1930/1

Ocean Island.
Central Pacific.
January 12th. 1930.

Dearest Mother,

Hora is using my Pen, which leaves me with an excellent excuse for writing in Pencil, especially as Mr Grumble has at last produced the beautiful one I left in England. I expect Hora has told you all the news in her letter since she seems to have been writing for hours, so I'll merely narrate some of the items which I imagine she'll omit.

I haven't honestly got Hodson's books - if they go through the library shelves they'll find (in the proper places) the books they're after even though some of them may not be crossed out in the Librarians list of Books lent out. The only book I've got of theirs is "Stewarts' Pacific Handbook" which I am returning though it's of no possible use to them.

Mr & Mrs Armstrong go to Butaritari either on the "Tunarova" or on the "Tauru Chief" early next month. The "Tunarova" is leaving Suva on the 18th & the "Tauru Chief" Sydney on the 15th so they should arrive about the same time. The "Tauru Chief" will then proceed around the group on her annual repatriation & recruiting of Gilbertese to work in the Phosphate fields here.

Holland, the Headmaster of the Colony Educational Scheme, is at present in charge of the administration of both the Central & Southern Gilberts districts & is very overworked. Mr Grumbles' plans at present are that Hora is to be transferred to Tarawa to get the

correspondence etc. up to date and I'm to go too to learn my administrative duties and act as assistant to Holland. We will go if we go at the same time as the Armitages and would be in Tarawa, I imagine, about a month and then come back to ocean Island so continue to send your letters here.

Mr Gamble seems terribly pleased to have us in the service - whenever we meet he ignores everyone else & talks Anthropology by the hour, it's quite embarassing. Armitage has become definately & obviously jealous which is a pity - he's of the type that believes Anthropology is "all rot" & considers the native should be kicked & generally taught to consider himself an inferior being. His one idea seems to be to rush around to other peoples houses "to have a good time together". His wife, however, has character & may influence him.

We're both very attached indeed to our Bungalow here - it's really an adorable little house and just the right size for a couple without children, we've got a lovely climbing plant with big yellow flowers trained in front and creepers along the Veranda trellis work. The secret of life out here, I'm convinced, is to keep working & occupied all the time; most people here, especially the women, are always bored & fed up and I'm certain it's because they find themselves nothing to do - those who keep themselves busy here seem always happy & fit, and there is <u>such</u> an enormous amount to do that one wishes the days were twice as long.

One feels a bit of a hero living in this house since it's only a little while since Bentley, the then accountant, blew out his brains just by where I'm sitting - the bullet holes are still in the

roof. His brother, the present accountant, lives in the house now, only a week before our arrival he & his wife and two children were sent down to Sydney on a more or less compulsory leave. There was a Police guard in their bedroom every night for some time as they endeavoured to kill each other on several occasions, I believe; particularly, funnily enough, when the moon was full. The first Mrs Bentley (the wife of the one who shot himself) immediately married Mr Leembruggen, the Secretary, a very nice man from what we've seen & heard of him — they came back from leave in Colombo with Miss Waithman.

No native will come near our house after dark now, as besides old Bill Bentley ending himself here — everyone who has lived here has taken to drink, both the brothers Bentley & Clarke, the present Treasurer, whose now reforming. I consequently keep no drink in the house & both of us are teetotalers, so you needn't alarm yourself.

Clarke, as I believe I told you, ran off with Spain's wife (Spain was the last Cadet.). Spain now refuses to divorce her, perhaps since she has come into some money, & Clark is miserable. Clarke, as a matter of fact, is very decent indeed & the doctor & ourselves, being fast friends, are steadily reforming him. The doctor has gone to live with him, as he's getting very introspective, and we have him around as often as we can. He came last night & drank nothing but an orange Squash & played Halma! He calls us the "Infants" and as I'm told very fond of us so we may be able to do something.

He told the Doctor that he'd never met any decent people since he was a kid and that "seeing the happy home life of the Maudes had made him realise what an ideal married life could be, and had made him

feel very unsettled."

I'm telling you all this so that you can get some idea of the problems we have to face, & of the characters of the miscellaneous collection of 'no'er-do-wells' who've drifted to this End of the Earth. The Bentley's are grandsons of Billy Hayes, the famous Pacific Buccaneer & Pirate, of whom you've probably heard, and they've retained the instincts of their grandfather.

January 22nd.

I hear the "Mellina" leaves for Sydney tomorrow, so I must stay up and finish my letter.

Phyllis Armstrong died on Saturday night, so you can imagine the state we're all in. Hora and I were having tea at Clarkes' house with the Doctor and Clarke - soon after 4 a Policeman came running to say that the Doctor was urgently wanted by Dr Lusk (the Ocean Island Doctor) to help, as Mrs Armstrong had been badly burned. We all went out and could see volumes of smoke ascending in the distance so the Doctor and I went ahead to the scene of action. Hora & Clarke lagged a bit behind & ran into Lusk who sent them back to find Naphine. Hora found the Naphine & the correct Hypodermic syringe which was wonderful as no one else had any idea what was wanted. But for her knowledge there wouldn't have been any chance of saving Phyllis.

When I reached the Armstrongs house it was one blaze from head to foot - it was a big 2-storied house (the only one on

the island.). The roof soon fell in and the whole thing was destroyed in an incredibly short space.

Apparently Phyllis had been making cakes in the Kitchen while Armstrong was writing in the Dining-room. The fire was not burning properly and it is presumed she poured Benzine on it to make it blaze up better (which it certainly did.). She had tried to do it two days before and had been warned by the Doctor, but, poor thing, she was an absolute child mentally and understood nothing about the serious side of life. Armstrong rushed in when he heard the terrific explosion and found her ablaze - it was some time before they could get out as the whole house was burning, and Phyllis had all her clothes burnt off her except her knickers. She was burnt terribly about the face and breasts and directly Dr. Macpherson saw her he entertained little hope of her recovery. However they gave her all the treatment possible (luckily there was tannic acid on the island.). She was very brave and spoke clearly & calmly. Honor was to be the chief nurse as both Phyllis and the Doctor wanted her, so she went to bed and was to come on duty at midnight.

However at about 11 she died so we woke Honor up & got her to collect some clothes from among Phyllis's possessions to put on her. Armstrong was pretty badly burned about the hands and face and it was a terrible job looking after him - Clarke and I had to keep him

quiet with various lies till 2 in the morning when we told him the news of her death and immediately injected so that he fell asleep soon after. He had to be kept drugged ever since and is a pitiful sight with his nerves all gone - just weeping and sleeping. One of us has to stay with him all night and Hara stays with him pretty nearly all day - He won't see any other woman but her, and hates her leaving him, so she sits there and strokes him and talks to him.

It's really unbelievable the hold Hara's got on the affections of the staff here. Grubb talks of her as the "most splendid woman who has entered the Colony" and the Doctor will trust no one else with his nursing cases - he says she's a natural born nurse. The Doctor, Clarke and Grubb live at the Residency now, with Amotary, and Hara manages the whole Household, ordering the food etc. She's really been splendid - even when the men around her were weeping with the tradgedy of it all, she went round calmly, helping the doctors. I have been proud of her lately with everyone calling her "the little woman".

You can't even faintly imagine how tragic it has been to us all out here - Phyllis was such a vivacious little thing and everyone liked her - we found out after she died that she greatly liked and admired Hara. She told the Doctor the day before she died that she "wanted to be just like Hara".

She had ten days of married life, and now Andrew is a widower at 22. Its the most terrible thing that has ever happened in a Colony where tragedies are always occuring. Its' thrown everything out of gear and to pay them. Naturally its' knit us all together a tremendous lot. H.H. comes down here for dinner and keeps his mind off it all, both Clarke and H.H. spent this evening with us — the poor Doctor has had Dysentery through it all and will rush about and won't take medicine. Swinburne, of course is out of it all - everyone hates him. He came and lodged a complaint with H.H. that Hare was nursing poor Andrew, — he thought his wife should do it as she was the senior lady and it might be talked about if Hare did it. Andrew, of course, hating the Swinburnes like poison would have quite possibly passed away had either of them come near him, not that Swinburne would have cared. Swinburnes mind is a cess-pit and H.H. has said that he'll never listen to anything Swinburne says under any circumstances. He told Swinburne what he thought of his mind and methods in terms that would have made any other man resign at once, but by the next day he was commencing his intrigues again. His one thought when anything happens is "How can I gain out of this?" However there's no-one on the Staff who don't hate him so he can do but little harm, as one hates so anyway.

January 23rd, 1930.

I was acting Secretary to the Government over the new year till Seemburggen came back and now I'm acting Colonial Treasurer so I'm writing this in my new office. I keep the Keys of the Colonial Safes and deal with all financial transactions so it's a great responsibility but in a Colony like this one never knows what one is going to be tomorrow. Dr Macpherson took on the job of Officer in Charge of Constabulary & did it remarkably well.

Mr Grimble talked over the Cadets etc with Clarke & the Doctor. I heard that he is very pleased indeed to get me out here — He said that I had the finest intellect that had ever entered the W. Pacific Service which pleased me no end. Last night he told me that he had definately decided that I was to be the next Lands Commissioner. He's endeavouring to get the last of "Government Anthropologist" created for me — It may come to nothing but it's worth fighting for as it would make a great difference should I apply for a Varsity job. I find the work out here very easy indeed.

Our present plans are to go out on the Recruit in about a fortnights' time. I shall leave Hone in Tarawa with Mrs Holland (the wife of the Headmaster of the Educational Scheme), while I tour around the Group

on the Recruit. We'd probably be back here about the middle of March. Mr Grimble has promised to take us both round in the "Tumaroa" afterwards to show me the Lands Commission Work.

I don't know if I told you that Grimble had hauled in a C.M.G. He got it on the day of his arrival here and we had great celebrations after.

The Climate seems more beautiful every day. We have day after day of beautiful Sunshine — just like a Summer at the Bungalow only not quite so hot, & with delicious soft breezes. It's certainly not a bit sticky as I had expected. The temperature is pretty well constant at 79°; and a dry 79° must be about the world's best temperature.

Officers on tour in the outlying Islands have rations of necessaries doled out by the Government — I was very amused to notice this morning that, when touring, the Ration of Toilet Paper is:-

District officers — 4 pieces per day.
Assistant District & other junior officers — 3 pieces per day.

One can't escape Precedence in this Service!

I'm very anxious that Father should write to

J.D. Potter.
145, Minories.
London. E.1.

& ask him to order through any

bookseller the following admiralty charts.

Gilbert Islands – No. 731.

Northern Gilberts – No. 732.

also possibly Ellice, Union, Phoenix – No. 1830.

I do hope you'll get them – they're very good and on No. 731 especially you'll be able to see exactly where we're living at the moment – they'll only cost a few Shillings. They'd look awfully nice on the wall in Father's study. In future letters I shall write on the supposition that you've got them and that you'll know where I mean when I talk of such and such a village on such and such an Island and a Canoe race between such and such points. You've no idea in what detail they give the Islands and how well they show the Configuration of the atolls. Look especially at the enlarged Map of Beru on 731 for that will probably be our future home before long. our district will comprise :-

Beru – Headquarters Island (Pronounced like Peru only with a B.).

Nukunau – (Pronounced Nūkunau.)

Onoatoa – (as Spelt.).

Tamana – (as spelt – no accent on any syllable).

Arorai – (Pronounced Arrow-ri.).

It's the nicest and most compact little district in the Colony, and with by far the best Headquarters Bungalow. Directly I pass my exams I cease to be an Acting District

officer and take up as it were a roving Commission all over the Colony as Lands Commissioner — or so we hope, if all goes well.

I must stop now as half the morning has gone and no work has been done. You needn't worry about us out here as we're very happy and have plenty of friends who like us — we've never regretted for an instant coming out here (a not sure I envied on Ocean Island.). I don't believe we could have possibly found a place a job to which we would be so entirely suited — it's almost as if the life was cut out to fit us. The chances of promotion from here, too, are excellent and better than anywhere else in the Colonial Service — it will probably take 10-15 years to get promotion to a Senior job somewhere (Grimble is to go to Mauritius as Colonial Secretary) but when it comes it should be rapid. On the other hand I may be transferred almost at once. In any case one is not forgotten out here. Money is really our only trouble, but with everyone in the service broke I suppose we shall get used to it.

I must stop now & post this.

Tons of love from

your affectionate & loving son.

Harry.

1930/2

Ocean Island.
Jan: 23rd 1930

Dearest Lady Maude,

I think Harry has told you all about the dreadful tragedy although he won't let me read what he has written. Poor little Phyllis, married for ten days & then in a few minutes so badly burned that she died (from haemorrhage) a few hours later. She was twenty three but an absolute child & leaves her husband a widower at 22. Mrs Grimble has said it would be nice if I wrote to her mother, I don't know what I shall say to her. I did not see her after the accident & I am glad. Her mother won't even get a letter from her after her arrival here, we know she wrote some but they were all burnt. Anyhow I suppose it is no use weeping for her, she had a very happy life & did not know she would die, we have now to concentrate on Armstrong whose hands are very badly burned & who naturally is very ill from shock as well. Phyllis' presence here

seems like a dream & yet it is impossible to think of her as dead, even though I went to her funeral. I wonder if the newspapers will get hold of it. I think Mrs Grimble is sending me to Tarawa with Harry in about a fortnight. Harry is going round the Group & I aim to stay at Tarawa until he comes back, it will be a nice change.

Much love to all from

Honor.

1930/3

Tabiang
Ocean Island
February 2nd. 1930.

Dearest Mother,

We don't seem to have had any letters for ages, though I suppose it's really only a month - no boat has been in from Sydney since the "Astoria" which brought Mrs Armstrong, though we've had a mail from Nauru, one from China on the "Tokula", and one from the Group, on the "John Williams".

Everybody (bar Hone) is ill and in bed so you can guess she has a hectic time. Grimble, as a matter of fact is all right except for indigestion - The Doctor, who had dysentry (Amoebic) before Mrs Armstrong died, has had it aggravated by having to do all the work during that period; Armstrong is just becoming convalescent; Clarke, the Treasurer, has dysentry; while I'm in bed with Tonsilitis or Quinsy or whatever you call it, since it's Sunday. Hone has her time full looking after two households of men - they're very naughty up at the Residency and only take their medicine properly when she speaks severely to them.

I.I.M. We've just heard that Grimble is in bed so that completes the list. I couldn't get to bed till I closed the office at 12 yesterday though my temperature was over 100 and I felt beastly - somebody had to be up and doing the work or the whole Colony would fall to bits!

I think I told you I was Acting Colonial Treasurer &

very fond of it! The more I think of the Service the more I laugh - it's exactly like a comic opera out here. I've never had an ounce of training in Treasury work and practice in my life and yet here I am running both the Treasury Depts. of the whole Colony (for the Accountant is on leave and I have to do his work too) without any officers to assist me. As you can imagine, at last I've got plenty of work to do and it's great fun - Hana has been deputed to be my assistant as soon as she can be spared from nursing, but I fear she's a broken reed to rely on as far as knowledge of Treasury practice is concerned.

I believe there are £100,000 in money, Stamps and Valuables in my safes so you can imagine the turmoil when I couldn't find the keys on Friday - they were eventually retrieved from one of my drawers - I always panic after I get home that I've left the safe unlocked. Yesterday salaries were due and after paying out several hundreds accounts wouldn't balance and it took ages to get things straight - It was the Treasurer's fault as he never gave me any Receipt or statement and had taken money out without even putting an I.O.U. in.

We hope to go in the "Astoria" about Thursday as she's doing the Recruit instead of the "Nauru Chief" - It's a Swedish Motor Vessel & I believe, very comfortable (as is the Swedish custom, the Captain & Officers have their wives on board.). Hana is being dropped at Tarawa and I'm going on to Nonakai, Abaiang and then down to Kuria, Aranuka,

Tafiteuea, Nonuti, Beru, Arorae & Tamana – on the way up I shall probably drop off at Beru and wait for the Colony vessel and come up on her to Tarawa & so to Ocean Island. It will take from 4–6 weeks.

Wednesday – 9 p.m. We had a terribly busy day today as a mail came up on the "Town Chief" and I had to assess the Customs Duty payable on all the parcels as well as on luggage etc. – I'm afraid I let the natives off very lightly as it's such a shame robbing them when they've so little. I believe the "Astoria" and we are leaving on Saturday. The "Amarosa" arrived yesterday – she looks tiny and rolls and pitches even in dead calm weather; however she seems a beautiful yacht and has auxiliary engines though I don't believe she'll use them much (Father would love her.).

Poor Hero has caught my Tonsilitis, I'm afraid, and has not been at all well during the last two days. However, I'm quite all right again now and full of beans.

We got three letters from you by this post and one from Father, three from Hero's Mother and a Cake from Ruby and a letter and big parcel of Curtains from Mr Justice Boys, Allahabad – it was nice of him and they're ripping Curtains. You can't imagine how we look forward to getting letters nowadays – they made a lot of difference out here, and they'll make still more when we're in the Group.

I do hope you've got the Admiralty Charts by now as in our next letter we'll be referring to all sorts of places in

the Group.

Friday, February 8th Tomorrow I believe we'll be going to the Group although it's been put off many times. We've been shutting up the house and putting everything away and it's now getting on for 1 o'clock in the morning.

I don't know how they'll get on without Swinburne & myself. Clarke will be just well enough to do a bit of Treasury work but the Doctor is still bad and he usually acts as Officer in Charge of Constabulary; Armstrong seems to be developing Dysentry and in any case is ineffective — Gumble has definately developed Dysentry but he'll have to hold the twice weekly Court in his room while he lies in a chair. I'm quite well again now and feel as fit as can be and Hore has quite recovered and is blooming.

Hore has to give the Dysentry people injections twice a day (Emetine, I believe — into their arms.). She muccs the stuff and does the whole thing herself. I believe she'll soon be capable of doing anything on earth. I don't believe that anywhere else we'd be able to obtain such a valuable and thorough training and one which would teach one better to face any eventuality that might occur.

I don't know if I ever told you that Hore cuts

hair beautifully nowadays – she cuts all the Resident peoples' hair now as everyone agrees she does it better than the average barber in civilization. Somehow she caught just the right knack and gets everything beautifully even and smooth, with none of the amateurs ridges. She cut everyones hair this evening after tea and were hoping it will last till we all meet again.

