In the Gilbert Islands.

For a little while this afternoon I am going to try to take you to some far away and little known coral islands which lie across the equator to the north of Fiji. The first part of the journey is by Phosphate ship from Melbourne or Newcastle to Ocean Island. Every day is warmer than the day before and the sea a little bluer until the journey's end when the temperature is about 86 degrees by day and 80 at night and the sea is a wonderful deep blue.

We stay at Ocean Island only long enough to tranship to a small schooner for the 2 or 3 or even 4 day trip to our destination, it all depends on the wind and the current. At last land is sighted and there, low on the horizon, is a long line of green, coconut palms, with lovely white coral sand below them and either pounding surf or or a lagoon edged with breaking surf, between you and the island. In either case you descend into a boat or canoe for the journey shoreward, sometimes there is a jetty where you land but often there is not and a muscular native carries you from the boat to the shore.

We have now arrived on one of the 16 Gilbert Islands, part of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony, the only British colony which lies N.&S. of the equator and E. & W. of the Date Line. Included in the colony are the 9 islands of the Ellice Group; the 8 islands of the Phoenix Group, until recently uninhabited but now colonised by Gilbertese, and including Canton Island the important mid-Pacific air base; the 3 Line Islands of Fanning, Washington and Christmas which have no indigenous population but possess large coconut plant-

Suppose

We have landed at the Native Govt. station for that is the headquarters of the island. Here live the ~~Chief~~ Magistrate, Chief of the Island Council and the Chief of Police; the village policemen take it in turn to spend a week at headquarters and Court is held once a month, when all the police attend and also the village councellors. There is a Court House and two gaols, one for female offenders and one for the males. There is also a Post Office & a house for the visiting European Officer. Here too there would probably be a Co-operative store for there are no such things as shops.

After a refreshing drink of the water of the very young coconut we are lent bicycles, all men's I am afraid, and we set of off to explore the island. First we visit the hospital where we find a native doctor in charge. He has been trained in Fiji & can operate when necessary as well as prescribe for everyday complaints. He is helped by a few men with a little training and a nurse who was trained at the main hospital at Tarawa. There are no wards but a number of small houses for each patient has their own house and relations to look after them.

We leave the hospital and cycle along the sandy road.....

ations and on Fanning the mid-Pacific relay station of the cable from America to Australia and N.Z.; and last but not least tiny Ocean Island with its phosphate of lime deposits so important to agriculture in Australia and N.Z. These 37 islands are so small that their total land area does not amount to more than 250 sq. miles but so scattered are they that they spread over 4,000,000 sq miles of ocean.

Except for Ocean Island, rising to a height of 300 feet no part of the Colony is more then 10 feet above sea level. We will suppose that we have landed on a lagoo island, a narrow ribbon of land averaging 200 yards wide from lagoon to reef shore, roughly crescent shaped, facing west, but divided into islets of various lengths connected by stretches of sand at low tide. The two extremities of the crescent are almost joined by a more or less submerged reef leaving a narrow passage through which boats, and ships if it is deep enough, ente the lagoon in calm water.

It would seem at first sight that the island grows nothing but coconut palms and certainly they are the mainstay of the people ~~native~~ for they provide food, drink, house walls, some thatch, the so-called grass skirt, mats, screens, baskets, brooms, charcoal, string and oil; they also produce copra which brings in money with which to buy rice material, tobacco, soap, kerosene and many other amenities of life; panama hats, tabl mats and fans, much coveted by ~~the~~ European are made from the very young leaves; so the coconut palm ~~must be~~ is one of the most wonderful ~~things~~ in the world. However, as we wander along the road which skirts the

lagoon shore, we notice some queer, mishapen trees, these are pandanus trees and they, too are most important trees providing food, leaves for mat making and the best thatch, also posts for house building and a decorative wood from the long aerial roots. Next we see a pit, a large pit, with enormous leaves like giant arum leavesshowing above the l vel of the ground, this is another food for the large root is cooked in various ways, some appetising and some not to European taste, but all could be described as somewhat solid.

Round the next bend in the road we come upon a native village, very neat and tidy with rows of little square houses, some with walls and some with leaf screens which can be raised and lowered at will. Some are raised above the ground and the natives sleep on the platform floor and each family has a sleeping house, a cook house and an enclosure for bathing. Very often white coral pebbles are spread all round the houses which makes the village area very clean but very glaring in the brilliant sunshine. Most houses have a few pawpaw trees, some ornamental shrubs and a few flowers dotted around which is very praiseworthy when you consider that the islands are very dry and often suffer from droughts.

The people themselves are friendly and cheerful and all the children crowd round to have a good look at the white folk. They are what anthropologists call micronesians, not very dark-skinned, have straight black hair, (the women's hair if often very long and thick and is always well oiled), their features vary tremendously from fairly acquiline to somewhat broad nosed and thick

lipped. The men usually wear just a length of material wrapped round their waists and f falling to their knees; the women wear grass skirts for working and a simple frock for general wear; the children follow their parents except for the tiny ones who wear nothing at all.

As we wander through the village we are greeted with "Kamnamauri", the Gilbertes greeting, often followed by "where are you going?" to which we reply "we are going north" or south, as the case may be. In the middle of the village we come upon an enormous structure, a huge thatched roof resting on stones only about 4 feet high; this is the "maneaba" or meeting house and here the people hold their dances, meet on all important occasions or just drop in to see who else is there and have a chat. Ver often a few people have slung their mosquitp nets up and are sleeping there while their house is being repaired. We shall also see as we go along, low fences round open wells, these go down 8 or 10 feet, the water is brackish , not very nice to drink and very hard to wash with but it is the only water there is except for an odd tin or tubful collected when rain is falling.

Every village has a Protestant church with the pastor's house nearby and a school-house; the pastor is always a native and he does both the preaching and the teaching. The European Protestant misionaries concentrate their activities at their headquarter on one of the islands where they have a boy$ school, a girls school and a training school for preachers and teachers. They visit the islands twice a year in their own ship, the "John Williams", bringing supplies,

books and any advice and help that may be needed. The Catholics have a European Father add two sisters on most islands with a ten native teacher in the village.

We continue our walk and as the sun is very hot we turn off the road into the welcome shade of the closely growing coconut palms and proceed across the island. Every man and woman own their own piece or pieces of land though there are no fences or boundary stones to show the divisions. As we go we meet girls seeking for flowers for making wreaths for their heads or for their menfolk. All the flowers are small and you would never believe they could make such lovely wreaths from them; a 3. 4 or 5 strand plait is used and the short stems of the flowers plaited in so as to make a thick band of blossoms and most artistic they are. We also see women gathering the flowers of a particular plant which is dried and used as a compost for growing the plant we saw in the pit; each plant has a woven basket place around it and into this is put the precious compost. It is hard to make anything grow on a coral island and all soil or leaf-mould has to be conserved.

As we cross the island the trees thin out and we hear the roar of the surf, the land rises a little, we come to some low bushes and then we are out on the reef side of the island. A steeply sloping beach lies before us, then the reef od dead coral rock and at its edge the towering waves break into a line of creming surf with a never ending roar. A strong breeze blows in from the ocean, the almost constant trade wind, so cool and refreshing but up and down the long stretch of beach there is no sign of human habitation for the natives almost

always live along the lagoon shore. So we too return from the glare, the wind, and the roar of the tumbling surf to the tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shore can be seen the brown thatch of village houses & canoe sheds, [illegible] perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing while further out their fathers fish patiently from outrigger canoes for fish, with coconut and sometimes rice, is their staple diet.

As the sun sets everyone gathers for th the evening meal and there is a lovely smell of burning wood from the cooking fires. Then lights go bobbing to the meeting house and is this is not a dancing night I will show you what some of the natives might be doing during the evening.

The Well and the Way. Te Boau Uatoa.

Three Wells.

Leaves of the Breadfruit Tree.

Canoe. Canoe Shed.

Funeral. Na Tunikun.

Na Ubwebwe. House.

Tabonibai ni Kauio.

Taai.

crew, become soon the centre of attention". And again when he writes of "days of blinding sun abd bracing wind, nights of a heavenly brightness". There is a tremendous fascination in these coral islands and it is a source of never failing wonder to pass from the deserted ocean side of of an island with its glare and wind and the roar of the tumbling surf, to the calm and tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours, and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shoreline can be seen the brown thatch of village houses and perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing.

These then are the Gilbert Islands for which we set sail in 1929; at that time Sir Arthur Grimble, who has written about them in two classic works, was the Resident Commissioner of the Gilbert and Ellice Islands Colony which included Ocean Island, the 2 mile by 2 mile, 300 foot raised coral island where Australia gets so much of her superphosphate. Ocean Island was the headquarters of the colony and there we spent 5 months. Life was fairly civilised and comfortable with electricity, (for lighting only,) a store, ice, meat, a few vegetables and a mail about every six weeks. There was an enormous population on this tiny spot, there must have been close on 2,000 people; these included Chinese and Gilbertese labour, about 700 local natives, (called Banabans after the real name of the island which is Banaba) and 150 Europeans. We had our first experience of the dreaded westerlies soon after we arrived; these storms blow up so quickly that sometimes a ship is caught at the moorings (which, incidentally are the deepest in the world) and blown on to the reef. There were two

milk, meat or vegetables. Ships called infrequently and erratically but when a mail did come it was worth having, ours usually filled a wash tub. On our other four islands you were coompletely isolated once the ship left and you never knew just how long it would be before you were picked up again. Fortunately we loved the life from the first, the only snag in my own case being the terrible and too frequent trips in Nei Nimanoa which at times reduced me to delirium.*

We found the ~~natives~~ Gilbertese very pleasant people; they are micronesians, not very dark skinned, have straight hair, beautiful teeth and a ready smile. Their diet consists mainly of coconuts and fish with some pandanus and a coarse root, which is grown with great care in pits, as extras for occasional use only. Droughts occur periodically and then times are truly hard, the cocunut trees cease to bear, and some die, and the fish leave the lagoons. The government give out a ration of rice but it is a bad time for old people and babies. In 1938 and 9 there was a bad drought and I opened a baby clinic, not intentionally, it just grew. My own child was then barely a year old and I had taken plenty of tinned and powdered milk of various kinds and spare bottles in case of need; the mothers on the island decided that as I now had a baby of my own I must know all there was to know about babies so one by one they brought them in as the mothers milk failed or they reached an age where they needed to be weaned or because they were sick. Fortunately we had a very good and helpful Gilbertese doctor ~~Medical Practitioner~~ with us, the same missionaries across the lagoon, who gave me

advice and I had taken the precaution of having 2 weeks in a Karitane home in N.Z. when My baby was a couple of weeks old. I also had Truby King's book "Feeding and Care of Baby" which helped with formulas. I ended up with 14 babies and a Gilbertese girl who had worked with a mission family for 10 years, she was invaluable and took over from me when I left and carried on right through the war years.

Life was absorbing in those lonely islands, there was always someone wanting something or there were things to learn like making mats and baskets and how they cooked their food, and cats cradles to be collected, these last I made my special hobby.

One thing that saddens one in these islands is the very strong feeling of animosity between Protestants and Roman Catholics. I think it began in the early years when the Roman Catholics came into a field where the protestants were firmly established. To this day 7 out of 8 Ellice Islands refuse to have the Roman Catholic Church and 2 of the 16 Gilberts are still Protestant. Part of the trouble also is the fact that the Protestants have only native Pastors in the villages, only 2 islands have European missionaries, whereas the Roman Catholics have at least a Father and usually two sisters as well on every island and the Fathers are apt to throw their weight about and make life difficult for the Protestant Pastor. On two occasions my husband was called in to see fair play, on the first occasion a R.C. man had gone to the Protestant mission for medical aid and had died there and the Father would not allow him to be buried with any religious rites whatsoever. In the second instance a boy had fallen from the

top of a coconut tree and smashed his elbow so badly that the only hope of saving the boy's life was to amputate the arm. Mr. Eastman was willing to do this but asked my husband to be a witness in case of trouble with the Father. The operation was very successful, the boy did not even run a temperature, so all was well except that Mr. Eastman was upset because he had cut the flap of skin so that it was sawn towards the outside of the arm instead of the inside.

We eventually left the Gilbert Islands at the end of 1939 and spent the war years in different parts of the Pacific returning to the Gilberts in 1945, soon after the battle of Tarawa, but that is another story.

From the Gilberts we went to Fiji where we prepared for a trip to Pitcairn Island, well known to all of us as the home of the Bounty mutineers. We were to spend 3 months on the island, my husband's job was to introduce salaries and revise their laws. The first issue of Pircairn stamps were to be brought out whilst we were there and for this purpose a post office official was to join us a month later. I ordered my usual 6 months stores, to be on the safe side, and in July 1940 we set off for Pitcairn.

Had we but known it we were but two jumps, so to speak, ahead of the German raiders who sank the Rangitane on its way to the island.

The landing at Pitcairn was by boat, as usual, but instead of a trim whaleboat with a uniformed and well trained crew we perched as best we could on piles of luggage and stores, our own and the islanders, in a huge, heavy boat manned by a motley crew of descendants of the Bounty. The

landing can be very bad but we were lucky, and after a short wait outside the breakers with everyone arguing as to when to go, the man at the steer oar gave the order and we dashed in. Unfortunately it was too dark to see Bounty Bay where the mutineers landed, or Ship Landing Point which towers 500 feet above ~~it~~ or the boatsheds nestling ~~[illegible]~~ at its foot on a narrow strip of land.

The story of Pitcairn appeals to most people, but very few are able to live on the island, hear the quaint dialect and absorb the local atmosphere, with all its associations. Here, you are told, lies the hull of the Bounty, here is the rudder, recovered after nearly 150 years; there lies old John Adams who brought up the children of the mutineers on the Bible and the Prayer Book, and here Fletcher Christian was murdered. Mc Coy fell into the sea in a druken fit from that point of rock and from the top of the cliff above Rope the Tahitian wife of one of the mutineers fell to her death. Every corner of Pitcairn seems to have a link with the past. Incidentally, whilst I was gardening one day, trying to grow some vegetables for our small son, I found what is thought to be a wedding ring that belonged to Midshipman Young and was used for all marriage ceremonies for the first 20 years.

We were lent a house, in a secluded ~~corner~~ spot called Shady Nook; it was built of hand sawn local timber, rough but sturdy; it had an upper storey, a corrugated iron roof and real windows with panes of glass, which rather surprised me. An open cistern stored the water from the roof and that was our only source of water. There was very little furniture, no cupboards or drawers but just

tables, chairs and beds; the latter were very spartan affairs, loose planks of varying thickness were laid across a frame and I was glad I had brought my Lilo and the baby's cot. Enormous cockroaches ate our clothes at night so we kept most things packed away in suitcases.

The Pitcairn Islanders are vegetarians but they have no use for milk or butter and very little for green vegetables. They like to make everything into a mush and then bake it. They have wonderful ovens made of 5 large thick slabs of stone, which form the top and bottom and 3 sides and the 4th side is covered by a square of iron kept in place by a piece of wood. A fire is lighted inside the oven, the thickness and quantity of wood depending on the heat required when ready the fire is raked out, the food put in and the door closed. My neighbour kindly cooked my bread for me and it was beautifully done.

The islanders still did most things communally; everyone fished on Wednesdays (so you could only have fish once a week); everyone went to Top Side (the plateau on the top of the island) to their gardens on Thursdays and everyone cokked and cleaned on Fridays in preparation for the Sabbath. When not otherwise engaged everyone made curios and baskets to sell to passing ships. When wood had to be cut for house building the whole family went and made a pionic of it. Another family affair was the paying of fines. Anyone fined could pay it off by working on the roads at the rate of 1/- a day but as this meant that some unpaid official would have to watch the offender it had become the custom for the person fined to collect as many

friends as the number of shillings in the fine, less one, and all do one day's work. After we had been on the island a little while my husband asked if he could see the official correspondence from Fiji. The Magistrate and his minions looked blank for a moment and then the Magistrate's face brightened, "Oh", he said, "them letters from Fiji, why we mostly keeps them in an old sugar bag".

The Pitcairn Islanders have a term "no use work" for anything they deem unproductive. They never ironed anything if they could avoid it; they washed out their houses once a week, rather a slap dash affair as it would soon be dirty again, and I must admit that when it rained the mud was awful and no one wore shoes that could have been left at the door. They laughed at me for having my floors properly scrubbed and we had to laugh later on for when we had removed the mud from the cracks in the boards the floors were dreadfully draughty. The people are Seventh Day Adventists so their Sabbath is our Saturday and it was very strictly kept; no work of any description was allowed, not even cooking. The days began at sunset, which was rather muddling, for if you were invited to a meal onTuesday evening you had to go on Monday evening or you would have arrived on Wednesday and missed the party. The Bible does say quite clearly "And the evening and the morning were the first day" so maybe they are right. They do not smoke, drink tea, coffee or alcoholic drinks but they do use awful swear words, a relic perhaps of their mutineer forbears. They have a peculiar dialect, more or less unintelligible to the outsider, but they can all speak fairly good English. Our

son
small talked for some months of "Myen" and "yourn".

We had some wonderful walks and climbs, some of them distinctly hair-raising; the island had a great variety of scenery and, as it is only 1½ miles across and rises to 1,000 feet you can imagine how steep it is; even the village is built on a steep slope and Pitcairn barrows are made without legs, they have runners instead, so that the legs don't get in the way as you toil up hill and coming down you can slide them. From the highest point of the island you look down about 900 feet of almost sheer cliff, then another 100 feet a little less steep to where the sea pounds on the rocks. We became very fond of the little island and its people and, in spite of some ~~worry~~ hardships and worry, with raiders in the Pacific and our departure so uncertain, we were sorry to say goodbye after nearly 8 months when an American ship called in for us and took us to Panama.

Our next assignment we knew was to relieve the Consul in Tonga. The poor man was ill and had been waiting to go on leave for some time whilst we were cooped up on Pitcairn unable to persuade a British ship to call in for us. Going to Panama was the only alternative to staying where we were and having got to Panama we had a bad time trying to get back to the other side of the Pacific. Eventually we flew to Los Angeles by a roundabout route and joined the Monterey with 24 hours to spare.

Back in Suva we spent a month at Government House waiting for the ship to take us to Tonga, it was rather like a dream and a very pleasant one.

On our arrival in Tonga we moved into the Residency and the Consul and his wife left

* There was a bath with a chip heater, a luxury we appreciated very much;

next day. The house is a spacious wooden building of the old type with open verandahs all round; very cool and comfortable. We had no luggage except our clothes, everything else had been left in Panama, so for the first time in 12 years there was practically no unpacking. The Consul's wife very kindly lent us linen and left the house in running order with very well trained servants;* the garden was lovely and the ordered life very restful after the rather hard time at Pitcairn. The contrast, however, between the happy-go-lucky way of life we had lived there and the rigid ceremonial and etiquette of a Royal Court, however small, was tremendous. The Tongans are a delightful people and the Queen a most charming person. When we first arrived there were Red Cross bazaars and entertainments of various kinds to raise funds. The Tongan dancing was particularly lovely, the girls' arm movements are so soft and smoothe and graceful.

Queen Salote is the only reigning monarch left of the many island royal families; her kingdom is a fully independent state bound only by Treaty obligations to Great Britain by which we are responsible for the conduct of its Foreign Affairs and advise on financial matters. The Queen was very friendly and was full of kind thoughtfulness. She would always walk to the door with us when we were leaving her presence which saved us an awkward journey walking backwards down the room. She speaks, of course, perfect English and has a strong sense of humour and an infectious laugh. She dresses mostly in Tongan fashion , a long dress and sandals and a finely woven mat tied round her waist with a girdle of plaited hair. All Tongans wear mats on ceremonial occasions and in the presence of royalty or a chief. It is always

worn at times of mourning and it doesn't matter how old and ragged it is.

~~When we first arrived there was~~

A month after we arrived in Tonga Tugi, the Queen's husband died very suddenly; everyone went into mourning and all entertainments ceased. Tugi was very popular and his funeral was the saddest I have ever seen; the ceremony was most impressive but all the Tongans were weeping and I don't think it was entirely Polynesian custom, I would say they felt his loss deeply.

When the Consul returned after 4 months we stayed on for another 2 months as the Queen had asked if my husband could be seconded to the Tongan Civil Service to do a special job for her. We moved into a sparsely furnished house and no sooner had we settled in than one of the Queen's ladies-in-waiting arrived to see if we had everything we needed. We assured her we were very comfortable but she had a good look round and not long after her departure a lorry arrived with all kinds ~~for~~ of things for us. There were comfortable arm chairs, china, glassware and even the Crown Prince's bed for small Alaric who filled about a quarter of it. The prince was at Newington College at that time. Every now and then a Lady in Waiting would come to the house to invite Alaric to spend the morning with the Queen and away would go our 3 year old son and goodness only knows what he told her.

She is very fond of children and evidently knows how to win their confidence for Alaric was always pleased to visit her.

We left Tonga very regretfully in November 1941 and arrived in N.Z. a few days before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour. My husband returned to Fiji but Alaric and I stayed in N.Z. for 18 months before we were

allowed to join him.

We stayed in Suva, in the same house, for 3½ years, the longest we had ever stayed anywhere and then we were asked to go back to the Gilberts. I had become so used to living in a community where one had the normal amenities of life that I was quite nervous about returning to the isolation of the Gilberts and I felt rather ashamed of myself. Fortunately I did not know what fate had in store for me; I was the first woman back on Tarawa and soon after we arrived my husband was asked to fly to England and I was left alone for 4 months. Then Alaric and I had a month on a small ship, collecting copra, as we made our way back to Fiji. Some months later we returned once more to Tarawa and gradually things settled down.

I only wish I could tell you something of our subsequent adventures in the Gilberts, where my husband had by now succeeded Sir Arthur Grimble as Resident Commissioner of the Colony, or something of the many other islands in the Pacific which we have visited but as it is I have overrun my time and I'm afraid told you too little about too many places.

The Problem of Nauru.

It would be of little use discussing the problem of Nauru without knowing the background, so I propose giving you the background which will in itself serve to bring out the problem. The problem itself, the removal of the Nauruans from their island, can be looked at from a number of different aspects - some of these will no doubt emerge as a result of discussion.

As you will see I shall give you one view point, my own, with which you may not necessarily agree.

Nauru was discovered by John Fearn of the British ship "Hunter" in 1798 & named Pleasant Island, from its pleasant aspect. When the Germans annexed the island in 1888 they reverted to the native name of Nauru.

The story of Australia's responsibility for the welfare of the people of Nauru goes back to 1914 when, a few months after the Great War began, Australia sent up a ship with 66 soldiers on board who took over the island from the Germans. But Australian whalers had for many years called at Nauru; from 1830 onwards whaling ships based on Port Jackson made for the whaling grounds "on the line" & often the first Pacific Island to be sighted was Nauru or Ocean Island, these bare, flat, high equatorial islands. The result was that the island became a refuge for stowaways, escaped convicts & deserters; a motley crowd of cutthroats & desperadoes.

Nauru is a small, elevated, coral island some 220 feet above sea level; it is about 3½ miles long, 2½ miles wide & 12 miles in circumference. The island is girdled by a low coastal belt, varying in width from 100 yds to a ¼ of a mile, & beyond that again by a coral reef 100 to 200 yds wide. It might be roughly compared in shape to a man's hat, the fringing reef & coastal belt forming the brim, the high land the crown & Buada lagoon (this not nearly in the centre) the dent in the crown. At the edge of the reef the coral shelf drops at an angle of 45° so that 200 yds out the water is 100 fathoms deep. There is therefore no anchorage & a stiff current runs past the island. The nearest land is Ocean Island, 165 miles away; the commercial cities ~~of the world~~ of the world are thousands of miles away - for example Sydney is 2,200

miles from Nauru & Hongkong is 3,000 miles away.

The people are of fine physique, intelligent & friendly in manner. They are not very dark skinned & have straight hair. Their prowess at riding a bicycle has to be seen to be believed; it is quite usual to have 4 people on a machine - often there are several more.

In olden days there were a number of dialects & natives of one district had difficulty in wholly understanding natives from another district but with the translation of the Bible the language became standardised. At this time there were about 1500 Nauruans. There were 14 districts each having its own Chief & there was a good deal of tribal warfare. ~~especially after they had been introduced to guns. The Europeans made trouble on the island.~~

There are many stories of the desperate deeds done by Europeans at Nauru & also by the Nauruans but early visitors described the latter as "very mild & tractable in their manner." One early visitor, in 1843, was horrified at the behaviour of the Europeans & their influence on the natives. As they were men without either law, religion or education & and could make unlimited quantities of spirits from coconut toddy they quarrelled amongst themselves & incited the Nauruans to attack ships & kill other Europeans. One man invited 11 other Europeans to a feast & poisoned them 7 died but 4 refused to eat so he shot them. He then tried to make it appear that the natives were responsible for the deed but they would have none of it & he had to leave the island secretly. He was reported later as having been seen in chains on Guam; his sole reason

for his horrible crime was that he wanted to be paramount on Nauru, so he could not have failed more miserably.

Not only did the whaling ships bring these undesirable men to Nauru ~~but~~ sickness & disease followed in their train, & of course guns which enabled them to wage more effective warfare on one another. The Colonial Government was asked on ~~However~~ more than one occasion to send a ship to round up these escaped convicts & other marauders on the island but this was never done.

However, there was at least one man to my knowledge, & possibly more, who lived, married & died on Nauru a good member of society, but he was dumped on Nauru by his ship's captain. This was, Mr Stephen the man who collected some intricate string figures which he attached to paper & gave to an American ~~anthropologist~~ missionary in 1900.

American Missionaries arrived from the Marshall Islands in 1888 & there is a string figure named after the first man, Delaporte. The Roman Catholics followed in 1904, the first priest being Father Kayser, an Alsatian, who recorded the language & is said to have been the only European to speak it fluently (apart presumably from men like the aforesaid Stephen). He lived to a great age & only died under the Japanese. The Protestant mission is now the London Missionary Society, the Americans having handed over to them in 1917.

