I remember, on the Islands, one of which became the play and movie "South Pacific" and the other historical/fictional work on Hawaii which I think was called Hawaiiki; anyway you have both of them in the collection.

Michener wrote at least one other letter to me which hope you already have, saying that he is thinking of writing more on thee islands and soliciting the names of beachcombers and traders still alive who might be able to help him with there reminiscences.

29 West 12
New York, 11, N.Y.
14 July 1946

My dear Maude,

You won't remember me right off. I am the American naval officer you met via Robert Derrick on your and my last night in Suva. We spoke briefly but terribly to the point about islands. I have often recalled your uncanny perspicacity on a subject I had studied deeply in my own mind and emotions. Of all the various people I have ever spoken to about islands, you were the first who completely anticipated my reactions.

Well, often since seeing you I have tried in vain to recall your full name and then yesterday two unusual events took place. At a dinner party I met a beautiful young lady who had been an American Red Crossgirl with the Army hospital near Suva. She practically wept recalling the beauties of Fiji and told me she was conniving at ways to live there for the rest of her life. I myself liked Suva about dead middle in the scale of South Pacific ports of call, and so could not quite sympathize with her completely. But in the course of her conversation she mentioned a woman she had met there and whom she had never forgotten, a Mrs. Maude who had travelled....."What was that name?" I asked. "Maude," she replied. "And they went to Pitcairn...."

As happens in such cases, we compared a dozen notes. It was Tonga that did it. I remembered vividly your comments on Tonga. She remembered Mrs. Maude's parallel reminiscences. "Maude's that name!" I said, and today I was reading Tom Harrisson's book on Santo, and in the bibliography I stumbled across an ethnological paper by an H.C.M. and that seemed to clinch it. I said, "I'll write him a letter and hope it reaches port!"

Islands have been much in my mind since I saw you last! I am shortly bringing out a book of my own on Melanesia, a trivial thing but with certain passages I think you would approve. And after I saw you that night, I spent a marvelous week on Aitutaki, which I began to evaluate as you apparently did. It is a superb thing, lying there within the lagoon and with those wonderful oranges! Then on to Bora Bora, which is the queen of them sans debate. Following that I had another fine stay on Tonga, which has many alluring interests, primarily because it has a better history, via Marriner, than any of them excepting possibly Tahiti.

And so I went around my beat, thinking of that vivid few minutes we spoke together. In Wellington I met the astonishingly fine Beagleholes—they who did the masterful book on Pukapuka and the anthropological studies on Tonga. They are a fine pair and real scholars. I should like to see them again and commend their books to you if you do not already know them, especially ETHNOLOGY OF PUKAPUKA, Bernice Bishop Museum.

But the purpose of this letter is to tell you that an island of which we spoke only briefly was in many respects the surprise of the lot: Norfolk. It is not a tropical island, nor has it any volcanic features. It is simply a heavenly beautiful spot which apparently had no native inhabitants before Cook arrived. You may have seen it. If not, consider it as your spot of retirement, if the tropical islands ever seem to low or too hot for you. I got there quite by accident and loved the place (but would not live there if Aitutaki or Bora Bora were available). You would like it because of the fact that the Pitcairners constitute approximately eighty percent of the population. They are a lusty crowd, and they live in an island paradise with tall trees, sweeping vales, fine cliffs and a turbulent sea. Norfolk is entirely different from anything I had so far seen and it made a considerable impression upon me; but as I studied it I thought how lacking in character it was! The undeniable beauty was all physical. That superb beauty of living that one sees in the lower islands near the equator was gone. The Polynesian strain in the Bounty people had run very thin. The laughter wasn't there. But if you already know Norfolk, I should enjoy knowing your impressions.

Sincerely,

James A. Michener

29 West 12
New York, 11, N.Y.
14 July 1946

My dear Maude,

You won't remember me right off. I am the American naval officer you met via Robert Derrick on your and my last night in Suva. We spoke briefly but terribly to the point about islands. I have often recalled your uncanny perspicacity on a subject I had studied deeply in my own mind and emotions. Of all the various people I have ever spoken to about islands, you were the first who completely anticipated my reactions.

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But the purpose of this letter is to tell you that an island of which we spoke only briefly was in many respects the surprise of the lot: Norfolk. It is not a tropical island, nor has it any volcanic features. It is simply a heavenly beautiful spot which apparently had no native inhabitants before Cook arrived. You may have seen it. If not, consider it as your spot of retirement, if the tropical islands ever seem to low or too hot for you. I got there quite by accident and loved the place (but would not live there if Aitutaki or Bora Bora were available). You would like it because of the fact that the Pitcairners constitute approximately eighty percent of the population. They are a lusty crowd, and they live in an island paradise with tall trees, sweeping vales, fine cliffs and a turbulent sea. Norfolk is entirely different from anything I had so far seen and it made a considerable impression upon me; but as I studied it I thought how lacking in character it was! The undeniable beauty was all physical. That superb beauty of living that one sees in the lower islands near the equator was gone. The Polynesian strain in the Bounty people had run very thin. The laughter wasn't there. But if you already know Norfolk, I should enjoy knowing your impressions.