Im as bucked as can be tonight, as I approached Grimble with a tentative suggestion that on a certain very important point of Grammatical construction all textbooks and his own teaching were wrong, and I put before him an alternative theory which I had evolved. I must tell you about it as it was a terrible bit of audacity and after a long discussion he has, I believe, been completely converted to my theory. It will mean a drastic alteration in the spelling of Gilbertese and the re-writing of Grammers. The Pronominal Suffixes (and all verbs must have them) will be immensely simplified;- for example:-

Tangir-iko = I love you, will in future be writte Tangir-ko

Tangir-io will be Tangir-o. and so on. It would seem a small thing to you but it involves the admittance that the Pronominal Suffix you is -Ko and not -Iko; him is -o and not -io; me is -a & not -ia; thee is -io & not -iia. This will simplify Pronouns immensely and will involve altering a fundamental rule of the language – that the root of the verb adds an -i when the

object is plural. I have always maintained that the Root of every Regular Verb (& all are regular) must end in an -i, except in the case of the 1st Person Singular, when the -i is omitted for the sake of Euphony.

It will make still more difference to the Theory of the Language; for we can now derive all personal suffixes from Demonstrative & Possessive Pronouns which is in itself a proof of my contention. I know that, not being conversant with the Language, you'll neither understand my remarks nor appreciate their significance, but I feel I've got to get my discovery off my chest somehow.

We were thrilled about your Burglary - I only wish I had been there - you've left us in horrible suspense about the reasons for Mrs Dillard leaving, you said you'd tell us next week & as that was the last letter of the bunch we won't get another for months. all your accounts of Sturo and Cold make one glad to be in this Paradise of a Climate.

I must stop now as it's terribly late and we've such a lot to do still.

Tons of love from your devoted

Son,

Harry.

Tabian,
Ocean Island.
February, 8th
1930

Dearest Lady Maude,

We are off on our travels again tomorrow, unless a Westerly comes up in the night, which is always a possibility. I am going to stay in Tabawa, it will be a great help staying in someone else's house in the Group, it will give me an idea of how to start on my own. We shall be away for 3 or 4 weeks & then we shall have about 3 months more here before going to Beru (BERU), which is to be our headquarters. I expect we shall go there in June or July.
It will really be very nice to have a holiday, this nursing has been rather tiring, all four men at the Residency are more or less ill & Harry has indulged in Tonsilitus. Dr. Macpherson says he can't think how Manson Baks passed Harry's tonsils, they should be out, they look enormous, I had a look down his throat. Dr Macpherson is determined to make a nurse of me & I am now learning to give injections, I have given him two so far & I can't say that I enjoy the operation, I don't mind once I've got the needle in, it's that horrid jab! However, I think he is very brave to let me do it, he says I don't hurt him which is very nice of him. We are getting some Burgundy

from Australia as the Dr. says I am anaemic, as usual, & it is a good tonic, I shall make Harry have some too, he looked rotten while his throat was bad but is much better now. We had tea at the Residency to-day, we seem to have tea there most days, & I cut the Dr's hair, Mr Clarke's & Harry's, I did Andrew Armstrong's a few days ago so you see I am getting quite expert. I must do Mr Grimble, it would be so nice to have cut the Resident Commissioner's Hair!

I have found a bill from Jeanette Roielle for £1.17.6, would you ask her if we paid it? Also one from Gallichan which I enclose, please pay it for us & add to our account. Please thank Mona & Joan for their presents & letters, I will write to them from Tarawa. We were thrilled about the burglary, it would happen when we were not there. Olive seems to have been very brave, & Snap evidently did his level best to make you understand that something was wrong. I remember we all used to say that Snap would merely wag his tail if a burglar ever did enter the house! We received four E.P.'s. this mail, all about the gales which must have been terrific. We heard by wireless that there were very bad gales & it was nice to hear the details, even if it is two months later! We do love our

mails, they are worth waiting for. We had a very good one this time, Woman's Home came, two other magazines, which by the way had been opened because you sealed them & there were about 4 different remarks stamped on them, the last one remarking that the parcel had been through some particular office & that they had sent it on this time but in future it was liable to be returned. We had two Blackwood & one Cornhill magazine from a lady on the "Naldera" who lives in Tasmania, the childrens parcel, books from Mother & a parcel of 6 curtains from Mr Justice Boys, wasn't it awfully nice of him, he even sent me tape, rings & wire! Also a parcel from Ruby.

I'm longing to hear about the "domestic upheaval", what bad luck, so near Christmas. I don't understand about the leather bag, I don't remember promising to make one for Aunt Edie, I'm very sorry if I did; the one you mention I made at Wadhurst. Leather is hopeless out here, it is always mouldy, I'd love it if you could find some nice bag for me, not raffia it goes so limp & damp. Phyllis brought out a very pretty one with her, it was much stiffer than Raffia but I don't know what it was, soft cane?

We have had so much packing etc: to do that it is now 1.30a.m. & I think bed is indicated.

I enclose some photos which Dr Macpherson gave me, please show them to everyone & then keep them for us.

Much love to you all,

Yours affectly

Honor

1930/4

Saturday - 9th. Feb. 1930
7 a.m.

Dearest Mother,

at last I have completed my selection of magazines - I guess you thought I never should, but I wanted to (a) find out first whether they'd be a real necessity to me out here and (b) make the most careful selection before investing. The magazines, which otherwise would be a quite unwarantable extravagance, having been chosen primarily with a view to developing my literary style, and it is my intention, with their aid, to sell enough articles to more than cover their cost.

I am keeping Boots' list as I gather you have, can obtain, one; and I need it in case any amendments are necessary. you very kindly offered to send us out one or two magazines, if we specified their names, but I really think, since you send us Woman and Home & the Weekly Post etc. that you will have done more than your share if you wrap up, & pay the Postage on, the magazines I have selected. However if you have any magazines in the house at any time, or can beg or borrow any, do please send them out -

we shall be more than grateful and with us the majority of the Colony, for most of the staff drop in here to read our Magazines and Books. all is quiet to the mill out here — Wild West, adventure, American, English Fiction, Serious Mags. and even Juvenile — they're worth there weight in gold to us exiles, and I read everything for good selling plots. Mrs Crumble used to make £50 a year out here by articles & short stories and he is coaching me — I have also 3 courses on writing. I wish you'd also rout out from the books I left behind one entitled "Journalism for Profit" — please send it out.

I enclose a Cheque to cover the cost of the Magazines we want and the list is here annexed.

Tons of love
from Harry.

Please excuse my writing but everything is in a bustle due to our impending departure to Tarawa in an hour or so.

1930/5

Ocean Island.
March 18th 1930

Dearest Lady Maude,

We were sorry to hear the sad news of Grannie though I suppose it was better so. We did hope she would live till we got home again. As a matter of fact one of your letters are missing, we received Nos. 1 + 3, in No. 2 you must have told us of Grannie's death as all we heard of was the funeral. It must seem very funny without her. In one letter you said that she had a lot of pain + that her heart was failing so we guessed at once when you wrote of the funeral.

I suppose Phyllis Armstrong's death was in the English papers as you heard about it so soon. We are in trouble again as Dr. Macpherson who has been ill for over two months with dysentery has now developed appendicitis + we do not know whether he will have to be operated on or not yet. He will probably come + stay with us soon as there is no one to look after him properly at the Residency, it is all very worrying.

We both enjoyed the Group tremendously, everyone says we look awfully well too, I put on 3½ lbs in weight in 4 weeks + I think Harry is fatter two, he looks it. We are now taking Bemax + feeling very fit. I loved every moment on Banriki + did not want

to come back to Ocean Island. It is certainly much hotter here & there is no nice bathing or sailing. I sailed in various kinds of crafts, sometimes for 2 or three hours at a time. One day Capt. Holland took me across the lagoon, about 10 miles, to the headquarters of the Native Government, we went in the N.C's boat, quite a large sailing boat, it took 2½ hours to get there & about the same getting back again, we had a good wind & raced along. I also went in a canoe, which is the nicest sailing of all, it cuts through the water & is so buoyant; the canoes have an outrigger which comes right out of the water at times & a native has to run along it to put it back again, it is very exciting. We had rather a nasty experience the night Harry arrived in Tarawa from the Group, the steamer was not sailing until the next day so the Hollands said we had better go back to them for the night. We all left the steamer about 8 o'clock in a sailing boat but being towed by a launch. A squall came up as we left, it was pitch dark, rough & windy & the rain was torrential. We were very soon soaked to the skin, the launch driver was apparently mad as he towed us in such a fashion that we were in danger of capsizing & kept shipping water. After about half an hour Capt. Holland

remarked that he couldn't imagine what the launch driver was up to as we were about to strike the reef, sure enough, as he finished speaking there was a tremendous crash, the launch had stuck fast. We of course could not free ourselves quickly enough & we two went on the reef where the waves bumped us up & down. Fortunately the shore was quite near & we were not in danger of drowning, but it was not pleasant. After about ½ hour, during which we got off the reef & on again several times & nearly went under the stern of launch, with waves breaking over us all the time, it was decided that we must get to the shore. Mrs Holland & I had two boys each who got us out of the boat & on to our feet, the water was above my waist & must have been much higher on Mrs Holland as she is only 4 ft 11 ins, we then walked across the reef which is very uneven & rough, being live coral & after about ¼ hrs. wading reached the shore of Betio, which is a long way from the island of Bairiki. We had to walk another mile on the island to reach Burns Philp's store & houses. It poured the whole time, we had mackintoshes but no hats or umbrellas so the rain went down our necks & the road was ankle deep in water. Eventually we reached the house of a Mr & Mrs Jones where we were given a change of clothes

& hot whisky while the men got B. P's launch ready to take us home. It was still raining but we got home in comparative, about mid night & were very glad to get to bed.

In my opinion the food on the Group is far better than here, chickens & fish with home grown vegetables & plenty of eggs is good enough for anyone.
The Hollands have an "Icyball", a refrigerator which consists of two balls, one has amonia in it & the other glycerine & water, & one ball is heated & then put in cold water & eventually it makes ice. There is an ice-chest attached to it which is as cold as can be, we hope to get one too.
The scenery is certainly very fascinating though very much the same wherever you go; they say that if you have seen one island you have seen them all, but of course there are variations.
I should love to see Anne Muriel & hope we get home before she is very old. Bobbity must be delighted, has the babe got curly hair? I am sorry for Muriel's sake that it was not a boy but baby girls are much nicer. I trust the Sayer family will not be too beastly.

I have 8 fowls now which I brought back from Tarawa. They haven't started to lay yet, but

island fowls are not good layers. I am getting half a dozen white leghorns from Sydney for laying purposes. I should like to have a dog, I daresay we shall later. The kitten has grown tremendously but is an absolute villain, the smudges here are due to her. She climbs nearly to the top of our mosquito nets & I am sure will tear them to bits, but she is a most intelligent & lovable little thing.

I hope Maudie will be happy in Africa, how long does she propose to stay there? I suppose Walter will be home soon & Mary next year? We were glad to hear you were thinking of going to Guernsey for a holiday & hope it came off. It was very nice of Auntie to do my ~~fortune~~ fortune — the "friend" I should think is Mrs Holland, she is ever so nice & we are now great friends, she is English & comes from Yorkshire.
You need not worry about this "young married couple" as they are very satisfied with their life & very happy. The sickness predicted may come of course, but I think we have had our share of trouble just lately. I am now in charge of the doctor & have to take his pulse, temperature & plaster him with antiphlogistine to ease the pain as they don't want to operate here if they can avoid it. I put the first lot on last night &

he seemed to be much easier when I left him to come home to bed. Can you imagine me nursing an appendicitis case?

I am afraid there is always a long gap between mails but once we are in the Group it will be even longer, about once in three months. Harry has promised to tell me the code we use & I will add it to the end of the letter. There is a wireless station on Base, belonging to the A.M.S. but we shall be able to send occasional telegrams.

Will you send me one or two dress lengths of Crêpe de Chine please, I think one patterned one & one plain. Clothes wear out so quickly with the constant washing. Please let us know if you have any money of ours, if not we will send some & then we can have things sent out to us. Sybil is getting me some sandals & Liberty fabric, I have told her to ask you for the money so please let me know how are account with you stands!

Harry is taking his first exam in a few days & is in an awful funk. I hope he gets through because if he does he will be the first Cadet in the whole of the W.P. to have done it under 6 months.

Heaps of love from us both

Your affectionate

Honor.

1930/7

Ocean Island,
April 4th 1930.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We have had two mails since I wrote last. We were very sorry to hear of Uncle Herbert's death, though not very surprised; poor Aunt Mabel, I will write to her as soon as possible. At present we are packing as we are going to Bern in a few days. Poor old Snap, I hope his leg heals well & won't make him lame; those beastly busses.

We have been having a fairly trying time, nearly everybody has been ill & Harry is kept very busy. Mr Trumble has had nearly three weeks in bed & now looks quite fat, the doctors think he has an ulcer somewhere in the region of his stomach & he has to diet, I am afraid he will have to go down as soon as the High Commissioner has been. Mr Clarke, the Treasurer has been very ill with gastric trouble & 'flu, the Secretary has had 'flu & phlebitis, so Harry has had the whole office to run. Mac does the police but he goes to Australia to recuperate in a few days & also to meet his wife who arrives in Sydney about June 26th. Harry, I think has had 'flu but has not been in bed, he simply had to stay up & I had 'flu fairly badly

We are going to Beru in the yacht. Mr Gamble is coming with us to introduce us to everyone, he is also going to take us round our district. five islands, Beru, Nukunau, Onotoa, Tamana & Arorai, Harry says look at chart No. 731. Our house is situated on this point ☞ can you make that out? There is no furniture there at present except a few string beds but new stuff has been ordered, there is no mosquito proof room either so I have to make one of netting for the time being. We are looking forward to getting away from Ocean Island & all its ills & worries. Please send our letters to "Island of Beru", via Ocean Island. We shall get mails about 4 times a year, & I think at least you should get our letters at least 6 times a year. The D. M. S. have a wireless so we shan't be terribly cut off while we are on Beru. We shall have to tour our district, spending about 2 months on each island & then we shall be quite cut off but I will get mails off when ever I can.

Harry says the mail is closing so I must stop, I'm sorry this is so short but I've been ill & also have written a long letter to Mother as I've just heard of her operation. I'm jolly glad it is over.

There will be another boat in a few days so you will get another letter then. Many thanks for

the book, I shall certainly read it. The cash's ribbon came too, it was just what I wanted.

Heaps of love from us both

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

1930/8

Ocean Island,
Central Pacific,
7th April 1930

Dearest Lady Maude,

We have not had the missing letter or letters yet but hope to have a mail in about 10 days time. Harry's exam is over & he has done very well indeed, he will give you details I expect. anyhow Mr Grimble is very pleased & he has made a record for the Western Pacific, no other cadet ever having passed in so short a time. Dr Macpherson is staying with us, he had his appendix out & came to us 10 days later, he is not up yet but getting along nicely though very thin. Mrs Macpherson should be here about July, I hope I see her before they go to the Ellice. Mr Grimble has been here quite a lot since we returned, he & the Dr. & Harry talk for hours, always "shop" but very interesting.

I am feeling very irritable at the moment, I have some sort of rash all over my legs &

also on my arms, it nearly drives me dotty sometimes. I am bandaged up with calomine & carbolic at night & dab myself all day when it worries me & now it is a little better.

I have started some parchment shades for the electric light & think they will look rather nice when finished, unfortunately I haven't much time so I don't know how long that will be.

We have done absolutely nothing since we returned except two to the office & visit Mac in hospital, but the time flies The kitten is still a kitten & as full of mischief as ever, it stays with Dr Macpherson nearly all day & likes his toes & makes a nuisance of itself generally but everyone loves & admires it.

Much love from

Honor.

1930/9

Ocean Island.
Central Pacific.
April 7th. 1930.

Dearest Mother and Father,

I'm afraid I missed the last mail as I was so busy writing & reading for my exams. I had been working pretty hard and at length decided to burn my boats and give a months notice so I had a hectic time rounding off my weak points. However in the end it was a triumphant success. I was examined in:-

The Gilbertese Language.
The General Orders of the Government.
The Colonial Regulations.
The Financial Regulations.
The Ordinances and Kings Regulations.

One is allowed two years for the Exam and most people pass at the end of their second year if at all (the last Cadet, Spain, failed to pass till the end of his sixth year.). Mr Grimble is very bucked indeed as I have easily created a record for all Fiji and the western Pacific - the shortest time any Cadet had previously taken was eleven months and I passed at the end of my fourth.

One had to get a grand total of over 60% and one was not to drop below 50% in any paper - However my marks were 93, 97, 95, 98 and 86 out of a

hundred, a an average of 93½ per cent. So there was never very much doubt as to my passing. H.H. is sending a special despatch to the High Commissioner on my achievement and he has already sent a personal letter. Everybody had said the one couldn't possibly hope to pass in so short a time so I was glad to be able to show them that it could be done easily if one put work before social life and drinking, a thing which few will do out here. However I was very relieved to hear the results as I took a great risk and everybody would have laughed at my tenerity had I failed. Even now I can hardly believe my results — I had only hoped with luck to have just scraped through.

The Gilbertese was my ~~difficult~~ chief worry as it was not easy to master even the rudiments of a language in four months only having the evenings free to work at it — I had 45 searching questions on every sort of part of speech, sentence and idiom, and luckily was in good form.

I'm afraid it will not improve my relations with Armstrong, who is a lazy young slacker of the worst description — He arrived over seven months before me and hasn't opened a book yet. Being no longer a Cadet I, of course, have seniority over him whereas before he was always insistent on the fact that he was the senior Cadet and would therefore have the pick of all openings.

I thoroughly enjoyed my trip around the Group and Hare seems to have loved Tarawa. I thought our

future district (Beu) was easily the nicest of the three, and the H eadquarters house is a perfect dream — the nicest house, I believe, that I have ever seen — all native of course. The district is a very difficult one to look after and was Grumble's old district when he started — it's a case of kill or cure there, the mission either gets one the sack or one gets on by beating the mission.

our five little islands — Beu, Nukunau, Arotoa, Tamara, and Arorae — are beautiful beyond description and the people most lovable though hard to deal with. The climate too is very nice and healthy though climatically the whole colony is a paradise. The only barrier is that we shall be absolutely isolated and without the sight of a white face for months on end, so we shall have to rely entirely on ourselves, in sickness and health, for everything, which should prove a good training in self-reliance. (When Mrs Grumble had a child, for instance, Mr Grumble had to deliver it; and Mrs Grumble had to nurse her husband though a long attack of ~~dysentry~~ dysenty.). H ow is ordering enough food for a year and we hope to leave in some three months time. My plans are to spend two months on Beu straightening things up and then 2 months on each island of my district — September & October on Nukunau, November & December on Arotoa etc. We should be back on Beu within a year.

It will prove most interesting, I'm sure, as the

Southern Islands are quite wild and, except for Onotoa, have never been visited by a District officer for more than a day at a time — no one has ever yet lived on them, I believe.