~~Discovery of Phosphate~~

Nauru before Phosphate

Before the discovery of phosphate on Nauru the natives lived on a subsistence economy, their diet consisting mainly of coconuts, fish, pandanus & some other fruits. The fertile belt is the flat land which encircles the island & is similar to a coral atoll. The central plateau was covered in trees & not cultivated as very little soil covers the phosphate rock. I might add here that the sister island of Banaba (Ocean Is). does not have this flat belt & the Banabans life was therefore harder perhaps than that of the Nauruans, especially in times of drought. The Nauru population was not decimated during one terrible drought as was that of Ocean Island.

Nowadays, & for many years past, coconuts are largely left to waste & fishing is no longer popular, the Nauruans prefer imported tinned foods, rice & biscuits. About 1937 Beriberi struck both islands & a lot of babies died & the government had to make the people eat fresh toddy & also take a vitamin B preparation which was made from it. The European type house has replaced the traditional, airy & picturesque house of thatched roof with or without walls. The lavalava, a simple type of loincloth for men which is rather like an impleated kilt & is worn throughout the Gilbert & Ellice Islands is no longer fashionable. Men & women wear European style clothing though the women may not yet wear shoes - in fact the women are said not to have changed at the same rate as the men towards Western habits but this is so in most places I think.

Educated Nauruans speak & write English & English is now understood by most members of the community. The majority have adopted Christianity & belong to one or other of the missions on the island. It is obvious that the simple Nauruan communal society has changed into a social order more or less on Western lines, whether this is good or bad is beside the point; it is certain that having brought the Nauruans so far it would be difficult if not impossible for them to revert to life as it was before the discovery of phosphate. There are now about 2,000 Nauruans. Very few work for the B.P.C. but live on their royalties. The chiefs are all on the administrative staff.

The man who discovered phosphate on Ocean Island & Nauru was Mr Albert Ellis (later Sir Albert Ellis) a New Zealander. He was a member of the Pacific Phosphate Company which had been ~~trading~~ operating in the South Seas for nearly ~~50~~ 30 years. When a young man he was sent to the head office in Sydney where he noticed a large block of rock which was used as a door stop. At this time, 1900, the limited deposits of "low grade" phosphate had given out & the company had taken to copra trading to tide them over the lean years as they never gave up hope of finding more phosphate. Mr. Ellis thought this piece of rock looked very much like a rare kind of phosphate rock which he had seen on Baker Island but he was told it was petrified wood which had been found on Nauru some years previously. Several geologists had agreed as to the nature of this rock but every time Mr Ellis noticed it it worried him. After several months he chipped off a small piece & had it analysed & the humble door stop proved to be

~~Discovery of Phosphate~~

Nauru before Phosphate

Before the discovery of phosphate on Nauru the natives lived on a subsistence economy, their diet consisting mainly of coconuts, fish, pandanus & some other fruits. The fertile belt is the flat land which encircles the island & is similar to a coral atoll. The central plateau was covered in trees & not cultivated as very little soil covers the phosphate rock. I might add here that the sister island of Banaba (Ocean Is). does not have this flat belt & the Banabans life was therefore harder perhaps than that of the Nauruans, especially in times of drought. The Nauru population was not decimated during one terrible drought as was that of Ocean Island.

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phosphate of the highest quality; moreover from its formation there were evidences that it came from an old & probably extensive deposit.

Now the Germans were in possession of Nauru & a German Company held the mineral ~~rights~~ & other rights over the Carolines, Marshall Islands & Nauru. However the Pacific Islands Company, which was the immediate predecessor of the Pacific Phosphate Company, held numerous coconut properties - trading stations on the German islands which the German company was particularly anxious to have. Keeping the discovery of phosphate secret negotiations ensued with the result that the Germans got the trading stations and the Pacific Islands Company obtained the concession to work Nauru.

When Mr. Ellis made this discovery he concluded that Ocean Island would also be found to be rich in phosphate & this of course proved to be the case.

At the Peace Conference after the Great War it was maintained that Australia had occupied Nauru on behalf of the Imperial Government & that her claims could not be regarded as paramount & exclusive. The Australian Prime Minister insisted, however, that the Commonwealth's right must be recognised. New Zealand then laid a claim on the ground of proximity & her need of guaranteed supplies of phosphate. After a great fight by Billy Hughes it was agreed that the 3 governments, Britain, Australia & New Zealand, should

participate jointly in the Nauru deposits. That the Ocean Island deposits should be incorporated in the scheme. Ocean Island had become part of the British Colony of the Gilbert & Ellice Islands after the discovery of phosphate.

A mandate was granted to the British Empire in which the 3 powers were to administer the island of Nauru in turn, each for a 5 year period. Australia took over the government for the first 5 years & as New Zealand & Great Britain have never claimed their right to take over from them Australia has continued to administer the island. So it would surely be true to say that whatever stage the Nauruans have reached, educationally economically & politically, is entirely due to Australian Policy.

During the second World War Nauru was invaded by the Japanese. The people had a very bad time as 12,000 were taken to Truk, in the Caroline Group where 465 of them died, mostly from starvation. On Nauru thousands of coconut trees were cut down to make room for an air strip & the island was heavily bombed by allied air raids & practically all buildings were destroyed.

After the war the Nauruans were brought back, the villages were rebuilt & the phosphate industry re-started. The Banabans, on the other hand, were taken from the Carolines to Fiji where my husband had bought an island for them before the war. The Banabans were still essentially living close to their lands

~~Jan 1956~~

even though they liked rice, bully beef, sardines & strawberry jam & they have settled happily on the fertile island of Rambi. Some of the older people pined for their ancestral lands & they paid a visit to Ocean Island at the expense of the Phospate Commissines. The Nauruans are now almost an urban people, they would be miserable on an island like Rambi; in fact two Nauruans went with my husband about 7 years ago to see how the Banabans were faring & they were quite superior & out of place. Buying of Rambi.

A United Nations visiting mission in 1956 stated in their report that they believed there was no alternative to resettlement of the Nauruans after the phosphate deposits are exhausted. The Nauruans would like to come to Australia but they want to preserve their identity & if possible live in a place where they can run their own show.

Nauru will be left with the strip of coastal belt intact but the centre of the island will be a mass of coral pinnacles from 10 to 30 ft high. This land is returned to the Nauruans but it is not known what anyone could make of it. Being devoid of trees the heat is intense making rain clouds part & the land remains dry whilst the sea gets the rain. Once the phosphate is finished there is no reason for any ship to go near the island & there is no alternative industry from which the Nauruans could make a living.

The recent offer by the Dept. of Territories to settle the Nauruans in Australia was a generous one but it was a pity that it was made subject to a condition that would ensure its rejection on Nauru: the requirement that the Nauruans must be prepared to be immediately integrated into the Australian community.

On the other hand repeated Nauruan demands for political independence, or even self-government, on some island off the Australian coast are clearly impossible to concede. Clearly there is room for give & take on both sides. I suggest that the Nauruans must be permitted & assisted, to purchase the freehold of an adequate area of land as their second homeland, where those who prefer to do so can live as a community, with the same rights & obligations as any other Australians. This second home must obviously be on the sea coast, & probably but not necessarily on an island; somewhere on the seaboard of Queensland or the many offshore islands would seem most suitable.

To conclude I would like to read an extract from a letter received from Nauru last week.

 Nauru:

This lovely Sunday morning the feature of distraction is the sunshine and the open air at present filled with the restless sweet songs of the native canaries who in large numbers inhabit the magnificient "tomanos" surrounding this large, airy, well sited house. As usual I rose about 5.30 and sat on the verandah overlooking the sea and the coastal belt. Day after day sunshine and blue skies with light breezes certainly give a clue as to why some person named this island Pleasant Island. Its climate although hot is even, regular and most pleasant. ~~I'd even say better than Rarotonga.~~ The coastal strip with its forests and palms is really refreshing and the numbers of birds never cease to amaze me. In and out among the shadows and sunlight the white terns and black terns (noddies) flutter and sweep; and the native pigeons are quite plentiful. In addition there are several reef birds of the snipe or sandpiper class....

..... regarding resettlement and your quote "they mustn't be spoilt", I should say that the Nauruans are not only being spoilt but are being ruined. The sooner they are resettled the better because they are now enjoying an increasing measure of material comforts without having to make any physical or mental effort. They are growing lazy and overeating many of

the less desirable foods. Resettled on a good land where they could learn to plant for food and sale would be a good foundation and allow them to find their way with other altermative employment....."They are not ready yet", is still too often used as a negative reply.

Together with the people of Ocean Island they were known as the tin openers of the Pacific - it was said that attached to every Nauruan's waist belt would be found a tin opener - Saidmis - Strawberry jam

Beriberi.

Tarawa 370 nautical miles
Truk 1,010 "
Honiara 779.
Rabaul 920.

Rainfall 80 inches average.
1950 12.29 inches.
1930 180 inches

14 districts. Most closely related to Polynesians.
Average man's height 5.6 ins

1960. £. 2,328 Nauruans. 59 absentees.
1,052 other Pacific Islanders.
715 Chinese. included 33 women & 55 children.
380 Europeans. " 173 women 136 children.

1906 beginning of mining operations.
1942 to 1945 occupied by Japanese.

Nauru Police Force of 53. European in Command.
Nauru local Govt consists of 9 elected members.
First constituted in 1951 replacing Council of chiefs.
14 districts are grouped to make 8 electoral districts.
Every Nauruan over 21 eligible to vote.
Council meets once a week & a special meeting each calendar month attended by administrator Minutes are kept in English.
Charges are made for electricity & water supplied to homes - rent of govt. houses. 10/9 a week. (350 houses).
Revenue from Royalty Trust Fund.
No taxes.
7d per ton to Royalty Trust Fund. (£33,353).
3d " " " Landowners ditto. invested for landowners,

when this area is worked, at compound interest for 10 years. The principal plus interest is paid to landowner.

Royalty paid direct to landowners 1/1d per ton as from 1.7.59. Nauruan owners received £56,230.

Nauruan Community long-term investment fund:-
1917. to meet needs of future.
1/- per ton. invested till 2,000 A.D.
Balance at 30.6.59 £345,910.

Nauru Co-operative Society only non-government organization of economic nature.

36 studying overseas.
~~52~~ in australia, 1 in N.Z. 3 in Fiji)
17 are in secondary stage.

ONE OF HONOR'S TALK.

The Pacific, as the novelist Herman Melville tells us, is, above all the ocean of islands. They have never been counted but there are certainly thousands of them and for all practical purposes they can be divided into two groups; the high islands, such as Fiji and Tahiti, volcanic, fertile, well watered and clothed with lush vegetation to the tops of their cloud covered mountains, and the coral atolls, typically low, long narrow necklaces of islets strung on a coral reef encircling a blue lagoon. "The first love, the first sunrise, the first southsea island are memories apart, and touch a virginity of sense" wrote Robert Louis Stevenson; and indeed we can remember, as vividly as yesterday, the afternoon when we first saw ours, with its blue lagoon and golden sand, surmounted by a crown of waving green coconut palms, all bathed in warm, translucent sunshine.

So what I hope to do now is to give you some idea of what it was like to live in the Gilbert Islands, on a coral atoll, such as the one you have seen in the film, at the time when my husband and I lived on quite a number of them, travelling to and fro in small ships, and occasionally in an open boat, during the first 20 years of our married life.

The island I am going to talk about most is called Beru, it is one of the Gilbert Islands of which there are 16, straddling the equator, (we have lost count of the number of times we have 'crossed the Line'). They are about 10 days sailing to the north of Fiji and somewhat S.E. of Mokil, the island in the film.

Beru has a shallow lagoon, about three miles across, the island itself is only 12 miles long, the land seldom more than a few humdred yards wide and not more than 10 feet above sea level, the whole set in an immensity of ocean. The temperature remains much the same, day and night, all the year round, between 82° and 86°F and when it drops to 78°, during the wet and stormy season,

everyone shivers. To quote Stephenson again:

> "Days of blinding sun and bracing wind; nights of a heavenly brightness."

The Trade wind blows from the East for most of the year but westerly storms bring rain from October to March, unless there is a drought. Lagoons are always on the western side of an island and on the eastern shore the land is highest and the reef, with pounding surf is very close. No one lives on the windy side of an island, the villages being built along the lagoon shore. It would seem, at first sight, that the island grows nothing but coconut palms and certainly they are the mainstay of the people for they provide food, drink, house walls, some thatch, the so-called grass skirt, fishing torches, mats, screens, baskets, brooms, charcoal, string and oil; they also produce copra which brings in money with which to buy rice, bully beef, material, tobacco, soap, kerosene and many other amenities of life. "Panama" hats and finely woven table mats are sometimes made from the very young coconut leaves; these items are much prized by Europeans on Ocean Island and Nauru but the supply is always limited as at least one large bunch of coconuts is lost in the preparation of the leaves needed. As you can see the coconut palm is one of the most wonderful trees in the world.

The pandanus tree grows too, better in the Gilberts than anywhere else, and the fruit is used in a number of ways, fresh, cooked or dried. One of the tastiest dishes is made from cooked dried pandanus paste which looks very much like a thin slab of squashed dates; cream, made from grated coconut, is spread over the slab and it is rolled up and left for several hours, the resultant pudding, Te roro, is very rich but very nice. The pandanus tree also produces building materials, stout poles for house building, leaves for the best thatch and for making mats, both coarse and fine, and various kinds of hats, including an excellent rainproof fishing hat. A few inferior

breadfruit trees are grown and there is a little undergrowth and low shrubs of salt bush along the weather side. Babai, a coarse kind of taro, grows in pits in the centre of the island and has to be fed. A framework of plaited coconut leaves is placed around each plant and into this is put certain flowers and other compost materials. This too you saw in the film when the woman cut off the top of the taro and replanted it.

Before the coming of the European the people were a sturdy race with beautiful teeth and few diseases. Even now they can endure tremendous hardships, you may have heard on the news last week that a young Gilbertese had drifted in a canoe for five months and lived to tell the tale though his uncle and his cousin both perished. During the war another man survived seven months in a canoe and his story has been published in book form.

The first Europeans to land and live amongst the people were beachcombers, escaped convicts and deserters from whaling ships for the most part who began arriving in the 1830s; by 1860 there were some 50 of them throughout the Gilbert Islands. They brought with them diseases, alcohol and guns. After them came the traders, the first arriving in the north in 1847 and they were followed by the missionaries 10 years later. Early trade was coconut oil in return for axes, knives, tobacco, material, fishing line, ship's biscuit, kerosene and sad to relate guns and gin. The making of copra (the flesh of the mature nut dried in the sun) - instead of oil - was introduced by a German firm in the 1870s.

The early missionaries with their unsuitable clothing for the climate, the lack of fresh food or even the basic necessities of a European diet such as flour, milk, meat or butter, had a hard struggle for survival. Their unfortunate wives and children languished and died; one missionary lost three wives. It was perhaps unfortunate that the missionaries insisted on clothing their converts as well as themselves; the men in trousers and the women in shapeless garments known as Mother Hubbards,

covering them from neck to ankle and shoulder to wrist. A modified form was still being worn 20 years ago and one trader told us how much he approved of the style since it took at least five yards of material to make it. This clothing resulted in an upsurge of T.B. as the people oiled their bodies less and sat around in wet garments. On the other hand it was the missionaries who reduced the language to writing and established schools as well as converting them to Christianity.

The British Government annexed the Gilberts in 1892; they brought the people into villages from their scattered hamlets and instituted local island governments, with Europeans in charge of districts comprising groups of five or six islands, and that is how we came to live on Beru, a good many years later.

My husband had five islands to administer but our headquarters were on Beru where there was a spacious house, three-sided, built of local materials with few walls and no doors, so cool and airy. I had great fun moving inside partitions about, an easy job as everything is tied with string and there are no nails. Labour was 6d. an hour and the villagers insisted, even at that rate, that they must take it in turn to earn a little money.

There was a dear little garden enclosed by the three sides of the house. Scant grass, a breadfruit tree in one corner, a tiny fan palm and a red hibiscus in the centre and shrubs and large lillies around the sides, the latter of course benefitting from water off the thatch when it rained. The soil had been collected from the bush, leaf soil from underneath the "uri" trees, and hard to come by.

I mentioned that there were no doors to our house. There were no locks either of course and no need for them, no one ever took anything, although amongst themselves they share everything. So much so that a man coming back from two years labour on Ocean Island could, and sometimes

did, have his bicycle and other hard-earned goods "bubuti"d off him - that is, a request you may not refuse. After three years we went to New Zealand on three months leave and when we returned I found my little hand fork still in the ground where I had left it. During the war the Japanese visited Beru and threw our linen, china and other possessions all over the place. The Gilbertese gathered them all up, they even tied the dominoes together where the black had come apart from the white. Then they hid our boxes in the villages and returned everything after the war. They could have made good use of sheets and towels and I wished they had.

To return to Beru and domestic matters, our first cook had been a ship's cook and he made the most of our scant resources; we also had a house boy and an orderly.

In later years, during the war, when we were living in Suva, a Gilbertese man brought his 17 year old motherless daughter to our house leaving her with us with the words: "You will be her mother and father now and teach her how to help you". So I taught her to cook and when we returned to the Gilberts we took her with us and two other girls joined our staff. After meals they would be heard in the kitchen singing in unison and in the evenings, in their own house behind ours, they would sing to the ukelele: Teaira did indeed become as a daughter to us and stayed with us for five years, even postponing her marriage, until we finally left the islands.

In those early days we ordered our stores from Sydney every six months and if we forgot anything we were unlikely to be able to get it from the little trading ships. On one occasion, I ordered a wire ~~steamer~~ strainer among my groceries and received a weird contraption that I finally discovered was for tightening wire fences. But wire fences were non-existent in the islands. Most of our food came out of tins; if we were lucky we were able to buy eggs for tobacco or soap and also chickens. Fish was caught by the prisoners and was usually

in good supply and we bought coconuts by the hundred. These were used to feed dogs, cats and chickens, mixed with fish or crabs. Crabs were not confined to the sea shore, they scuttled round the house and burrowed into the foundations which were made of coral limestone and about 18" above the ground. Our dog had a horrid habit of cornering a crab in the middle of the night under our beds.

There were no stores of any kind other than the trade store which bought up the copra and kept only those items needed by the Gilbertese. We made our own bread and also made the yeast. We usually made ours from rice, sugar and sea water, in a screw top jar; that made very good bread if set overnight in enough flour to make a porridge-like mixture and kneaded up next day. Yeast could also be made from the water in a young coconut but it made the bread rather sweet.

There was no refrigeration at first, we had a butter cooler, a square box of some porous material which had to be kept wet, but even then we found it easier to use a brush rather than a knife to spread the butter, which came out of a tin of course like everything else.

Beer was kept cool in a mail bag cut in half, filled with water and hung in the breeze. The food safe had to be hung too, or the legs put in tins of water to keep out the ants.

There was great excitement when the first Crossley Icy Ball arrived. I wonder if any of you can remember them? There were two balls joined by a long handle, one ball had to be heated over a primus every morning and at a certain stage was plunged into a tub of cold water whilst the second ball was put into an ice box.

There was, of course, no electricity, and there won't be any now most likely. The lamplight in the evenings shone up into the rafters of the

thatched roof, there being no ceiling, and the little gecko lizards would scamper and squabble and occasionally fall on to the pandanus matting with a plop.

Washing was done in two galvanised iron tubs and clothes were ironed with the kind of box iron I now see in museums in Australia. I expect they are still being used in the Gilberts, with charcoal made from coconut shells.

We often took an evening walk through the villages to be greeted with Kamnamauri - may you be in good health to which we made the same reply. This was sometimes followed by Kamnaira? where are you going?, to which we would reply that we were going north or south as the case might be. All quite obvious but a friendly way of passing by.

The villages are very neat and tidy with rows of little square houses on either side of a central road. Each living house faces the road, behind it thereis a cookhouse and behind that again an enclosure for bathing. On special occasions and when there was pandanus to cook an oven was made. This consists of a large hole in the ground, linedwith coral blocks. When about to be used the oven is filled with firewood, mainly coconut husks, and set alight. When the fire dies down the food, wrapped in parcels of green leaves, is put in and all covered up with green leaves and over all a pandanus mat held down by blocks of coral. A dry oven was left like that but a steam oven had some water poured in before the last stone was put in place. I have had bread made in a tin in such an oven when there was no stove.

The living house is usually raised above ground level on short posts or coral slabs, some have walls, others coconut leaf screens which can be pulled up and down like blinds. Very often white coral pebbles are spread all around the front houses which makes the village area clean and attractive but very glaring in the brilliant sunshine. Most houses would have some ornamental

shrubs or flowers dotted around and some would have pawpaw trees; very praiseworthy when you consider how dry the islands are. Everyone owns their own land and no land can be sold, it is divided and divided and passed on to both sons and daughters.

Most villages have a maneaha, the meeting house, where the people hold their dances, meet on all important occasions or just drop in for a chat. Sometimes a few people will have hung up their mosquito nets so as to sleep there while their house is being repaired.

Each village has a well, this is about eight feet deep, dug through the sand and lined with coral stones, the water is brackish and the level rises and falls with the tide. We had a corrugated iron roof on our kitchen and two square rain water tanks but we had to be careful with the water and used it only for drinking and cooking. The islands are subject to cyclical droughts when the rains fail. Even the coconut palms cannot stand up to too long a drought and many wither and die, the trunks still stand but the heart is dead and fish, for some unaccountable reason, leave the lagoon. In 1939 my husband had to distribute rice and we bought as much as we could for government work to give the people money to buy food. At Beru I opened a baby clinic, so many mothers came for help either because they had no milk or it was time to wean the child.

One must remember that there is practically no soil, as we understand it, on these islands, only coral sand with a thin layer of humus. Stones and rocks are unknown, the nearest would be over a thousand miles away. Clam shells were used for making tools before Europeans bought knives and axes.

Although life on a coral atoll can be a hard struggle for existence at times it has produced, over the centuries, a people highly specialised for survival in their unique environment. For the European, however, with imported food, though lacking in fresh fruit, meat and vegetables, it was a peaceful

life amongst a friendly people. No motors or engines of any kind ashore; no aeroplanes above; no blaring radio; canoes skimmed across the lagoon and bare feet trod the sandy roads.

As we returned from our evening walk the sun would be sinking into the sea with a final small green light which is only seen near the equator. There would be a lovely smell of burning wood from the cooking fires and voices calling the children in to have their evening meal. Quite early all would be quiet except for the whispering of the wind in the palms nearby and the faint but constant roar of the surf on the far off reef.

Honor Maude

November, 1987.

In the far off days when everyone travelled by sea & not by air, my husband & I were given first class passages from London to Sydney for our introduction to life as members of His Majesty's Colonial Service destined for the Gilbert & Ellice Islands Colony. We were not told, however, that the voyage would be our last experience of luxury living for many years to come.

All we could find out about the Gilberts, in an encyclopedia, was that the islands lay across the equator & that the inhabitants wore conical hats: & apparently nothing else. It was quite untrue, of course, for the Gilbertese were all, or just about all, Christians, & covered themselves from neck to knee.

Hat. This is the conical hat, which is in fact worn only by fishermen. We had been able to buy, in the Charing Cross Rd. a Gilbertese dictionary & Mrs Edgeworth David's book 'Funafuti' (one of the Ellice Is).

We completed the voyage to Sydney & then

X returned to Melbourne by train to board the phosphate ship, Nauru Chief. She looked terribly small after the P & O liner but positively huge in later years when viewed from the level of a coral atoll, say 3 feet above sea level. After months of isolation it is in fact a quite frightening sight to see the bows of a ship coming nearer & nearer.

In due course we arrived at Ocean Is, where the sea was the most marvellous blue I have ever seen, & were rowed ashore in a large whaleboat by a crew of Colony Police. Sir Arthur Grimble, of Pattern

of Islands fame, was then the Resident Commissioner. He was interested in anthropology + also in string figures (cats cradles to most people) + for the first time in my life I saw two people mattens together which were very different from the cat's cradle we all did as children. I was thrilled, for I had been making string figures on the voyage out, from instructions in a book my anthropologist husband had given me called "Cat's Cradles from many Lands". And I have been making them + writing books about them ever since.

After 6 months' training my husband was put in charge of the 5 southern Gilbert Islands + we set sail for Beru (Island on) the brand new colony schooner Nei Nimanoa (100 ft long, Mr Grimble's pride + joy. Bucking into the S.E. trade wind it took 4 days sailing to reach our goal + our first coral atoll. We remember as vividly as yesterday the afternoon we first saw the thin line above the horizon which became a crown of green coconut palms above golden sand rising from a blue lagoon. Between us + the lagoon was pounding surf but, like many lagoon islands there was a narrow passage through the reef + through this the local government ~~people~~ came + then guided our boat ~~ashore, across 3 miles of calm water~~. Beru has a shallow lagoon, ~~about 3 miles across~~, the island itself is only 12 miles long + the land seldom more than a few hundred yards wide + not more than a few feet above sea level. Micronesians

Arriving at an island ~~was~~ always involved a ceremony of greeting. In a single line from the point of landing stood the native magistrate, (the head of the island) the chief Councillor, the chief of Police, the Warder of the male good ~~prison~~, the warderess of the female good ~~prison~~ + then the presiness, (who after all worked for the government) + we shook hands with each one, ~~saying~~ saying

Ko na mauri - may you be in good health.
Our house, which had originally been built for Mr Grimble, was of local materials - walls of the midrib of the coconut palm leaf made into narrow sticks & tied to a framework, very cool as the breeze filters through them. The roof was thatched with pandamas leaves & there was no ceiling - little lizards called gekkos lived up there - once when I had the wife of a ship's captain staying with me, one fell to the floor with a plop & Hazel went to look at it saying 'poor little thing' etc. Chinese Checkers.