Sincerely,

James A. Michener

29 West 12
New York, 11, N.Y.
14 July 1946

My dear Maude,

You won't remember me right off. I am the American naval officer you met via Robert Derrick on your and my last night in Suva. We spoke briefly but terribly to the point about islands. I have often recalled your uncanny perspicacity on a subject I had studied deeply in my own mind and emotions. Of all the various people I have ever spoken to about islands, you were the first who completely anticipated my reactions.

Well, often since seeing you I have tried in vain to recall your full name and then yesterday two unusual events took place. At a dinner party I met a beautiful young lady who had been an American Red Crossgirl with the Army hospital near Suva. She practically wept recalling the beauties of Fiji and told me she was conniving at ways to live there for the rest of her life. I myself liked Suva about dead middle in the scale of South Pacific ports of call, and so could not quite sympathize with her completely. But in the course of her conversation she mentioned a woman she had met there and whom she had never forgotten, a Mrs. Maude who had travelled....."What was that name?" I asked. "Maude," she replied. "And they went to Pitcairn...."

As happens in such cases, we compared a dozen notes. It was Tonga that did it. I remembered vividly your comments on Tonga. She remembered Mrs. Maude's parallel reminiscences. "Maude's that name!" I said, and today I was reading Tom Harrisson's book on Santo, and in the bibliography I stumbled across an ethnological paper by an H.C.M. and that seemed to clinch it. I said, "I'll write him a letter and hope it reaches port!"

Islands have been much in my mind since I saw you last! I am shortly bringing out a book of my own on Melanesia, a trivial thing but with certain passages I think you would approve. And after I saw you that night, I spent a marvelous week on Aitutaki, which I began to evaluate as you apparently did. It is a superb thing, lying there within the lagoon and with those wonderful oranges! Then on to Bora Bora, which is the queen of them sans debate. Following that I had another fine stay on Tonga, which has many alluring interests, primarily because it has a better history, via Marriner, than any of them excepting possibly Tahiti.

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Sincerely,

James A. Michener

This glorious poem was written by Professor Oskar Spate of the A.N.U. in reply to an official enquiry from the Director of Education, Fiji.

It was withheld from publication at the time lest it offend some citizen of India with a strong sense of national pride & a weak sense of humour.

Dear Maude,

How it is -- hope you
enjoy it

Alton



THE AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

Canberra, A.C.T.
31st October, 1955.

Dear Maude,

The Indian academic scene is a lush jungle, rank, obscene. New colleges in dense array rise, sickly, to the light of day; like mushrooms some, but some, more deadly, like toadstools in a livid medley. Each District, thirsting after knowledge, erects a barn and calls it College where dud MAs, quite void of sense, vast stores of slush to all dispense; sacked Rajahs, thinking thus to curse the expropriating State, disburse the leavings of their Privy Purses (the nautches paid, and bawdy verses) to found a University and so confound posterity. Fat capitalists think it funny thus to invest their conscience-money: they get an Income Tax deduction for every jerry-built construction, vast and imposing, with their name writ large for everlasting shame over the lintel rich with gilding; but the white shell of hollow building is all they pay for: desks and books, the sweepers, scholars, Profs, and cooks - these will be, left care of the City Council's unendowed Committee.

So I regret that there's no guide to lead you through this jungle wide, replete with foul malodorous tracks, blind corners, and dead cul-de-sacs. God's grace apart, your sole defence is but Internal Evidence: and chiefly, that the College status varies inversely with the afflatus shown in its polysyllabic title. Good English in the Prof is vital. Be ruthless on the cliché vague and Sanskrit names shun like the plague. Put not your faith in Princes: sure His Highness of Damballypur is but a grafter and a wog wrapped in the Ind-Avran fog.

Stick to the old, the tried, the true - Bombay, Calcutta, Madras too, Agra and Allalabad; Benares in Maths and Higher Thought quite fair is, but in all other subjects dismal and in my own it's just abysmal; at Lucknow are some sterling types but Cuttack's just a mess of tripos; Annamalai and Andhra rank quite near the bottom, dim and dank; Patna and Muslim Aligarh and Urdu-taught Osmania are worth respect, and sometimes more, also Baroda and Mysore. But places whose long names include resounding Sanskrit treat as crude.

Now, at the end of my resources I must admit no printed source is available to help you weed the tares from any fruitful seed. So please accept, in lieu of better, this rambling but quite serious letter; for to a man of sense a hint is quite as good as solid print.

This poor advice I give quite free; Salaam the Government of Fiji.

Yours sincerely,
(Sd) O.H.X. Spate.

ACTION	
INFO.	<i>Alton</i>