One can't help taking a great liking to the people too. Men & women, they wear nothing but a little grass skirt, just as one imagines from stories — very graceful they are too, tall, upright men and firm breasted women — and the skirts look so picturesque as they swish when one walks. In Tarawa and the more civilized Islands they usually wear the Mother Hubbard except when in their own villages but our own district has remained as primitive and unsophisticated as they were before we came — indeed, there are no whites except at Beru where Eastman the missionary resides (a tobacco man, from all accounts and one who will have nothing to do with the Government.).

Dr. Macpherson has just had an operation for an appendicitis and is staying with us to Convalesce — he's recovering very quickly but now Nora has developed a rash and so cannot come down to the office. She has been looking the picture of health since she came back from Tarawa and put on 3 lbs. in 4 weeks there. She's as rosy cheeked as ever and healthely so.

H.H. comes down nearly every evening and we all talk shop for hours together — he considers that I should be the Resident Commissioner by the time I am 35 though I have no such hopes myself. It was fine

luck him getting it himself and he is a far abler man than I shall ever be. It is virtually impossible to rise above a District and £600 – no one has done it except H.H. It all depresses me terribly as there are no prospects and no hope and no discrimination between slackers and workers.

There should be a mail up in a fortnights time which will be a blessing as we haven't had one for ages. I'm afraid I must stop now as the mail is closing and we've a lot of official letters still to be got off.

Tons of love from
your affectionate son
Harry.

1930/10.

Ocean Island.
May 10th 1930.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We have at last finished packing & all the cases have gone down to the yacht. I have had to supervise all the packing, I had two police & two prisoners to do all the hard work. Harry has been tied to the Treasury all day – half the night & won't have time to write but he says he is having £50 sent to you (by this mail probably) & will you please re-open his account with the Midland Bank, they know his signature so there should be no trouble. We want to send some money home each month as instead of paying us in English money we get Australian which means at the moment, with the Australian pound only worth 15/-, that we are losing tremendously. However drafts to England are paid in English sterling. Harry is sending in a memo to the Treasurer asking to be paid in English Stirling as it is supposed to be the currency used in the colony. Imagine, we lose £100 a year on £400, goodness knows what my Gamble is done out of. I see our visit home fading into the far far distance unless something is done pretty speedily.

This place is absolutely hopeless, there is no organisation

nobody ever knows, or cares, about anything, it's sickening sometimes. To-day the yacht has come in, the Captain doesn't know where he is going from here, how many passengers he is to take or how much cargo & apparently it isn't anyone's job to tell him. Until Dr Macpherson went down to the jetty there was no one to supervise the loading of our luggage or to tell the police what to do. The yacht is drifting & there is a big swell which makes loading terribly trying but nobody cares. They even kept Harry at the office all morning & asked him to go back this afternoon just because the secretary wouldn't take over the treasury, it's a half holiday too. Half our luggage is probably at the bottom of the Ocean by now. I'm afraid this is very depressing but I had to get it off my chest!

I have sent a photo of Ocean Island to you via Ruby, all the buildings on the right hand side are the Phosphate Commissioners works & houses, our house was on the left & up on the hill. Mrs Clarke, who is ill & living with Dr Gould, lent us his house for the last few days here which was a great help. Dr Gould has lent me suitcase full of Books to take to Beru & has also sent some mummy apples on board for me, he is one of the B.P.C. doctors but is Govt. M.O. Ocean Island as well & ever so nice.

I haven't had a moment to write to Aunt Mabel, I will write on the yacht if I'm not ill, in the meantime please give her our love.

I don't know whether Guides or Cubs would be any good out here but I should think very probably they would, when I can speak Gilbertese fluently I shall see how the land lies.

I am afraid you will think me very unkind but everybody writes so sympathetically of Andrew & feel so sorry for him & really we all think he has recovered marvellously, in fact we are rather disgusted with the lack of feeling on his part, I honestly think Mr Grimble was more affected than Andrew. He is due back in a few days so we shall just miss him. I don't think he is at all suited to a life in the group, anyhow not without Phyllis, he is too fond of social life & is always saying he "likes to be amused".

Did I tell you I was taking three kittens to Bern? They are all friendly now & play together. I woke up this morning with the two tiny ones playing on my chest! Their names are Tabirea, Tituaabine & Tanentoa, don't they look fine? I shall collect chickens out there & probably a pig.

I hope Muriel is quite settled now & that Mona & Joan like their new school, what is it

called? Mr Clarke is the Treasurer, yes, he is a C. S. man & also fairly senior. He has been pretty ill & will still be laid up for a week or two, much to his disgust.

I'm afraid I must stop as we have to go on board. I hope to have lots to tell you about Bern next time, it will be a haven of peace & rest after this place.

Much love from us both

Your affectionate

Honor.

1930/6

Banaba,
Tarawa,
Central Pacific.
May 13th, 1930.

Dearest Mother,

At last I seem to have some spare time to write a letter. I suppose Honor told you about everyone being ill - she was pretty bad herself but the Group should pick her up, she looks much better already. I had to act as Government Secretary and Colonial Treasurer at the same time though my temperature hovered between 99 & a hundred most of the time. It was a horrible visit and poor Honor had to do all the packing, with the help of two police & two prisoners - I had to work till after 12 at night to keep things going all at once, & hardly ever saw Honor. However it didn't last long and the Secretary is now about.

I'm not sorry to have left ocean Island - though it wasn't as black as it's painted, it was, however, extremely wearing on the nervous system.

I'm really thoroly alarmed about finance. The present terrible financial crisis in Australia is going to hit us badly. Though English money is the legal tender we are exchangely paid in Australian notes - and so on my very slender salary I'm only getting 14/- in the pound. Australian prices, which are ours, have increased out of

recognition – he just received a Stationery Bill (Government) from Australia. The Same (Thin typewriting) Paper that we get at 5/6 a ream from London we have to pay £1-2-6 a ream in Australia. I ordered 400 linen-backed, foolscap sized envelopes for Headquarters – the price in England would be a few pounds at the most – the Australian price is now £22. This is a sample of the general price-level. The position with us is that with the utmost of economy & careful living – no alcohol, no cigarettes, no entertaining – we're actually less money in the bank than when we arrived. I suppose the position will mend, otherwise we shall have to leave the service & try our luck in America as so many do from this way, but it seems so unfair that people who live in some of the hardest & loneliest spots of the Empire should be in continual distress & straightened circumstances. Mr Gumble, Clarke & Armstrong have all private incomes & so don't feel it so much but nearly everyone else is living in advance of their salaries by having to borrow from the Government. Swinburne has just had to borrow another £150 – it's the cost of mere eating that uses up all one's resources – with no indigenous foodstuffs & imported things at Australian prices + freight at £6 per ton + 25% it's awful – butter, for instance, is over 4/– a lb now by the time it reaches one's house.

Having got that off my chest I feel better,

we leave here, where we're staying with the Hollands, tomorrow at midday and should arrive in Blue two days after that – the 16th. H.H. is going to help us settle in and is leaving about the 19th. for Ocean Island.

I have arranged for the Crown Agents to pay you a draft of £50, which should arrive soon after this letter. It's useless having an account in Australia, in depreciated currency, so I'm sending it home & keeping a small one at the Bank of New Zealand to pay off bills etc. I paid a Cheque of £50 (australian) into the Treasury here & the Crown Agents will pay you £50 (sterling), the Colony thus paying some £20 on exchange. (The Treasurer cannot understand it owing to his fundamental ignorance of any economic principles.). With the money would you please reopen my account with the Midland Bank, Hill Street and ask them to send me a Cheque book, I shall use the account to pay off English Bills. They already have my Signature & you might give them my address.

It is, as you know, several degrees cooler in the group & the climate is just wonderful. Day after day of mild Summer weather with cool breezes. Nora and I are sitting out of doors under the palms with the Ocean Reef just behind us and the waves

dotting on the edge, which is a long way off since it's low tide. Through the trees one can just catch a glimpse of the Lagoon which is marvellously coloured today. The land stretches for twenty three miles along the lagoon but it's all cut up so that, except at low tide, a canoe is the only practical mode of proceeding. The whole place exudes peace and calm and beauty so that one could cry with it and though it's midday & out of doors it's beautifully cool.

I do hope Honor will like her new house at Bera - it's really a gem, and every single thing is of native construction and type. I shouldn't wonder if it's the finest native house in the Pacific

H H is calling me to business so I must stop. I hope this catches the "Golden Eagle" from Tarawa to Honolulu & San Francisco as you'll get it soona via America

Tons of love for

Ya devoted sa

Harry

1930/11/11

Thornhill Road
ALLAHABAD

Sunday 15.6.30

India

Oh, dear! That is not a mark of affection (though it might be in fact) but just an exclamation because I have returned from the verandah to my writing table perspiring at every pore. It is the best of our hot weather and in the verandah it is anywhere about 114°. Before breakfast this morning I designed the conversion of a box to take my typewriter, gave the carpenter personally full instructions, and myself marked the measurements in pencil. He said he quite understood. Now just when I was sitting down to write to you I was summoned to the verandah to be shown the box all in pieces, tidily planed, with no record of how the pieces were to be reassembled and all my measurements and markings planed off and lost, and I have had to do it all over again. I expect the man

in private life has a vote and is an ardent Home Ruler! Are your Gilbertese home-rulers? However, a great motto is "Keep smiling" and I always tell Kitty (when she is momentarily in despair) that it is because these people are what they are that we are eating our bread and butter here!

I sent off the parcel on 16.12.29 and it took about two months to reach you! Your letter of Feb. 20th took about two months to reach me! I have waited several weeks because you asked me to send you a snap-shot of myself and I was expecting each mail some reproductions from England of a snap-shot which some people like. They have not come even by this mail. I was snapped in a deck-tennis group on my lawn and the Kodak people (in Sydney) rather cleverly took me out of the group but had to draw in an arm which was hidden in the group and gave me a deformed arm. I have tried

the Kodak people in England and it is for the result
that I was waiting, but I do not
27, Thornhill Road,
ALLAHABAD.
want to wait any longer lest you might be wondering
whether your letter had gone astray. You would not
dare to think that I should not answer!

You say you "expect to go to Bern about June"
and while I write you may be there. I should
love to have a snap shot of you, one of Harry,
and one of your own first home. I am so very
glad you find yourselves pleased with your
surroundings. I could very well myself do without
many of the trammels of an older so-called civilisation
and I do shed a good many of them.

I do wonder what Morning Star is really like. Does
he wear an English shirt hanging out all round and
bright blue sock-suspenders on bare legs as many
do here? Anyhow he is a stout fellow for he has done
his job with my parcel and your letter in reply, and I

really was a bit wondering when they told me that I could not insure.

I in fact heard about Phyllis Wentworth's sad death before I got your letter. I had spoken about you to a girl here and she sent me a cutting from a newspaper. These tragedies just drop from the blue. I have just this morning been putting a wreath on the grave of a man whom we buried a week ago and whom I liked immensely. He was playing polo, his pony fell, and he died within twenty four hours.

I am due to sail for England on June 28th and expect to have about ten weeks there and bring Kitty out with me. I expect most of my time there occupied with my son's affairs. He has just got into Ford's Motor Co, the English branch, and I want to see that he is really satisfactorily settled.

27, Thornhill Road,
ALLAHABAD.

You do not say what you do for exercise. You must'nt get fat! I can't allow that, or anyhow you must send me a snap-shot before a diet of cocoanuts and fish has had that disastrous effect. I know! I will send you one of my patent (not yet) deck-tennis quoits. I have invented one and am going to patent it when I get home if Lilywhite's think it would take on. Two people like the rubber one (which is also expensive), and the boardship ones always vary in weight, size, rigidity and everything else. If I don't send you one, just send me a cable "how then! what about it?"

It is good to hear that you have got a colony yacht, though I suppose it has to distribute itself over a wide area. Still, it will improve your communications.

Now, don't forget those snaps. I promise to send mine along. The very best of luck yrs affectionately

L. Bonaparte

 1930/12

Tabuki-ni-Beru,
Island of Beru.
June 22nd. 1930.

Dearest Mother and Father,

We've now been on Beru Island over a month and we're beginning to get quite settled in. I've no doubt Homer will tell you all about the house as she's very enthusiastic about it. We're situated in the middle of the native Government station though well away from other dwelling houses and a long distance from the nearest village, which is down at the south end of the island. In front of us, there's the sea and a short pier with a thatched house on the end of it - about 50 yards off. If the sea is at 12 o'clock, at 11 there's a fine flagstaff with a huge white, lined base (from which I addressed the Island at the King's birthday.). The Union Jack flies as long as we're at home, but directly we go anywhere else on the island a lagoon, it comes down. At night we hang a lantern from it as a beacon for any ship. at 10 o'clock there's a Store-room, where I keep the Rations for the native Headquarters staff. I discovered a large case of Dynamite in it yesterday and am now wondering what to do with it! at 9 o'clock there's the huge Government Maneaba, a meeting-house for the Islanders - here the people sit wherever I summon them for some purpose or other. Behind us are

the Female and Male Gaols, the Native Scribes' Offices and the Carpenters shops, and at 3 o'clock there are the dwelling houses of the Native Government Heads - The Magistrate, Chief Kaubure, Scribe, and Chief of Police. These are about 100 Yards away. The Gaols and Scribes' Office are big buildings, built of Coral and limed all over - thatched roofs, of course. They had a mud floor, but we had them all cemented (remembering lessons learnt when we did the floor of the Garage at St. Quens) and they're now to be cement washed on top. They look very fine now. We having Wooden beds made and installed, instead of the old ones mad of Coconut branch strips.

There are only 3 Male and 3 female prisoners now though there were 10 of each at one time since we arrived. The Male prisoners help Hone with the house all day - one wake in the kitchen, another looks after the Garden, and all are under Hone's orders. There are 14 Kaubures - who are elected at my suggestion, 2 by each village; such is the theory, but in reality I appoint them - They are the members of the Island Parliament and hear disputes, try cases etc., and are responsible for the good order of their villages. The Police are also 2 to each village - they live in the villages but I have 4 down each week to work on the Government Station, they take this in turns so I always have a Chief of Police & 4 police on the spot. Besides these there are always on the Station the Native Magistrate, who is the head of the Island Government, the Chief Kaubure and the Warder and Wardress, and

a Station messenger. My own Headquarters staff consists of Ete, my interpeter and clerk; Teikaowa, my orderley, who is a dear but when I never see as Hora uses him all day about the house, a Carpenter and at the moment, an extra native Lands Clerk.

Contrary to my expectations, from morning to night it's' wak, wak, and more wak. I neve have a minute to do anything in as I wak every available moment from 8.30 in the morning to 8.30 at night when we go to bed. It's' fearfully interesting and I don't mind doing it a scrap. As a matter of fact it's' mostly optional, as there being no supervision, one could go to sleep for a month and no-one would be the wiser. Spain, a typical slacker, never does a stroke and yet he's' still in the Service, and Anderson & Baverstock do very little. On the other hand, if one wants one's District to progress and improve one must wak constantly and do it all oneself. The natives are only children - even the Government officials and my own interpeter - everything has to be told them in words of one syllable and they're incapable of thinking out anything for themselves, but rely on one for everything. The responsibility is very great indeed - I have to give decisions on every conceivable matter and there's no white man I can consult with nearer than three days sail and even that is only possible every three months or so. Though he's only 7,500 people in my present District were the absolute Father and Mother of the

lot - there are no specialized experts as there would be in India or elsewhere - so I have to design and direct the building of all Public Works, advise and make orders about all Agricultural matters, make such Laws as I think necessary - under the name of ~~[illegible]~~ Roland Regulations, - and then try and punish offenders under my own laws! I'm the Customs officer on all incoming & outgoing ships, the Treasury officer in control of all disbursements - several thousand pounds a year, also the Collector of Revenue and Taxes, amounting to about £2,500 a year. I have to try all Divorce cases and issue Divorces. I'm the Postmaster of the District (a worrying business) and manage the Mails as well as Registered Letters, Money Orders, Postal Orders etc. As police officer I have to control 64 police and as Superintendent of Prisons I have to visit and supervise 10 gaols. This is all apart from my normal job as District officer, which compels me to have personally reviewed the case of every prisoner in the ten Gaols - this takes a lot of time as one has to go thoroly in to every case to do justice and then amend or confirm it. I've given three Divorces this week - all for Adultery - though if everyone who committed adultery was divorced there'd be no-one married on the Island except ourselves.

There are five on the station who I don't know what to do with - two are Women demanding protection from attempted incest - I've told them to sleep in the barracks; and the other

there are Lunatics a reputed to be such. My medical knowledge is not sufficient to give me confidence in any treatment for them, and the nearest Doctor is three days sail away.

We a lovely office with a huge new office Table which must have cost a fortune and two Cupboards and various shelves and file trays etc. We just obtained a big new Safe from Sydney which looks most imposing & takes an army to lift - there also a smaller safe for messy things. Knowing how I hated writing letters you can imagine me having to write between 3 & 4 official ones every day - there seems no end to the Returns and things Headquarters wants, and we no less than 67 different forms in the Cupboard. As a matter of fact I like writing official letters - they are very easy once one gets the knack.

Directly things are straight here I shall go round the rest of our District - Nukunau (? Francis), Onotoa, Tamana (? Byron) and Arorae Islands. I expect that will be next month by the "Nauno" - Burns, Philp's trading schooner - I may leave Nora behind as we only be away a week or two. After that we hope to go to Island after Island, staying a month a two at each - no one has ever done it before so there ought to be plenty to do, straightening things out.

We have the finest bathing in the Gilberts just outside our front door and Nora and I often go out about

five in the afternoon and take a canoe out into the lagoon and swim around about it. There are no sharks but plenty of small fishes in the lagoon, which is very shallow in most places.

We were both very upset at hearing about Snap, I do hope he gradually gets better. I took our own dog "Koura tetake" for a walk along the sands this afternoon and he raked after birds wildly just like Snap – the birds play with him by flying just in front of his nose. He also went in the lagoon after fish and made them jump out of the water in all directions.

Our dog is about 3 months and Tan colored – He is called "Koura Tetake" after the Tropic bird of that name, who in the legendary past flew from Samoa to Butaritari and eat a great many people – The Tropic Bird was about the same color as our dog, hence the name. Our cats are called "Nei Taabiria", "Nei Titabine" and "Nei Tearei", all called after various semi-mythical Goddesses whose stories I'll tell you about some day. "Nei" is approximately equivalent to our "Mrs" and is prefixed to all women's names, as is "Ten", "Teng", & "Tem" to men's.