The climate of the Gilberts was described by R.L.S as '.. days of blinding sun & bracing wind, nights of a heavenly brightness' & of house building 'they were held together by lashings of palm tree sinnet' 'no nail had been driven, no hammer sounded in their building & they were held together by lashings of palm tree sinnet'.

Mail days were few & far between, perhaps one in 3 or 4 months but when it came we had literally bags of it; letters, magazines & parcels, they were most exciting days. A New Zealand naval vessel usually called once a year, a party would come ashore for lunch once, but only once, & I've [illegible] on board for dinner, The first ship's captain we saw was the nicest & the gave us a leg of lamb (we never saw any meat) & a box of chocolates.

At Christmas time and on the King's Birthday there was always a great gathering at the Government Station, with dancing going on till midnight. We held sports for the children, with some local games and also egg and spoon races, ~~and~~ sack races and musical bumps using a gramophone.

I learnt how to make a variety of baskets from the green leaves torn from the coconut palm; how to cook pandanus in an oven of hot stones in a hole in the ground; how to make a puree afterwards ... demonstrate ... which was spread on leaves and left to dry in the sun. The result looked like a thin layer of squashed dates and was delicious when rolled up soaked in coconut cream. also string figures

We ordered our groceries from Sydney twice a year, everything came in tins, even sacks of flour The day they arrived was quite tense: had we forgotten anything? If we had we were certainly not likely to be able to buy it at the island trade store, where a Chinaman catered for the needs of the Gilbertese, such as stick tobacco, kerosene, sail cloth and materials. On one occasion I ordered a wire strainer; but it wasn't there .....

We bought coconuts by the hundred, at a shilling a hundred. They were used to feed the dogs, cats, and chickens ~~and~~ ~~starch~~, mixed with fish or crab meat. We used coconut cream ... describe. Land crabs and Koura ....The arrival of the Crossley Icy Ball caused great excitement.

Sunset was a lovely time. As we returned from our evening walk the sun would be sinking into the sea, with a final small green light which is only seen near the equator. There would be a lovely smell of burning wood from the cooking fires and voices calling the children in to have their evening meal. Quite early all would be quiet except for the whispering of the wind in the palms nearby and the faint but constant roar of the surf on the far-off reef.

~~Over the years the tempo of life changed little, but the environment changed dramatically.~~
Isolation

X At Beru we had the headquarters of the H.M.S. & a radio station across the lagoon. On these islands we would be the only Europeans & we simply waited there for one of the two trading vessels to pick us up or, very occasionally, a Phosphate ship repatriating & recruiting labour for Ocean Is. So we could be in complete isolation for 6 weeks or more

Over the next ten years the tempo of life changed little, but there were many trips north & south visiting the 16 islands + west to Ocean Is where headquarters were then situated. We travelled by local copra collecting schooner or by a very small trading steamer The Captain of the steamer was George Heyen who had previously been in sail + we met him again not many years ago when he was in charge of the reconstruction of the Polly Woodside in Melbourne.

Towards the end of 1939 my husband had very severe lumbago + we sailed to Fiji for hospital treatment in the mission ship John Williams. In Suva, the Headquarters of the W.P.H.C we were ordered to NZ for treatment in Rotorua. So Harry was baked + steamed + pummelled with great success + back we went to Suva but not to the Gilberts. The High Commissioner in his wisdom asked us to go to Pitcairn, the home of the Bounty mutineers, where Harry was to revise the Islands laws, in consultation with the islanders, + also oversee the first issue of Pitcairn stamps We were to stay for 3 months so, to be on the safe side took stores for 4 months. took

+ 3 months

In 1940 Harry was asked to go to Pitcairn Island, home of the descendants of the Bounty mutineers, to oversee the revision of their laws, to launch the first issue of postage stamps.

We set off from Wellington, N.Z. in mid winter having with us our 2 year old son + the young housekeeper of a friend to help me, having heard that the Pitcairn people were not overfond of work. This was not entirely true but I was extremely grateful for Kitty's aid.

We were met off the island by enormous whale boats into which Pitcairn people first of all piled their cargo + as dusk fell they were ready to take us. The ship's passengers + crew gave us 3 hearty cheers as we pulled away - which we felt was a little unnecessary as they were going to a Europe at war.

Landing at Pitcairn was rather too exciting, especially when the islanders rested on their oars waiting just outside the breakers - the rocks for the oder to row. Then they sprang to activity + we were rushed in, not on top of a breaker as we did in canoes over the reefs, but in between the waves + we were safely in Bounty Bay before the next wave broke behind us.

The road to the village of Adamstown, 300ft above was narrow + very steep, + we were glad to reach the top. We stayed in a house in Shady Nook with David Young-

American wife for a few days before moving into a house in Shady Nook, an area just outside the village, where Banyan trees grew.

The house we was built of hand sawn timber, raised off the ground, with an iron roof which provided us with rain water stored in an open cement tank.

The Pitcairn people speak a dialect of their own, a mixture of English + Tahitian, with a broad accent. Alaric came away saying 'Thats myen" or "Thats iyoran' but most of them spoke understandable English as well.

The families on Pitcairn are descended from the few families of Young + Christians who returned there a few years after everyone had been taken to Norfolk Island because of overpopulation + a feared shortage of water.

The people are rather more European than Polynesian now and a number of them have New Zealand or Australian wives. When we were on the island there were close on 200 inhabitants, I believe that now there are only just over 100 as so many have migrated since the war to New Zealand and also to Australia. Their staple diet seemed to be sweet potatoes, dalo, yams, beans and fried green Bananas, but they also have manioc, pumpkin and bread. They are very fond of making everything into a mush and then baking it and coconut cream is used a good deal for mixing but coconuts are not very plentiful. Corn meal and arrowroot flour are made on the island and a little sugar cane is grown and crushed in a Heath Robinson contraption of their own devising. At one time the island was very short of flour and I eked mine out by putting one third of corn meal to two thirds of flour when making bread, and it was delicious. later

Kitty and I very soon found it best to pack away any clothes we valued at all; what the cockroaches left the Pitcairn mud stained. In any case most of our luggage sat in the boatsheds at Bounty Bay for at least 4 months as we were expecting a ship to call for us, and once a ship is sighted there is no time for anything but a rush to the landing. We actually left once, after 5½ months. We said goodbye, gave away what few stores were left and my beautiful crop of ~~carrots~~ vegetables and then the Captain refused to take us, // Mr Fuller got away but we had to return to the shore and we stayed another 2 months. We had no butter, very little milk or tea and lived mostly on vegetable soup and vegetable curry with fish ~~and~~ and chicken about once a week, and plenty of fruit. The islanders were wonderful, they insisted on returning all our presents and kept us well supplied with local produce.

(1) You will all remember the story, or the film, of the mutiny of the Bounty, of Fletcher Christian the leader of the mutineers, & of their setting on Pitcairn Island. One of the midshipmen, Edward Young, was with the mutineers & he was the only man to own a ring. Another midshipman, James Hallett, was put in the open boat with Capt. Bligh. He had a sister, Ann, who married William Maude, & thus

became my husband's great ~~grandmother~~ great uncle. It amused us to think that James could have been the founder of a Pitcairn family. If the mutineers had taken him with them, ~~about~~ as well as my husband's great, great uncle, so we could have had cousins there.

The mutineers landed on Pitcairn in Jan. 1790 with their Tahitian wives + the first generation of children were married by John Adams, the only surviving mutineer, in a ceremony using Edward Young's wedding ring. The last person known to have had possession of it was John Adam's wife + it had been lost for 180 years or so. Robert Young dug a small patch of ground for me in his own garden near our house + there I grew vegetables for Alasic. One day as I knelt on the ground planting seeds + breaking up the soil with my hands to cover them. I found a ring. Great excitement. I knew the story but Harry said, as I eagerly cleaned it, 'it won't be anything special'. But gradually I saw a crown between two letters G. R., so it was old. On the other side was imprinted PURE, which it wasn't. The islanders had no doubt about what I had found + although I said it was theirs they insisted that I should

keep it. They also told me that my little patch of ground was on the site of John Adam's house Presumably the ring had fallen between the floor boards which were very uneven.

A few years ago we decided to have the ring put into a picture frame with a short history above it. Two certificates, stating that I had found it, one signed by the Magistrate, David Young, & the other by the owner of the land, Robert Young, were framed separately. We took the two frames to Norfolk Island where they are housed in the Legislative Council offices but I hope one day they will hang in this museum.

We had some wonderful walks and climbs, the island has a great variety of scenery and as it is only 1½ miles across and rises to 1,000 feet you can imagine how steep it is, even the village is built on an incline. From the highest point, on the south of the island, you look down about 900 feet of almost sheer cliff, then another 100 feet a little less steep to where the sea pounds against the rocks; it compares favourably with the Pali outside Honolulu with the added attraction of the boiling surf at the bottom.

We became very fond of the little island and its people and in spite of some hardships and worry, with raiders in the Pacific and our departure so uncertain we were sorry to say goodbye when an American ship eventually called in for us and took us to Panama.

From Panama we were able to fly to Los Angeles in time to board a ship bound for Honolulu, & Suva ~~& Sydney~~ Luxury again, followed by a month's stay at Government House before going on to Nukualofa where my husband was to be Acting Consul for 3 months.

So we were back to island life but with a tremendous difference.

First & foremost was Queen Salote & her husband, Tungi. A regal ~~Queen~~, well remembered for driving in an open carriage in the rain at the coronation of our Queen. She had a lovely smile & made protocol as easy as possible walking to the door when we left her presence so that we should not have to walk backwards. She was very fond of children & her own sons were then at school in Sydney. She would often send a lady-in-waiting with an invitation for Alaric, 3 years old then, to spend the morning with her. ~~In the first weeks I went to Red X functions with her & then Tungi died, very suddenly & we were all in mourning.~~

Clothing was a bit of a problem, my husband had never needed tails, as you can imagine, & there was no possibility of obtaining any. When the Governor

was asked to solve the problem he replied that Tungi should be told that the Court of James had given up formal dress for the duration of the war. Tungi was delighted, he said he had always hated ~~it~~ them anyway.

We attended the Opening of Parliament & my husband did have his official dress, complete with white topee & sword.

~~When~~ I accompanied the Queen at a Red X market where rolls of tapa, baskets & produce were being sold. I was also asked to help her judge some fancy dresses & I was amazed at some of the costumes, they were extremely clever.

Then Tungi died, very suddenly indeed & we all went into mourning.

~~After 13 months~~

When the Consul came back from leave my husband was asked by Queen Salote to reorganise her public service so he was 'lent' by the British Govt. to the Tongan Government. We moved into a house provided by the Queen & spent a very happy month there. Incidentally I was able to collect some Tongan stamp figures. ~~& this is one of them.~~

Our short stay in Tonga was ~~very much one of the~~ highlights of our life in the Pacific.

The Pacific, as the novelist Herman Melville tells us, is, above all, the ocean of islands. They have never been counted but there are certainly thousands of them and for all practical purposes they can be divided into two groups; the high islands, such as Fiji and Tahiti, volcanic, fertile, well watered and clothed with lush vegetation to the tops of their cloud covered mountains, and the coral atolls, typically low, long narrow necklaces of islets strung on a coral reef encircling a blue lagoon.

"The first love, the first sunrise, the first southsea island are memories apart, and touch a virginity of sense" wrote Robert Louis Stevenson; and indeed we can remember, as vividly as yesterday, the afternoon when we first saw ours, with its blue lagoon and golden sand, surmounted by a crown of waving green coconut palms, all bathed in warm, translucent sunshine.

So what I hope to do now is to give you some idea of what it was like to live in the Gilbert Islands, on a coral atoll, such as the one you have

seen in the film, at the time when my husband and I lived on quite a number of them, travelling to & fro in small ships, and occasionally in an open boat, during the first 20 years of our married life.

The island I am going to talk about, most is called Beru, it is in the world one of the Gilbert Islands of which there are 16, straddling the equator, (we have lost count of the number of times we have 'crossed the line') they are about 10 days sailing to the

north of Fiji & somewhat S.E. of Mokil, the island in the film.

Beru has a shallow lagoon, about 3 miles across, ~~and the whole island~~ the island itself is only 12 miles long, the land seldom more than a few hundred yards wide & not more than 10 feet above sea level, the whole set in an immensity of ocean. The temperature remains much the same, day & night, all the year round, between 82° & 86°F & when it drops to 78°, during the wet & stormy season, overgone showers. To quote

Stevenson again:

'Days of blinding sun and bracing wind; nights of a heavenly brightness.'

The Trade wind blows from the East for most of the year but westerly storms bring rain from October to March, unless there is a drought. Lagoons are always on the western side of an island & on the eastern shore the land is highest & the reef, with pounding surf is very close. No one lives on the windy side of an island, the villages being built along the lagoon shore. It would seem, at first sight, that the island

grows nothing but coconut palms & certainly they are the mainstay of the people for they provide food, drink, house walls, some thatch, the so-called grass skirt, mats, screens, baskets, brooms, charcoal, string & oil; they also produce copra which brings in money with which to buy rice, bully beef, mackeral, tobacco, soap, kerosene and many other amenities of life. "Panama" hats & finely woven table mats are sometimes made from the very young coconut leaves; these items are much prized by Europeans on Ocean Island and Nauru but the supply is always limited as at least one large bunch of coconuts is lost in the preparation of the leaves needed

As you can see the coconut palm is one of the most wonderful trees in the world.

The pandanus tree grows too, better in the Gilberts than anywhere else, & the fruit is used in a number of ways, fresh, cooked or dried. One of the tastiest dishes is made from cooked dried pandanus paste which looks very much like a thin slab of ~~dates~~ squashed dates; cream, made from grated coconut, is spread over the slab & it is rolled up & left for several hours, the resultant pudding, Te Bobo, is very rich but very nice. The pandanus tree also produces building materials, stout poles

for house building, leaves for the best thatch & for making mats, both coarse & fine, & various kinds of hats, including an excellent rain proof fishing hat. A few inferior breadfruit trees are grown & there is a little undergrowth & low shrubs of salt bush along the weather side. Babai, a coarse kind of taro, grows in pits in the centre of ~~the~~ island & has to be 'fed'. A framework of plaited coconut leaves is ~~put~~ placed around each plant & into this is put certain flowers & other compost materials. This too you saw in the film when the woman cut off the top of the taro & replanted it.

Before the coming of the European the people were a steady race with beautiful teeth & few diseases. Even now they can endure tremendous hardships, you may have heard on the news last week that a young Gilbertese had drifted in a canoe for 5 months & lived to tell the tale through his uncle & his cousin both perished. During the war another man survived 7 months in a canoe & this story has been published in book form.

The first Europeans to land & live amongst the people were beachcombers, ~~runaway~~ escaped convicts & deserters from whaling ships

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for the most part who began arriving in the 1830s; by 1860 there were some 50 of them throughout the Gilbert Islands. They brought with them diseases, alcohol & guns. After them came the traders, the first arriving in the north in 1847 & they were followed by the missionaries 10 years later. Early trade was coconut oil in return for axes, knives, tobacco, material, fishing line, ship's biscuit, kerosene & sad to relate guns & gin. The making of copra (instead of oil was introduced by a German firm in the 1870s. (The flesh of the mature nut dried in the sun)

The early missionaries with their unsuitable clothing for the climate, the lack of fresh food or

even the basic necessities of a European diet such as flour, milk, meat or butter, had a hard struggle for survival. Their unfortunate wives & children languished & died; one missionary lost 3 wives. It was perhaps unfortunate that the missionaries insisted on clothing their converts as well as themselves; the men in trousers & the women in shapeless garments known as mother Hubbards, covering them from neck to ankle & shoulder to wrist. A modified form was still being worn 20 years ago & one leader told us how much he approved of the style ~~as~~ since it took at least 5 yds of material to make it. This clothing resulted in an upsurge of T.B. as the people oiled their bodies less & sat around in wet garments. On the other

hand it was the missionaries who reduced the language to writing & established schools as well as converting them to Christianity.

The British Government annexed the ~~islands~~ Gilberts in 1892; they brought the people into villages from their scattered hamlets & instituted local island governments, with Europeans in charge of districts comprising groups of 5 or 6 islands, & that is how we came to live on Beru, a good many years later.

My husband had 5 islands to administer but our headquarters were on Beru where there was a spacious house, 3 sided, built of local materials, ~~with few walls~~ ~~there was no need for locks, no one~~ & no doors, so cool & airy. I had great fun moving inside partitions about, an easy job as everything is

tied with string & there are no nails. Labour was 6d an hour & the villagers insisted, even at that rate, that they must take it in turn to earn a little money. [illegible]

There was a dear little garden enclosed by the 3 sides of the house. Scant grass, a breadfruit tree in one corner, a tiny fan palm & a red hibiscus in the centre & shrubs & large lilies round the sides, the lattice of course benefitting from water off the thatch when it rained. The soil had been collected from the bush, leaf soil from underneath the "uri" trees, & had to come by. [illegible] where the black had come apart from the white. Then they hid our boxes in the villages & returned everything after the war. They could have made good use of sheets & towels & I wished they had.

I mentioned ~~earlier~~ that there were no doors to our house. There were no locks either of course & no need for them, no one ever took anything although amongst themselves they share everything. So much so that a man coming back from 2 years labour on Ocean Island could, & sometimes did, have his bicycle & other hard earned goods "bubuti"d off him. That is a request you may not refuse. After 3 years we went to NZ on 3 months leave & when we returned I found my little hand fork ~~sticking~~ still in the ground where I had left it. During the war the Japanese visited Banaba & threw our linen, china & other possessions all over the place. The Gilbertese gathered them all up, they even tied the dominoes together where the black had come apart from the white. Then they hid our boxes in the villages & returned everything after the war. They could have made good use of sheets & towels & I wished they had.

To return to Beru + domestic matters. Our first cook had been a ship's cook + he made the most of our scant resources; we also had a house boy + an Orderly.

In later years, during the war, when we were living in Suva, a Gilbertese man brought his 17 year old ~~dawa~~ motherless daughter to our house ~~with~~ leaving her with us with the words:

"You will be her mother + father now + teach her how to help you"

So I taught her to cook + when we returned to the Gilberts we took her with us + two other girls joined our staff. After meals they would be heard in the kitchen singing in unison + in the evenings, in their own house behind ours, they would sing to the ukelele. Teaura did indeed become as a daughter to us + stayed with us for 5 years, even postponing her marriage, until we finally left the islands.

In those earlier days we ordered our stores from Sydney every six months & if we forgot anything we were unlikely to be able to get it from the little trading ships. On one occasion I ordered a wire strainer amongst my groceries & received a weird contraption that I finally discovered was for tightning wire fences - in fact the a wire strainer ~~something~~ but wire fences were non-existant in the islands. Most of our food came out of tins; if we were lucky we were able to buy eggs for tobacco or soap & also chickens. Fish was caught by the prisoners & was usually in good supply & we bought

coconuts by the hundred - These were used to feed dogs, cats & chickens, mixed with fish or crabs. Crabs were not confined to the sea shore they scuttled round the house & burrowed into the foundations which were made of coral limestone & about 18" above the ground. Our dog had a horrid habit of cornering a crab in the middle of the night under our beds.
night under our beds. [illegible]

15 There were no stores of any kind other than the Trade Store which bought up the copra + kept only those items needed by the Gilbertese. We made our own bread and butter also made the yeast. We usually made ours from rice, sugar + sea water, in a screw top jar; that made very good bread if set overnight in enough flour to make a porridge-like mixture + kneaded up next day. Yeast could also be made from the water in a young coconut but it made the bread rather sweet.

There was no refrigeration at first, we had a butter cooler, a square box of some porous material which had to be kept wet, but even then we found it easier to use a brush rather than a knife to spread the butter, which came out of a tin of course like everything else.

Beer was kept cool in a mail bag cut in half, filled with water + hung in the breeze. The food safe had to be hung too, or the legs put in tins-of-water to keep out the ants.

There was great excitement when the first Cruise Ship Ball

arrived. I wonder if any of you can remember them? These were two balls joined by a long handle, one ball had to be heated over a primus every morning & at a certain ~~temperature~~ stage was plunged into a tub of cold water whilst the second ball was put into an ice box.

There was, of course, no electricity, & there won't be any now most likely. The lamplight in the evenings shone up into the rafters of the thatched roof, there being no ceiling, & the little gecko lizards would scamper & squabble & occasionally fall on to the pandanus matting with a plop.

Washing was done in two galvanised iron tubs & clothes were ironed with the kind of box iron I now see in museums in Australia. I expect they are still being used in the Gilberts, with charcoal made from coconut shells.

>156 We often took an evening walk through the villages to be greeted with Kamnamauri - may you be in good health, to which we made the same reply. This was sometimes followed by Kam naira? - where are you going?, to which we would reply that we were going north or south as the case might be - all quite obvious but a friendly way of passing by.

The villages are very neat & tidy with rows of little square houses on either side of a central road. Each living house faces the road, behind it there is a cook house & behind that again an enclosure for bathing.

On special occasions when there was pandanus to cook an oven was made. This consists of a large hole in the ground, lined with coral blocks. When about to be used the oven is filled with fire wood, mainly coconut husks, & set alight. When the fire dies down the food, wrapped in parcels of green leaves, is put in & all covered up with green leaves & over all a pandanus mat held down by blocks of coral. A dry oven was left like that but a steam oven had some water poured in before the last stone was put in place. I have had bread made in a tin

7? ~~Most things~~ The living house is usually raised above ground level on short posts of coral slabs, some have walls, others coconut leaf screens which can be pulled up & down like blinds. Very often white coral pebbles are spread all around the front houses which makes the village area clean and attractive but very glaring in the brilliant sunshine. Most houses would have some ornamental shrubs or flowers dotted around & some would have paw paw trees; very praise worthy when you consider how dey the islands are. Everyone owns their own land & no land can be ~~bought~~ sold, it is divided & divided & passed on to sons & daughters

Most villages have a maneaba, the meeting house, ~~&~~ where ~~dancing~~ the ~~takes place, important meetings~~ people hold their dances, meet

coral 'stones', the water is brackish & the level rises & falls with the tide. We had a corrugated iron roof on our kitchen & two square zinc water tanks but we had to be careful with the water & used it only for drinking & cooking.

The islands are subject to cyclacle droughts when the rains fail. Even the coconut palms cannot stand up to too long a drought & many wither & die, the trunks still stand but the heart is dead. and dried fish, for some unaccountable reason leave the lagoon. In 1939 my husband had to distribute rice & we bought as much stenaj as we could for government work to give the people money to buy food. At Beru I opened a baby clinic, so many mothers came for help either because they had no milk or it was time to wean the child.

19. One must remember that there is practically no soil, as we understand it, on these islands, only coral sand with a thin layer of humus. Stones & rocks are unknown, the nearest would be over a thousand miles away. Clam shells were used for making tools before Europeans brought knives & axes.

Although life on a coral atoll can be a hard struggle for existence at times it has produced, over the centuries, a people highly specialised for survival in their unique environment. For the European however, with imported food, though lacking in fresh fruit, meat & vegetables, it was a peaceful life amongst a friendly people. No motors or engines of any kind ashore; no aeroplanes above; no blaring radio; canoes skimmed across the lagoon & bare feet trod the sandy roads.

As we returned from our evening walk the sun would be setting, sinking into the sea with a final small green light which is only seen near the equator. There would be a lovely smell of burning wood from the cooking fires & voices calling the children in to have their evening meal; after we

Quite early all would be quiet except for the whispering of the wind in the palms nearby & the faint but constant roar of the surf on the far off reef.

Very few people, shown a simple loop of string such as this, would realise that it is the basis of the world's most universal game; Cats Cradles, more properly called String Figures.

Hundreds of different patterns are made by Eskimos, Africans, American Indians, Maories, Australian Aboriginees & Pacific Islanders from Papua-New Guinea to Hawaii.

In keeping with your area of study I will show you some from the Pacific

Na Ubwebwe. · Canoe Shed

Ba ni Mai. Tinameito

Kabaebae Baara. Warou

Dogs Tooth Parachute

Sardines.

As Round Waists

If you were to take a map of the Pacific & trace a line north from N.Z., through Fiji, you would come first to the 9 Ellice Is, further north your line would traverse the 16 Gilbert Is, which straddle the Equator, & then some 200 miles west you would see 2 tiny islands, lying just south of equator, Nauru & Ocean Is. ~~Judge actions by the thinking of the time.~~

Nauru, though named Pleasant Is. when first seen by Europeans, has always been known by its true name, & its inhabitants as Nauruans. But Ocean Is., named by a ship's captain who came across this tiny dot of land in ~~the immensity of ocean after weeks at sea~~ 1804 & named after his ship, has only recently come to be known as Banaba, its true

Germany drew a line on the map south of her most southerly possession in the Solomon Is (namely Bougainville) to the south of the Marshall Islands. All islands north of the line were to be in the German zone, everything south ~~to~~ in the British. Thus Nauru came into the German sphere & Ocean Is & the G.E. Is into the British.

Records relate that Britain wasn't particularly interested, however she declared a Protectorate over the G. E. Is. at Germany's request in 1892; Ocean Is was not included. In 1900 phosphate was discovered on Ocean Is. — as a result of requests by the Pac. Is. Company, who wanted mining rights, Ocean Is was declared a colony

Doorslip Rock

name, & the owners as Banabans. Both islands have rich deposits of phosphate between coral pinnacles & both were raised from under the sea, Banaba in 3 stages as can be seen by 3 distinct terraces. Towards the end of the last century, when colonial powers were dividing the Pacific into spheres of influence, Nauru came into the German sphere, & Ocean & the G & E Is into the British. Records relate that Britain wasn't particularly interested, however she declared a Protectorate over the G & E Is in 1892 at Germany's request, & no notice was taken of Ocean Is. until phosphate was discovered there in 1900 when that island was declared a colony at the request of the S.P.Co

So we have the position of the G & E being a Protectorate in 1892 & Ocean Is. a Colony in 1900. In 1916 the G & E & Ocean Is were joined together as a Colony with Headquarters at Ocean Is. By this time the phosphate industry had become big business & it was essential to have Government officers there, to oversee the various aspects of deals with the Banabans & control of indentured labour. Moreover the Banabans, who appeared to be the same race of people as the Gilbertese & spoke the same language.

The Banabans, in two law cases, are now suing the British Govt, as Trustees of their welfare, (a) for the failure by the B.P.C. to re-

plant the island as was agreed in 1913 and (b) for back Royalties, saying they have never had a fair deal.

Now Banaba, ba-rock, aba-land, in other words a rocky land, is also a very dry island. is in the drought belt. The island rises steeply from a 30 ft rampart of coral limestone cliffs ~~the surrounding reef~~ to about 300 ft.; the edge of the reef, only a short distance from the land, drops sheer to a great depth, there is no anchorage. The moorings for buoys are the deepest in the world. The only water on the island was in rock pools reached by women squimming naked through narrow subterranean passages down to sea level; the only containers were coconut shells for rain water was caught by tying

a long leaf round a tree in such a way that the rain ran into a receptacle. During the latter part of the last century O.I. suffered a four year drought & the inhabitants, starving & thirsty, reduced in numbers by new diseases & wars which followed the introduction of firearms, flocked on board every labour-recruiting vessel that visited the island, to be scattered over the eastern Pacific from whence most returned in due course. ~~[illegible]~~ By 1900 the miserable remnants of the former population said to be some 2,000, were reduced to 450 of the poorest natives in the Pacific

Incidentally: Nauru string figure Wauru.

The island was covered with about an inch of soil, or humus, & in places tall pinacles of dead coral were raised above the level of the land. On the top of the island there were beautiful big trees, with sweet scented flowers, some coconut palms which did not bear very well, pawpaws, Pandanus & a certain amount of undergrowth. Lower down there was a more fertile belt, where coconuts were plentiful. It would appear that coconuts did not grow well on phosphate land but did well on the lowest levels where the rock is poor in phosphate. Mining began on the top of the island, & this is where an experimental planting of coconuts was tried, with no success - & the project was abandoned.

When phosphate was first discovered the rocks tested were simply lying on the ground & no one had any idea of the depth that lay beneath the surface. The Pacific Phosphate Company, who had worked other islands, offered the Banabans £50 a year for the ~~lease & payment for trees~~ right to mine. The Banabans accepted. They made the same offer to the Nauruans who replied that they never used the high land & didn't want any money for it. Nauru, unlike Ocean Is, has a flat belt running right round the island & even a brackish inland lagoon, beyond the reef however the depth of water is sudden & as deep as at Ocean Is.

Before digging for phosphate began the land required by

the company had to be leased & a ~~small royalty~~ compensation paid for trees destroyed. Royalty after 1912 of 6d. ~~was also paid to the owners.~~

In the course of time, when it became evident that there were millions of tons of phosphate, of years & years of work ahead, the Government decided that the Banabans should have a fund built up for them for future use as well as allowing them an annual income. Tax, or royalties, also went to the Government for the running of the whole Colony, 25 other islands.

~~Also~~ During the 30s the need for a new home for the Banabans was much discussed & a number of islands suggested. At the same time the Australian Govt, who were administering Nauru as a

Nauruans to Fiji with Hosey.

Trust Territory (the Germans having lost it in World War I) were discussing the possibility of moving the Nauruans to Fiji. I think Fraser Island was mentioned offered to them in the 60s. They, however, though isolated, do have sufficient land to live on & decided to stay where they are.

At the beginning of World War II the Banabans were enquiring about islands in Fiji - my husband was asked to take charge of any negotiations. Before any decision had been made the Japanese had taken possession of Ocean so it was not possible to find out what the Banabans' wishes were. After my husband had argued for some time with the Governor of Fiji he was allowed to buy Rambi, in the Fiji Group, as an investment,

with Banaban money - & a very good investment it has proved. $25,000 to 3½ mil. N.C.

The Japanese took the Banabans away from O.D., some to the Gilberts a good many of them to a swampy place in the Kusaie in the Caroline Islands where they had very little to eat. After the war the British Phosphate Commissioners, (whose ships had mostly be sent to the bottom of the Ocean by German raiders) sent a ship N.C. to collect the Banabans & bring them to Tarawa now the Govt Headquarters of the G.E.I.C. & was there & went out to the ship to greet them & some Gilbertese amongst them. They were a sad looking lot, ragged, thin & suffering from yaws & T.B. We set up a baby clinic

on the tiny atoll I was living on & they where they were all brought. Sewing machines were borrowed & everyone was given lengths of cloth to make new clothes. Day & night bare feet went padding past my own little island built house to get water from a nearby well.

Ocean Is was devasted, all the villages destroyed & the island covered in pumpkin plants - the main food of the beleaguered Japanese. The B.P.C. had to repair the works & the jetty so the Banabans were asked if they would go to their new home in Rambi for 2 years & after that they could decide where they wanted to live. To this they agreed. The first year was not a happy

one. The Banaban community was reduced to a total of 703 persons, (185 men, 200 women & 318 children); those returned from the Carotine Is. were mostly sick people. 300 Gilbertese, those who had befriended & fed the refugee Banabans on Tarawa, accompanied the Banabans to Rabi hoping for a brighter future away from the over-populated Gilbert Is.

The island of Rambi is about 9 miles at its greatest length + 1½ miles wide, rises to a central peak some 1,550 ft high. It is 5 times as high as Ocean Islands & more than 10 times as large. a hilly island. The climate is totally different, there are hurricanes to contend with at times, heavy rain always. The days are

humid, the nights cool + in winter cold. To anyone accustomed to the small variation of an equatorial climate. There is mud + dense, lush undergrowth but also coconut palms + fertile land. However the Banabans are not agriculturists, they were fishermen + can skeel be that. They decided, after two years, to make Rambi their home Bualot. My husband drew up a statement of intention which, amongst other things, safeguarded their ownership rights to O.I. + freedom to travel to + fro. Recently the Gilbertese declared the island a closed district. Party of Banabans to O.I.

lie due north of Fiji straddle the equator

~~Now away to~~ The Gilbert Islands, 16 flat coral islands straddling the equator north of Fiji; 11 of these islands are lagoon islands, that is to say they are ribbons of land with a reef and pounding surf on the east and calm water between the shore and the reef on the west with a narrow entrance for boats; and the rest are reef islands, islands completely surrounded by a coral reef and pounding surf.

There is a tremendous fascination in the lagoon islands and it is a source of never failing wonder to pass from the deserted reef side of an island, with its glare and wind and tumbling surf, to the calm and tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shore can be seen the brown thatch of village houses and perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing.

The islands very in width from a few hundred yards to perhaps half a mile and in length from 10 to 30 miles but the land is cut up into islets which are separated from one another at high tide. The easterly trade wind blows most of the year and keeps the reef side of an island cool but the Gilbertese never live on that side and very few Europeans do either, it is too boisterous. The rain and storms come from the west between October and March, ~~and~~ then travelling from island to island is rather a nightmare and landings very unpleasant.

When we went to the Gilberts my husband was put in charge of 5 islands; we had been at Ocean Island, the headquarters of the G.&E.I.C. for some months and we set off , with all our goods and chattels, and stores for 6 months, in the newly arrived Colony Schooner "Nei Nimanoa", she was 100 feet long, had a corkscrew motion and was guaranteed to make quite 80% of her passengers extremely sick. On one occasion, after several days of terrible sickness I was

quite delirious and when my husband came into my cabin to see how I was I asked him if he was a Greek or a Roman which alarmed him somewhat. I can remember to this day the fight that was going on between the Greeks and Romans as I crouched at the head of my bunk!

One of our 5 islands had a spacious house built of local materials, coconut leaf midrib for walls, slim sticks tied to a framework with coconut string, and a roof thatched with pandanus. There was no ceiling and the small lizards, or geckos, used to romp in the thatch and occasionally fall on to the floor with a plop, lie for a moment half stunned and then dash off. The kitchen was apart from the house, it was built of fibro cement and had a tin roof which was our catchment area, all very luxurious and quite new. This was our headquarters and across the lagoon, about 3 miles away, was the headquarters of the L.M.S. where there were about 5 European missionaries. They had a girls' school, a Boys' school and a Teacher Training school as well as a wireless station, a printing press and a dispensary. They also had electricity, an unheard of luxury, but it was entirely due to the efficiency of the head missionary who was a very practical man. None us of had any refrigeration and we all had to wait several months as a rule for a mail. I sometimes used to think the missionaries were very lucky in having settled homes whereas we were continually packing up and moving either to another island in our district, or back to Ocean Island, or to another district. Wherever we went we had to take everything we needed from cooking utensils and linen to washtubs and tinned food. There were no shops, not even a trade store, no ice, no meat, no fresh vegetables or milk, no electricity, no doctor and very little water. no cinemas or even radios.

In the first 6 years we moved from one district to another 10 times; this involved all our possessions, not just enough for a few

months. Apart from these long-distance moves there were the short journeys from island to island and visits to various villages* On one occasion we walked about 30 miles in two days to call at all the villages on an island with a very shallow lagoon as it would have taken weeks to do it by boat or canoe waiting for the high tides. Although most of our food came out of tins we could usually get good supplies of fish, scraggy chickens and eggs; we could quite often get pawpaws, occasionally breadfruit, seldom bananas but always coconuts and sometimes the heart of a coconut, the millionaire's salad.-- we only had this when there was a fallen tree. A few vegetables could be grown with skill, care and patience but we were seldom long enough in any one place for things to have time to mature.

Using * trading schooners.

The natives.... Micronesians...learning handicrafts... women's society... cats cradles. Life was absorbing in those ~~isolated~~ lonely islands, there was always someone wanting something and you felt you were doing a worthwhile job.
At one time during a bad drought.. Baby Clinic. Lack of medical aid. Appendicitis.
There is no doubt, I'm afraid that the isolation and the lack of fresh food eventually tells on the health, both mental and physical, of Europeans. We knew that when we left England we could not return for six whole years but after nearly 3 years we went to N.Z. for 3 months. We were lucky as I had an aunt to go to and a family of cousins ~~who are now more like sister and brothers~~ so we were looked after and saw something of N.Z. as well. We went back to the Gilberts for another 2½ years and then went to England but , much as we loved the islands and the people, it was over a year before we were fit to return to them.

String figures.
Going to Nauru.

Ladies and Gentlemen -

It seems to me, ~~that~~, having had the rather unique experience of actually living on Pitcairn Island, that the best way of giving you some idea of what life on the island is like would be to describe our own life whilst there. To begin with one has to get ashore and that is always mildly exciting and often a lot too exciting. We arrived at the island one afternoon, after a rather stormy voyage, with stores for five months, Alaric aged just 2 years and a girl, Kitty, to help me cope with what I expected would be ~~to find~~ a pretty tough life. The Chief Engineer, out of the kindness of his heart, had made an odd contraption in which we were to be slung over the side and into the Pitcairn boat. It was a square piece of wood with canvas all round it about 4 feet high and depending from four ropes. I'm afraid I eyed it with dismay and would ~~have~~ much rather have gone down

the rope ladder but I did not like to refuse what had been provided with so much trouble. So over we went, one at a time, and were soon helped out and deposited amongst piles of boxes in one of the boats. It was late by the time we left the ship and dark before we reached the breakers, and I was not feeling at all happy as we stopped to wait for the right moment to dash in. To make matters worse everyone seemed to be shouting "now" but nothing happened until the Captain, whose word evidently did count, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, shouted "Now" and everyone took up the command and pulled with a will. In a few moments we were in the narrow channel, took a sharp turn round some rocks and by the time the wave had broken behind us we were well on our way to the shore. Here willing hands pulled the boats in and set our feet

on the sands of Bounty Bay. It was very romantic to think that the keel of the Bounty, visible at low tide, lay only a few yards from where we stood and that just 150 years before Fletcher Christian and his band had landed at the same spot. Most of the ~~island~~ islanders were at the landing, and with torches to guide us, we were escorted up the steep path to the village 300 feet above us. It is a good path but in daylight mildly hairraising in parts, but I was blissfully unaware of what lay below me as I toiled up, Alaric away ahead of me in the arms of a stalwart islande It had been decided that we should spend the first night in the house of the Magistrate, David Young and his American wife, Edna, and next day look at several houses and choose wh which we liked best. Feeling on the island runs pretty high and it was obvious that there was a good deal of feeling as to where we should reside. We had a job of work to

do and we did not want to start off on the wrong foot, so we spent four days with the Magistrate before deciding on a clean little house at the end of the village and in a secluded spot. The houses are built of hand sawn local timber, rough boards overlapping one another on the walls and laid flat for floors with uneven spaces between the boards, ~~rather draughty in cold weather as we found when we had scrubbed them so clean that there was no mud in between the cracks~~. The houses are mostly bungalows but a good many of them have one upstairs room. Ours had a living room and a small bedroom downstairs and a large bedroom upstairs with windows all round it. There was also a dining room and a small kitchen joined on by a short passage and outside an open cement cistern in which the rainwater from the roof collected and was our only source of water. The house had

plenty of windows but they were difficult to manage as they had no cords and the panes of glass were lightly tacked in with little or no putty to keep them in the frames. I'm afraid we had a number of accidents especially, when the hornets were bad, as in the excitement of the chase, when one caught on the window, the slightest pressure would dislodge the pane of glass which crashed below, and the hornet got away scott free. We were fortunate in being provided with a wood stove on which we did most of our cooking; (the islanders use open fires a good deal) and I also had a Primus stove. Our bread was cooked in a Pitcairn oven by my neighbour, Hilda Young, in whose house we were living while she and her family lived with her aged mother close by. In the house we had the bare essentials of furniture, most of it made locally and

rather crude. The beds were rather a trial as they were rough frames with timber of uneven width and thickness laid loosely across; the mattresses were inadequate and also uneven but we managed to find a ship's mattress for my husband and I had a loose kapok mattress on which I put my Li-Lo and slept very comfortably. The baby had his cot which we presented to Hilda on our departure and we found a fairly good mattress for Kitty. We had no drawers or cupboards and the cockroaches were simply frightful, they ate our clothes every night, especially anything with artificial silk in it, and they didn't just nibble, the holes were as large as shillings.

Most of our food came out of tins, of course, but the islanders were most kind and generous and took it in turn to bring us fresh fruit and vegetables. The

family ~~wit~~ in whose house we lived ~~were~~ was expected to take especial care of us and provided us with fish and chickens as well as other food, and also firewood. When we had been on the island for nearly six months and our stores were almost finished the islanders rallied round wonderfully but we got pretty tired of vegetable curry and vegetable soup and even avocado pears pall when they become ones staple diet for some weeks. We were very short of flour and had no butter for the last two months and milk and tea were short too. There always seems to be some fruit in season so that fruit salad was also a good standby. We had oranges, pineapples, mangoes, pawpaws, banabas, avocado pears, water melons, guavas, limes and lemons and the large passion fruit at various times. There wasn't much variety of green vegetable as the islanders eat their beans when mature

and use the dalo tops instead of cabbage. This has to be very carefully picked and cooked as it is apt to give one a very prickly throat; it is rather rich as it is always cooked in coconut cream but it is very nice - it is a Polynesian dish. I did persuade them to let me have young beans occasionally and they also brought me sweet potatoes, carrots, a few Irish potatoes, tapioca, sweet corn, tomatoes and pumpkin, and I grew carrots, silver beet and lettuces and had taken a good stock of potatoes and onions from New Zealand. The islanders eat a lot of sweet potatoes and dalo, beans and tapioca, and fried green bananas. They are very fond of making everything into a mush and then baking it and coconut cream is used a good deal for mixing but coconuts are not very plentiful. The freshly grated tapioca is made into delicious biscuits &

so is the locally grown arrowroot. Corn meal is also made and is very good; a little sugar cane is grown and is crushed in a Heath Robinson contraption of their own. At one time the island was very short of flour and I eked mine out by putting one third of corn meal to two thirds of flour when making bread and it was delicious. Later I added one third of arrowroot to the mixture and made our last loaf of bread on the day that the ship came in with flour. You may be interested to hear how we make our bread in the islands and how I made it on Pitcairn. The islanders use the young coconut or limes for yeast but I make mine with rice, flour, sugar and sea water; the rice lasts from four to six months but the sugar, flour and sea water have to be renewed each time bread is made. On Pitcairn it was too far to go down to the sea so I used rain water to which I added

~~salt made from the~~ salt sea which I found in a large crock in my kitchen. The islanders gather on the rocks once a year to make their salt, like most things on Pitcairn everyone does it at the same time. Well, having set my dough overnight, I kneaded it next morning, left it to rise and then handed it to Hilda who had been busy preparing the oven. This is a large affair made of 5 very solid slabs of stone, each being about 2½ feet square, these form the five sides leaving the sixth side to be covered later by a square of iron which forms the door. A fire is lighted inside the oven, small sticks are used when preparing for a batch of biscuits or cake and larger pieces of wood for bread. When ready the ashes are raked out, the bread put in and the iron door is put in place; when the bread is cooked there is still sufficient heat left to cook some pumpkin.

Tea and coffee are not used by most

people but cereal coffee is made from dandelion roots or bran, I tried the dandelion roots and found it quite a good drink.

The islanders still do most things communally, for instance everyone goes fishing on Wednesdays, so you only have fish once a week. Everyone cooks and cleans on Friday as the Sabbath begins on Friday evening at 6p.m. and then no one may do anything. Everyone goes to Top Side to their gardens on Thursday s and so on, and when not otherwise occupied everyone makes curios and baskets ~~for sale~~ to be sold to passing ships. Incidentally, if you are invited to a meal on Tuesday evening at 7p.m. you must be sure to go on Monday evening otherwise you will find that you have turned up on Wednesday and there is no party; this being due to the fact that Tuesday begins on Monday evening ~~and~~ so evening comes before morning which is quite correct as you will see if you check up on it in the First Chapter of Genesis, "the evening and

the morning were the first day".

When wood for housebuilding has to be cut the whole family and a number of friends all go to the place where the work is to be done and make a picnic of it; we went several times and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves.

The Pitcairn islanders do not believe in doing unnecessary work and have a term "no use work" for anything which they deem unproductive. For instance their houses are washed out once a week but they thought I was most foolish to waste soap and energy in having my floors properly scrubbed. So did I later on when we found how draughty our floors were when we had removed all the mud from the cracks! Ironing is done sometimes but no one would think it at all odd to appear in a hopelessly creased frock obviously just unpacked. So that housework is reduced to a minimum but on the other hand there is no water laid on, no aids to cooking, no baker, butcher or green-

grocer, and no laundry or window cleaner. The main gardens are away on the top of the island tho' everyone has a small plot near their house as well. On the days that one goes gardening it is usual to start off fairly early and most of the family go too. A Pitcairn wheelbarrow is essential, this is like an ordinary wheelbarrow, a little deeper perhaps, but has no legs as the hills are so steep they would get in the way. From our house we would wend our way beneath some banyan trees, then up a short steep rise which was almost always muddy, and Pitcairn mud is phenomenal, so that there were stepping stones on one side, then through the main street of Adamstown with houses below us and houses above us, all on a very steep incline. At the end of the village the road divides, one road goes down to the landing and the other goes up to Holiander, so called because there used to be oleander trees there, and there is a seat

to rest on after the steep climb at ~~At first~~ At first one rests about ten times on the way up but after a few weeks Holiander can be reached without a single stop. From here one looks down into Bounty Bay far below, to Outer Walley where the gardens are, or to the point called St. Pauls and Red Rock and the top of Rope. To go down Rope is really rather frightening as one creeps down the face of the cliff with only shallow crevi~~ss~~es to give one any feeling of safety and in places only a narrow ledge of rock to cross with a sheer drop below. I went down twice because we wanted to photograph the pre-historic cliff drawings which are at the bottom but I took the precaution of having a stout rope round my waist and the other end firmly held by a strong islander, who I regret to say only laughed at my fears. The descent is so steep that when we reached the bottom I found that my knees were shaking so much that I could hardly walk, I thought it was due to

fright but I decided later that it was the unacustomeduse of the leg muscles, as it happened in other places when I wasn't in such a funk. To return to Outer Walley, this was originally named Aute Valley, aute being the name of the plant from which they used to make tapa cloth, and as the islanders have no V, valley becomes Wálley. From here you can ascend to the right along the main ridge of the island until you come to the flat plateau at the top, known as Taro Ground, where cricket matches are played and where the Wireless Station now stands. Still following the ridge one crosses the road leading to Ted's Side (a contraction of T'other Side) where the islanders have an alternative landing place for use in rough weather, until you cometo the bold peak known as Goat House peak which faces down on Adamstown from the west. Half way down Goathouse Cliff is the famous Christian's Cave, Where Fletcher Christian is supposed to

have spent many hours watching for an approaching vessel.

For such a small island - only two miles by one mile - Pitcairn possesses the most amazing variety of hills, valleys and cliffs and the scenery is always magnificent. One place in particular is quite awe inspiring; it is, I think, the highest point on the islandand from it you look down about 900 feet of almost sheer cliff, then another 100 feet a little less steep to where the sea pounds against the rocks; it compares favourably with the Pali at Honolulu with the added attraction of the boiling surf at the bottom.

I feel I may have given the impression that life on Pitcairn is all work and no play. It is true that this is very nearly the case but they do have a few other activities and amusements, in which we joined. One day, after a ship had come and gone and the boats were all in the water, they decided to row

us all round the island. Everyone wanted to go, of course, and with women and children we filled four boats. At other times we would be taken for picnics, climbs or explor- or would go "down Issaacs" or to Bounty Bay to bathe.
ing expeditions, On Christmas day there were great festivities in the Court House including a Christmas tree, a play by the school children and carol singing. Then there were the various activities connected with the Church, which we attended tho' we do not belong to the S.D.A. church ourselves. I taught the toddlers of the Cradle Roll in the Sabbath School and also presided over the local branch of the Mothers' Union. Altogether, our 8 months on the island passed amazingly quickly and, tough though some of it was, we said goodbye with genuine regret.

September, 1959.

When I was asked to come to Murrumburrah to tell you something about life in the remoter Pacific Islands I was at once struck by the great contrast between the two environments. Here we live hundreds of miles from the sea and yet only on the fringe of a vast continent - all we see around us is land and yet more land- while over there one lives on a tiny island surrounded by a vast ocean which covers a third of the world's surface.

As a matter of fact very few Europeans h have the opportunity of living on a coral island, either in the Pacific or anywhere else, and as I was one of those few for the best part of 20 years I shall begin my talk this afternoon by trying to give you a picture of what it was like. And then to show that Pacific islands are by no means all alike I should like to say a few words about life in two very different environments; on the lonely island of Pitcairn, home of the descendants of the Mutineers of the Bounty, and in the Kingdom of Tonga, the last of the independent states of Polynesia.

Coral atolls can be very small or quite large, anything up to 90 or 100 miles in length but the land area is small compared with the area of the lagoon. The land consists of a series of narrow sandbanks covered with coconut palms, these encircle a lagoon except on the western side where, instead of islets, there is a more or less submerged reef. There are usually one or more channels into the lagoon, sometimes so deep that ocean going vessels can enter and anchor in sheltered water but often only deep enough for boats and canoes. Reef bound islands on the other hand are compact and completely surrounded by a coral reef and roaring surf making landing a hazardous undertaking.

To live on one of these islands can be almost frightening at first, nowhere, except by climbing a coconut palm, can you be more than 10 feet above the surrounding ocean and nowhere more than ¼ to ½ a mile from either the lagoon or ocean shore. R.L.S. puts it so well when he says "...the sameness and smallness of the land, the hugely superior size and interest of sea and sky. Life on such islands is in many points like life on board ship. The atoll, like the ship, is soon taken for granted; and the islanders, like the ship's crew, become soon the centre of attention". And again when he writes of "Days of blinding sun and bracing wind, nights of a heavenly brightness". There is a tremendous fascination in these coral islands and it is a source of never failing wonder to pass from the deserted ocean side of an island, with its glare and wind and the roar of the tumbling surf, to the calm and tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours, and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shoreline can be seen the brown thatch of village houses and perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing.

wrecks visible when we arrived and one ship was blown on to the reef while we were there but somehow they managed to get her off.

After 5 months of training my husband was assigned to a district of 5 islands in the southern Gilberts and we set off, with an orderly called Teikarawa, which means "child of heaven", stores for 6 months and Mr Grimble who was to introduce us to our new home before leaving us to our fate. We sailed in the newly arrived Colony vessel "Nei Nimanoa", she was 100 feet long, had a corkscrew motion and was guaranteed to make quite 80% of her passengers extremely ill.

We made our headquarters on the island of Beru; here there was a spacious house built of local materials and it was also the headquarters of the Protestant mission, the L.M.S., and they had a small wireless station. The mission was some miles away across the lagoon, there were about 5 Europeans there, and about a mile away from them was the Roman Catholic station having a Father and two sisters, all of them French. The L.M.S. had a girls' school a boys' school and a teachers and pastors training school besides various classes for wives and mothers, and a dispensary. The head missionary, Mr Eastman, and his wife had both had a good deal of training in elementary medicine and nursing which was very necessary and a great blessing to everyone on the island as the Colony doctor was hundreds of miles away and in any case could not come to the rescue unless there happened to be a ship handy. On one occasion I had to wait 3 months for a ship to take me to civilization knowing that I had a chronic appendix. On Beru there was no store, no ice, no refrigeration (kerosene operated refrigerators had not been invented) no milk, meat or vegetables. Ships called infrequently and erratically but when a mail did come it was worth having, ours usually filled a washtub. The Mission ship,

John Williams, came up from Fiji twice a year and took the missionaries to visit their flocks on all the 16 Gilbert Islands. They also collected coconuts and other food from the various islands to feed all the boys and girls and students on Beru. The lady missionaries found travelling round the islands as much as of a trial as I did, though their ship was very much larger, but at least they only did it twice a year whereas I was frequently travelling on Nei Nimanoa who at times reduced me to delirium with seasickness. However we loved the life in the islands and the people from the first in spite of hardships.