I have become an absolute teetotaler now and never touch anything. It seems that in England it doesn't matter but out here it's quite different. Moderation is

apparently very hard to maintain if one can judge by the amount of drunkeness among the whites, including government officials, and it's as well to be on the safe side – in any case I can't afford it. I hear by the last mail that the acting District officer of the Northern Gilberts has been found lying incapably drunk in a maneaba among the natives, and he's been trying to use private influence with the Governor of Fiji and others to get made a confirmed District officer ahead of me and without being a Cadet, which he couldn't be, having no qualifications except a thirst.

We never touch water either, except at Tea time in Tea, but confine ourselves to the products of the Coconut palm. I have about 2 pints of fresh Toddy for breakfast and 2 pints of "Nomoto" or the Milk from the young Coconut for Lunch. at Dinner I have another 2 pints of "Karewe" or fresh toddy. Toddy is fine body building stuff and being fresh is vital for us, I consider. Hone has the same drink diet as myself though she doesn't drink quite so much. We both love toddy now and yet were practically the only Europeans in the group who drink it in spite of it's fresh food value – No one else can get over the initial nastiness, and of course there are many with whom Coconut does not agree – thank heavens were not among them or we should indeed be in the soup for it enters into our meals at every turn.

I never let the Clerk touch the correspondence, although most D.O.'s seem to leave it entirely in their hands. He's much to uneducated really to do it and I write out all my letters in pencil and then type them myself on my own typewriter (I'm getting a Big new typewriter for the office - a Barlock, - but it hasn't come yet.). Consequently I can now type pretty well as fast as I can write and I much prefer typing - I got a Manual on the subject and with Honor's help I learnt it properly with all the correct fingering, and now my Despatches are recognised to be the best turned out in the Colony, including Headquarters' - at which we're both very pleased. I think it's worth it though it takes some extra time and considerable expense in stationery to the Government, as I make it a rule never to erase but simply tear up the page and start again.

We ordered 50 big Pilot files in which I hope to re-arrange and classify all the correspondence also a Card Indexing Cabinet in which I hope to enter every incoming and outgoing letter - as it is I enter them into a Subject Correspondence Book which we devised. We classified, numbered and indexed all the files in the office - some 200 - In fact the office is a great joy to me and I'm continually devising new efficiency schemes.

Father asks in his letter if there's any Snakes or Scorpions - There are no Snakes anywhere - there are a

few Scorpions in places – tiny things who have never been known to hurt anyone. The Climate is indeed superb and during this time of year at any rate, must be about the finest in the ~~world~~ world. The temperature does not often reach 80° except perhaps at midday but hovers somewhere between 73° & 79° most of the time. Day after day of wonderful cloudless skies and terribly beautiful sunsets that make one almost weep to look at them, and very often a little refreshing rain at night. I just wear Khaki shorts and an open-neck khaki shirt and feel very comfortable and Honor wears a cotton frock with very often her hair down ~~as~~ like the women of the country.

The Islanders are always bringing us presents, spears made out of sharks' teeth, model fish traps etc – if you'd care for any we'd be glad to send you some. a fine old man from the village of Nuka-n-te-wa brought me a ~~n~~ magnificent spear yesterday – it must be fully 9 feet long (we just measured it and it's just over 9 feet.), and very valuable – it's bound with human hair.

I wonder how Mandie will like Kenya – I often wish I'd gone into that service though I expect I'd have loathed the snobbishness and pettiness of the White population. And it's dreadfully immoral from all accounts.

We're sorry to hear about Mabel but I'm absolutely certain she'll be back with you before long now. We got an

idea that she imagines she'd be lectured and reproached if she came back. If only she realized that no one would mention any past happenings to her but that she'd be genuinely welcomed by all, & one she'd come home as quick as her pride would allow her. She ought to come out here and stay with us, she'd love it. Maudie too should come and stay with us, she could come on a one class boat quite cheaply.

I wonder if Father would consent to another job. Mr Grumble is always telling me to persuade him to come out as legal adviser to the Government — he'd be absolute boss and although the salary would be small according to Indian standards, you'd have an excellent big, furnished house, a perfect climate and congenial surroundings. You'd live at Tarawa by the lagoon. Absence of legal knowledge is no bar atall as all that is wanted is a person of some weight and standing to serve as a moral influence and example in the Colony and to add the weight of his experience to the questions which puzzle the administration at the moment. He wanted Walter to come as the new Superintendent of Public Works at a salary of £500 + a furnished house but I didn't think Walter would look at it so it's been filled for the moment — I wonder if you could find out from Walter if he'd like it as I think I could get it for him. The salary is fixed at £500 per annum + a furnished house + allowances which should bring it up to £600 —

I know it sounds tiny besides Indian salaries but his expenses would be small and he'd have no establishment to keep up. His job would be to go round planning, designing and supervising the construction of the various public works in the Colony — a very easy job, which has been successfully performed up to now by the various District officers who have no mechanical knowledge. Most of the construction is of native materials.

I must stop now as it's getting late and I should be in bed. The Warship "Veronica" should come on Tuesday and take the letter away. It amuses me to think that I rank equal to a Commander in the Navy and so everyone on the Warship has to call me "Sir"!

You need have no fear that we're unhappy here — I don't think we've been so happy for a long time as we've been on Bem and we both love every minute of the time.

Tons of love to you both

from your devoted

Son

Harry.

Thank Father very much for his lovely long letter and Mother for hers.

D.O.

Sports. June 3rd 1950.

Te biri 100 te iati.	100 yds Race.
Te wae neiran.	Needle Race.
Te kabae wae.	Three legged Race.
Te nne Non.	Potato Race.
Aia biri Buretiman 100 Te iati.	100 yds Police Race.
50 te iati te anga bai.(kawanako)	50 yds Village teams Relay.
Te kiba.	High Jump.
Aia biri unimane 50 iati.	50 yds Old men's Race.
Te oro iaon te kmi.	Pillow fight.
Te biri ma te bunimoa.	Egg & Spoon Race.
Te kaunrabata.	Wrestling.
~~Eating Biscuits Race.~~	
Te kangi berena.	Eating Biscuits Race.
Te katikiro.	Tug of war.

Aia uaia Ataei-Children's Races.

Te biri 50 te iati(Ataeinimane)	50 yds Boys Race.
Te biri 50 te iati(Ataeinaine.	50 yds Girls Race.
Te wae kirere.	Hopping Race.
Te nne Non.	Potato Race.
Te kabae wae.	Three legged Race.
Te biri ma te bunimoa.	Egg & Spoon Race.
Te koto-mabe.	Putting in the pig's eye.

Te uaia wa. Canoe-Race.

Ae raka iaon 5 te nga.	Canoes over 5 fathoms
ae ian 5 te nga.	" under " "

No. 11. of 1931

Tabuki-ni-Beru,
Beru Island.
via Oceac Island.
G. & E. Is. Colony
Central Pacific.

[should be 1930]
SW.

June 18th 1931

Dearest Lady Maude,

I had better start from the day we left Tarawa in the "Nimanoa", we left a letter for you there which I hope has reached you before this. We had two days on Bairiki with the Hollands & left about 5 p.m on Wednesday, May 14th for Kuria, an island about ⅓ of the way to Beru. We arrived there the next morning & spent the day ashore. A Mr Murdoch, who used to be a D.O. lives there with a half caste wife & a large family of very nice, freckle-faced children. He is about 70 years of age, has lived out here for 20 years & appears to be quite fit, he hasn't been out of the Colony for 10 years now. He gave us a lovely puppy, a mongrel of course, but he has a few black spots on the roof of his mouth & I think has a dash of Irish Terrier in him. He is tan in colour & has a long tail with a white tip, he is awfully naughty as he has just got to the chewing stage; we have named him Koura. The kittens are all growing & love their new home, it is ever so much nicer for them here & they get heaps of fish. Tituabine is horribly greedy, she absolutely bulges at times & has to be held so that the others can have a look in! They objected

to Koura very strongly at first & even now, after a month, they won't make friends although they are curious.

We left Kuria at 6 p.m. the same day, spent the next one at sea & arrived here on the 17th about 6.30 a.m. We had breakfast on board & then rowed ashore, it is about 3 miles as the passage is a very round-about one & unless the tide is high the lagoon is too shallow to cut across. We have a smooth passage through the reef too & don't come in on the breakers. When we landed we found the entire Native Government & policemen lined up & quite a number of people, we shook hands with about 40 men, saying Ko-na-mauri" (may you be in health) to each one. "Ko-na-mauri" is used in greeting people at any time, morning, noon or night which saves a lot of trouble & if there are a number of people & you want to greet them all together you say Kam-na-mauri If you want to be particularly friendly you put an "o" on the end, "Ko-na-mauri o", & usually use it for children. That reminds me; a few days ago two little girls presented themselves on the front verandah with three little mummy apples & a bottle of molasses, the latter they make by boiling toddy. & gave them some sweets & they went away grinning. They were very nice children.

Having shaken hands with everyone we went into the house; several natives came to see Mr Gamble (who came with us) he is an old friend to the people on Beru. After

lunch we went to the "maneaba", a huge building where all public meetings, dances etc. are held; there we were "introduced" to the people, an honour which Koura insisted upon sharing!

June 22nd The house is simply lovely in spite of the fact that it needs repairing & that all the walls are transparent; they are made from the mid-rib of the coconut, cut down to about an inch in width & tied together with string. needless to say the chinks are numerous & vary in size. The house is thatched & inside we have no ceilings, you look straight up into the roof, it is rather picturesque. The windows are long, latticed, minus glass and very plentiful; the doors are curtains. The lounge looks lovely, it is a long room as you will see in the diagram, with two windows, one a bow window, & five arches. The windows have little blue curtains, the long seat under the straight window is covered in blue & pale orange & so are the marshall trunks which are in the room. The seat in the bow window has two mattresses on it, (new ones which we slept on for one night & were so hot & restless I swore I'd never sleep on a mattress out here again!) they are covered with two Indian curtains, the chairs & seats have the brightly covered cushions on them & look very effective.

The bedroom is also very long & is nearly all windows, & have white curtains with little blue flowers in these & Indian

curtains over the two doorways. I have had mats nailed up round the bathroom walls as they were more open than others & I do like a little privacy, so I dress etc: in there. I have drawn a plan of the house & hope it will give you some idea of the place. The dining room walls are only 4 ft high & 2 ft of that is lattice work, the window into the pantry is a service hatch! The little garden is ever so nice, there is a "lawn" of knotch grass which is green even if the grass is a foot high & rather unruly. On all four sides there are lillies & little tall trees like miniature poplars. I brought a few cuttings & plants from Ocean Island, most of them are growing well now. We have made a flower garden by digging a pit & filling it up with sifted soil from the bush; the soil in the garden is chiefly coral & sand.

The King's birthday is a great day here, everyone has a holiday & all the people collect on the Government Station. They began to arrive on the 2nd & continued to arrive all day, & the next morning until 10 a.m when we they were all supposed to be here. At 10 o'clock we went out, Harry gave a speech & then the flag was unfurled & everyone sang God Save the King, they sang it awfully well too. There were about 2,000 natives, so you can imagine Harry's state of mind, it took us about a week to make up the speech, all about the King & the Empire. After the ceremony we had a short rest & then from 11 a.m until 5 p.m. we had sports. There was no

organisation of course & everyone got in the way, especially the children, but they all made plenty of noise & seemed to enjoy it thoroughly. The next day was Court day, a very big "Bowi" so everyone stayed & on Thursday we had the canoe races; the canoes went beautifully. On Friday morning they departed after making a half-hearted attempt to clear up the mess they had made. We had them on the station within 100 yds of the house for four nights, singing their monotonous songs for hours at a time. We went to the maneaba one afternoon & watched them dancing, it was most amusing. The day after all the people had gone we packed up a few things & departed in the canoe to the northern point where there is a delapidated bungalow, taking the orderly & his wife with us. The bungalow is quite near the reef there & absolutely different surroundings, the land is quite hilly, rather like the sand hills in St Ouen's bay below La Moye only there is no grass. We got up at 6.30a.m the next morning & went for a long walk before breakfast, had breakfast at 8a.m & then went for another walk, out to the reef this time, we had gone inland before. We had to wade a good deal across gullys & we saw the loveliest little fishes swimming in & out of the coral, vivid green ones, little striped ones & the deepest, brightest blue you can imagine. Little bits of coloured coral too, pink, mauve & green. I got very burnt & so did Harry but he peeled much worse than I did.

We have been living here with practically no furniture for a month but a few days ago the new stuff arrived. most of it is lovely, really nice designs but the beds are horrible, very narrow & iron. Harry fell out of his last night by rolling too far, of course he pulled the mosquito net down on top of himself & when I had got a light I laughed & laughed, it was too funny to see a heaving mass of net & instead of getting out he was getting more more entangled. As I have mentioned before we found the mattresses unbearable so we have returned to native sleeping mats, on top of the wire which is quite nice. We seriously think of returning to the string beds we had before they were so comfortable, I'll see how often Harry falls out first!

Did I tell you before that the High Commissioner was coming up & due here on the 26th June? I was dreading it as I had to have lunch for 10 people, I had no furniture & no stores & I had to be cook. However, we hear now that he is ill & can't come but the war-ship is coming & Mrs Gamble, who went to Funafuti to meet H.E. will come in the war ship. I shall still have to give lunch I suppose but it won't be so bad. I made some rather successful meringues a little while ago & think I shall make some more & have them with fruit salad. I can always get fish & I have some fowls, also potatoes &

onions which arrived with the furniture. I went out to the boat which brought our stores etc: to see if I could get one or two things, there was a big swell on & I was horribly frightened in the canoe when we got to the open sea, getting on board was an awful job the schooner rolled so much & having got there, the motion & the smell of copra soon made me feel very ill indeed. Eventually, Harry having finished his business, the Captain, who was coming ashore brought us back in his launch. Of course, as soon as I got on to the ladder to get into the launch some particularly big waves came along & I had to hang on for dear life & after several minutes with the Captain's help, made a flying leap, landing on the roof of the launch. The Captain had got on first & gave me his hand. In the end he came & had lunch with us.

Yesterday all the old men from one of the villages came to bring us presents, such nice old men. They brought coconuts, bakai so much that I'm sure it will last us 6 months, & a bowl lovely spear about 7ft long. chickens. A few days ago another lot of "old men" brought us ~~presents~~ ~~head~~ led by a man who had just been let out of gaol! He should never have been in gaol as a matter of fact, I liked him very much & I think he liked me as he brought a special kind of coconut that he knew I wanted. We get pumpkins, mummy apples & eggs brought to us which I buy for tobacco or money, they usually ask for tobacco.

I shall be cooking all tomorrow I expect, meringues, cake etc. ready for Tuesday, I shall have to finish the letter to-day as there won't be time to add to it, the warship will take the mail to Ocean Island. I had a long letter from Maudie this last mail, written on the "Vjassa", I have written to her this mail & also to Geoff Marnham. Mrs Grimble came here about two weeks ago on his way to Funafuti & brought us a lovely mail. He also brought Capt. Holland & they slept here two nights. We have a lovely new bath now & stove & the house is fairly presentable but when they were here it was awful. I am also writing to Aunt Mabel. If you or Sir Walter are writing to Uncle Arthur please thank him for his letter, I haven't forgotten him but although I have tried to write a little each day I haven't written half the letters I should and we have been busy. I have written 16 sheets on both sides & haven't finished yet.

It is far nicer here than Ocean Island, we are both much better, I feel a different person now & work hard all day. The mosquitoes leave us alone during the day but after sunset they fill the house with noise. We use the fan which keeps them away more or less but I usually go to bed early. Our last letter from you was April 4th, it was over two months getting here but it was held up at Ocean Island for 2 or three weeks. The asthma pills have arrived, thank you very much. I still have 5 of the original dozen I brought

with me & haven't had one since we left Marseilles. Poor old Snap, I can't imagine him not dashing wildly about, it is too bad. Did you ever send on the snapshot Bazett took of us because it has not arrived yet. Also will you keep one of those that Muriel took for us, we haven't got one & it would be nice to keep.

Andrew Armstrong is back again & on his way to Butaritari, he must have had a lovely holiday, he toured all round the North Island of New Zealand with friends. Mrs Grimble says he is much improved in every way & much steadier, he puts down his extraordinary behaviour before he left Ocean Island to shock. I haven't seen him but have written to him, I hope he won't be too lonely on Butaritari. Mac will be meeting his wife in a few days & they will probably be in Tarawa by the beginning of August.

This is a lovely spot & I'm sure you would love it, I only hope they never send us back to Ocean Island.

It will be somewhere round about Bobbie's birthday when you get this, please give her 2/6 from us with our love. Jo's I'm afraid is long past but please give her 2/6 too. Timothy's birthday will also be near, Sept. 11th & we should like him to have 2/6 so please take 7/6 & put it to our account!

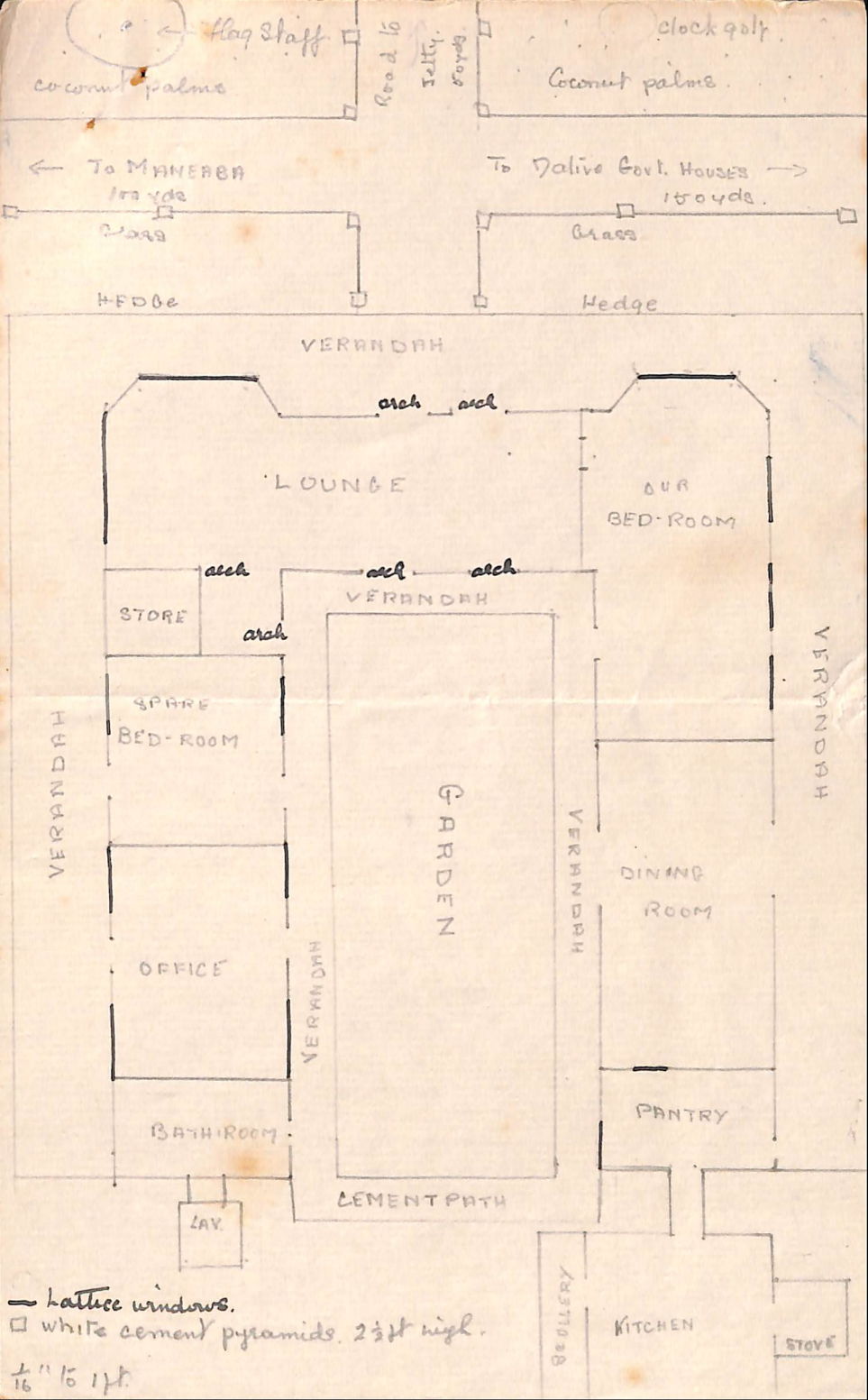
Much love from us both

Yours affectionately,

Honor

P.S. You have heard of the toddy the natives get from the trunk of the coconut haven't you? It is supposed to be very good so we drink it for breakfast & for dinner; I didn't care for it much at first but now I love it.

Harry is a mass of prickly heat, the whole of his body & even his legs & wrists, I tried everything I can find in books & think it is better. He takes a towel to bed with him to stop the irritation, he gets so wet just sitting at his desk writing the drips, even his hands are wet, I can't think why. I get hot at times but only if I do something pretty strenuous. I used to get prickly heat a little on Ocean but haven't had it here yet.



— Lattice windows.
□ white cement pyramids. 2½ ft high.

1/16" to 1 ft.

1930/13

Tabuki-ni Beru
Beru Island.
July 31st 1930

Dearest Lady Maude,

Please don't look at the date and think what a long time it is since I last wrote. I keep a diary now and write my letters when there is some hope of a ship turning up. We have had no mail for nearly two months and I don't think "Nimanoa" will be here for another two weeks.

The sloop arrived here earlier than we expected, instead of arriving on Tuesday she appeared over the horizon about 10 a.m. on the Monday. It was really dreadful as my new stove was being installed and I had strewed the verandah with packing from our stores. Harry went out to the ship, "Veronica" and had lunch on board, I made meringues and cakes in the old stove out in the open! After lunch a number of the officers came ashore, Captain Robertson, Lieut. Chesswell and the Doctor also Mr Grimble and Capt. Holland. They all stayed to tea and Mr Grimble spent the night ashore with us. They brought us a huge bunch of plantains from the Ellice Islands. They also landed our new boat, an enormous thing which, owing to the shallowness of the lagoon, we shall only be able to use at half or full tide. However it will be very useful for cargo and going out in rough weather.

The Tuesday was a hectic day, we were up from 7 a.m. to 1 a.m.! Mrs Gumble, Capt. Robertson & Sub: Lieut. Wade had lunch with us, the two latter know Auntie Connie, in Auckland quite well. I was able to use my new stove but we had hardly any fish for some reason or other so I concocted a dish with white sauce & tinned green peas to eke it out! They all went over to "Rongorongo", the L.M.S. Mission for tea and I spent the afternoon getting our clothes ready to dine on the "Veronica". My washerwoman took about 3 hours to iron my blue crepe de chine evening dress and the result was marvellous.

We left the house about 6 p.m. and arrived at the sloop at 7.30 p.m. Can you imagine anything more incongruous than two Europeans in evening dress, sitting on an outrigger canoe, being paddled by natives in grass skirts? It was my first visit to a war ship but unfortunately we were not shown round at all, we went straight to the Captain's cabin where we were to dine with him & Mrs Gumble. I was surprised when I saw what a luxurious cabin the Captain had, with bright cretonne curtains & chair covers. We had an enormous meal and all kinds of nice things we had not tasted for months, including chocolates & crème de menthe. After dinner the Second in Command came in and for about two hours he never ceased telling stories, all of them his own experiences. He was awfully funny and certainly knows how to tell a story well, he kept us all in fits of laughter until I absolutely ached. It was 11.30 p.m.

before we left the ship, Capt. Robertson gave us some weekly times and half a dozen novels. He also sent a frozen leg of lamb ashore for us which was very good. It was much darker coming home, we seemed to be much further out to sea too and the waves were fairly big. The Veronica turned on her flashlight for about ¼ hr. but she sailed away before we had reached the passage and her lights had disappeared before we were half way home. We got back just before 1a.m. and I'm afraid we did not hear the toddy cutters' song the next morning!

I got all my stores unpacked during the next day or two and had a great time arranging my store-room. My order was fairly satisfactory though I have too much of one or two things & not enough of others, however none of them are absolute necessities. I am getting as many dried things as I can, dried fruits, vegetables and beans, & also prunes all of which are good. We use a lot of marmite, bemax and, just lately Horlick's Malted Milk & Ovaltine. There is a very good brand of milk called "Bear", it is <u>not</u> condensed, merely sterilized & is just like real milk. Unfortunately it is horribly expensive, Alpine, which we usually get works out at 6½ a tin and of course has to be diluted. Bear brand is 1/1 a tin and must not be diluted, pretty stiff isn't it, just over half a pint of milk for 1/1! We have had one case (48 tins) just for drinking as a treat.

We got 4 big pots of honey from Sydney which is jolly good; the wretched ants spoilt nearly half one jar before I got them unpacked. I have a large safe surrounded by water in which I keep anything likely to attract ants. We have brown bread now, I got 100 lbs of Wheatmeal flour from Sydney, I think it will last just about 6 months. Have you any idea how much sugar you use per month, counting loaf sugar & brown sugar? I think we use an awful lot, about 14 lbs.

I have made a collapsible mosquito proof room, (with a door that also collapses), of mosquito netting & calico. It is 12 ft by 8 ft & is 7 ft high, it took me two & a half days to make, sitting at it all day. I designed the door & the carpenter, a native, made it, as you see it stands by itself & everything is screwed together. Where the netting joins the door it is bound with string and caught between two thin pieces of wood. It works beautifully and is such a boon. There is a border of calico to with stones in it to keep it down. I have drawn you a sketch to give you some idea but I'm afraid I never was much good at drawing.

We have a tiny canoe now which just holds two, we call it our Baby Austin and love going about in it. Koura always comes with us, if we try to leave him behind he swims after us. He very nearly upset us into the sea the other day, he moved from one side to the other, Harry & I were both on the same side & Koura was

the last straw, up went the outrigger and for two seconds we balanced then it went down again with me on it. The natives don't think we are capable of looking after ourselves and if we stay out after sunset the ordeally comes to fetch us! A report immediately goes round that we lost ourselves, a sheer impossibility.

I have been having my abilities as a General practitioner and chemist tested. The first patient was a child of about 2 years, he was bleeding profusely from the nose and mouth and appeared to be vomiting blood as well, anyhow he was in a nasty mess & his mother somewhat alarmed. We washed him first, to see what was what & then treated him for bad nose bleeding which very soon stopped it. Apparently that was all it was and he has been quite all right ever since.
The second case was a Policeman who had managed to cut his face rather badly just on the outside corner of his right eyebrow & nearly on the eyelid. It was a very awkward place & almost impossible to bandage well without yards of bandage which I haven't got; so we used an eye shade I made for Mac and put the dressing beneath the cardboard and it worked beautifully. It has healed very nicely though it took a long time & there is only a small scar. The man is quite devoted now & is always bringing us presents of bread fruit & bobai!
The Interpreters baby was next with a cut on his arm,

quite small but fairly deep, it also took ages to heal as everything does here. He is 10 months old & a very nice infant, he is very friendly now & even wanders into my bedroom by himself now! He is very fond of Koura and often cries when Koura comes with us instead of playing with him. My washerwoman, the Enlapeleis Mother got a touch of 'flu & then had to be treated ~~wi~~ for muscular rheumatism, I painted various knuckles etc with liniment iodine about 2 weeks ago & she assures me it is very much better!

Aug: 3rd Harry has been misbehaving lately, in fact ever since we came here he has been having fever about once a week. Then one day he had to work in the office fairly late getting off a mail to Mrs Grimble, that night about 1 p.m. he woke me & said he was very cold, about 5 mins after he was hot but shivering, I took his temp. and found it was 101°, he took some aspirin, had a couple of blankets and after about 2 hours went off to sleep. However he soaked his sheets & even the blankets before long! In the morning his temp. was 99° but a gland, just below his left ear was very swollen & hard & his tonsils very large indeed. He stayed in bed but seemed to feel fairly well until sunset when his temp. was again 101°. He slept well that night, the temp. next morning was 99° at night 100° and after that it gradually came down. The gland stayed swollen for

over a week but seems to be all right now. Since then he has been better than before & looks really well, I've been giving him Ovaltine & Horlicks & I do think he is putting on weight. He has tried raw onions too as a tonic, but we have nearly finished them and can't get any more for 6 months or so. I bought a lovely bunch of bananas the other day for 1/6, unfortunately there are very few on the island. A few days later the R.C. Father sent us a huge bunch so for about 2 weeks we have eaten bananas morning, noon & night & had no puddings. They all ripen so quickly & then go bad. My vegetable garden is progressing but oh! these people are so slow, they nearly make one weep, they haven't the vaguest idea how to work & get a thing done.

Koura is growing fast & is really a very nice dog, he follows us everywhere & very seldom goes with the natives. He is very affectionate & think quite intelligent. He even left a dish of chicken bones to the cats the other day because he thought we were going for a walk! He is quite a good watch dog too.

I have been helping Harry by typing out annual Reports from various islands, such a lot of rubbish, we have to send it all in quadruplicate, which means 5 copies with the one we keep and I don't believe anyone will ever look at it. I think Harry's General Report on Beru is awfully good, I'll see if he will let me send you a copy.

I am collecting the string figures at the moment & have learnt 23 in 2 weeks. Harry is very thrilled with them as they are very different to any others and awfully good. There must be heaps more, I have one native who has shown me several & says he knows plenty more but I can't keep pace with them. Out of the 23 only 7 are written out & have diagrams, they take so long to do. The others are written out roughly so that if I forget them I can look it up. I make all the figures I know every day & learn one or more new ones each day. Harry learns other figures from the books and when a native gives me a figure Harry shows him some of his and they are always interested.

We are expecting the Rimanoa any day now & hope to go to one ~~of~~ or more of the other islands for a long or short stay. We have no wireless so have to be ready to go when she arrives. I have packed stores & have suitcases etc. ready. I don't suppose they will want to stay here long.

August 9th

It seems probable that we shall be leaving here early next week. We have had B.P's. ship in today from Tarawa & have heard some news of the whereabouts of Rimanoa & the L.M.S. ship "John Williams". We also hear that a woman has been murdered on the next island Nikunau, 22 miles away, so we have to get there as

soon as possible. We may go on the John Williams as she is expected first, but I hope the Minanoa comes before we leave as she has our mail & after waiting two months it would be very hard to have to go without it. I don't suppose they would bring it on to us either. People are terribly slack here, I mean the white people, I wonder they ever do anything at all. I think Harry has a very hard time before him, the L.M.S. have such a grip on the Southern Gilberts that it's almost impossible to do anything with the natives. They don't care two hoots for the Government, they won't pay their tax. copra which is over due but they have plenty to give to the mission, & yet we pay them for rats tails, we pay for labour, we pay for this & we pay for that, the Mission pays for nothing & takes all it can get & yet these natives stick to them. There is a wretched pastor on one of our islands now, he has the people praying all day, he told them the end of the world was coming last Tuesday & the magistrate has written to Harry because the people won't do any work. If Harry does anything drastic Mr Eastman will write straight home without saying a word & we'll get the sack. He's done it before & boasts that if the D.O. doesn't do as he wants he'll have him sacked, he has had several people removed to other places. He tried to get Mr Gamble out but he was too much for him! Anyhow it makes things very unpleasant unless one is easy going & gives in to

Mrs Eastman, which we won't. I've nothing against the R.C. Mission, I think they are wonderful but the L.M.S. are scoundrels. The R.C. sisters come out here for <u>life</u>, they never have leave & they never go back home. The fathers come for 10 years in the first place & usually stay longer. They do all the work themselves & don't attempt to join in any social activities the L.M.S. tell their people that they are so important that D.O's have to call on them first! They didn't try it on with us but they did with Mrs Semble. The natives trained at the L.M.S. are smug & cheeky & wear bow ties, isn't it awful? I feel that we are in for a hectic time, there seems to be trouble on most of our islands & we must get to them, but we are certain to clash with Eastman sooner or later & then there will be a row. The worst of it is that people at home who uphold the L.M.S. wouldn't believe they could be in the wrong, first because they are a mission & even the natives say that the L.M.S. lie to them about all sorts of things other than religion.

Have you still got your gadget for making picot edging or rather hemstitching on your machine? If you don't use it may I have it? If you do, please get me one as I have a lot of work to do with it. I have used the thing that gathers on my machine with great success.

Much love from us both

Your affectionate

Honor.

1930/14

Tabuki-ni-Beru.

Beru.

22nd Augusett. 1930

Dear Sir Walter,

I enclose a report we sent to Mr Grimble, on one of our islands which has been behaving very badly. We have had to write it in an awful hurry as we leave here again as soon as a ship turns up and we expect to hear "Sail oh" any moment, a ship should have arrived yesterday. Since we returned on Saturday evening I have done nothing but typewrite, we had yards of impossible & useless Annual Reports to finish before leaving.

We had a very exciting time on Onotoa, especially as we were not expecting anything serious, & had no idea there had been any fighting. The natives were thoroughly frightened of the "Party" and it was a long time before anything could be got out of them. We wired Mr Grimble when we got back here & he is sending someone to help us with the enquiry, probably Mr Clarke. We shall be on

Onotoa for at least a month & probably two; I hope there will be no more trouble. The one night we spent there was not very comfortable as we were not sure whether they meant to defy the Government or not & I'm afraid we did not sleep much!

Later we shall have to go to Nikunau to try the men they have arrested for murder. We had one and a half days there after leaving Onotoa but could find out very little, they are perfect beggars for hiding important evidence.

Our life just lately has been a succession of packings & unpackings and it is dreadfully difficult to have all ones household goods ready for transport when you don't know which day the ship is coming. We have had no mail for 2½ months but "Nimanoa" is wandering round the Pacific at the moment & should turn up with it soon, either here or at Onotoa as she is bringing Mrs Clarke. We had a very interesting evening on Monday, we went over to the I.M.S. station to send wireless messages - Mr Eastman let us stay in the room while he sent them -

received answers. Mrs Eastman sends things out in morse but from Ocean Island we heard Mrs Milne's voice through the telephone and he was in touch with Mrs Grimble, it was most exciting.

Will you please let Mother see the Report as I am only sending home this one copy? It seems to me that the whole island will have to be punished! We are both very tired after the strain & hurry of the last ten days but otherwise we are flourishing & even getting fat. Harry, I am afraid, will have to have his tonsils out as soon as possible, they are enormous & appear to fill the whole of his throat & are rather troublesome.

With love from us both,

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

P.S. Harry hopes to have time to write at some future date, he has taken over the typewriter & although we have both been working all day & half the night for days & almost weeks, we are still behindhand with all these beastly red tape forms.

Barailon.

Onotoa.

Sept: 1st 1930.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We had a gorgeous mail, which we brought with us, 30 letters, 32 magazines, 22 papers + 3 parcels; 2½ months mail! D^{r} & M^{rs} Macpherson, M^{r} Clarke – M^{r} Beyer are all staying here with us and they are delighted with all our books. M^{rs} M. & I have been doing crosswords, she is awfully good at them. Nimanoa arrived at Beru on Aug: 23rd about dusk, we rowed out, (it was too late for them to anchor as the Captain is so nervous of the reef) it took us two hours + they were very surprised to see us. We got our mail + arranged to be on board early the next morning, we got stuck just outside the reef on some coral heads, coming back which wasn't very nice but eventually got back home about 11 p.m. Then we ~~of~~ had our supper, glanced through the mail, opened parcels + packed the contents safely away + proceeded to finish packing our luggage. We went to bed at 1 a.m. + were up again soon after 5 a.m.! Thank you ever so much for the pyjamas, they are perfectly lovely. I think I also had a parcel of material from you but we were so rushed I pushed it into my marshall trunk immediately, anyhow thank you very much indeed. The frock you mention has not come

yet, perhaps next mail; I think very little gets mislaid. We hear from the Macphersons that a Col. Henderson was killed in a flying disaster a short time ago, ~~is~~ was it your Mrs Henderson's son? They say he had only been married one week, very sad.

I'm afraid this letter will be rather a screawl as I have four people staying in the house & we are really only camping, with limited stores! & I'm very busy. Mac says I am ever so much better & that he would not have believed it possible so I'm very bucked. Harry, he says must have his tonsils out as soon as Dr Young comes to Beer & he is going to write to him about it. I have sent Sir Walter a Report on the trouble here which should arrive about the same time as this. We left Beer on the 25th August about 10 a.m. & arrived here about 5 p.m. Harry & Mr Clarke have been holding an enquiry & all our visitors will be leaving either tomorrow or the next day. I am sending this via Fiji. The Macphersons have been sleeping in the mosquito room, Mr Clarke in a hammock on the verandah & Mr Boyd on the warf! Feeding is a bit of a jot but so far we have done very well.

I am enclosing some negatives & Mother has prints of all but one, (a lane) I have written on hers so that you can see what they all are. I also enclose a letter from Mrs Boys, he is a dear old thing. I should like one of his quails

We were very interested in your trip to Guernsey & the house but as a matter of fact we have not had time to read your letters thoroughly. I hope you will like your house but are you going to keep the Jersey one? keep the bungalow! I got heaps of magazines & books, thanks awfully much. Are you sending Good Housekeeping instead of Woman & Home? I'd rather have the latter as it sometimes gives patterns & I do love the Arts & Crafts. I am not paying anything on the pyjamas as they came letter post. I have to pay duty on other parcels & have also just paid over £4 duty on groceries which is a shame considering that we can't get them here. Mr Clarke, the Treasurer, quite agrees & says that all duty should be taken off foodstuffs but Fiji won't allow it.