In the first 6 years we moved from one district to another 10 times; the packing each time took about 10 days and I reckon I have spent several years of my life either packing or unpacking. Apart from these long distance moves which involved all our household effects, there were short journeys from island to island and visits to the various villages. On one occasion we walked about 30 miles in two days to call at all the villages on an island with a very shallow lagoon as it would have taken weeks to do it by canoe waiting for the high tides. This particular part of a very long island was cut up into numerous tiny islets and we even swam some of the passages. At this island too we had to manage without any kitchen utensils as we found on arrival that the cook box had been left behind on Beru. The prisoners detailed to take it to the boat had put it on a side verandah and forgotten all about it. We managed quite well by cooking native fashion on hot stones in a hole in the ground. We even made bread by putting it in a biscuit tin amongst the stones and covering it all up.

Our food was mostly out of tins but we could usually get supplies of fish and small island chickens, eggs and pawpaws and occasion-

ally breadfruit, We also had, very occasionally, a millionair's salad, the heart of a coconut tree, but only when a tree had fallen down. A few vegetables could be grown with skill, care and patience, except during a drought, but we were seldom long enough anywhere for things to have time to mature. We usually had a limited supply of rain-water otherwise there was only brackish well water. I still cannot bear to see water wasted.

CIRCULAR. October, 1949.

THE PACIFIC ISLANDS SOCIETY
(Founded 1937)

Box 2434, G.P.O.
SYDNEY.

PATRON : His Excellency Sir Brian Freeston, K.C.M.G., O.B.E. Governor of Fiji and High Commissioner for the Western Pacific.

PRESIDENT: Major C.A. Swinbourne, O.B.E. (Mil.) - Tel. XJ 3205

The MONTHLY MEETING and SOCIAL GATHERING of the Society will be held at History House, 8 Young Street, Sydney (near Circular Quay) on WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26th, 1949 at 8 p.m.

The GUEST OF HONOUR AND SPEAKER WILL BE -

MRS. H.E. MAUDE

whose subject will be

"PITCAIRN ISLAND"

(Illustrated with lantern slides)

Mrs. Maude has spent the last twenty years in various parts of Pacific where she is well-known. She lived for some time on Pitcairn Island where she had excellent opportunities of becoming thoroughly acquainted with its people, history and conditions.

In view of the unusually interesting nature of the address a large attendance of members is anticipated.

ADVANCE NOTICE OF MEETINGS : November 23rd - History House, 8 p.m.

December 16th - History House, 5-7 p.m.

NEW MEMBERS : Mr and Mrs H.E.Maude
Mr and Mrs J.Griffin

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS : Members are reminded that the Annual Subscription of Ten shillings (10/-) for the financial year ending June 30th 1950 became due on July 1st 1949, and are asked to co-operate by paying their dues early.

C.PRICE CONIGRAVE (BU 1160)

Hon. Secretary.

Highlights of a Year's Travel

The highlights of my travels last year were mostly not ones that I had anticipated or planned. Our journey overseas was study leave and the study took precedence over the leave so that many of our cherished plans went overboard.

However we arrived in England early in March all agog to see our first English spring for 30 years & we steamed into the depth of winter. Liverpool was a Christmas card picture, everything was covered in a thick mantle of snow turning a grey city into fairyland, at any rate from the deck of a steamer. On the train journey to London the whole countryside, farms and hedges and trees, were white with snow, a beautiful sight if a bit cold.

The Spring was the coldest for 70 years and about a month late but the new green leaves, the Horse Chestnut blossom and the tulips came up to expectation. The tulips are planted in great patches of colour

in the parks and gardens, thousands of them, with stems well over a foot long, a wonderful sight. Later window boxes and beds bloomed over night with geraniums and it was only occasionally that you actually saw the transformation under way.

Just to be in London is an adventure, to walk past Big Ben and across Westminster Bridge or to go by launch down the Thames to Greenwich, every yard redolent with history. We were walking along Fleet Street one morning when the Church of St Clement Danes struck the hour playing the tune of "Oranges and Lemons say the bells of St Clemens", much to my delight. This church was badly damaged during the war but has been restored; from the outside you cannot see that it was bombed but the inside is completely new, quite lovely and dedicated to the Air Force. It so happened that when we were there some officers were practising for some ceremony and on the following Sunday we saw them on television celebrating the 50th year since the R.F.C. was brought into being.

Which reminds me of a service for the deaf and dumb that we also saw on television. It was the most wonderful experience; the preacher was the son of deaf and dumb parents and very expert in the sigh language. He spoke slowly as he took the service and many words had signs such as this for God, this for love and this for world, so that he mostly did adjectives, pronouns and some verbs on his fingers.

The Chelsea Flower Show I had wanted to see for years and that I achieved and was so impressed that I dragged my husband along to see next day at 9a.m. before the crowds arrived; after 10 it is almost impossible to move. The show is set out in a huge marquee formed of 9 marquees joined together with no inside divisions and there you find gardens laid out complete with lawns and even waterfalls. The most spectacular exhibits were the seedsmen's, massed annuals making glorious banks of colour - all of course grown in pots in glass houses and planted in their pots. There was

a square of delphiniums standing 5 feet high in wonderful shades of blue and larger perfect blooms; many rockeries with enchanting little plants of all descriptions; masses of beautiful roses and miniature roses set out on miniature terraces and lawns looking delightful.

During our stay in London I was given one job to do by myself which I found very exciting. We were anxious to find, if possible, the entry in the Baptismal Register of John Adams of Bounty and Pitcairn fame. We knew the parish, St John at Hackney, but all that was left of the old church was a square tower of flint stones which dated from 1200 and something; however the local librarian said the L.C.C. had the Registers for safe keeping as some of them had been damaged during a fire. So I went to the enormous L.C.C. building across Westminster bridge and asked for the Register and was terribly thrilled when it was put before me. I searched for John Adams and found first his elder brother Jonathan, then John, in 1762, and some years

earlier their sister Dinah. We knew they were orphans and brought up in the workhouse so I thought I might find the entry of the death of the father who was dro wned in the Thames. I found that too, when John was only 2 years old. The very next page had been damaged by water so I was very lucky.

We very much enjoyed going to different places for lunch as we worked in different libraries. Twinings coffee lounge was one of the most intriguing, it is long and narrow and has been doing business since 1706. It is situated almost opposite the church of St Clement Danes.

A rather personal highlight was a pilgrimage we made to find a home I had left at the age of 7 in s suburb of Edinburgh. I had only my memories to guide me, no address beyond the name of the house and the suburb and the school I went to with my sister. There was no mention of the school in the directory so we bought a map, then took a bus to a name I

remembered and walked along a road to a Roman Catholic cemetery (I remembered nuns and a laundry and lots of trees next door to us). The cemetery was completely bare of trees but as we rounded a slight bend there was the old house, surrounded by a stone wall just as I remembered it. The name had been changed from Park Villa to The White Gate but even the laburnam tree was still there , a small door at one end of the wall for people and large gates at the other end where my fathe used to drive in with horse and gig. We were able to go in , a curious sensation after so many years, and I was shown our old swing chains still on the branch of a tree and the bark growing over them. The old fruit trees were there too and I recognised one in which my younger sister got stuck. From the house we went to the school which had been turned into flats and then looked for the little sweet shop I remembered. That too was there, still a sweet shop and still with a bell over the door which rang, as I knew it would, as I opened the door but there were no bars of nougat or sticks of

Edinburgh Rock. There were rows and rows of new houses, just like Canberra, but the old area I knew had been left as it was in the middle of the new buildings.

Apart from a number of visits to the Channel Islands where my 92 year old mother-in law lives we saw little of the British Isles and nothing of the Continent. However I did see Greenland, from 35,000 feet, as I flew from London to Seattle and on to Honolulu via the Polar route. I thought at first that it meant flying right over the north pole but a map of the route soon disillusioned me on that score. We flew to the south of Greenland and could see the whole country laid out below us, mountains of snow as far as the eye could see. On the coast line could be seen what I imagine were iceberg s, with a tiny patch of emerald green at the base of each, presumably the ice below the water. Of Canada we saw absolutely nothing, which was very disappointing, and we came down at Seattle through thick cloud and rain. I had only a couple

of hours there before setting off for Honolulu; it was 3.30 Canada time but 11p.m by my watch. I had a second dinner about 7 hours after my first one over Canada and arrived in Honolulu at 8.30p.m. Honolulu time but as I had been travelling for 20 hours it was very early the next morning to me and I was very tired.

London depo. 12.30 - arr. Honolulu 8.30 pm Sunday

The only out of the way experien I had in Honolulu, apart from landin in hospital with a ghastly attack of asthma, was luncing at the top of a 25 story building in a round restaurant which revolved while you ate completing a turn every hour so that you had a view of the sea, the city and the hills in the course of a meal/Red Hill I worked at the Bishop Museum for a couple of weeks and had a look at the exhibits. The tapa (bark cloth) is magnificient and the art is, unfortunately, lost. The feather cloaks are also wonderfi (the Maori's have similar ones) made of thousands and thousands of tiny coloured feathers. Here is a pictur of ~~one~~ a cloak and also one of the birds

from which the feathers were taken.

During the year we collected a tremendous amount of information on the early history of the Pacific including the Southern Whale Fishery, the East India Company's ships which came to Sydney and then on to China for tea and so back to England. We also bought some 500 books ~~*******~~ ~~Pacific~~ to add to my husband's already large library on the Pacific. Edinburgh was a good hunting ground and so was Brighton, both having rare books at rock bottom prices. I have come back with yet another collection of String Figures, this time they are from the Solomon Island and Tikopia and were collected by Professor Raymond Firth in 1928 so are precious and interesting. Anthropologists seem to collect these string games when they are in the field and then they have no time to check them and write them up with the result that they hand them to me trusting me to finish the work. I, of course, find them absorbing ~~fascinating~~ and the differences between the various island groups in the Pacific is a fascinating study.

May, 1960.

I have been asked to tell you something of my experiences in the Pacific where, as the wife of a British Colonial Service Officer, my lot was cast for 20 years in some of the most isolated islands in the south seas.

I expect some of you have read Sir Arthur Grimble's "Pattern of Islands", & those of you who have will have some idea of what the Gilbert Islands are like, & it is to these islands that I want to take you first.

The Gilbert Islands are all coral islands, nowhere is the land more than 10 feet above sea level but all are covered thickly with coconut palms which makes them look a good deal higher and also makes them visible from the deck of a ship about 20 miles away. There are two kinds of islands, lagoon and reef islands; lagoon islands have narrow ribbons of land surrounding 2 sides of a triangle and a reef forming the third side and continuing all round the outer or reef side of the island; the land varies from 50 yards to ½ a mile in width and is divided into islets, some tiny, others several miles long with a lagoon in the centre; there is a tremendous fascination in these lagoon islands and it is a source of never failing wonder to pass from the deserted reef side of an island, with its glare and wind and roar of the tumbling surf, to the calm

and tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Reef islands, on the other hand, are completely surrounded by a reef and breaking surf which makes landings hazardous.

My husband's first district had 5 islands, 3 reef islands and 2 lagoon islands but neither of the lagoons were deep enough for ships to enter and we travelled from ship to shore in canoes and so did all our goods and chattels. One of our 5 islands had a spacious house, built, by Mr Grimble, of local materials, coconut midrib walls tied with coconut string and a thatched roof, and here we had our headquarters. On this island we had also the headquarters of the London Missionary Society across the lagoon. They had a girls' school, a boys' school, a Teacher Training School, a dispensary and about 8 European missionaries. The head of the Mission was a very practical and efficient man so they had electricity, a wireless station and sewerage, and of course more permanent houses as they lived there all the year round except for 2 trips a year round the islands to visit all their pastors and teachers. The Protestants had Gilbertese or Ellice Pastors on all the islands, they were both pastor and teacher in their village and their wives were expected to teach sewing and crochet, which is very popular

The Roman Catholics, on the other hand, had a Father and two sisters on most islands except the two southernmost islands which were entirely protestant. This sometimes made it difficult for the native pastor who had to stand up to a European Father, (usually French or German but sometimes Irish,) and if the Native Magistrate was a Roman Catholic he could have a bad time until the District Officer came round and he had a fair hearing. The L.M.S. missionaries went round the islands in the "John Williams", we went round the islands in "Nei Nimanoa" or one of Burns Philp's trading schooners but one thing the ladies had in common was the agony of seasickness.

There were no shops, not even a trade store, no ice, and we lived on or near the equator, no electricity and no doctor. Ships called infrequently and erratically but when a mail did come in it was well worth waiting for, we used to get a galvanised wash tub full. We ordered six months stores at a time from Sydney which usually came on the ship that called for copra twice a year. We used to go from one of our islands to another ~~being dropped~~ by one little ship and waiting for the next one to come along this usually meant a stay of a month or more and once we were left we were completely isolated, mostly without any other Europeans.

August, 1956.

I have been asked to tell you ~~some~~ thing of my experiences in the Pacific where, as the wife of a British Colonial Service Officer, my lot was cast for twenty years in some of the most isolated islands in the south seas.

I expect ~~most~~ some of you have read Sir Arthur Grimble's "Pattern of Islands", & those of you who have will have some idea of what the Gilbert Islands are like, and it is to these islands that I want to take you first. In 1929, when Sir Arthur Grimble, author of Pattern of Islands was the Resident Commissioner of the G. & S. I., my husband and I, a very young, newly married couple, set out from England for Australia and the Gilbert Islands. We had very little information about the islands, and it was not until we reached Melbourne that we even found out how to get to them. There we were told that we were to travel on a phosphate ship to Ocean Island which was the headquarters of the colony. So in due course we found ourselves on board the "Nauru Chief" sailing through Sydney Heads with a good sea running and a 10 day

voyage ahead. I thought the ship the most dreadful little vessel I had ever seen, and I was used to small ships crossing the English Channel, but I learnt in after years to look upon her as a veritable liner, full of luxuries; such is the chastening effect of comparison.

After an uneventful voyage we duly arrived at Ocean Island, a lonely lump of land barely 300 feet high at its highest point and 2 miles across each way; and so, 2 months out from Home we were faced with the new life we had chosen. The sea was calm and a very deep blue, the hot sun was tempered by the trade wind and the native police boys in the Government whaleboat waiting to take us ashore fascinated us.

My husband spent 2 months in the office at Ocean Island, we explored the whole island, began to learn the language and heard a lot about "the Group", in other words the Gilbert Islands, which lie some 400 miles to the east. Mails arrived every six weeks or so, stores

were obtained from the Phosphate Company's store, also meat, a few vegetables, ice and electricity; there were tea and dinner parties and dances so life was fairly comfortable and civilised, except, I may say for the mosquitoes which attacked me so viciously that my legs had to be bandaged. // There was an enormous population on this tiny spot, there must have been close on 2,000 people; these included Chinese and Gilbertese labour, about 700 local natives and 150 Europeans. We had our first experience of the dreaded "westerlies" soon after we arrived; these storms blow up so quickly that sometimes a ship is caught at the moorings and blown on to the reef. There were two wrecks visible when we arrived and one ship was blown onto the reef while we were there but somehow they managed to get her off again.

After 2 months we went across to the Gilbert Islands, my husband to visit all the islands recruiting labour for the Phosphate Commission, and I to stay at

Tarawa with the headmaster of the Government School and his wife. Tarawa is a large lagoon island, a true coral atoll as are most of the Gilbert Islands; that is, an island with long narrow ribbons of land forming 2 sides of a triangle and and a reef forming the third side and continuing all round the outer, or reef, side of the island. The land is only a few feet above sea level, varies from 50 yards to $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile in width and is divided into islets, some tiny others several miles long. There is a tremendous fascination in these coral islands and it is a source of never failing wonder to pass from the deserted reef side of an island, with its glare and wind and the roar of the tumbling surf, to the calm and tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shore line can be seen the brown thatch of village houses and perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing. In these delightful surroundings I learnt how to

Map.

cope with cook-boys, chouse-boys, wash-girls and the ordering of stores for 6 months at a time. It was a tremendous help, as you can imagine, and I was able to set about ordering my own household with confidence.

We returned to Ocean Island for another 2 months and then my husband was assigned to a district of 5 islands in the Southern Gilberts and we set off, with all our goods and chattels, in the newly arrived Colony Schooner "Nei Nimanoa", she was 100 feet long, had a corkscrew motion and was guaranteed to make quite 80% of her passengers extremely seasick.

One of our five islands had a spacious house built of local materials and with a thatched roof which we made our head-quarters. Here we had about 8 European missionaries a few miles away across the lagoon and one mission had a wireless station. There was no store, no ice or refrigeration, no electricity and no docto Ships called infrequently and erratically

There are a few islands in the Pacific without trees
x + A ship's captain had a wonderful story of how he was sailing along one day when he saw the head of a man apparently sticking up out of the sea, then his body appeared + a little later the donkey he was riding + finally the island itself. When I saw the Gilbert Islands from the air in 1946 I was horrified to think that I had lived on them for years + was about to live on them again. They were mere specks of land in a vast ocean + the sea seemed ready to engulf them at any moment.

but when a mail did come in it was worth having. On the other 4 islands you were completely isolated once the ship left and you never knew just how long it would be before you were picked up again. However we loved the life from the first, the only snag in my own case being the terrible and too frequent trips on Nei Nimanoa, which at times reduced me to delirium.

In the first 6 years we moved from one district to another 10 times; the packing each time took about 10 days and I reckon I have spent several years of my life either packing or unpacking. Apart from these long-distance moves, involving all our household effects, there were the short journeys from island to island and visits to the various villages. On one occasion we walked about 30 miles in 2 days to call at all the villages on an island with a very shallow lagoon as it would have taken weeks to do it by boat or canoe waiting for the high tide.

Our food was mostly out of tins but

work and interests are still bound up with the island world, so that in mind and spirit, if not in body, we are still living in the South Pacific.

we could usually get good supplies of fish, chickens (though scraggy) eggs, pawpaws and very occasionally breadfruit. A few vegetables could be grown with skill, care and patience, except during droughts, but we were seldom long enough in any one place for things to have time to mature.

We found the Gilbertese ~~natives were~~ very pleasant people; they are Micronesians, not very dark skinned, have straight hair, are very honest, very loyal and were only too glad to teach us their customs, games and handicrafts including their cats cradles which I made my special hobby. Life was absorbing in those lonely islands; there was always someone wanting something and you felt you were doing a worthwhile job. At one time during a bad drought, when the natives were undernourished, I opened a baby clinic which I ran with the help of Truby King's "Feeding and Care of Baby" plus the little knowledge I had picked up during two weeks in a Karitane home in N.Z. I am quite sure we saved a number of babies that would otherwise

to Suva and I had replied that I did not want to leave Tarawa unless my husband was going to be away very much longer. So they left me there and then kept my husband! It is the only time I ever threatened to leave my husband to fend for himself and he was so upset, for it wasn't his fault, that he was taken off to hospital and I returned to a wan husband and had to swallow my wrath. I was sure ~~however~~ that I noticed a twinkle in the Governor's eye and I am certain he knew I would have loved to give him a piece of my mind. However, the war was barely over and one just had to grin and bear it; we packed up our house in Suva and returned to Tarawa about 3 months later my husband having been confirmed as Resident Commissioner. Dry kennel.

After living this free, though perhaps not always easy life, for 20 years you can imagine what a drastic change it was for us to settle in Sydney. We are fortunate in that our

have died.

There is no doubt, I'm afraid, that the isolation and the lack of fresh food eventually tells on the health, both mental and physical, of Europeans. We had six years in the Gilberts witha 3 mont break in N.Z. after the first 3 yeats and when we came down to Sydney on our way home on leave we were miserable. We found a Port Line cargo ship gping to England via the north of Australia which was just what we wanted, especially as there was only one other passenger! My husband had had some kind of nervous breakdown which affected his health in every possible way and it was 2 years before we were allowed to return to our beloved islands. During this time we returned to N.Z., spent 6 glorious weeks in Honolulu at a conference and were then sent to Zanzibar, which I'm afraid we disliked very much. In 1937 we were able to return to the Gilberts where my husband did some very interesting, but extremely tough work colonising the

fore the doctor, were 15 miles away across a lagoon which was seldom calm. We decided to build a new Residency as quickly as possible, everyting was of native construction of course, and we chose a site which was kept cool by the almost constant trade wind. In two months it was ready and we moved in but 3 weeks later my husband had to fly to England for some conference and Alaric and I were left on our own. We had been told that my husband would be away for a month but 4 months went by before he managed to get back to Fiji and then, to my indignation, he was kept there and I was told to return on our little ship, "Awahou", which meant a month's trip as they were collecting copra on all the islands on their way south. For the first time I was really heartbroken, I had had a tough spin, 7 months on ones own with no other women is no fun. Also several months earlier I had been asked by the Governor in Fiji if I would like a plane sent to take me

Phoenix Islands with land hungry families from the Gilberts. By the end of 1939 he was ill again and we had a dreadful journey to Fiji in the mission vessel "John Williams". My husband had a slipped disc, or something like it, and couldn't move, I was seasick the whole way so our native orderly and our cook boy, who accompanied us, took charge of our year old son and ourselves. We were sent to Rotorua where my husband was cobked and massaged until he was on his feet again and we returned to Fiji.

The next six months were spent preparing for a trip to Pitcairn Island where we were to spend 3 months reforming the local administrative system, introducing salaries and revising the laws. The first issue of Pitcairn stamps were to be brought out whilst we were there and for this purpose a post office official was to join us a month later. I ordered my usual 6 month's stores, to be on the safe side, and in July, 1940 we left Fiji for N.Z. and Pitcairn. Once

years before. The school buildings had disappeared and the neat roads trimmed with coral blocks whitened with lime had been churned up by jeeps and other vehicles. The headmaster's house and one other that I remembered still stood mess and there was a jumble of other buildings as this was now the headquarters of the colony which had been removed from Ocean Island. In spite of the fact that the man in charge before we arrived knew very well that I would have to live on Bairiki and my husband on Betio he had done absolutely nothing about preparing anywhere for me. So I arrived on the beach with my son, now 7, and a Gilbertese girl who had been with me in Suva. The district officer said there was a small house I could have and he would see what furniture he could find but there was no kitchen so would I eat in the officers' mess. There were a number of government officials here but no other women and the colony hospital, and there-

again we were faced with something entirely different.

The actual landing was by boat, as usual, but instead of Antrim whaleboat, uniformed boat's crew and crisply given orders we perched as best we could on piles of luggage and stores, our own and the islanders, in huge heavy boats manned by a motley crew of descendants of the mutineers of the Bounty. The landing can be very bad but we were lucky, and after a short wait outside the breakers with everyone argueing as to when to go, the man at the steer oar gave the word and we dashed in. Unfortunately it was too dark to see Bounty Bay where the mutineers landed, or Ship Landing Point which towers 500 feet above, with a few boat-sheds nestling at its foot on a narrow strip of land.

The story of Pitcairn appeals to most people, but very few are able to live on the island, hear the quaint dialect and absorb the local atmosphere, with all its associations. Here, you are told,

asked to go back to Tarawa, I had become so used to living in a community where one had the normal amenities of life that I was quite nervous about returning to the Gilbert Islands and felt rather ashamed of myself. This time we flew up by catalina flying boat, a 2 days journey with a stop overnight at Funafuti in the Ellice Islands. As it turned out our return was not a very happy one; the Americans were still occupying the islet of Betio, where the terrible battle with the Japanese had taken place nearly two years before, and we found on our arrival that they would not allow me to live on Betio with my husband although we had been told that everything was arranged. So there was nothing for it but to leave the men to themselves and go and live on the next islet up the lagoon, it was about 40 minutes by launch and was the place where I had stayed so happily with the Headmaster of the school some 15

One of the midshipmen on the Bounty, Hallet by name, who went in the boat with Bligh, had a sister, Ann, who married William Maude - thus became my husband's Great Grandmother. It amused us to think that our great, great uncle could have been the founder of a Pitcairn family if he had stayed with the Bounty. Incidentally, whilst I was gardening one day, trying to grow suitable vegetables for my small son, I found a gold ring which is thought to be the ring belonging to Midshipman Young + which was used for all wedding ceremonies for the first 20 years.

lies the hull of the Bounty and some ballast; here is the rudder, recovered after nearly 150 years; there lies old John Adams who brought up the children of the mutineers on the Bible and the Prayer Book; and here Fletcher Christian was murdered. McCoy fell into the sea in a drunken fit from that point of rock, and from the top of the cliff above Rope the Tahitian wife of one of the mutineers fell to her death. Every corner of Pitcairn seems to have a link with the past. Hallett's sings.

We were lent a house, in a secluded spot called Shady Nook; it was built of hand sawn local timber, rough but sturdy; it had an upper storey, a corrugated iron roof and real windows with panes of glass in them, which rather surprised me. An open cistern stored the water from the roof and that was our only source of water. There was very little furniture, no hanging cupboards or drawers but just tables, chairs and beds; the latter were very Spartan affairs, and I was glad I had brought a Lilo with me and the baby's cot. We were fortunate in having a wood

Cockroaches

if we had everyting we needed; we assured her we were very comfortable but she had a good look round and not long after her departure a lorry arrived with no end of things for us. There were comfortable arm chairs, china, glassware and even the Crown Prince's bed for small Alaric who filled about a quarter of it. The Prince was at Newington College at the time. Every now and then a Lady in Waiting would come to the house and say "would Alaric spend the morning with the Queen" and away would go our 3 year old son and goodness only knows what he told her.

We left Tonga, very regretfully, in November 1941 [and spent the war years in] arrived in N.Z. just before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour. My husband returned to Suva almost immediately but Alaric and I stayed in N.Z. for 18 months before we were allowed to join him.]

~~We stayed in~~ Suva, [where we stayed] in the same house for 3½ years, the longest we had ever stayed anywhere, and then we were

stove, quite a luxury on the island, and I had Primus stoves as well and a good ~~sup~~ supply of kerosene. Our bread was cooked in a Pitcairn oven by our neighbour; these ovens are very ingenuous, they are made of 5 large thick slabs of stone, each stone being about 2½ feet square, which form the top and bottom and 3 sides, leaving the fourth side to be covered by a square of iron propped in place by a piece of wood. A fire is lighted inside the oven, the thickness and quantity of wood depending on the heat required; when ready the ashes are raked out, the food put in and the door closed. I have never had better baked bread, and I learnt how to make several kinds of biscuits from the locally grown arrowroot and manioc, which were also baked in this way.

You may be interested to know how we make bread in these isolated islands. The yeast is made in a screw top bottle and consists of rice, flour, sugar and sea-water; the rice lasts from 3 to 6

everyone went into mourning and all entertainments ceased. Tugi was very popular and his funeral was the saddest I have seen; the ceremony was most impressive, but all the Tongans were weeping and I don't think it was entirely Polynesian custom, I would say they felt his loss deeply.

Queen Salote is the only reigning monarch left of the many island royal families; her kingdom is a fully independent state bound only by Treaty obligations to Great Britain by which we are responsible for the conduct of its Foreign Affairs and advise on financial matters. The Queen was very friendly and was full of kind thoughtfulness. She would always walk to the door with us when we leaving her presence which saved us an awkward journey walking backwards down the room. Later, when the Consul returned, awe moved into another house as my husband was to do a special job for the Queen; no sooner had we moved in than one of herladies arrived to see

months but the sugar, flour and sea-water are renewed each time bread is to be made. The dough is set overnight, kneaded up just once in the morning, left to rise for an hour and it is ready for baking. I found at Pitcairn, where a journey to the sea meant a strenuous climb down 300 feet or so of very steep and rocky hillside, that salt made from sea water added to fresh water worked just as well, or better, than sea water. The islanders make their salt once a year and I found a lovely crock of it in my kitchen.

The Pitcairn islanders are vegetarians but they have no use for milk or butter and very little for green vegetable They are very fond of making everything into a mush and then baking it. They are rather more European than Polynesian now and a number of them have NZ. or Australian wives. There were close on 200 inhabitants when we were there, but I believe A good many left after the war and went to work in N.Z.

with open verandahs all round; very cool and comfortable. We had no luggage except our clothes, everything else had been left at Panama, so for once there was practically no unpacking. The Consul's wife very kindly lent us linen, and left the house in running order with very well trained servants; the garden was lovely and the ordered life very restful after the rather hard time at Pitcairn. The contrast, however, between the carefree, happy-go-lucky way of life we had been living and the rigid ceremonial and etiquette of a Royal Court, however small, was tremendous. The Tongans are a delightful people and the Queen a most charming person. When we first arrived there were Red Cross bazaars and entertainments of various kinds to raise funds. The Tongan dancing was particularly lovely, the girls' arm movements are so soft and smoothe and graceful. A month after we arrived in Tonga , Tugi, The Queen's husband died very suddenly;

The islanders still did most things communally; everyone fished on Wednesdays (so you only got fish once a week); everyone went to Top Side (the top of the island) to their gardens on Thursdays and everyone cooked and cleaned on Fridays in preparation for the Sabbath. When not otherwise engaged everyone made curios and baskets to sell to passing ships. And, of course, when a ship was sighted every able-bodied man, woman and child made a bee-line for the landing. Before the war an average of one ship a week called at Pitcairn but during the war there were very few. When wood had to be cut for house building the whole family and a number of friends all went along too and made a picnic of it. Another family affair was the payment of fines. Anyone fined could pay it off by working on the roads at the rate of 1/- a day, but as this meant that some unpaid official would have to watch the offender it had become the custom for the person fined to collect as many friends as the

departure so uncertain, we were sorry to say goodbye after nearly 8 months when an American ship called in for us and took us to Panama.

Our next assignment we knew was to relieve the Consul in Tonga. The poor ma man was ill and had been waiting to go on leave for some time whilst we were cooped up on Pitcairn unable to persuade a British ship to call in for us. Going to Panama was the only alternative to staying where we were and having got to Panama we had a bad time trying to get back to the other side of the Pacific. Eventually we flew to Los Angeles by a roundabout route and joined the Monterey with 24 hours to spare.

Back in Suva we spent a month at Government House waiting for the ship to to take us to Tonga, it was rather like a dream and a very pleasant one.

On our arrival in Tonga we moved into the Residency and the Consul and his wife left next day. The house is a spacious wooden building of the old type,

After we had been on the island for a little while my husband asked one day if he could see the official correspondence. The Magistrate, his minions looked blank for a moment - then the magistrate's face brightened. "Oh", said he, "them letters from Fiji, why we mostly keeps them in an old sieged bag."

number of shillings in the fine, less one, and all do one day's work! Correspondence.

The Pitcairn islanders have a term "no use work" for anything they deem unproductive. They never ironed anything if they could avoid it; they washed out their houses once a week, rather a slap dash affair as it would soon be dirty again and I must admit that when it was wet the mud was awful and no one wore shoes which could have been left at the door. They laughed at me for having my floors properly scrubbed and we had to laugh later on for when we had removed the mud from between the cracks in the boards the floors were dreadfully draughty.

The people are Seventh Day Adventists, so their Sabbath is our Saturday and it was strictly kept, no work of any description was allowed, not even cooking. The The days began at Sunset, which was rather muddling, for if you were invited t to a meal on Tuesday evening you had to go on Monday evening or you would have arrived on Wednesday and missed the party.

The Bible says quite clearly "and the evening and the morning were the first day" so maybe they are right. They do not smoke, drink tea, coffee or alcoholic drinks; nor are they supposed to eat meat, but they sometimes eat chicken and occasionally goat. They have a peculiar dialect, more or less unintelligible to the outsider, but they can all speak fairly good English.

We had some wonderful walks and climbs, some of them distinctly hair-raising; the island has a great variety of scenery and, as it is only 1½ miles across and rised to 1,000 feet, you can imagine how steep it is; even the village is built on a steep slope. From the highest point, on the south of the island, you look down about 900 feet of almost sheer cliff, then another 100 feet a little less steep to where the sea pounds against the rocks. We became very fond of the little island and its people and, in spite of some hardships and worry, with raiders in the Pacific and our

STRING FIGURES

String figures are more or less intricate patterns made from a simple loop of string held between the two hands, manipulated by the fingers with the aid of the mouth, and sometimes the toes, until the desired design is achieved. They are made by so-called primitive peoples all over the world; by the Eskimos in their snow igloos; by the Pacific islanders in their palm thatched huts near the still lagoon: in fact in every continent, by every race, with the solitary exception (as far I know) of Europe, where civilization has caused them to disappear in face of the competition of other forms of recreation.

But string figures are not only a fascinating pastime; amongst several races, for instance the Eskimos and the Gilbert islanders, they played an important part in their religious life. The Gilbertese believed that when they died

their spirits flew north to the island of Makin, from where they flew west to the lands of the departed ancestors. On their way they met a mythical bird woman, Nei Karamakuna, who pecked out their tatoo marks, or if they were not tattooed their eyes. Having safely passed Nei Karamakuna they met Na Ubwebwe, an ancestral spirit who made with them a series of string figures; if they could do this they went on unmolested but if they could not do the figures they were entangled in the string and could not reach paradise. The basic figure is called Na Ubwebwe and according to legend was performed by Na Ubwebwe at the beginning of the world when Riki, the eel, lifted the heavens from the face of the earth where he still holds them.

String figures also have scientific importance, and this has only been realised during the course of the present century. They are now studied by anthropologists as a means of tracing

relationships between two races of people. The number of movements in a fairly intricate figure is so great that it is difficult to imagine two groups of peoples independently arriving at the same figure by means of the same movements. When, therefore, we find a group like the Maoris having ten or more figures virtually identical with the Gilbertese we can suppose that at some time or other there has been contact between them. One of the most surprising examples I have seen myself was when we were passing through Wyndham (on the N.W. coast of Australia) some years ago; there an aboriginal woman showed me some string figures and in one case I knew at once which pattern she was making, it was identical with a Gilbert Island figure known as "The Leaves of the Breadfruit Tree".

On the other hand however, we have figures, known all over the world, which are identical in final result but are made by entirely different methods; these prove nothing with regard to cultural contact.

As you can imagine nothing could be d done to study string figures until some method of recording them had been devised. The system almost universally used to-day was worked out by Proffessor Haddon when on a visit to Torres Straits in 1906. To shorten descriptions some of the commoner openings and movements have their own names; such as Position 1, Opening A, Navaho Opening, Mouth Loop Opening and several others. We use first the five fingers of each hand, a loop on any finger has two strings, that on the thumb side is called the radial string and that on the little finger side, the ulnar string. Should there be two loops on a finger the lower loop is said to be proximal and the upper one distal. In this way whatever position you happen to have your hands in you know exactly which string or loop is meant.

✓	Na Ubwebwe	Fish Spear	x	1
✓	Ba ni Mai	Bed		
	Na Akinran's Well	Siberian House		2
✓	Te Bata	Barriere	x	7
✓	Te Bareaka	Sardines	x	6
*	Kabaebae Baara 4	Tent or parachute		3
✓	Te Mate ma Korakina			
	Te Moniku ni Mtiko			
x	Hina's Skipping Rope and Teniakau's Door 5			
	Te Wa			
	Teibu te Tatai			
	Tenua ni Maniba			
	Taai			

Two Little Orphans 8

Tallow Dips. 1 Nauru

Taai Tebubua

Rat's Eggs 1 Banaban 2 Wells

Seagull

Sept. 16th. 1950

"BARAKEE"
HAUGHTON STREET,
LANE COVE, N.S.W.

Dear Dr. Maude

This is just a wee personal note to say once more how very much I appreciated your coming along last Wednesday. My dear, could you have heard all the nice things that were said about you, & your talk, I'm sure no hat would be large enough to fit you!!

With many thanks once more & Kindest Regards.

Yours Sincerely

Eleanora Seppelt

Sept. 16th 1950

The South Australian Women's Association
(New South Wales)

Dear Mrs. Maude
I have been requested by the President & Committee of the above Assoc. to thank you for the entertaining talk you gave us last Wednesday. I assure you that every member found it most enjoyable & we could have listened to you all the afternoon.

With Kindest Regards
from us all
Sincerely Yours
Eleanor Seppelt
(Hon. Sec.)

Mrs. H. E. Maude
12 Wallaroy Road
Double Bay.

I am going to try, ~~this morning~~, to give you some idea of the background of ~~Sir Arthur Grimble's book~~ "Pattern of Islands". Where ~~are~~ the islands are that he writes about, what ~~are~~ they are like and who ~~are~~ the people are who live on them?

As you will have seen from the map in the book the Gilbert Islands really do exist and I can assure you that they do as I lived on them for many years. There are 16 of them, all low coral islands except Ocean Island which is not really part of the Gilbert group of Islands. Ocean Island and Nauru lie to the west of the Gilberts and are of different formation. I notice that ~~Sir Arthur~~ Sir A. Grimble, on page 45, writes of sailing to the "group" and you may have wondered what he meant. When we first went to Ocean Island we found everyone talking about "the group" and soon learnt that they meant the Gilbert Islands. Most of the Europeans in the Gilbert and Ellice Is. Colony lived actually on Ocean Island, either employed by the Phosphate Commission or at Government Headquarters and regarded the few Europeans who were stationed as government officers or missionaries in the Gilbert Islands as being hardy pioneers, much as we in Canberra would regard the people who live on some isolated cattle station in the Never Never.

Ocean Island, from the sea, looks rather like a large dome sticking out

of the ocean, in fact from a distance it ~~would~~ is not unlike the Academy of Science building, it rises about 300 ft above sea level and is about 2 miles across in any direction. They say it has been under the sea at least 3 times and the centre of the island is filled with millions of tons of rock phosphate deposited by millions of birds over countless centuries. The Gilbert Is., on the other hand are all low and flat and made of coral, nowhere more than 10 feet above sea level; there are no stones as we know them, or volcanic ~~rock~~ soil, only coral rock and coral sand.

The first thing you see when approaching one of the Gilbert Islands in a ship or schooner is a long line of tops of coconut palms and it is not until you are quite near that you can see the white beaches shimmering in the sun and the white line of surf breaking on the reef. On some islands ~~near the Gilberts~~ in the Pacific there are no coconut trees and a ship's captain tells the story of how he was sailing along one day when he saw the head of a man apparently sticking out of the ocean, then after some time his body appeared and underneath the body a donkey, and finally, the island itself on which the man was riding!

When I first saw the Gilbert Islands from the air, in 1945, I was horrified to think that I had lived on them for years

and was about to live on them again. They were mere specks of land in a vast ocean and the sea seemed ready to engulf them at any moment.

Suppose we go in imagination to a lagoon island, or atoll as it is often called, for most of the islands which are mentioned in "Pattern of Islands" are in fact lagoon islands.

We first sight the island soon after dawn and anchor close to the boat passage into the lagoon and have our breakfast whilst waiting for the government canoe to come out to meet us. When it arrives the Native Magistrate comes on board and after greeting us leads the way to the canoe which is bobbing up and down at the ship's side. We manage to scramble into the canoe without upsetting it and sit one behind another with our legs dangling inside, the sail is hoisted and away we skim on one of the fastest sailing craft in the world.

We land at the Native Government Station for thatis the headquarters of the island. Here live the Magistrate, Chief of the island Council and the Chief of Police; the village policemen take it in turn to spend a week at the headquarters and court is held once a month when all the police attend and also the village councillors, or "kaubure"

There are a Court House and two gaols, one for female offenders and one for males. There is also a Post Office and a house for the visiting European Officer Here too there would prpbably be a Co-operative store for there are no such things as shops/ the

After a refreshing drink of/water of a very young coconut we are lent bicycles, all men's I'm afraid, and we set off to explore the island. First we visit the hospital where we find a ~~native~~ Gilbertese doctor in charge; he has been trained in Fiji and can perform operations when necessary as well as prescribe for everyday complaints He is helped by a few men with a little training who are called Dressers (you will find one mentioned on page 117) and there is probably a nurse who has been trained on Tarawa where the main hospital is situated. There are no wards but a number of small houses, for each patient has their own house and relations to look after them.

We leave the hospital and cycle along the sandy road shaded by coconut trees, in fact it would seem that the island grows nothing but coconut palms and certainly they are the mainstay of the people for they provide food, drink, house walls, thatch, the so-called grass skirt, mats, screeds, many types of basket, brooms, charcoal, firewood, molasses, string and oil; they also produce copra whic brings in money with

which to buy material, tobacco, soap, kerosene and many other amenities of life; panama hats, table-mats and fans, much coveted by Europeans, are made from the very young leaves on a few islands only. Altogether the coconut palm must be the most wonderful tree in the world. However, as we wander along the road which skirts the lagoon shore we notice some queer mishapen trees, these are pandanus trees and they too are most important trees providing food, leaves for mat making and the best thatch, also posts for house building and a decorative wood from the long aerial roots. Next we see a pit, a large pit, with enormous leaves like giant arum leaves showing above the level of the ground; this is another food for the large root is cooked in various ways, some quite appetising and some not to European taste, but all could be described as somewhat solid. Sir Arthur Grimble mentions it on p. 50 but he did not seem to like it in any form. Babai.

To continue our exploration, round the next bend in the road we come upon a village, very neat and tidy with rows of little square houses, some with walls and some with leaf screens that can be pulled up or lowered at will. Some of the houses are raised above the ground and the people sleep on the platform floor, other houses are on

the ground and these are cook houses and behind them is an enclosure for bathing. Very often white coral pebbles are spread all around the houses which makes the village area very clean but very glaring in the brilliant sunshine. Most houses have a few pawpaw trees, some ornamental shrubs and a few flowers dotted around which is very praiseworthy when you consider that the islands are very dry and suffer from periodic droughts.

The people themselves are friendly and cheerful and all the children crowd round to have a look at the Imatang, p.20 white people, They are what anthropologists call micronesians, not very dark skinned, have straight black hair, (the women's hair is often very long and thick and is always well oiled) and their features vary tremendously from fairly acquiline to somewhat broad nosed and thick lipped. The men usually wear just a length of material wrapped round their waists and falling to their knees; the women wear grass skirts for working and a simple frock for general wear; the children follow their parents except for the tiny ones who wear nothing at all.

As we wander through the village we are greeted with "ko na mauri" ~~(you will find it on p.44)~~ the Gilbertese greeting, often followed by "where are

you going?" to which we reply "we are going north", or south as the case may be. In the middle of the village we come upon an enormous structure, a huge thatched roof resting on stones only about 4 feet ~~from the ground~~ high; this is the "maneaba" or meeting house (described by Sir Arthur on p.40). Here the people hold their dances, meet on ceremonial occasions or just drop in to have a chat. I used to go in to see if I could find anyone to teach me a new cats cradle ~~and later on I am going to show some that I learnt.~~ Also in the village we shall see low fences surrounding open wells, these go down 8 or 10 feet, the water is brackish, not very nice to drink and very hard to wash with as soap won't lather in it, but it is the only water there is except for the odd tin or tubful collected when rain is falling.

Every village has a Protestant church with the pastor's house nearby and a school house; the Pastor is always a Gilbertese and he does both the preaching and the teaching. The European protestant missionaries concentrate their activities at their headquarters on Beru where they have a boys' school, a girls' school and a teacher training school. They visit the islands in their own ship, the

"John Williams", bringing supplies, books and any advice and help that may be needed. The Catholics have a European Father and two sisters on most islands and a Gilbertese teacher in each village.

We continue our ride and as the sun is very hot we turn off the road into the deeper shade of the closely growing coconut trees and proceed to walk across the island which is only about ¼ of a mile wide. Every man and woman owns their piece or pieces of land but there are no fences or boundary stones to show the divisions. As we go we meet girls looking for flowers to make wreaths for their heads or for their menfolk. All the flowers are tiny and you would never believe they could make sucu lovely wreaths from them; a ~~two~~ three, four or 5 strand plait is used and the short stems of the flowers are plaited in so as to make a thick band of blooms and they are most attractive.

As we cross the island the ~~land~~ trees thin out and we hear the roar of the surf, the land rises a little, we come to some low bushes and then we are out on the reef side of the island. A steeply sloping beach lies before us, then the reef of dead coral rock and at its edge the towering waves break into a line of creaming surf with a never ending roar. A strong breeze blows in

from the ocean, the almost constant trade wind, so cool and refreshing, but up and down the long stretch of beach there is no sign of human habitation for the Gilbertese almost always live along the lagoon shore. So we too return from the glare, the wind and the roar of the tumbling surf to the tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shore can be seen the brown thatch of village houses and canoe sheds, perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing while further out their fathers fish patiently from outrigger canoes, for fish, with coconut and sometimes rice, is their staple diet.

As the sun sets everyone gathers for the evening meal and there is a lovely smell of burning wood from the cooking fires. Then lights go bobbing to and fro, some to the maneaba and some to shore where, on dark nights the men set out with coconut leaf torches to catch flying fish.

We return our bicycles and say Tiakabo, goodbye, and return to the ship where we up anchor and set sail for the next island.

In contrast to Miss Bonney's description of our very gracious Queen, with her background in the hub of modern civilization I am going to try to take you in imagination to some little known islands, as far away as one can possibly get from England to meet Queen Salote & [illegible] there. Islands are little changed by modern inventions even to-day, they are populated by Polynesians who are proud of their heritage & devoted to their Queen, the only reigning monarch left of the many island royal families.
Tonga is the only independent group of islands in the Pacific.

people are apt to think it is a British Protectorate but in fact it is a fully independent state, bound only by Treaty obligations with Great Britain by which we are responsible for the conduct of their foreign Affairs & advise on their financial matters.

Perhaps I should explain at the beginning how we ever came to visit Tonga. My husband is a member of the British Colonial Service, liable to be posted to any of our Colonies, in any part of the world. Towards the end of 1940 we were on lonely Pitcairn Island where my

their diet was rather different to ours. However, life on Pitcairn is another story, I mention these few facts to give you some idea of the contrast between Pitcairn & Tonga.

After much planning, worrying & musing to & fro to Travel Agents in Panama, we got ourselves to Los Angeles in time to sail for Fiji on the Monterey. In Los Angeles we had one day's hectic shopping for all our luggage had been swamped by a wave coming out of Pitcairn & we were badly in need of clothes both for Suva, where we were to stay at Government

House + for Tonga.

So in due time we landed at Nukualofa, the capital of Tonga, the Consul + his wife handed over the spacious Residency to us, complete with well trained staff + everything in running order. It was heavenly + for the first time in 12 years I had very little unpacking to do.

Tonga not only has its own Queen but a Parliament too, which consists of the nobles + the elected representatives of the people. All the ministers of the Crown, with the exception of the Minister

for Finance, are Tongans & sit in the Privy Council & Cabinet which direct the affairs of the Kingdom. When we were there the Premier ~~[illegible]~~ was Her Majesty's Consort, Prince Tungi; now it is her elder son, who was educated at Newington College & Sydney University.

Tungi used to visit the Consul in his office once a week & after his first call an audience was arranged for my husband with the Queen. This entailed full dress Uniform

with sword & white gloves
& was very formal. My
husband was met by an A.D.C.
& ushered into the Throne Room
& presented to the Queen, a
very tall & very regal
person but also very shy.
As my husband is shy too
their conversation was limited
to formal courtesies. I gather.
& added to his nervousness
was the fact that he knew
that at the end of the
interview he must bow low
& leave Her Majesty's
presence without turning
his back on her. Walking
backwards, guided with a

sword needs practice & might have been very awkward but the Queen, with a kind thoughtfulness we were to learn to know so well, descended from her throne & accompanied him to the door.

Shortly after this we were invited to tea when the Queen chatted & laughed with us. She speaks, of course, perfect English. & has a strong sense of humour & an infectious laugh. She dresses mostly in Tongan fashion, a long dress & sandals with a finely woven mat tied round the

waist with a girdle of plaited hair. All Tongans wear mats on ceremonial occasions & in the presence of royalty or a chief. It is always worn at times of mourning, & it doesn't matter how old & ragged it is.

The Tongans collected a lot of money for the Red X & when we first arrived, in June 1941, 6 months before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour, they were working hard. They held a bazaar on the malae, an open grassy square in the village, & I accompanied

the Queen & her entourage on a tour of inspection. There were hundreds of baskets of yams & other food-stuffs; Tongan mats, fans, baskets & rolls of Tapa. Ahor was collected that day to our admayement & admiration. Another day there was a Fancy Dress dance & Queen Salote asked me to help her judge the costumes. Only the children were dressed up & only local material was used such as shells, leaves, coconuts, tapa, matting & the so called grass skirt.

I was astounded as what the parents had accomplished, & the children were attired in wonderful costumes & it was most difficult to decide which was best. I remember two costumes in particular; one child was dressed entirely in shells & another represented the God of Fire & had a ½ coconut shell on his head with fire in it. Dancing – Whale Steak Salmon fishing

About a month after our arrival in Tonga we had a flying visit from the General in charge of Pacific Defence & Tengi

came to dinner to discuss plans. He was full of fun, he was always good humoured & easy to talk to. That night he went out to his estate in the country, as he usually did at week-ends, & next morning, after asking his attendant for an orange drink he just fell back & died; as his father had done before him.

It was a terrible shock to everyone & a great loss as he was universally loved." The Queen said she was going to attend

Twinkling lights all round the palace & silence.

the funeral but to our relief she decided not to at the last minute. We, of course, followed the catafalque, carried by 20 or 30 men; all the Tongans were weeping & it was quite impossible to remain dry-eyed. it was the most moving ceremony I have ever attended. Everyone went into mourning, of course, & there were no more bazaars or dances. the Queen was prostrate with grief-stuck & my husband dealt with the telegrams which came in shoals & had to be answered; not an easy job.
When the Consul returned from leave after 4 months we stayed on for another 2 months as the Queen had asked if my husband could be seconded to the Tongan Civil Service to make a report on the

reorganisation of her own service. We were naturally very flattered that Her Majesty should have such a high opinion of my husband & as we admired her very much & loved Tonga we were delighted to stay. We moved into a sparsely furnished house & no sooner had we settled in than One of the Queen's Ladies in Waiting arrived to see that we had everything. We assured her we were very comfortable but she had a good look round & a little later a lorry arrived with

with us end of things for us including comfy arm-chairs + the Crown Prince's large bed for small Alaric. Every now + then a Lady in Waiting would come to the house + say "would Alaric spend the morning with the Queen", + away would go our 3 year old son + goodness knows what he told her. She is very fond of children + evidently knows how to gain their confidence for Alaric was always pleased to visit her. He came home one day with a

broken wooden head-rest & advised us that he was going to fix it for the Queen.*

The Tongans are mostly Methodists & very religious. Divided at one time into Tongan Free Church by Rev: Shirley Baker who was expelled by the Methodists. Disapproved of money going away. Queen has brought most back into the fold.

Tongan Dancing.

~~Falcon Island~~ ~~Whale Shark~~.

When we left Tonga we were sad to go, the Queen embraced me & kissed me on both cheeks & shall does when we meet in Auckland or Sydney. She is a much loved Queen

in her own land where she is a benevolent sovereign but at the same time keeps an eagle eye over the affairs of her people.

She was immensely popular in England & her drive to the Coronation in the rain will always be associated with her name in song. She joined with the Prime Ministers of G.B. & the Commonwealth in the broadcast after the Coronation & this is what she said:

The dignity & the grandeur of this great day & the deep spiritual meaning of the

Sacred rites well remain with me in cherished & abiding memory.