Aug: 3rd I have been typing the Report of this Inquiry & am dreadfully rushed now & have still to make out my store order for Sydney; Niuanoa leaves in a few hours. I have written to Sybil but I would be awfully glad if you would give Mother any news she hasn't heard. I have not told Sybil much.

We shall be here for at least a month & probably longer.

Heaps of love from us both,

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

P.S. Received a letter & snaps from Muriel & the children, will write her later.

1930/16

Island of Onoloa,
Central Pacific.
Sept: 28th 1930.

I am badly in need of a new sponge-bag, would you get me a new one please, a good strong one with a zip fastener if poss. & if it is not too expensive. Also 3 bottles of Palm olive Shampoo. I used to get it from Ocean but they wouldn't send me any last time although I told them they had it.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I sent you a letter via Fiji, I hope Dr Macpherson remembered to post it in Funafuti as no mail went from here. We have been here a month now and Harry finished the trials yesterday, there seem to be quite 12 men in gaol now!

We were very sorry to hear you had been so ill, you must have had a beastly time. Please thank Sir Walter for all his letters, I think Harry will be writing to him in a few days as the trials are now over & he will have a little spare time. I should think three weeks fever would pull you down pretty badly. You must have had a lovely time in Guernsey, we are wondering if you are there now in your little house. We are also wondering what has happened to the Jersey houses. Harry was very thrilled with the idea of your taking over Platte Rocque, he always says it is the nicest house in the island. The Guernsey house sounds awfully nice & the view must be lovely, it will be rather fun if you are there when we come home, we have always wanted to see Guernsey. Did you have the children for the summer holidays & did you go to the bungalow I wonder. I had two awfully nice letters this last mail from Mona & Joan; can Bobbie write yet & have you started calling her Cuyl? It is a pity to waste such a pretty name. I should just love a glimpse of them all & the

baby Ann. I was glad to hear Muriel had started chiropody lectures, yes, I think she is awfully brave, she must be tireless also. I have had one letter from Maudie since she arrived in Kenya & I wrote to her two mails ago. She sent us two lots of B.I. magazines too. We received heaps of cuttings & crosswords from you, thank you very much. I am getting quite good at the crosswords. We were very interested in the cuttings on the Colonial Services, I hope they make some improvements. There is plenty of room for them. I doubt very much whether we shall benefit as any article we have ever seen never mentions the Western Pacific! They head the article "Colonial Services" & then proceed with a long discourse on Africa.

We love the Detective magazines you sent; I never saw anything like our collection when I had unpacked our mail & our visitors were delighted. We had the Jersey Weekly Post, the Times Weekly, Good Housekeeping, Punch, Royal, Windsor, Chambers', Blackwood's, Cornhill, United Empire, Clues, Detective Magazine, Sunny, Happy, about 6 paper covered novels, (one Edgar Wallace which everyone squabbled over except us, I've never read any of his before!) and 6 books. A wonderful variety, which will keep us happy till our next mail arrives. Our friend in Tasmania sends us Blackwoods & the Cornhill most regularly & Mother sends the Times, Punch, United Empire & I think the Chambers Magazine.

I am longing for the crysede to come, I think it should wear very well out here. I'm sorry I forgot to give colours; I like blue, green & lemon best. My clothes are wearing better than

I expected them to in spite of constant washing. Mrs Gamble told me washing silk was the best material but I think there is nothing like cotton, especially Tobralco. I have 8 cotton frocks in constant use & 4 silk ones which are only worn occasionally. 4 of the cotton frocks I have had for 3 years & they are still going strong!

Sir Walter, in his letter to me, mentions the food difficulty as represented in the Govt reports. We quite agree that it is hopelessly exagerated, the only tinned things we use are milk & butter, jam, marmalade, dripping & occasionally tins of fruit, sardines, tongue etc: when on tour. It really isn't very bad but the milk & butter are awfully expensive a pound or the latter, being fairly soft, does not last nearly as long as an English pound of butter. There are no goats, I can't think why, if they survive in Aden I should have thought they would flourish here. Mrs Holland once had two goats but they came to an untimely end, one went mad & they had to shoot the other, I've forgotten why. Green vegetables are the great difficulty. I have started a vegetable garden at Beru, where I hope to grow tomatoes etc: but I am told that it is very difficult & anyhow, we are there only 5 or 6 months each year. The ants eat the seed unless it is grown in boxes surrounded with water, I've tryed Borax but the ants seem to like it! Having got the seeds to grow the next stage is keep away land crabs as they will eat anything. Did I tell you that the frock you say you sent, has not arrived yet, it will probably come by the next mail as parcels

often take longer than letters. I enclose a letter for the "Shopping Service", will you put in a P.O. for 15/- please, I can get nothing here but stamps, I shall be glad when Harry has an account in Jersey. Good Housekeeping had a very nice, extra-strong (so they say) flour sifter which I have sent for. I brought one with me but the rotary movement has given out & we use it such a lot, so I have sent for this one. An egg-timer too which can be set for 3, 4, or 5 mins. & a bell rings when it is ready, Harry wanted that! It is great fun sending for things as we have usually forgotten what we have ordered & unpacking causes great excitement. As you see our pleasures are very simple! I think 40 should be the right size for me as a 42 I got once had to be taken in. I have been letting out Harry's shorts lately, I hope it is because he is fatter & not that the shorts have shrunk. I have also embroidered Maude on all his handkerchiefs, I wrote it in pencil & worked it in a very small over stitch, he likes them very much. I am getting really expert at cutting his hair, the last time I did it, it looked really nice. I think I am the only woman who cuts her husband's hair, all the other men get boys to do it & we think they do it abominably.

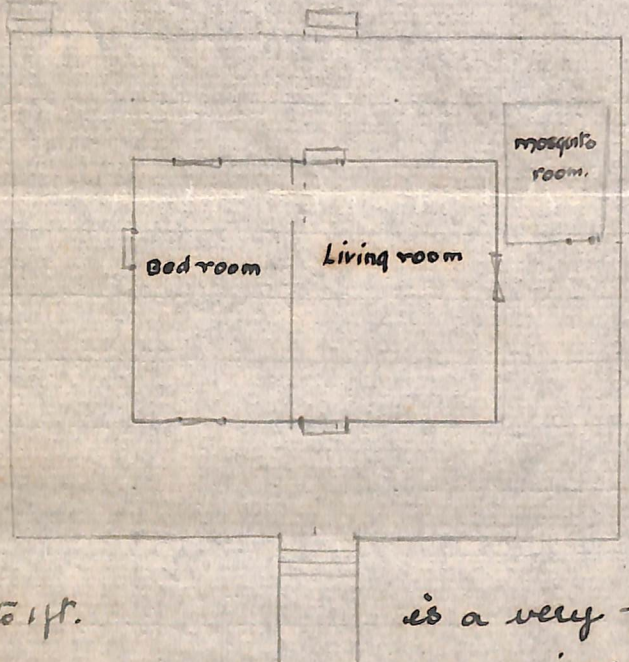
We were ever so glad Snap had bucked up & was running about again, we thought the poor dear would always be lame. Koura is a perfect darling but he has had a slight & rather unpleasant accident. We went for a long walk about two weeks ago, Koura was dashing ahead after birds & he suddenly came back to us with blood dripping

from his mouth. We couldn't see what was the matter & as he soon recovered we did not worry. It was dark when we got home but the next morning I discovered that a crab had very nearly pulled out three of his beautiful lower teeth. Teikarawa tells me that crabs are very strong & even pull off finger nails, & as Koura is always playing with them it was obviously a crab that hurt him. The extraordinary thing is that we never heard a sound, he usually makes an awful din when a crab pinches him. Since then one tooth has come out, one is firmly embedded but out of line & one is just sticking to the gum, he looks an awful sight, but we have tried to pull it out & he makes such a fuss. I thought it would fall out but I'm afraid it won't now. He is becoming a very good watch dog though he is still a puppy and he understands what a "walk" is & gets most excited when asked if he would like one.
There seem to be an awful lot of accidents in Jersey now, the Weekly Post is full of them.

We were awfully disappointed in Mrs Macpherson, she is quite nice but the very worst type of person to bring here. She thinks of nothing but her personal appearance & changing her clothes! She had been badly bitten by ants or bugs on Nimanoa & her legs & arms were covered with very nasty places, she says she had never had even a pimple in her life before & I believe wept copiously when her legs & arms started. She nearly has a fit at the idea of a freckle or hairs on her legs & of course hair flourishes here, the hair on my legs is nearly an inch long & it is even growing on the

backs of my hands. I think she was horrified, not to say rather disgusted at my not wearing stockings & she dressed every evening in the smartest semi-evening gowns, never the same one twice either. They were here 9 days & she wore 18 different dresses, imagine it in a place where one is more or less camping & I, very naturally hadn't got any good clothes with me. However, she stopped wearing stockings after a few days & I might have got a little sense into her after a time but I'm afraid she is hopeless. What made me wild was her powdering her nose at intervals during the day, she always carried it with her, & she always looked as white as a sheet. Personally, I don't powder at all here, it is far better not to I'm sure. I can't understand Mac, he always used to say he agreed with everything I did & was, more or less, & I thought his wife would be the same type instead of which she couldn't possibly be more the opposite of what Mac always said he admired. Mac was looking fairly well but still much too thin, I'm glad he has got to his iron work at last. Mr Clarke, who has been ill ever since we left Ocean, was looking quite fit again & said he was feeling much better when he left here. He was even interested in his meals, an unusual thing for him, & he even ate my puddings, a course which he has always maintained he hates. I really think we fed them very well considering our limited supplies & our very broken stove. The house here is very small & of course, native built, the roof leaks too when it rains heavily, it was

leaking on to my face when I woke up yesterday. The foundations are square, there are two rooms in the centre & a verandah all round. In one corner we have our mosquito-proof room. There is a large, native made table & two chairs in the Lounge & a string bed in the bedroom, "voilà tout"! We brought the mosquito room, our deck chairs & two folding tables from Beru & we are quite comfortable. We managed to borrow two very narrow string beds from the mission house for the Macphersons & Mr Clarke had a hammock of his own. Here is a plan. The kitchen & bathroom are separate buildings, when it rains we have to go to them with umbrellas. The verandah is quite open. There are two steps up from the ground to the verandah & one from the verandah to the centre rooms. The two middle rooms are always full of mosquitoes so we live on the verandah, usually in the mosquito proof room. The bathroom is a very fine house but it stands alone & I'm sure everyone can see right through it, however I drape a few bath towels round the walls when washing, stay in one screened corner & hope for the best. We have quite a large compound with the house, bath-house, kitchen, store & one native house where Uria, the cook, sleeps & where all & sundry seem to collect during the day. The male gaol is on one side, just beyond our railing & on the other side the police quarters



1/16" to 1 ft.

and about 100 yds away the female gaol.



24th October.

Harry's cheque book has come so I am sending direct to the Shopping Service. I am starting another letter which will go at the same time as this.

LEYLANDS,
CROWBOROUGH,
SUSSEX.

Sept: 29th/30

My dear Walter.

I am afraid I have been a long time returning Harry's letter, but I thought I might send it on to Alan as I was sure it would interest him. I enclose Alan's reply, which I do not want back.

Angus goes up to Oriel next week, he got one of the Kitchener Scholarships, he is taking up modern languages, and has been now taking a vacation course at Tours University.

I soon settled my domestic trouble — the impending loss of the cook who has been with me two years, at least I have another coming in next Monday.

Harry's letter is most interesting, he is a born Empire builder. How few can ever have tackled a similar job with such keen interest.

I met my neighbour Miss Wainwright yesterday she has just returned from a 5 weeks stay at "Hotel Troy" Oberhofen, and had heard a good deal about Mrs John Brande, whom she described as a terrible woman, she said everyone there described John as an 'old dear'.

As I expected the building of the "Chalet Montalt" was the result of meetings between Minnie & the landlady of the Troy. Now Minnie has taken away the head parlourmaid & another servant.

I recently had a very sad letter from Gwen Riddett, who says John is entirely in the hands of Minnie, & cannot sign a cheque without her consent.

Arthur Riddett has been very bad and had a serious operation in London (Thyroid gland complications I believe). He is about to be moved to the sea.

When you get to Guernsey I hope you will not be bothered by a young man Roland Davies, I have always been rather fond of his brother Emma Davies (nee Bradley) a first cousin of Ina's; who when I first went to Coventry was one of the handsomest girls I ever knew. Roland was a very nice boy, but I know not what he is now, a bit bashful I expect. He is sure to place you as my brother & will look you up. Before the war he was a clerk in Barclay's Bank, & a keen Naval Volunteer, he was on 'The Lion' Beatty's ship in the Jutland affair & did well getting

a commission in Churchill hybrid force (I can't remember the name of it) that took him to New York sometimes where he made friends with a wealthy banker, who engaged him after the war to take three boys globe trotting round the world, coming back across India, he somehow got to Guernsey as a Commission Agent and Stock & Share Broker or something of that sort. I fancy he makes friends, & if his brother is to be believed (but she has a habit of drawing a long bow), he acted as Adjutant or something of that sort to the Governor of Guernsey, Lord Jellicoe's brother I think.

I have just been spending a week with Hesta, they had a fortnight in August at the sea in Norfolk & then came to me for a fortnight; in July I went to the Prize Giving at Bengeo, where John took his

form prize, the prizes were distributed by Ronald's friend Sir Clive Wigram (the King's equerry) who made a very good speech; he is a very charming fellow. Notwithstanding the poverty of the country Ronald is always busy & people buy cars in large numbers still. He has been busy arranging for the sole concession for London postal area for the new Ford car, all British make — at Dagenham in Essex, where they are spending 7 millions.

You will be tired of wading through this.

Yours affly

E. Evans.

14 LANCASTER GATE, W. 2.
TELEPHONE PADDINGTON 5602.

Sept 28 1930.

My dear Father,

I am sorry I have not returned Harry's letter before. I have read it several times with the greatest interest – in fact he writes such a good letter that I should have liked to make a "Court Page article" out of it. It would make a very good one with very slight omissions. He certainly sounds happy as well as busy, and he is evidently very lucky in his wife. I wish we had met her before they sailed.

I have always thought that Harry would do well in life – he was always so keen on anything he took up. His father must be very proud of him – and you too.

We have been working like navvies the last few days staining floors & hearing furniture etc in the endeavour to get Angus's room habitable before his return.

we have had the big back bedroom divided into two, & the workmen made a most appalling mess. However, we are nearly straight again except for my dressing room — a luxury I have not hitherto had here.

Angus got back early this morning having had a good crossing from Havre. He seems to have enjoyed his month in Tours & found it profitable. He goes up to Oxford in ten days' time.

I am sorry to hear of your domestic worries but I hope you are fixed up by now.

Things are beginning to liven up with us now at the office. Anderson has been away for three weeks so I have been hard at it six nights a week, with a certain amount to fit in in the daytime. I dare say you saw the 'Yardy annual' first leader on the 'Territorial Year' last Tuesday —

On Wednesday we had an interesting lunch party here, for Enid Rose brought Gordon Craig (Ellen Terry's son — not the 'film magnate') to see me & try & pull strings concerning Cochran's offer to finance him for a season at the New Phoenix Theatre. I hope for the sake of the British drama that something will come of it, but

charming though Craig is personally & brilliant producer though every country but his recognises him to be I doubt whether anyone will ever get to any sort of business arrangement with him. However I have arranged for an interview between him & Cochran & we shall see what happens.

Now I must get off to work & walk through the Park to get a breath of air on the way.

Your loving Son

Alan.

P.S. Is an out of date London Telephone directory any use to you (March 1930)? If so we will bring it next time we can get down.

1930/17

Island of Nonouti,
Southern Gilberts,
6th October, 1930

Dearest Mother and Father,

At last the trials are over and we're a breathing space while waiting for the next ship to take us on. I hope it will not come for a long time as we are both busy from morning till night with Anthropology. Honeo's collection of string figures is really marvellous – it will revolutionise the study of the subject when it is published. In the first place it will nearly double the known examples, but apart from that the unique movements, the subject results and the unparalled wealth of mythological data and chants etc. which accompany the making should quite change the prevalent conception of the social importance of the art. String figure making is here a living art and more than holds its own against western innovations. I believe this to be the only place in the world where new figures are being invented from day to day as the outlook of the native enlarges – a new figure which has recently achieved popularity is known as the "Gulf of Mexico", and consists of a realistic portrayal of the contours of that Gulf, learnt from the Geography book.

Honeo is engaged at the moment in learning the technical processes involved in the arts of Cooking, dyeing, making grass skirts, weaving etc. with a view to our producing a joint article in the near future on "The Material Culture of the Gilbertese". She is really most

skilful in mastering the various processes. Today we've been making a scale drawing of the Gilbertese kite, kite flying being a very old Gilbertese pastime. The kites are immense affairs about 12 feet in length and need many men to manipulate them – the actual surface is formed by split pandanus leaves sewn together with the roots of the same tree.

On Saturday I learnt how to make fire and wrote a description of the process, though so far I've not been able to cook a flame myself – it needs continuous and prolonged friction and being a mere European my muscles ache before I have got half way.

We go for a walk together every evening from 4 till dusk, which comes soon after 6. If we walk along the road which cuts the lagoon and connects the village we never get anywhere as we have to stop and say "Ko na nomi" to every man, woman and child on the way so we practically always go along the reef and collect shells or through the bush – we've been taking advantage of these walks to make a collection of the flora of the Island and I think we've now got practically a complete collection. I never realised what a difference it makes to a walk to be able to recognise every tree, shrub or flower one passes and to know their properties and uses. The difficulty is that though we know them all by their Gilbertese names most of them are naturally unknown to science, no scientist ever having visited these parts, and we have no means of identifying those that are known. This worries me a lot as I feel we could do something about it, but what? Would you please search for my book on "Wild Flowers" – the one I

bought myself and which contains introductory chapters on general botany. If we read this we might be able to describe the stamens etc. Hora will also paint reproductions of each specimen in a book and write a general description. I'm afraid thats the best we can do, but if you have any botanical friends they might be able to suggest a way of preserving specimins as far as Australia. Its awful knowing a series of facts which should be correlated to the general store of knowledge and yet knowing of no means by which such correlation can be effected. We're sending the shells for here to a conchologist in Cambridge so we're doing our bit in that direction.