A number of stories are told of Queen Salote showing her strong sense of humour, I quote from Mr. Neil's book "Ten Years in Tonga" he was Agent & Consul in Tonga for 10 years & was chosen as her attaché during her stay in the U.K. On one occasion, driving in London at night her car was jammed between a coach from the country & a London Transport bus. The children in the coach recognized her & shouted "Queen

Salote" , the London bus conductor removed his cap, bowed low + said with grave dignity "Goodnight my dear." The Queen rocked with laughter. Later on, when on her way to her room she stopped half-way up the stairs + when Mr. Neil enquired if there was anything he could do she replied "No, good-night my dear". *

On Sundays, when she was in London Queen Salote attended Divine Service at the Central

Hall. Westminster. She visited the Headquarters of the British Foreign Bible Society where she was deeply interested in the old copies of the Bible in the Tongan language. It is just over a century since the New Testament was printed at a small mission press at Vavau in Tonga.

After Queen Elizabeth, the Duke of Edinburgh had ~~visited Tonga~~, left Nukualofa the Tongans could be heard speaking

of Elizabeth & Philip & when reproved said "Yes we know, but the titles keeps them far away while their own names bring them near to our hearts.

Every Consul, it is well known, goes to Tonga as the representative of the British Government but leaves the Kingdom a firm supporter of Tongan independence & with an abiding affection for Queen Salote & her people.

What, it will be asked, was Queen Salote's impression of London? Ma'am, said a guest at a reception, London is in love with you. The Queen smiled and she replied, "All you see it is not the other way round?" In these few words, spoken on the spur of the moment, she summed up her feelings towards the capital & I think to the British people.

~~On another occasion~~

A The Queen motored to the north of Scotland & to Ireland, & everywhere she went people left their work to cheer her on her way. Her party became very familiar with the shout "There she goes - she's lovely". One day when motoring in Ireland the car stopped to enable the ladies to take photos of the magnificent scenery but the Queen - Mr Neil stayed in the car. After a time the Q. decided to play a joke on her ladies & ordered the car to drive on. They, however, not to be outdone, dashed out

as she passed calling
loudly "There she goes,
she's lovely"

During her Scottish tour nothing pleased the Queen better than the gifts of small posies of flowers from the children at the village schools. The little girls would be helped into the car to make their presentations & would listen shyly to the Queen's words of thanks.

One of the midshipmen on the Bounty, Hallett by name, who went with Capt. Bligh, later married a Miss Maude - it was amusing to think that our great, great, grand Uncle might have been, not our Uncle at all but the great, great, grandfather of a Pitcairn family.

Bounty sing

husband was working on a new system of Government - Code of Laws for the 200 or so descendents of the Bounty mutineers. One day we received a radio message directing us to proceed to Tonga as soon as possible to relieve the Consul who was ill & in need of leave. Now Pitcairn is an isolated island as you probably know, about half-way between N.Z. & S. America. Normally they average about a ship a week calling or passing close by the island but during the war they were few & far between & at that particular time the German Raiders were in

the Pacific. We had expected to be on Pitcairn about 3 months but it was 8 months before an American ship called in & took us to Panama. (it was impossible to get south to NZ.) & we had long since run out of butter, tea & tinned foods & life on Pitcairn was hard, especially with a small boy of 2 years. We had packed all our good clothes & sent them to the landing place, where they sat for months. The few clothes we kept were eaten by cockroaches every night & we depended on the generosity of the islanders for our daily food. They were wonderfully good to us but

A Talk on Pitcairn Island.

I feel there must be quite a number of people in my audience tonight who have had just as interesting, and may I say tough, experiences as myself. However, few people visit Pitcairn Island and it is a rather unique spot, firstly because of its historical background, and secondly because it is not an easy place to visit. No casual callers are allowed to land and anyone wishing to go there for any special purpose, scientists, novelists and even the wives, or husbands, of Pitcairn Islanders who have married abroad, have to obtain a permit to land from the High Coommissioner for the Western Pacific.

Before telling you something of our own life on the island I would like to give you a brief outline of some of the more important points of Pitcairn's history and a little of their form of government.

You will all remember the story of the mutiny on the Bounty which took place while Capt Bligh, later Governor of N.S.W., was in command of the vessel, and of his wonderful boat voyage of 3,500 miles to Timor, in the Dutch East Indies. One of the midshipmen, Hallett by name, who went with Bligh, married a Maude and this gave our visit to Pitcairn an added interest, for our great, great, grand uncle might so easily have been, not our uncle at all but the great great grandfather of a Pitcairn family. A fact we often joked about with the islanders,

Let us then go back to the year 1787 when Lt Bligh was assigned the task of sailing to Tahiti, discovered by Wallis only 20 years earlier, in order to collect breadfruit plants for the West Indies where it was hoped they would prove to be a nutritious and economical food for plantation slave labour. The Bounty arrived in Tahiti in October, 1788, and in this South Sea paradise the ship stayed for five wonderful months. Historical records show that the crew had a good deal of time ashore and the easy life they saw there no doubt contributed to the discontent and friction which led to the mutiny. Be that as it may, the fact remains that 23 days after the Bounty had sailed from Tahiti the famous mutiny took place, Bligh and 18 others, including my husband's relation, were set adrift in a small boat and left, with scanty provisions, to find their way as best they could in unchartered seas and among unknown savages.

Fletcher Christian, at the head of his 25 mutineers, set sail for the delights of Tahiti. All but 8 elected to stay there but Christian, well knowing that sooner or later they were sure to be found on such a frequented island, persuaded these 8, with Tahitian wives, 3 other women and 6 Tahitian men, to settle with him on some island off the beaten track. It is probable that Fletcher Christian knew of the existence of Pitcairn Island which had been discovered by Capt Carteret in 1767 and whose account formed part of the collection of

printed voyages in Bligh's cabin.

The little party of 27 landed in Bounty Bay probably some time in October, 1789, and after removing all they required from the Bounty burnt her in the bay - to this day the islanders can show you the remains of her hull and some ballast lying on the bed of the sea. Some years ago the rudder was reclaimed and is now in the Suva Museum awaiting final deposit in the British Museum; it is, of course, still legally the property of the British Admiralty. It was taken from the island because the temptation to chop off small pieces for souvenirs was too strong for the islanders and the rudder was gradually disappearing. The Bounty vice had quite recently been sold by the islanders to an American and I believe is now in some museum in the United States.

Nothing was heard of the missing mutineers for 20 years when the chance visit of an American vessel disclosed the existence of the settlement to the outside world. By this time all the Europeans except John Adams were dead, and all the native men, there were 10 women (one had fallen off a cliff and been killed) and 25 children. After the death of Edward Young, the only European who had died a natural death, John Adams had become the benevolent patriarch of the little community. He had undergone a strong spiritual conversion and, teaching himself first to read and write, brought up the children of the mutineers on the Bible and the Prayer Book. In 1830 the entire population were moved to Tahiti on account of a

threatened shortage of water but they soon pined for Pitcairn and persuaded a sympathetic whaling captain to take them back. By 1856 the population had grown to 187 and it was feared that the island would soon be over-populated so, once again, they were moved but this time to Norfolk Island where descendants of the majority still live. The call of the old home was strong however and within a few years 6 families, 43 men, women and children had returned. They were all either Christians, Youngs or Warrens and from them most of the present population is descended. The islanders call each other by their Christian names so that one really does not notice the excessive numbers of Mrs Youngs or Mrs Christians.

For many years any judicial or administrative matters on which the islanders needed outside advice were dealt with by Commanders of Warships which called there at fairly frequent intervals. Then, about 1890, the British Consuls at Papeete were placed in charge of the island and carried on until 1921. By this time contact between Pitcairn and Tahiti was becoming more and more difficult and instructions were given that all correspondence should be sent to the High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. After we had been on the island for a little while my husband asked one day if he could see the official correspondence. The Magistrate and his minions looked blank for a moment and then the Magistrate's face brightened, "Oh!" said he, "them letters from Fiji, why we mostly keeps them in an old sugar bag" and sure enough there they were found after some searching and many of them had never been opened.

My husband's work on Pitcairn was the reform of the local administrative system, to introduce salaries and revise the laws. It was becoming more and more difficult to fill the key position of Chief Magistrate for that unfortunate man "got all the kicks and no Ha'pence" when things went wrong. The elections take place once a year on Christmas Day and it was said that on the previous Christmas no one could be persuaded to be Magistrate. The problem was only solved by one of the older men absenting himself from the meeting in order to collect food for his family whereupon he was promptly proposed, seconded and

unanimously elected in his absence. Briefly, the officials are as follows:- A Chief Magistrate, Government Secretary, an Internal Committee of 3 members, and External Committee of 3 and 2 Assesors and I think two Policemen. While we were on the island a case came up before the Court and my husband went along to see how a Court was held. He found things far from satisfactory and when he explained just how everyone should behave the islanders were amazed and delighted, he gathered there had been some real "rough houses" when even the Magistrate was assaulted.

For about 3 months my husband spent part of every day sitting with a committee of islanders revising the laws. There was, of course, much argument among the amateur legislators but in the end my husband succeeded in drafting a suitable and acceptable constitution and code of laws which is unique in one respect - it bears the signed consent of every person in the community over the age of 18. ~~By law anyone~~ fined could pay it off by working on the roads at 1/- a day, but as this would have meant some unpaid official watching, it had become the custom for the person fined to collect 9 friends and all do a day's work; the larger the fine the larger the number of workers of course.

After we were had been on the island for about a month or so we were joined by Mr Fuller, from Fiji, who was in charge of the bringing out of a Pitcairn stamp issue. He persuaded the islanders to build a brand new

Post Office, Pitcairn Style, and they made a very good job of it. The revenue from the stamps mounted rapidly and whereas when we were there the island exchequer amounted to £50 or so, within 6 years Pitcairn funds were 30 to 40 thousand pounds. This has been a tremendous help to the islanders, it pays the salaries of the Government Officials, a School Teacher, a Wireless Operator and a Qualified Nurse besides buying them anything essential to the welfare of the community such as a new school house, a launch and a number of other things.

To come to our own arrival and sojourn on the island; we sighted Pitcairn one afternoon after a rather stormy voyage, we had with us our small boy, Alaric, aged just 2 years, Kitty, a girl from Suva who came to help me; she was really Dr Macpherson's housekeeper and keen though she was to travel I'm sure she didn't realise how far away we were going. We took stores for 5 months though we were only supposed to stay for 3, actually we had nearly 8 months on the island. Ships calling at Pitcairn do not go in close to the shore and do not lower their gangways as there is usually a good swell running and the Pitcairn boats being very heavy are liable to damage them. So the officers apparently were rather exercised as to how to get 2 women and a very small boy into the boats. Unfortunately they did not consult us as we could have told them we were perfectly capable of descending a rope ladder.

The Chief Engineer has a platform made, surrounded by canvas walls and depending from 4 ropes; in this we were slung in turn over the ship's side and deposited in a boat already laden with piles of cargo. It was late by the time we left the ship and dark before we neared the breakers; having heard all kinds of stories about the dreadful landing I, at least, felt I would much rather see where I was going. To make matters worse everyone seemed to have their own ideas as to the right moment to dash in but they all rested on their oars and nothing happened until the captain of the boat said "now", then they sprang to activity and we rushed in, not on top of a breaker but in between the waves and we were through a narrow channel and round some rocks before the next wave broke behind us. Ship Landing Point, rising to about 500 feet, towers over Bounty Bay, there is just room for a few boat sheds at the foot of the cliff and a narrow path winds up, very steeply in places, to the village 300 feet above the landing.

It had been decided that we should spend the first night at the house of the Magistrate, David Young, and his American wife, Edna, and next day look at several houses and choose which we liked best. Actually we spent four days with the Magistrate trying to get the feeling of the island. Like all small places there was a good deal of rivalry and we wanted to make sure we were making a wise decision. In the end we took a clean little house at the end of the village in a secluded

spot called Shady Nook. The houses are built of hand-sawn local timber, rough boards overlapping one another on the walls and laid flat for floors with uneven spaces between the boards. Most of the houses are bungalows but quite a number have just one upstairs room. Ours had a living room and a small bedroom downstairs, and a large bedroom upstairs with windows all round it. The dining-room and kitchen were in a separate building joined on by a short passage; we had a wood stove, a luxury on the island, on which we did most of our cooking and I had also a Primus stove. Our bread was baked by our neighbour, Hilda Young, in whose house we were living while she and her family lived with her aged mother close by. In the house we had the bare essentials of furniture, most of it made locally and somewhat crudely. The beds were a trial as they were rough frames with timber of uneven width, length and thickness laid loosely across; however we found a ship's mattress for my husband which levelled out most of the bumps, and another for Kitty, Alaric had his own cot and I had a loose kapok mattress with my Lilo on top. There were no drawers or cupboards for clothes and the cockroaches were simply frightful, they ate our clothes every night, especially some artificial silk frocks I had taken with me, and they didn't just nibble, the holes were as large as shillings.

There was an open cement cistern in which the rainwater from the tin roof collected and that was our only source of water. Hilda's husband, Robert, kept us supplied with fish

and firewood. As I mentioned just now there were lots of windows but they were not an unmixed blessing as they had no cords and the panes of glass were lightly tacked in with little or no putty. I'm afraid we had a number of accidents, especially when the hornets were bad, in the excitement of the chase when one was caught on the window, the slightest pressure would dislodge the glass which crashed below and the hornet usually escaped scott free.

Most of our food came out of tins of course, but the islanders were most kind and generous and took it in turn to bring us fresh fruit and vegetables. Pitcairn is very fertile so there was always some fruit in season and there were plenty of vegetables; Robert dug a patch of ground for me in his own garden near the house and there I grew vegetables for Alaric. Incidentally it was in this little patch that I found the ring which is said to be the original Bounty ring; it belonged to Edward Young and was the only ring possessed by any of the mutineers. It was used for all marriages for the first twenty years or so and the last person known to have it was John Adam's wife. The islanders insisted that as I had found it I should keep it and I am sorry that I cannot show it to you tonight but I deposited it in the Auckland Museum for safe keeping.

One of the first things you notice about the Pitcairn people is the number of men and women who have lost their two

top front teeth. It is not, as one might at first suppose, due to an old Tahitian custom, but simply to the fact that they have bad teeth. I should imagine it is largely due to the fact that they eat too many starchy, mushy foods and very few containing calcium. They have no use for milk or butter and very little for green vegetables. Edward Young is said to have had very bad teeth and may have left this weakness. On the other hand he also had very bad asthma and eventually died of it, but I heard of only a few cases.~~on the island~~.

10

The people are rather more European than Polynesian now and a number of them have New Zealand or Australian wives. When we were ~~on~~the island there were close on 200 inhabitants, I believe that now there are only just over ~~100~~ 40 as so many have migrated since the war to New Zealand and also to Australia. Their staple diet seemed to be sweet potatoes, dalo, taro yams, beans and fried green Bananas, but they also have manioc, pumpkin and bread. They are very fond of making everything into a mush and then baking it and coconut cream is used a good deal for mixing but coconuts are not very plentiful. Corn meal and arrowroot flour are made on the island and a little sugar cane is grown and crushed in a Heath Robinson contraption of their own devising. At one time the island was very short of flour and I eked mine out by putting one third of corn meal to two thirds of flour when making bread, and it was delicious. Later I added one third of arrowroot to the mixture and made our last

loaf of bread on the day the ship came in with flour.

The Pitcairn Islanders use open fires for cooking but they have remarkable ovens; these are made of five large thick slabs of stone, each being about 2½ feet square, these form the top and bottom and three sides of the oven leaving the fourth side to be covered by a square of iron propped in place by a piece of wood. A fire is lighted inside the oven, small sticks being used when preparing for a batch of biscuits and larger pieces of wood for bread. When ready the ashes are raked out and the bread put in and the iron door put in place. The bread was very well baked and had a lovely crust.

Salt is made once a year at a special time when the people gather on the rocks to make it from sea water by evaporation. Cereal coffee is made from bran or dandelion roots, I made some from dandelion roots and we found it quite a good drink.

The islanders still do most things communally, everyone fishes on Wednesday (so you only have fish once a week); everyone goes to Top Side (the top of the island) to their gardens on Thursday and everyone cooks and cleans on Friday in preparation for the Sabbath. When not otherwise occupied everyone makes curios and baskets to be sold to passing ships. And, of course, when a ship is sighted every able-bodied man, woman and child makes a bee line for the landing. Before the war an average of nearly one large ship a week called there.

When wood has to be cut for house building the whole family and a number of friends all go to the place where the work is to be done and make a picnic of it; we went several times and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Another family affair is the paying of fines. By law anyone fined could pay it off by working on the roads at the rate of 1/- a day, but as this would have meant some unpaid official watching the offender it had become the custom for the person fined to collect as many friends as the number of shillings in the fine, less one, and all do one day's work.

The Pitcairn Islanders do not believe in doing unnecessary work and have a term, "no use work", for anything they deem unproductive. They wash out their houses once a week but they thought I was very foolish to waste soap and energy having my floors scrubbed. So, as a matter of fact,did we when we found how draughty the floors were when we had removed the mud from the cracks! Ironing too is considered a nuisance and is only done when absolutely necessary.

The islanders are Seventh Day Adventists so their Sabbath is our Saturday and it is strictly kept, No work of any description is allowed, not even cooking. We kept the island sabbath but I found it quite impossible to do Monday's wash on Sunday so, in effect, Kitty and I had two Sundays each week. Another custom that is rather muddling is having the day begin at sunset. If you are invited to a meal on

Tuesday evening you must be sure to go on Monday evening or you will find you have arrived on Wednesday and missed the party. The Bible says quite clearly "And the evening and the morning were the first day", so maybe they are right. Again being Seventh Day Adventists they are careful about giving a tenth of their income, in cash or kind, to the Church and the tithe barn stands in the centre of the village close by the Church, Court House and Post Office. They do not smoke, drink tea or coffee or alcoholic drinks, nor are they supposed to eat meat but they sometimes have chicken and occasionally goat. I believe it is still a jailable offence to smoke under the age of 25. They have a peculiar dialect, more or less unintelligible to the outsider but they can all speak fairly good English.

We collected a large number of Polynesian stone adzes, the largest collection from any single island in the Pacific, and more are being found all the time. We also braved the descent of Rope, rather an ordeal, to see and photograph, ancient rock carvings at the foot of the cliff. At Rope there is a 500 foot cliff and in the early days they used to let one another down on a rope to collect bird's eggs. Nowadays you creep down at one side in shallow crevices and in one place cross a narrow ledge of rock with a sheer drop below. Not being a mountaineer I can't say I enjoyed it. Unfortunately the best beach on the island is at the bottom of Rope.

Kitty and I very soon found it best to pack away any clothes we valued at all; what the cockroaches left the Pitcairn mud stained. In any case most of our luggage sat in the boatsheds at Bounty Bay for at least 4 months as we were expecting a ship to call for us, and once a ship is sighted there is no time for anything but a rush to the landing. We actually left once, after 5½ months. We said goodbye, gave away what few stores were left and my beautiful crop of carrots and then the Captain refused to take us. Mr Fuller got away but we had to return to the shore and we stayed another 2 months. We had no butter, very little milk or tea and lived mostly on vegetable soup and vegetable curry with fish and chicken about once a week, and plenty of fruit. The islanders were wonderful, they insisted on returning all our presents and kept us well supplied with local produce.

We had some wonderful walks and climbs, the island has a great variety of scenery and as it is only 1½ miles across and rises to 1,000 feet you can imagine how steep it is, even the village is built on an incline. From the highest point, on the south of the island, you look down about 900 feet of almost sheer cliff, then another 100 feet a little less steep to where the sea pounds against the rocks; it compares favourably with the Pali outside Honolulu with the added attraction of the boiling surf at the bottom.

We became very fond of the little island and its people and

in spite of some hardships and worry, with raiders in the Pacific and our departure so uncertain we were sorry to say goodbye when an American ship eventually called in for us and took us to Panama.

Now that I have given you some idea of the main features of life on Pitcairn I am sure you would like to see some slides. Most of these have been made from our own snapshots by the courtesy of the Royal Historical Society and I would like to thank Major Swinbourne and Mr Price Conigrave for the trouble they have taken in arranging for the slides to be made. There are also a few ~~slides kindly lent by the Royal Historical Society~~ pictures of interest kindly lent by the Royal Historical Society.

The story of Pitcairn Island appeals to most people, but very few are able to live on the island, hear the quaint dialect and absorb the local atmosphere, ~~of the island~~ with all its associations. Here, you are told, lies the hull of the Bounty and some ballast; here is the rudder, recovered after nearly 150 years; there lies old John Adams and here Fletcher Christian was murdered. McCoy fell into the sea in a drunken fit from that point of rock, and from the top of the cliff above Rope the Tahitian wife of one of the mutineers fell to her death. Every corner of Pitcairn seems to have a link with the past.

We were lent a little house, in a secluded spot called called Shady Nook; it was built of hand sawn local timber, rough but sturdy; it had an upper storey, a corrugated iron roof and real windows with panes of glass in them, which rather surprised me. An open cistern stored the water from the roof and that was our only supply of water. There was very little furniture, no hanging cupboards or drawers but just tables, chairs and beds; the latter extremely spartan affairs, and I was glad I had brought a Lilo with me and the baby's cot. We were fortunate in having a wood stove, quite a luxury on the island, and I had Primus stoves as well and a good supply of kerosene. Our bread was cooked in a Pitcairn oven by our neighbour; these ovens are very ingenuous, they are made of 5 large thick slabs of stone, each being about 2½ feet square, which form the top and bottom and 3 sides, leaving the fourth side to be covered by a square of iron propped in place by a piece of wood. A fire is lighted inside the oven, the thickness and quantity of wood depending on the heat required; when ready the ashes are raked out, the food put in and the door closed. I have never had better baked bread, and I

learnt how to make several kinds of biscuits from the locally grown arrowroot and manioc, which were also baked in this oven.

You may be interested to know how we make bread in these isolated islands. The yeast is made in a screw top bottle and consists of rice, flour, sugar and sea water; the rice lasts from 3 to 6 months but the sugar, flour and sea water are renewed each time bread is made. The dough is set over night, kneaded up just once in the morning and left to rise for an hour, when it is ready for baking. I found at Pitcairn, where a journey to the sea meant a strenuous climb down 300 feet or so of very steep and rocky hillside, that salt made from sea water and added to fresh water worked just as well, or better, than sea water. The islanders make their salt once a year and I found a lovely crock of it in my kitchen.

One of the first things you notice about the Pitcairn people is the number of men and women who have lost their two top front teeth. It is not, as one might at first suppose, due to the survival of an old Tahitian custom, but simply to the fact that they have bad teeth. I should imagine that it is largely ~~due to the fact that~~ because they eat too many starchy, mushy foods and very few containing calcium. They have no use for milk or butter and very little for green vegetables. They are very fond of making everything into a mush and then baking it.

The people are rather more European than Polynesian now and a number of them have N.Z. or Australian wives. There were close on 200 inhabitants when we were there, but I believe that nearly a hundred left the island after the war and went to work in N.Z.

The islanders still do most things communally; everyone fishes on Wednesday (so you only have fish once a week); everyone goes to Top Side (the top of the island) to their gardens on Thursday and everyone

cooks and cleans on Friday in preparation for the Sabbath. When not otherwise engaged everyone makes curios and baskets to be sold to passing ships. And, of course, when a ship is sighted every able-bodied man, woman and child makes a bee-line for the landing. Before the war an average of one ship a week called at Pitcairn, but during the war there were very few. When wood has to be cut for house building the whole family and a number of friends all go to the place where the work is to be done and make a picnic of it; we went several times and everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Another family affair was the payment of fines. By law anyone fined could pay it off by working on the roads at the rate of 1/- a day, but as this would have meant some unpaid official watching the offender it had become the custom for the person fined to collect as many friends as the number of shillings in the fine, less one, and all do one day's work!

The Pitcairn Islanders do not believe in doing unnecessary work, and have a term "no use work" for anyting they deem unproductive. They wash out their houses once a week, but they thought I was very foolish to waste soap and energy having my floors scrubbed. So, as a matter of fact, did we later on, for when we had removed all the mud from the spaces between the floor boards the house was horribly draughty. The islanders are Seventh Day Adventists, so their Sabbath is our Saturday and it is strictly kept, no work of any description is allowed; not even cooking. The days begin at sunset, which is rather muddling, for if you are invited to a meal on Tuesday evening you must be sure to go on Monday evening or you will find you have arrived on Wednesday and missed the party. The Bible says quite clearly "and the evening and the morning were the first day", so maybe they are right

They do not smoke, drink tea, coffee or alcoholic drinks; nor are they supposed to eat meat, but they sometimes eat chicken and occasionally goat. I believe it is still a jailable offence to smoke under the age of 25. They have a peculiar dialect, more or less unintelligible to the outsider, but they can all speak fairly good English.

We had some wonderful walks and climbs; the island has a great variety of scenery and, as it is only 1½ miles across and rises to 1,000 feet, you can imagine how steep it is; even the village is built on a steep slope. From the highest point, on the south of the island, you look down about 900 feet of almost sheer cliff, then another 100 feet a little less steep to where the sea pounds against the rocks. We became very fond of the little island and its people and, in spite of some hardships and worry, with raiders in the Pacific and our departure so uncertain, we were sorry to say goodbye after nearly 8 months when an American ship called in for us and took us to Panama.

When leaving Pitcairn the boat carrying most of our luggage was swamped by the breakers and I spent ~~most of~~ the journey to Panama rescueing what I could from the terrible mess. The camera was ruined; the sewing machine and typewriter were later reconditioned and as good as ever but a lot of clothing was hopelessly stained and all my best clothes, which I had packed away months before to save them from the cockroaches, were in a sorry state.

We had 5 hot and hectic days in Panama trying to get passages back to New Zealand, but found it hopeless, as all the ships had filled up in New York. In the end we managed to fly to Los Angeles by a rather roundabout route and there caught the Monterey, which took us to Fiji. We had one day

to shop in Los Angeles; we did our best to replenish our wardrobes and found that we could get everything we wanted in one large store which saved a lot of time. We were quite exhausted by the time we boarded the ship and even Our small boy overslept next day.

Back in Suva we spent a month at Government House before being sent to Tonga to take over from the Consul, who was going on leave. The Residency there is a spacious wooden building of the old type, with open verandahs all round; very cool and comfortable. We had no luggage beyond our clothes, so for once there was practically no unpacking. The Consul's wife very kindly lent us linen, and left the house in running order with very well trained servants; the garden was lovely and the ordered life was very restful after the rather hard time on Pitcairn. The contrast, however, between the carefree, happy-go-lucky way of life we had been living and the rigid ceremonial and etiquette of a Royal Court, however small, was tremendous. The Tongans are a delightful people and the Queen a most charming person. When we first arrived there were Red Cross bazaars and Fancy Dress dances to raise funds and entertainments of all kinds, including Tongan dances which were really lovely to watch. After we had been there a month, however, Tugi, the Queen's husband, died very suddenly; everyone went into mourning and all entertaining ceased. Tugi was very popular and his funeral was the saddest I have seen; it was a most impressive ceremony, but all the Tongans were weeping and I should say they felt his loss deeply.

When the Consul returned we stayed on for another month to enable my husband to do a special job for the Queen. We moved into

another house and we were very touched when the Queen sent one of her ladies to see if we had everything to make us comfortable, followed by a lorry load of furniture and crockery. The Crown Prince's large bed was sent up for small Alaric to sleep in; several times he went to spend the morning with the Queen, who is very fond of children, and we often wondered what he told her. We left Tonga, again regretfully, in November 1941 and arrived in New Zealand just before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbour. My husband returned to Suva almost immediately but Alaric and I stayed in New Zealand for 15 months before we were allowed to join him.

We stayed in Suva, in the same house, for 3½ years, the longest we have ever stayed anywhere, and then we were asked to go to Tarawa to relieve the Resident Commissioner who was due for leave. I had become so used to living in a community where one had the normal amenities of life that I was quite nervous about returning to Tarawa. As it turned out our return was not a very happy one; we found on our arrival that the Americans would not allow me to live on Betio with my husband so I had to live on the next islet, some 40 minutes by launch up the lagoon; nothing had been prepared for me, no house, and no furniture; and when a small house was found for me there was no kitchen and I had to mess eat with the government officials in their mess; and there were no other women. We chose a site for the new Residency and in a couple of months were able to move in, but we had been all together for only 3 weeks when my husband was asked to fly to England in a hurry, so Alaric and I were left on our own. My husband was to return in a month, but 4 months went by before he managed to get back to Fiji, and I was asked to return there too and that meant a month's trip on a tiny steamer,

not to mention the inevitable packing up, and we were to return to Tarawa two or three months later. For the first time I was really heartbroken; I had had seven months practically on my own, I had just got the household in running order, the garden started, chickens and ducks laying and all our things unpacked. However, the war was barely over and one just had to grin and bear it, so back to Suva we went. Since then we have had two trips to Tarawa, ~~and also~~ leave in England and over a year in Sydney, still, unfortunately, moving from house to house! Our next move is due to take place in January, and so far we have found nowhere to move to.

Bumbimbi
Embroidery Guild. Goulburn - 3.3.71.

I shall begin my talk with some remarks on the influence of missions in the Pacific & go on to describe the conditions under which they, + we as Government officers, + the people themselves lived in the Gilbert Islands.

The missions, both Protestant & Roman Catholic, have played a tremendous part in the Education of the Pacific Islanders. It was the early missionaries who learnt the various languages + dialects, chose suitable letters, or combinations of letters, for alphabets, produced written languages & translated the Bible into numerous tongues. They still do this in remote parts of New Guinea. They had primary schools throughout the islands, until recent years without any government aid whatsoever. In the Gilbert Islands the L.M.S. (no A.B.M. there) had a secondary school for boys & one for girls at their headquarters station where they also trained their pastors & teachers. The unkind & critical called it the marriage mart & many marriages of course took place between girls & students - but what could be more suitable? An educated wife is an enormous help in school & church work + the village girls did not have the same opportunities as the mission girls. (Miss Pateman & notes in laundry). After the war I had 3 girls as my house staff, one was the cook, educated in Suva, Fiji, + brought to me by her father during the war when we too were living in Suva, with a request that I take her into my family.

at that time I had an old Indian cook but later I taught Teaira to cook & when we returned to Tarawa she went with us & was a great success as the Residency cook. (Her trip to Honolulu). The other 2 girls were mission educated & when household chores were done would sew or embroider. All 3 lived in a house behind ours where their voices could be heard in the evenings singing in harmony to the strumming of a ukelele. They also sang whilst washing up & the whole atmosphere was delightful. Pastor Reuben now leader of the unofficial members in the Leg. Co. House of Reps

Last week I was fortunate in meeting the Rev. John Garrett who is the head of the Theological College in Suva. He came to see my husband but I was able to have a few words with him & ask him some questions. John Garrett himself is a charming person & he told me that there is one young, or not so young, man from New Guinea at the college who though not awfully clever has a most attractive personality & they hope to get him through. His name is Kingsley Gegao, he was first at Dogura, then in Suva (I think at the Cathedral) & is now at the Theological College. Also at the college are men from the New Heb, New Cal. Sol Is. G. & E. Cook Is. Tonga, Samoa, Fiji & American Micronesia. (2 from the Carolines & 2 from the Marshalls). There are 45 all

told & ⅓ are married men. They have 3 or 4 years at the College, depending on their standard of education when they enter. There is a programme for the wives who go to the S.P.C. Community Training centre where they learn English, how to run meetings & amongst other things the customs of their Pacific Islands Brothers. I asked why customs & was told that as the various groups have different customs it is most important to know them & so not cause offence to one another. Mrs Garrett added that gradually the peoples of the Pacific are coming to regard themselves as brothers & use that term. He also told me about the College chapel which is built in the round with Pacific Islands money & uses Pacific Islands music as much as possible. I was a little amused as guitars are featured as well as drums but they <u>are</u> very much a part of islands music nowadays. The last $1,000 for building the Chapel was given by the R.C.'s which was a wonderful gesture. To anyone knowing the appalling antipathy between Protestants & R.C.'s a few years ago in the islands it is even more wonderful & encouraging. On Thursdays, in the College chapel, they have Holy Communion dressed

in their working clothes & all standing round the Communion Table - The bread is home baked by the wives + is roughly broken as it would have been by our Lord. The wine varies but is often the usual Communion Wine.

I found all this intensely interesting + feel I was most fortunate in meeting Mr Garrett. I hope I have been able to make you feel you met him too.

Now for a description of life on the coral islands +, by special request, a short demonstration of Cats Cradles, more correctly called String Figures, mostly from the Gilbert Islands.

The 16 Gilbert Is lie due north of Fiji + straddle the equator, all are coral islands, barely 10 ft above sea level, but only 11 of them are atolls, [illegible] [illegible] lagoon + the surrounding reef upon which the surf pounds with loud unceasing roar. The other 5 islands are reef bound. Coral atolls...

Mrs H.E. Maude
12, Wallaroy Road,
Double Bay

Life in the Islands.

I have called my talk "Life in the Islands", a rather vague title, I'm afraid, as there are so many different ways of living and so many different kinds of islands.

Firstly there are the natives, living on the whole, an untroubled, unhurried, free life, depending mainly on themselves for their well being; then there are the plantation owners or managers, with their settled homes; the missionaries, also with settled homes but with a certain amount of travelling to be done from time to time visiting their churches and schools; and finally there are the Government officials, who are liable to be transferred from island to island and district to district at frequent intervals, and occasionally from one colony to another.

The islands themselves are of four main types; ~~come under four main headings;~~ the high and the low islands, those with fairly frequent communications with the outside world and those isolated from the main stream of civilization.

In this brief talk I shall try to give you some idea of the life of a government official and his family in the South Pacific over a period of 20 10 years in the British Colonial Service.

Twenty 5 years ago there was no year of training in England as there is now; a young man joined the service and was shipped out to learn on the spot. It was difficult to get accurate information about the ~~isla~~ islands, or even how to get there; you sailed for Australia and hoped for the best; if you were newly married, as we were, you wondered at times if the romantic islands of the South Seas would come up to

expectations or if you would be horribly homesick.

The voyage to Australia was, of course, full of interest and excitement; the first coconut palms seen at Ceylon and the native canoes; would the Gilbert Islands be anyting like that, we wondered? Then Australia, and a bad introduction at Fremantle, where we were horrified at the hundreds of unpainted corrugated iron roofs and shocked to find, even in those days, that things we bought in England quite cheaply were two and three times the price out here. Then Adelaide, a beautiful city with lovely gardens and wonderful wisteria and we felt happier, but seek as we might we could find no one to tell us how to get to the Gilbert Islands. Eventually we came to Melbourne, where we found the offices of the B.P.C. and were told that we were to sail from Sydney to Ocean Island on a ship called the Nauru Chief.

So in due course we found ourselves on board the Nauru Chief, sailing through Sydney Heads with a good sea running. I thought she was the most dreadful little ship I had ever seen, and I was used to small ships crossing the English Channel, but I learnt in after years to look upon her as a veritable liner, full of luxuries; such is the chastening effect of comparison.

Ocean Island appeared after 10 days, a lonely hump of land barely 300 feet high at its highest point and two miles across each way, and so two months out from home we were faced with the new life we had chosen. The sea was calm and a very deep blue, the hot sun was tempered by the trade wind, the police boys in the whale boat waiting to row us ashore fascinated us; the only blot on the landscape was the customs officer, what an unromantic calling!

At Ocean Island we learnt the rudiments of office work and

At Ocean Island we learnt the rudiments of office work and tropical housekeeping and heard a lot about "the Group"; in other words, the Gilberts Islands. Mails arrived every six weeks or so, stores were obtained from the B.P.C. store, also meat and a few vegetables and ice; there was electricity, tea and dinner parties and dances, so life was fairly civilised and comfortable, except I might add for the mosquitoes which took a fancy no doubt to my fresh English blood! There was an enormous population on this tiny spot, there must have been close on 2,000 people, which included Chinese and Gilbertese labour, Gilbert and Ellice police, about 700 local natives and 150 Europeans. We experienced the dreaded westerlies, bad storms that blow up so quickly that sometimes a ship is caught at the moorings and blown on to the reef. I think about 5 ships have been lost at Ocean Island.

After 2 months my husband went round the Gilbert Islands with a senior officer recruiting labour for the Phosphate Commission, and I was sent to Tarawa to stay with the Headmaster of the Government School and his wife. Tarawa is a large lagoon island; that is an island with long narrow ribbons of land forming 2 sides of a triangle and a reef forming the third side & continuing all round the outer side of the island. The land is only a few feet above sea level, varies from 50 yards to ¼ of a mile in width and is divided into islets; some tiny, also many miles long.

There is a tremendous fascination in these coral islands and it is a source of never failing wonder to pass from the deserted reef side of an island, with its glare and wind and the roar of the tumbling surf, to the calm and tranquil lagoon with all its wonderful colours and the sleepy palms leaning over the water's edge. Along the shoreline can be seen the brown thatch of village houses and perhaps a bevy of children splashing and laughing. I think in no other part of the world can one gain such a sense of peace and tranquility. In these delightful surroundings, living in a cool house of native construction, I learnt how to cope with Cook boys, house boys, wash girls and the ordering of stores for 6 months at a time. It was a tremendous help, as you can well imagine, and later I was able to set about ordering my own household with confidence. Bread making!

After we had been five months in the Colony my husband was assigned to a district of 5 islands in the Southern Gilberts, and we set off, with all our goods and chattels, in the new Government Schooner, 100 feet long and guaranteed to make 80% of her passengers extremely sick.

One of our 5 islands had a spacious house; and there we made our headquarters, and when visiting other islands took supplies for a couple of months only. Here we had about 8 European missionaries 2 or 3 miles away, and one mission had a wireless station. There was no store, no ice or refrigeration, no electricity and no doctor. Ships called infrequently and erratically, but when a mail came in it was certainly worth having! On the other four islands you were completely isolated once the ship had left and you never knew just how long it would be before you were picked up again.

We loved it from the first, which was lucky for us; the only real

hardship in my own case being the terrible and too frequent trips in the government schooner, which at times reduced me to delirium. Within 3 months my husband was faced with a religious revival on one island, in which two natives were killed, and a horrid murder on another island, so within a year of leaving England, we were out on the most isolated islands and up to our necks in trouble. However, it had its humourous side and we never regretted coming out.

In the first 6 years we moved from one district to another 10 times, the packing each time took about 10 days and the brunt of this usually fell on me, as my husband had to carry on with his work. Apart from this there were short journeys from island to island and visits to the various villages. On one occasion we walked about 30 miles in two days, as the island had a very shallow lagoon and to call at all the villages by boat, a canoe at the high tides would have taken weeks.

Our food was mostly out of tins, - we never had fresh meat but we could usually get good supplies of fish, chickens (though scraggy), eggs, Pawpaws and very occasionally breadfruit. A few vegetables can be grown with skill, care and patience, except during droughts, but we were seldom long enough in any one place for things to have time to grow. nature ~~nature~~ - Warship.

We found the ~~natives~~ Gilbertese were a very pleasant people; they are Micronesians, not very dark skinned, have straight hair, are very honest, very loyal and were only too glad to teach us their customs, games and handicrafts. Life was absorbing in those lonely islands; there was always someone wanting something and you felt you were doing a worthwhile job. At one time, during a bad drought when the natives were undernourished, I opened a baby clinic which I ran on Truby King's "Feeding and Care of Baby", and we certainly saved a few babies. Weaning

My husband, after some years, put up a scheme whereby natives with too little land in the Gilberts might be taken to colonise the Phoenix Islands. This was accepted and several busy years followed, first exploring the islands to see if they were really suitable and then choosing the settlers and establishing them in their new homes.

There is no doubt, I am afraid, that the isolation and the lack of fresh food eventually tells on the health, both mental and physical, of Europeans. I developed appendicitis after 2½ years and had to wait 3 months for a ship to take me away. My husband's health broke down after 5½ years: we had done two tours of duty of just over 2½ years and had had only 3 months in New Zealand in between them. We found when we returned to civilisation that we didn't like it much and we were terribly shy and diffident. My husband was still not well after a year, so we spent another year being sent here and there; we went to Honolulu for a conference and had 6 wonderful weeks there and later went to Zanzibar for 7 months, but I'm afraid that didn't appeal to us very much, and we were thrilled when we were told we were to return to the Gilberts.

At the beginning of 1940, my husband having become ill again, we found ourselves in Fiji; missing our Gilbertese horribly but enjoying to a certain extent the amenities of civilisation. A car, after 10 years without one, was a joy; the security of doctors nearby and shops to buy what you needed was certainly an advantage, and fresh food, especially for our small son aged 1 year, outweighed our nostalgia for

the low islands. The mountainous scenery and the tropical forest did not appeal at first, it was too lush and different, but long drives along winding roads, beautiful beaches and the rather spectacular Fijian houses could not but please in time. The tall and graceful Fijian girls with their bushy hair, long skirts and smiling faces; the men, also with bushy hair and fine physique, the flowering trees, the lovely gardens and the birds were all delightful. Then there were Indian shops, tailors, shoemakers and jewellers and the native market in All Nations Street, not to mention lots of friends, both old and new.

We were to be in Suva for 6 months and then were to go to Pitcairn Island for 3 months to reform the local administrative system, introduce salaries and revise laws. The first issue of Pitcairn stamps was to be brought out while we were there and for this purpose a post office official was to join us a month later. I ordered my usual 6 months stores, to be on the safe side, and in July we left Fiji for N.Z. and Pitcairn. Once again we were faced with something entirely different.

The actual landing was by boat, as usual, but instead of a trim whaleboat, uniformed boat's crew and crisply given orders we perched as best we could on piles of luggage and stores, our own and the islanders, in huge heavy boats manned by a motley crew of descendents of the mutineers of the Bounty. The landing can be very bad but we were lucky, and after a short wait outside the breakers with everyone argueing as to when to go, the man at the steer oar gave the word and we dashed in. Unfortunately it was too dark to see Bounty Bay where the mutineers landed, or Ship Landing Point which towers 500 feet above, with a few boat-sheds nestling at its foot on a narrow strip of land.

* May I digress for a moment to refresh your memories with the salient points of Pitcairn's early history? Early in 1789 the Bounty , commanded by Capt Bligh, had completed loading breadfruit in Tahiti and was ready to sail for the West Indies. The crew had had a wonderful 5 months in Tahiti and there was a good deal of friction on board as they settled down for their long voyage.

This discontent came to a head 25 days out from Tahiti when the crew, under Fletcher Christian, mutinied, put Bligh and 18 others into a boat and set them adrift and then sailed for Tahiti. Here after some discussion all but 8 of the mutineers stayed, and incidentally were later arrested and taken back to England. Fletcher Christian with his 8 followers, Tahitian wives & a few other Tahitians set sail for some unfrequented isle. Eventually they landed at Pitcairn Island; they burnt the Bounty close to the shore in Bounty Bay and settled down to spend ~~the rest of~~ their lives completely isolated from the rest of the world. In a very few years all the ~~white~~ men except John Adams had been murdered or had died, and 20 years after they had first landed the chance visit of an American vessel disclosed to the outside world the existence of the ~~little~~ settlement which consisted of 10 women, 25 children and John Adams, ~~who~~ Adams had become the benevolent patriarch of the little community; he had undergone a strong spiritual conversion and, first teaching himself to read and write, had brought up the children of the mutineers on the Bible and the Prayer Book.

The Pacific is, above all, the ocean of islands: thousands of them. There are high islands, such as Fiji, Tahiti and Pitcairn, volcanic, fertile and well-watered; coral atolls such as the Gilberts, the Ellice Islands, and many others, typically low, long, narrow necklaces of islets strung on a coral reef and encircling a blue lagoon; the land being only a few feet above sea level. Ocean Island, which comes into my story, as well as its neighbour Nauru, are raised atolls, with pinnacles of dead coral up to 300 feet high, and that tremendous deposit of phosphate, which makes them so well-known, lay in between the pinnacles.

What I hope to do ~~now~~ is to give you some idea of what it was like to live on coral atolls such as the Gilberts; on Pitcairn, which is one of the high islands; and on Tonga, which ~~like Ocean Island~~ is a mixture of the two.

In the far off days when everyone travelled by sea and not by air; ~~when seasoned travellers made sure that they had what was called 'port' cabins, which meant port side out to India and starboard side back home,~~ my husband and I were given First Class passages from London to Sydney as our introduction to life as members of His Majesty's Colonial Service. We were not told, however, that the voyage would be our last experience of luxury living for many years to come - ~~in fact my husband was told that we could spend the odd weekend in Tahiti, which would have taken weeks to reach if there had ever been a ship going there.~~ in an encyclopaedia.

All we could find out about the Gilberts was that they lay across the equator and that the inhabitants wore conical hats: and apparently nothing else. It was quite untrue, of course, for the Gilbertese were all, or just about all, Christians, and covered themselves from neck to knee. (Here is their conical hat, which was actually worn only by

fishermen).

We travelled from ~~Sydney~~ in the Nauru Chief and were delighted to find that most of the crew were islanders. The ship seemed appallingly small after the P. & O. liner, but positively huge in later years when viewed from the level of a coral atoll,

In due course The first highlight was our arrival at Ocean Island, where the sea was the most marvellous blue I have ever seen and we were rowed ashore in a large whaleboat by a crew of Colony Police. Sir Arthur Grimble, of Pattern of Islands fame, was then the Resident Commissioner. He was ~~also~~ interested in string figures (cat's cradles to most people) and for the first time in my life I saw two people making patterns together which were very different from the cat's cradle we all did as children. I was thrilled, for I had been making string figures on the voyage out from instructions in a book my husband (an anthropologist) had given me; and I have been making them and writing books about them ever since.

~~the wrists and fingers~~. I had 4 groups of children in 3 hospitals for crippled children in Sydney; their ages ranged from 8 to 16 years, both boys and girls, and they were all enthusiastic performers. Many were immobile but had perfectly strong hands, others had difficulty in making their fingers work but these children never gave up, if a finger couldn't pick up a string they picked it up with their teeth and put it on the finger. When I was not there they taught one another and if a new patient arrived they usually knew at least one figure before my next visit. When they had visitors to entertain they included cats cradles in their programme . One advantage string figures have over other forms of handwork is that they can be done perfectly well even if you are flat on your back, or on your tummy for that matter, as lots of children are.

I chose the simpler patterns for hospital work and I was amazed how quickly the children

NAURUAN EPISODE

By Honor Maude

Towards the end of 1937 I was able to fulfill a long felt wish by spending 6 weeks on the island of Nauru collecting string figures, an ambition originally inspired by the illustrations of unique and complicated patterns in Caroline Ferness Jaynes' book 'String Figures', published in 1906. I was very fortunate to have this rare book; my husband gave it to me in 1931. The illustrations had been made from original string figures collected by an Australian, Ernest Stephen, who as a youth, was left stranded on the island in 1880 by a hard hearted ship's captain. There he married an islander and settled down and it was some years before his father, who had sent him on the voyage for his health, discovered where he was.

I should have begun the story by saying that the only reason I was free to go over to Nauru was because Harry was going to the Phoenix Islands on his first exploration with some Gilbertese 'old men' (as they were called) to see if they were in fact suitable for the Gilbertese people to live. I knew that he would be away for a long time and it was quite easy for me to get a phosphate ship with an overnight trip to Nauru and just hope that I would get another phosphate ship to bring me back again – which in fact I did. I was able to stay with the Australian Administrator Commander and Mrs Garcia and go out to the village every day, mostly on a bicycle, and I gradually collected a few old men, not many, and one younger man who could show me the string figures. First of all they produced a very long, very fine string made out of plaited human hair and they generously gave me one. The language, of course, was difficult in a way but as I only had to copy with my hands what they were doing with theirs, that was all right and now and again they would do a figure and bark at me 'amwangiyo' which was a series of movements to finish a design and as I had learnt those movements somewhere else, that helped me tremendously. There was another series of movements to finish off the figure to the best advantage and I had learnt already that one too before, so each morning I would go out to the village and collect what I could, be taught a certain number and then go back to the Residency and there spend the afternoon having a rest and then writing up the figures I had learnt and seeing that it was all correct.

The next day the same thing happened. So for about 6 weeks I went on learning. I had some social life amongst the Phosphate Commission staff and was very well looked after by the Garcia's.

Ernest Stephen must have been an unusual young man to have learnt string figures, and having learnt them to somehow attach them to brown paper or some such thing and when an anthropologist called some years later, he handed them over to him and he gave them to his sister, Caroline who was interested in string figures and had already been to exhibitions in America where they showed off various American designs. So she put the illustrations (she had no instructions on how to make these Nauruan string figures) of them in her book, and it was these illustrations that I saw and was very anxious to acquire. By 1937 when I reached the Island Ernest Stephen had been dead some time, and string figures had almost ceased to be used except by this group of old men. In the early days of German occupation they used to have competitions with these string figures but they no longer held such gatherings.

The old men would put their heads together overnight and see how many figures they could remember or I would point to the pictures in Caroline Jaynes' book and see if they could remember how to make them, and the next day they would show me any they could remember. I got some but not all of them, but I did get this wonderful collection of some very complicated patterns and also a few new designs – they started to invent them, but largely after I left the island – I had to go when my six weeks were up and rejoin my husband - by this time we had decided that most of our traveling around the Gilberts were over and that we might start a family so I had become pregnant and I eventually went down to New Zealand where my son Alaric was born. On my way back 3 months later we stopped briefly at Nauru to be confronted by Commander Garcia with a whole lot of string figures pinned on to a board and I had to see in about 48 hours, (and with a 3 month old baby to look after) how many I could collect. I did get some very interesting ones but not all of them. Recently, with our interest being in string figures coming to the fore in America where we now have the International String Figure Association, some of the very keen members have been working on the Nauru string figures and using, as they say, the same methods as the Nauruan's would have used, they have solved all the figures that I couldn't get. They can't be sure that the Nauruan's made them exactly the same way but they do have the results. If I had not gone to Nauru when I did and collected those string figures they would have been lost forever because shortly afterwards, in 1939 the War started in Europe and we decided that I should go to New Zealand with the baby. It so happened that Harry was shipped out with me because the Japanese had been coming in and out of our island lagoons in the night time when our men wouldn't have done it

– they knew the place thoroughly but Harry was sure they would be in the Gilbert Islands within 24 hours of declaring war: well we know now they didn't declare war they just bombed Pearl Harbour. Anyhow, I had my precious collection and I shuddered to think how easy it could have been lost. It traveled around the world with me – every time we were moved. It even went to Zanzibar and I took it, I'm sure, to most places and didn't lose it. Over the years I went to it and improved on my instructions and eventually, when we came to Australia, I was asked by the library in Adelaide if I would finish the book and it was published eventually in 1971 so that from 1937-1971, through all the war years and all the traveling, those string figures went with me.

One episode, which has nothing at all to do with string figure, but I must mention –

One night when the moon was right, Mrs Garcia – she was very game and she wasn't very young – decided that as it was the time to go out fly fishing we were to go out with the police boat (not in a flimsy canoe) and catch flying fish. Torches were made out of bundles of very long coconut palm leaves, which were tied at intervals, and off we set. When we got to a certain place and they would stop rowing and we were all given a net and the flying fish started to fly. I think we would all scoop up flying fish as fast as we could. We were not to worry where we 'chucked' it – on to somebody else and then into the boat – and then they would cut the string and go a little further and cut the next tie and have this bright light going again and we would all catch as many flying fish as we could. I really think it most exciting thing I have ever done and I got the second best catch, which thrilled me enormously.