Hora has just arrived with a piece of string she's just made for the stunt to the final - she's accordingly rather proud of it. I'll describe the process though she'd probably maintain that my description is incorrect. She first cut off a big frond from the coconut tree. 2 She cut a small frond from one side. 3. She stripped the mid-rib off the frond leaving two strips of green leaf. 4. She rode on incision across one leaf, cutting through the outer skin. 5 She peeled off the outer skin with her teeth (a really hard operation). This leaves a thick skin which is discarded. 6 She split the thin skin into 4 strips and put it into the sun to dry. 7 She rolled two strips together on her thigh and knotted the ends. This type of string is called "Te Wau" or "Te Tau" and is used exclusively in making string figures, an amazingly interesting fact. She's also given me a piece made by herself from Te Wau and her own hair.

9th October, - I was called away from this as there was trouble in Tabuaroae Village, the furthest South on the Island. The Protestants

Wee had burnt down a mans house because he didn't believe in their particular brand of Protestantism - the London Missionary Society. When I got there I could find out nothing as everyone swore that God himself had set fire to the house - one old woman had actually seen the fire descending from heaven. I am absolutely certain it was done by the orders of the London Missionary Society teacher as in a sermon a few weeks ago he stated that God had told him that fire would descend upon the houses of five people in the village, 2 being Catholics and 3 what are known as Hesitators. I tried to get enough proof to charge the Teacher with being an accessory before the fact but owing to the fogging & intimidation going on I was unable to. In any case it would have quite possibly meant the loss of my job if I had as the L M S are all powerful at home. Their teachers and pastors know it quite well and are consequently unbelievably insolent and rude.

The late trials, I flatter myself, went off well. The Native Court sat daily for over three weeks and I acted as their guide & mentor. We sentenced 2 for murder, about 12 for assaults with weapons, 6 for aiding & abetting assaults and various other people for minor offences. Most of the Natives pleaded guilty in the end but not until the evidence was strong against them. They however fervently believe that they are merely doing their duty to God if they kill and assault Catholics and Hesitators & it is difficult to be severe on them. As I said in my report on the two murder trials, these people are merely the

tools of the people behind the scenes who are actively instigating and fomenting inter-sectarian hatred. These people we can never get and it would be as much as our jobs worth to do so if we could. It makes my blood boil when I think of the old women at home leaving their money to foreign missions - I believe money is continually being raised in England to help the savages of the Gilbert Islands to see the light of Christianity. Little do the subscribers realise that the standard of education and intelligence here is higher than among the peasantry of Europe and that the people here pay annually enormous sums to the L.M.S. funds. It is the L.M.S. that are keeping the Islands so poor - they take literally every penny from the Islanders. Every Island has to build and repair its own churches, provide the entire salary and food of the pastors & teachers on it and at the same time subscribe to all the missionary appeals. This Island is expected to give 1/3 of its annual produce to the London Missionary Society - talk about tithes. No wonder the missionaries can live in what would be to us, unparalleled luxury. Across the lagoon from our house at Bem the missionaries live in beautiful houses with every comfort of civilization, electric light and wireless. When Hera and I go in canoes they go in beautifully painted and cushioned boats rowed by well-trained crews - free labour, of course. Hera was telling a missionary at Rongorongo how much she liked the Gilbertese canoe. "Do you", answered the woman, "I've been in one once - about 10 years ago." In return for squeezing the native out of

boat ferry a bus boat coconut what do they give him. A certain smattering of bad English, an intense desire to ape the European & a most intense hatred of anything Gilbertese, a morality which is perhaps suitable for the European but which is ludicrously and patently inferior to the native's own code. They make him flabby in body and flabbier in mind. Too "superior" to learn the native's arts and crafts they encourage him to forget them at the same time cramming their heads with contentious dogmas which few Europeans understand, much less any native.

Still, my own policy is one of extreme friendliness towards the missions - no good can come through opposing them, they are too strong, thanks to the support of the ignorant at home; and much good can come through co-operating with them and endeavouring to reform from within.

It is now 8.30 p.m. & all the time the nitty H/ers is squatting on the floor making a mat out of four coconut leaf fronds we cut this afternoon. She's making it from beginning to end herself in the correct Gilbertese manner which she learnt from a skilful person in the female Gaol. The mat looks rifting and is big enough to sleep on. It's fascinating going into the bush and cutting ones floor mats & sleeping mats and then weaving them & she getting really good at it - I'd love to see the faces of any of the wives of the officials at Ocean Island if they could see her - they'd merely ejaculate, "Good native" and pass on hurriedly.

25th October. A ship suddenly turned up at Arotea, and,

extraordinarily luckily for us, it was going to Beru and then to Nikunau. So we boarded her at midnight and landed at Beru the next day, where I picked up various telegrams etc which were waiting for me and sent off some more. We got on board again the same night and landed at Nikunau the next day about 2 p.m. The Islanders here are very different to the Aratoans in temperament, being coarser and more brutal. I have been busy investigating a murder here and am perfectly certain who the murderer is but I doubt if I can get enough proof to sentence him, the murder having occured over 2 months ago. We also a case of Rape of a girl of 5½. The trouble with the Island is that it's full of Sour Toddy drinking. The drinking of fermented Toddy is forbidden by the Government as the natives go absolutely mad when they get drunk on it. However there's plenty of it on this Island and the Native Government is giving them all the maximum penalty for it — 6 months.

The natives here, being unsophisticated & much more primitive and savage than elsewhere in Polynesia & Micronesia, are naturally very interesting anthropologically — they are also the lowest paid workers in the Gilberts for throughout the Southern Gilberts I can get plenty of labour at -/6 per day. Up on Tarawa Island they get 5/- a day and on Butaritari 6/- a day or 42/- a week and yet they're now on strike for 6/- a day + full rations. Many English working men would jump at £110 a year for each adult in his family + a free house and practically no expenses. And

yet that is the minimum wage for unskilled labour on Tarawa & Butaritari. Yet natives from my District won't go up north to work simply because money means absolutely nothing to them. If we wants eggs and coconuts and tell the natives they bring anyn we want & always prefer not to be paid. When we arrive at an Island the natives all bring us presents of their natives products & the house is absolutely stocked with spears & coconuts & babai & sleeping mats etc. This goes on for about a week or fortnight & then we insist, in spite of grumblings, in paying for anything which we specifically ask for, such as more eggs. It seems unfair to trade on their excessive ideas of hospitality as the Missionaries do.

22nd November. We've been on this Island a month and a week now and still there seems no signs of a boat. We've been expecting recruiting ships for weeks but I expect they are held up by the bad Westerly weather we have been having. However nothing is more pleasing than this delay as I have at last had a breathing space in which to get my official correspondence up to date. I wrote my 63rd letter to the Resident Commissioner yesterday, some of them containing up to 50 pages, so you can imagine I've been pretty busy, as I must have written twice as many letters to other people, though they are most of them short. I don't believe other District officers write more than 25-30 letters in a year to the Resident Commissioner and most of them awful productions, scrappy and illegible. However I am of the firm opinion that it's

one's written work that will get one on in the Service & so I am most careful to send in all returns at the right time & answer all letters besides sending in reports on all important questions.

I finished the Murder though it took 3 weeks solid inquiry before I could collect the required evidence. We convicted the murderer all right, though I had to put 2 people in Gaol for "aiding & abetting the Murder". They refused for 2 weeks to give me some information I knew they possessed, heaven knows why as it was of very little importance. The evidence was circumstantial but, I think, fairly conclusive. The Murder was a particularly reprehensible one, being the Murder of a woman and therefore, as one witness said, "against Native custom."

After the Murder we proceeded with the Rape trial & the Native Government gave the man 2½ years, a very light sentence as it's his 3rd offence on young children. They only wanted to give him a year but I demurred unofficially.

After that I dealt with Divorces and gave 14 which makes the Divorce rate as high as the Marriage rate. We've given 26 in the last four months, though I always demand strict proof, 15 for Adultery, 7 for Desertion & 4 for Habitual Cruelty.

We had considerable trouble in dealing with unauthorised laws on this Island as on the others. Owing to there having been no District officer for some time the Missionaries got the Native Government to pass whole series of laws which I have now abolished & ordered that no Law is to be passed without my express sanction in writing. As examples I give some of the laws I

abolished at the meeting of the Island Court on Wednesday.

1. Once a Man and Woman have become engaged to be married they are not allowed to speak to each other or be together at any time until they are married. (The Marriage & Colony Law cannot take place till at least 3 months after the engagement is announced).

The reason given for this law is that if an engaged couple were allowed to speak to each other they might be tempted to have intercourse before marriage!

2. Men and Women are not allowed to play any game whatever a dance or play or do together at any time, but all games must be played by men alone & women alone. This is lest any improper thoughts might enter their heads owing to the sexes being in presence of each other.

3. No Song is allowed to be sung which contains any filthy expressions. This is a Colony Law but the interpretation is Missionary. This is how, according to the Magistrate, the Court interprets the word "filthy" — "Any song is filthy which mentions a woman or the name of any woman or anything which belongs to a woman". Thus I found a song has been recently ordered as being "filthy" because it mentioned a Comb. The Court argued that combs were used usually by women & a woman was too filthy a subject to sing about!

And yet the Missionaries are not content but are endeavouring to persuade the Island Courts to rule that all songs which have not got a definately religious subject taken fm the Bible are ipso facto "filthy".

These examples of Missionary inspired Laws I can guarantee, as I

Harry is unable to finish this as he is helping Mr Baverstock & they are only staying here a few hours.

1930/18

Island of Nikunau.

24th October, 1930.

Dearest Lady Maude,

I expect this will arrive with one from Onotoa as I am only using two envelopes because the first is full. We hear that the Recruit Ship, which will take our mail unless "Tumanova" comes back first, has not left Sydney yet. Our Christmas mail, in consequence will be very late reaching you I'm afraid. The "Macquarie", the inter island steamer belonging to Ong Chong & Co., arrived on the 13th about 6 p.m. Harry boarded her and came back at 8 o'clock to tell me that the ship was leaving again at 2 a.m & that we were going too. We got out all the prisoners & by midnight everything was packed and sent to the ship. We left the shore about 1 a.m & landed at Beru at 8.30 a.m. on the 14th We spent the day at Beru, I went on board again at 6 p.m. & Harry at 1 a.m. but the ship didn't leave Beru until 10.30 a.m on the 15th as we went to the south of the island to get copra. We anchored so near the reef that the children swam out to the ship. It only takes a few hours to get to Nikunau and we arrived here at 2.30 p.m. This island is reef bound but quite nice, we have a sea wall about 25 yds. from the house & the breakers, at low tide, are only about 200 yds away. The noise is incessant & at times is just like thunder, it is very pretty though. The "Macquarie" brought us some mail much to my surprise A ship had been direct from Sydney to Tarawa & the P.O. had had the good sense to send our letters direct. I got a letter from Mona, addressed "Tarawa, Central Pacific"

Jolly good I thought. We also got magazines & three parcels of material. Thank you ever so much they are all lovely. The khaki & the dress haven't come yet but as we had no papers and several letters are missing, I still hope they are all at Ocean. I can't remember whether I asked you to send me some pretty but inexpensive material for the natives? I want ¼ yd lengths please, any price up to 1/6 a yd. It doesn't matter how thin it is, the material they get here is awful. The women wear anything but the men need something fairly opaque. Any remnants about, 2 yds, would be excellent for lavalavas. We want these things for presents at various times. I should also like some cheap necklaces, Woolworth pearls etc: with clasps, Several toy motor cars & small dolls. Harry says they are 6d each. Pipes, coloured balls, "Sorbo" belts, mirrors in wee cases with a comb, in fact anything likely to attract our simple folk. ~~Only not toys~~ Harry wants you to buy £2 worth, nothing over 6d. and as many different articles & varieties as you can. A few toys would be useful, but I think we need chiefly articles of adornment. About £1 on material please. We should like these things sent out in one parcel if possible.
Harry is delighted with the new magazines, in fact I can't get him to talk to me at all!

I enclose a list of things we need, mostly from Le Poidevin. It is so difficult to get things here. Some of them I could get at Ocean but we are not encouraged and they just pretend they haven't got them. The razor blades are seldom used but I need them if left alone & they are 6/- for 10 here. The Embrocation is for the natives rheumatism. Well you see if you can get envelopes

with a piece of paper under the flap? All mine have stuck & are an awful jot to undo. We'd like some blocks of writing paper too, its about 1/6 here for a small block. I very badly need some sharp pointed embroidery scissors, they had better be vaselined please. Harry needs some bedroom slippers from Beghin's, I have only one pair in reserve. Otherwise our clothes are lasting well, we both have heaps of pyjamas so I shall use that pretty stuff for a dress. No, I have found that long sleeves are uncomfortable so wear either short or noslaves but with the new full skirts I need the extra length.
I lost my best white counterpanes in the fire, two linen table cloths and a sheet but I am not renewing them yet as I have plenty for this kind of life. We would love you to send us our occasional luxuries like ginger biscuits, tinned genoa cake or toffees. I long for chocolate but I'm afraid it would melt.
We eat a tremendous amount of marmite which I get from Sydney but Australian biscuits are "expensive & nasty"!
Does Vita Wheat keep? Because we both like it.
I want to begin a regular system of numbering letters so that both you and I will know if any are lost. I am numbering the Onotoa letter 1 & this 2 & shall also put the date when I post it & note it in a book. We received 6.7. 10 & 11 from you & I expect 8 & 9 are at Ocean. Well you also number & date your letters on the back & if we let one another know when each number is received it ~~would~~ will be rather interesting.
We should like the magazines numbered too & I'll keep an

account of them.

I have learnt how to make fishing torches since we have been here, they are made of dead coconut leaves, rolled & tied, it is quite easy to do but makes my hands very sore. Having made the torches we went out fishing on the reef, it was great fun. The wardress has given me a beautiful cushion made in the same way as the bags I am sending you; I hope I get some more but fear they are difficult to make. I am sending you two purses which I designed & had made on Onotoa, I designed the shape but the patterns are the natives. One is for you & the other for Muriel. I am having a large basket made too which I hope will be ready soon, I have one which I use for sewing & it is very useful. I procured a beautiful grass skirt yesterday, a really super article. There is an awfully nice old trader here, Mr Turner, he is a Swede but talks English perfectly. He has been on this island for over 30 years & hasn't been even to another island for 16 years, he is 75, hale & hearty & has, of course, a native wife who is also nice. She suffers from asthma. I was talking to Mr Turner last evening while Harry was in the village getting evidence from a cripple & he suddenly said he had been reading in an English paper that some island which had only 27 people, fishing folk, living on it, was being claimed by the French. It transpired that it was none other ~~but~~ than the Minquiers!

I enclose photos of the Bere House.

Please give Joan, Bobbity, Ann, Timothy & Doreen 2/6 each for

Christmas from us. To Mona & Alick I have sent stamps.
Mr Turner has lent us bicycles which is ever so nice. Last night we had to come back in the dark about 3 miles, I didn't like it much because I can't see but Harry raced ahead & I followed more or less blindly. It's most dangerous as the road is covered in sand in some places, stones in others & ~~ocass~~ occasionally a tree blocks the way.
Nov: 5th
I suppose their is the usual excitement among the school children to-day, I think I shall have a bonfire on the sands.
We have been indulging in a really good "Westerly". The worst we have had since we left Ocean Island. The wind was very strong & we had to have mats hung up along the verandah to keep out the rain & also had the roof tied to several trees. We couldn't keep a lamp alight one night and with all the blinds down the damp came in over the top of the walls just like mist. It lasted four days & now there is just a gentle breeze and occasional showers. However the storm will have delayed the ship I'm afraid, but she may arrive any day now so I am finishing my letters. We have tried surfing here but got so cut on the rocks that it wasn't much fun. The natives, especially the small boys, do a lot of surfing. They use odd bits of board, logs and small outriggers. They are ~~just~~ like fish and know just what to do to get along. Yesterday I was watching nine little boys surfing ~~just~~

outside here, they had all kinds of wood but two or three had small pieces of board, once launched they just rested on the board on their tummies & used both hands & legs to help them get along, it looked gripping & they were thoroughly enjoying it.

I spent two days in bed last week, bilious & think, though I was only sick once. We had been eating a native dainty & it is very rich, that was probably the trouble.

Harry has finished the murder trial & the man was found guilty; it took three weeks to get the evidence & everyone lied like anything!

I have enclosed a small mat in one of the purses. It is made from the young shoot of the coconut & is the same as the hats they make here.

Nov: 11th We are still expecting a ship any day, in fact there are two somewhere as the Fanning Island Recruit is also in the Gilberts we hear.

There is an enclosed lagoon in the centre of this island, the natives put in small fish and after a long time and with great ceremony, the lagoon is fished. There has been a big dispute about the ownership of this lagoon, it belongs to one or two clans but and they tried to make out that everyone had equal rights over it. They came to Harry for a decision so he went into the thing thoroughly found out all its history & last week said to whom it belonged and the natives were all so pleased that they said they would forego the feasts that usually precede the fishing of the lagoon & would fish on Monday so that we could see it. They were afraid a ship might come before they were ready otherwise. We got up at 5a.m. and were at the lagoon before 6a.m. Everybody was there, men, women and children. After waiting about 10 minutes a conch was blown and the people rushed in hordes into the water from every side. They have large nets for fishing with a long pole at each end. When they enter the water the nets are rolled up and it looks like several armies with their banners. It made me absolutely shiver when the conch shell was blown & everyone started shouting

& advancing; it really looked wonderful. The natives swam out, some going to the middle of the lagoon & others staying near the land. They unrolled the nets, then everyone made as much noise as they could, at the same time vigorously smacking the water with their hands, to frighten the fish into the nets. The fish have to be dived for and they are then put in a floating receptacle made in the same way as a fishing net. The people stay in from one to two hours, then go home & gorge themselves afterwards salting & drying what fish is left. Isn't it mad to go and fish the whole lot in one day? This time, as it was done for our benefit, nearly everyone who caught any fish gave us one but the lagoon was too deep owing to the recent rain and the fish were able to get away so that many people caught only one fish or none at all. However we were given over 50, ranging in size from 1 to 1½ ft long & ever so fat. They are extremely rich & oily in parts and too much makes even the natives feel ill. They eat part of the stomach, something like tripe I suppose, this is so rich that two or three men divide the inside of one fish. I saw Ulia cook some, he put it in a saucepan without any water & in a very short time it was boiling in its own fat! We didn't eat any of it. Well, with over 50 fish lying around with millions of flies making the most

of such a pleasant situation, we decided to have a shot at salting and drying it. The old Leader gave me instructions, so with six prisoners I set to work. By 11 o'clock the fish were all salted & stowed away to soak in a large bath tub. The 60 insides I told them to divide and I quite expect to have to give doses of salts. They also kept the discarded back bones & the heads which I am told they baked and ate so they don't waste much! To-day we are drying the fish in the sun and as I object to the millions of flies sitting on them I have got about half drying in the sun but under a mosquito net and relays of prisoners are keeping the flies off the rest. The natives, I know, think it a great joke & can't understand why I object to flies but surely it would be most unhygienic? It seems rather unfair that we should have so much fish when it wasn't a very good catch but they did it for us & would be very offended if we refused a present.

The mosquitoes just now are simply chronic, I've never seen anything like it. They even get into the mosquito room every time the door is opened, so we spend the whole day from the second we poke a toe out of bed to the time we retire,

itching & scratching, & part of the night is occupied in killing stray mosquitoes which have managed to get into bed, at least Harry spends his nights thus, he was chasing one very wily mosquito for about half an hour I'm sure & then couldn't catch it! they were so thick on the mosquito net last night that you couldn't have put a pin between them in places & nowhere was the gap no bigger than half a crown. they bite Harry through his thick stockings. He, by the way, has not been fit, those wretched tonsils again, he spent one day in bed but seems to be picking up now. He had had a very busy time & was probably over tired. On Monday last the murder trial lasted from 9a.m. to 1a.m. on Tuesday another case from 9a.m. to 3p.m. & Wednesday 9 am to 9p.m. & of course he won't come to meals.

My hair is still coming out very badly although it seems to be quite healthy & "I don't seem to have much left" to quote Jo's expression! Did you have the same trouble in India & could you give me any advice as to treatment or tonic? I leave it loose at night, loosely rolled all day, brush it well & wash it every 3 weeks & put on coconut oil.

I also need something for my hands, we have to use a lot of well water having no means here of getting or rather storing rain water & my hands are

always dry & peeling.

Nov: 25th Beru.

Our experiences of the last few days will have to be written in my next letter as I have very little time to finish my mail. Anyhow, here we are at home again, I have been both in and out over the reef & got thoroughly drenched each time. I hope to be here for a couple of months until the bad weather is over. Harry will have to go round on the Ocean Island recruit but should only be away about 10 days, I shall not go. We have come from Nikunau on the Fanning Island recruit a very nice boat & very nice people. The doctor has written the Easton Syrup thing for me on the back of my list & says it is about the best thing I can take but I am quite flourishing really. Will you send Alick the 1/- stamp off your parcel please? I have told him you will. The Astrea will be here before long I think so another letter should reach you in about a month. I'm afraid you have had a long wait.

Heaps of love from us both,

Yours affectionately,

Honor.

Forest Edge
Forest Row
Nov 18. 30

My dear Wells

I return to you a couple of letters sent on by Tid.
I have not got your address so must chance this finding you at Palm Port, as I am told you are settled in there & have got rid of Almorah C.
I have also got a scrawl from Honor dated Aug 4. received about 10 days ago. but I am keeping it by me to answer carefully, as she wants some information on the bibliography of cats cradles, which is by now rather extensive. as I was at the Brit. Museum last week I was able to get it for her, & I have got her the 2 latest books on the subject. I knew nothing about the subject, or that it was a

1930/19

Beru,
4th December, 1930.

Dearest Lady Maude,

We had a terrific rush getting the letters off on the Fanning Island ship, the poor old scribe is so slow & very nearly lost the boat. This letter, I am hoping to send by "Niagara", we had a wireless from Mrs Gamble to say she was on her way here from Suva & would take mails to Ocean. She should be here any day after the 6th the "Astoria" was supposed to leave Ocean on the 1st & should be here about the 7th and Harry will be going south with her. I expect he will be away about a fortnight & with any luck will be back for Christmas.

We had a very exciting time getting from Nikunau to Beru and I have had my first experiences of going over the reef through the breakers. On the Sunday morning a large ship appeared on the horizon about 6.30 and made straight for the island. She looked enormous coming straight at us, I suppose because we are so low, as the ship wasn't nearly as big as the Jersey Mail Steamers. We had been having a westerly for about a week & there was a pretty good swell on, the breakers were enormous & the sudden squalls so strong that after passing the Government station the ship went

off north and we spent the rest of the morning chasing her. First of all we thought she had decided to try Beru & then the natives said she was probably on the eastern side which is usually comparatively calm in westerly weather but no one lives on that side all the villages being on the western shore. We cycled north and then crossed the island with natives walking & running behind us. You can imagine our disgust when we found no sign of a ship! We returned home, quite sure that the ship had gone to Beru but about half an hour later Eté said that there was a passage of sorts down south so off we went again. This time, after crossing the island ~~the~~ we saw the ship drifting some way out. Of course there was much discussion as to whether she was from Ocean or Tanning. we could see that it wasn't the "Aeloera" but they might have sent another ship. The tide was very low which made it almost impossible to launch a canoe so the magistrate said he would go out with a few Police and find out who was on board and what they were intending to do. He divested himself of his official clothes which he put in one canoe & kept on an ordinary lavalava. Then he put two police in the canoe & he stood in the breakers to give the signal. The canoe went out fairly well though they nearly

stood on their stern, and the magistrate swam out after them. The second canoe wailed and wailed until we thought they would never get away, then, suddenly they shot forward and got out beyond the surf without shipping a drop of water, it was very well done.

Mr Baverstock was the Government official on board, he is D.O. Fanning Island and used to be D.O. here before we came out. The doctor was very nice, he used to be S.M.O. here but resigned & went to Tanganyika. He says this Colony is a back water & that we haven't a hope of a transfer but of course he knows ~~too~~ nothing of the recent discussions on transfers from here. It may come to nothing, I've never heard of such a higgledy piggledy administration, but we are all right at present & will just have to wait & see. We were invited out to a meal on board at 5.30 p.m. but I thought I should be happier ashore so Harry decided to go alone & I cycled down to see Mr Turner, he was so kind to us & is a dear old man. Teikarawa came with me & as we left the Turner's to return home he was caught up by a village policeman who told him that Harry had had to go home & change he had got so wet trying to go out in a canoe but that he had eventually gone out in the ship's boats which had come ashore with natives. When I got home I was surprised to see Harry emerging from the bathroom dressed in a bath towel &

the front verandah looking like washing day. He tried first to go out in a canoe but got so wet although they didn't actually upset, that he had to go home and change, then, the ship's boat having come ashore he joined it as it was about to return. Unfortunately, the men thought that their boat would go through without any trouble and didn't wait for a lull, the consequence was that a big breaker caught them and very nearly overturned the boat; a huge affair in which they might easily have been killed had they been caught underneath. As it was it righted itself though pretty well swamped & eventually they got out of the surf & back on the reef. Harry says he spent his time floundering about in the bottom of the boat in company with one or two others & every breaker threw them about. One of the crew, a brawny person, hauled him out at last & he swam ashore. So he never got to the ship at all! Koura was very annoyed with Harry because he dumped him overboard as they started. Tho Koura wouldn't take any notice of Harry that evening.

We heard from the magistrate that the ship was going straight to Beru and decided to go on her. I was rather nervous about going over the reef, especially after Harry's experience, but he

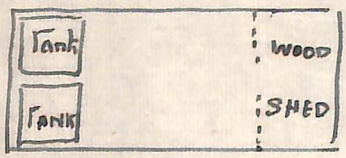
assured me it wouldn't happen again. Next morning the Fanning Island people started recruiting & I got the packing done. By 2p.m. we were all ready & set off for the shore only to find upon our arrival that the boats had been pulled up high & dry & there wouldn't be enough water to float them for about 2 hours. We walked about & played with Koura, fortunately it kept fine & eventually got the boats in the water. We went out fairly well but I'm sure they never timed it & I got pretty well soaked but we were in no danger of capsizing. We didn't sail until about 7p.m. and we enjoyed a very nice supper, beef steak, which we hadn't seen for about 6 months. The ship was quite good & very steady, not as large as the Jersey mail boats I should think. It was evidently built for a cold climate as all the cabins had steam radiators which couldn't be turned off! The doors were made of wire gauze & had no curtains, our cabin was opposite the galley & therefore we had very little privacy. Even the bathroom wasn't very private, it had doors like venetian shutters which I always felt people could see through & I'm quite sure the lock was ineffective & that if anyone had pushed from the outside they would have opened! I'm glad to say no one tried. The crew was a wonderful

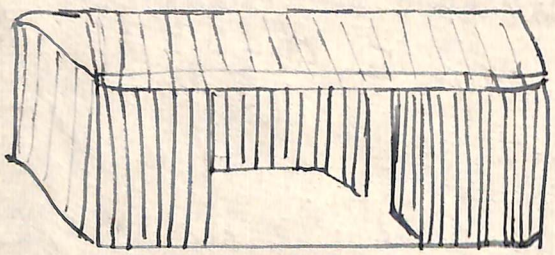
medley of nationalities although the ship was American. they all looked horribly anaemic beside the natives. We arrived at Beru next morning in beastly squally weather & very wet, the captain didn't attempt the lagoon side but drifted off the L.M.S. no station where Ete said there was a passage. The tide was low & not good for landing as we might not have been able to get up on to the reef but we had to make an attempt or wait all day. Harry & I were sent off in the first boat with a native steersman, all our gov: staff & wives & the baggage. We were pretty heavily laden & unwieldy & I admit I was very frightened. As we neared the reef Ete said he would swim ashore - get help, all the Rongorongo boys were swimming & standing in the surf ready to assist. Ete got hold of their boat captain who came out & steered us in very well, the passage was tiny, only just large enough to take us & we just got up on to the reef & then stuck & the boys pulled us out of the breakers. We had one very exciting minute & were all more or less wet. I was ready to jump overboard, it seemed to me to be much the safest & pleasantest way of getting ashore & one got wet either way! It's most tantalising to get within 50 yds of the shore & then to be stopped by breakers.

It was fairly nerve racking waiting while Ete went ashore as we had to wait just outside the breakers & every swell threatened to take us in. The natives are all so unconcerned & never seem to mind whether the boat sinks or not. Naturally, they would just grab a white man & swim ashore so why worry! Mrs Eastman was on the shore & very kindly let me use her bathroom to change in. Harry didn't seem to be very wet, I got all the water both at Nikumaroro & Beru. She gave us all Ovaltine too which was delicious. The second boat with the Canning people got ashore all right too & didn't get very wet though Dr McNaughton retired to the kitchen fire to dry his seat! It takes us about ¾ of an hour to get from Rongorongo to here so we were very glad of the refreshment etc. The lagoon, after six weeks proximity to the lagoon, looked marvellous & was as smooth as could be with the breakers right away on the horizon. The peace & quietness too took us days to get used to & for several days I had a roaring in my ears, the result of being so near the reef at Nikumaroro I suppose. We found the garden flourishing, all my pot plants too & cuttings I planted in August are almost bushes. The vegetable garden was quite 2ft under water so

I shall have to try again elsewhere. We realise now what a lovely home this is, nothing could be more peaceful or beautiful. I do wish you could manage to come and see us I'm sure you'd love it & if you arrived between May & August you would have a good voyage & no unpleasant landing here.

We have enlarged the chicken run and have a fine enclosure now, about 30 fowls & 20 chicks of various ages, all hatched while we were away. Harry is having a new wash-and-ironing house built for me. The old one was such a blot on the landscape, unpainted corrugated iron on a few posts. Now it is to be native built with thatched roof. There is to be a wood shed at one end, there are tanks at the other end & the centre is for ironing & perhaps washing in. I designed the place myself but the shape is the old foundation.





Something like that, costing 30/- !

I have turned the spare room into my work-room, the two strong beds act as couches, I have a large table, a cupboard and the linen cupboard in it & the store room opens out of it so everything is very handy. The latter is well stocked just now as our stores arrived sooner than I expected, while I was away. Harry has arranged the Lifebuoy soap in a marvellous pyramid & says he thinks he will become a store keeper! We have had a wireless from Ocean to say that "Tumanoa" has left Suva & is on her way here. The "Astoria" left Ocean on the 1st & should be here about the 7th

Tuesday. December 16th

I am on my own now & feeling very lost without Harry. The "Astoria" arrived here last Saturday and left again the same night. Two ladies came ashore, Mrs Thomas, (her husband seems to be the head of the recruit but I don't know his title, and they are both very nice) & Mrs Hatfield the clerk's wife, also Mr Hatfield & the doctor, a new man whom we hadn't met. They had lunch ashore & went out again to the ship about 10 o'clock. I hope they will be back by Friday or Saturday but it depends on the weather, it is a bit blowy to-day. The "Macquarie" & the "Manuo" were here yesterday & Mrs Heyen & the baby spent the day ashore with me.

Mrs Heyen told me that they had seen the "Astoria" at Onotoa on Sunday evening so she was getting round very quickly. Mr Grimble wrote to Harry that he was sending "Nimanoa" to Armstrong & telling him to come to us for Christmas. It will be lonely for him so I hope he comes. Oh! the "Nimanoa" passed us by the wretch & went straight to Tarawa. Mr Grimble hopes to come round about January, it will be nice to see him again. I saw one or two bits of Harry's mail from Mr Grimble before he left, but you can imagine the rush I had, entertaining & endeavouring to finish packing his things. Anyhow, he was awfully pleased with his mail & Mr Grimble has written some very nice letters about his correspondence & especially about the scheme for building a causeway here & reclaiming a lot of land. The Acting D.O. of the central Gilberts sent a man down here for prisoners for the Colony & a/c some time ago & Harry told him to take "so many" from Onotoa but <u>none</u> from anywhere else. Instead of which he took, I think, 3 from Tamana & Arorae whom Harry had not seen & the D.O. accepted them against all regulations. Unfortunately for him Mr Grimble sent for prisoners for Ocean & got these 3 men amongst others. He was simply furious & has sent Harry a copy of his letter to the D.O. & it certainly is a brute

From rumours we have heard the D.O. in question seems to be suffering from a swollen head. He was a clerk in Suva, sent to Funafuti while the D.O. was on leave & then brought here temporarily by Mr Gumble.

I am endeavouring to talk Gilbertese as Harry has taken both Ete & Teikarawa & no one else speaks English. I'm getting along slowly & they all try to help. I have three women who sleep in the mosquito room next my bedroom to keep me company, they all belong to the Govt. station. Last evening they taught me how to play a game of cards, I found it very nearly the same as one we used to play at home called "Casino" so it was fairly easy. All the same we had one or two "arguments" in Gilbertese! Ete's father had rather a nasty accident about a week ago. He trod on a clam which shut on the sole of his foot giving him a nasty zig-zag cut. ∿∿ like that. He was alone at the time but managed to crawl home & of course, got the cut full of sand & lost a lot of blood. They brought him to me & I managed to stop the bleeding & got it fairly clean. The dresser (native) came along next day but said it was alright & I said I'd carry on. Then I got the doctor to look at it on Saturday & he said a stitch would improve matters. That evening, when I was all alone, they came rushing in to say that the foot

was pouring with blood. they brought him to the house & the foot was simply streaming blood. I found out that he had stood up & evidently tore what had healed. Well, we poured cold water over it & ~~it~~ raised the leg on a box & it very soon ceased. the next day the dresser put in the stitches & it is going on well.
I also have a woman patient who evidently got a boil, didn't come to me or to the dresser & when I discovered her the boil had burst & she had an open sore quite an inch in diamter & about ½ in. deep with a certain amount of matter. I bathed it with an alum lotion out of the book you gave us & put on Boric Ointment, it healed very rapidly & now is almost all right. I am also treating Uria's baby of 2½ months, its feet are one mass of Gilbertese sores, nasty little places full of matter. It cried & cried Uria says but I think it is a little better now though I have only put on two dressings so far. When I saw its poor little feet I didn't wonder it cried.

Mrs Jewett & her little girl are coming to see me this afternoon, they are part of the Mission staff at Rongorongo - We had a lovely mail from the "Astoria" but it's funny how the letters come, I have received this time 8. two 12's. 14. 15. 16 & 20. I wonder where 17. 18 & 19 are. We have received two pairs of

khaki now & a flowered silk came this time. thank you ever so much for all of them & for our Christmas presents. the bags are lovely & just what I wanted, I shall use one for a sponge bag. the purse is ever so nice but unfortunately they had folded it & broken the mirror. Many thanks too for the raffia bag I'm looking forward to working it. Muriel sent me a very pretty necklace, I'd been wanting some more beads ever since Hylda Macpherson came she had such nice ones, so I was delighted. D^d Gould sent me a 5-lb tin of "Minties" from Ocean, isn't he nice?

Fancy Bazett getting into the Sudan, I hope he likes it. I never thought he would give up his teaching. Geoff, Sybil says, sailed for India in October.

It takes such a long time to get news here, we heard some time ago that Vesuvius had erupted & all I can find in the Times is an earthquake in Southern Italy so I suppose the other followed. We also heard of the loss of the Airship, R.101? but have no details yet. I really think we shall have to invest in a wireless set we are so cut off when not on Bere and since all the B.I. papers & books have arrived I feel we want to know what is happening all over the world. We got a lot of "National Messages" & a parcel of small books on B.I. truth. Harry hasn't

seen them yet but I have been reading them.

I must answer some letters & then begin cooking for my visitors. It is very awkward not knowing when they will return or what their plans are. It means such a waste of good food as one must be prepared - things won't keep. Even cake goes mouldy in a few days. I made all kinds of cake last time & they didn't stay to tea & also arrived a day late so that ginger snaps I had made had all gone flabby. I gave them mummy apples & shortbread to take with them. I don't suppose I shall have time to add to this so I'll put the date of Harry's return on the back of the envelope, it will be near enough for the time of posting.

Heaps of love from

Honor.

P.S. Glad to hear you had received mail from us, I'm afraid they are very far between. The green frock had come all the time but I thought it was a length of material in my haste. It is awfully pretty, thank you very much.

Mrs Eastman says Astoria won't be back till Monday & it seems ages since Harry went.

December 26th

I am still alone and the weather is still very bad, isn't it disgusting? We heard news of the "Astoria" on Wednesday, she had been held up at Avarae for several days but had got away on Tuesday. We don't know whether Harry & co. went ashore & couldn't get off again or what happened. Anyhow there is a possibility of their getting here tomorrow or Sunday but they may not as the weather is worse again. I went over to Rongorongo on Christmas Eve & slept there that night & the next. It was very kind of Mrs Eastman to invite me & I had a very nice Christmas. I'm afraid I should have been rather miserable by myself. They had a Christmas Tree for the children on Wednesday afternoon & in the evening I helped to tie up parcels for the Teachers. On Christmas day we were awakened by the girls singing carols on the verandah! I went to the service at 10 a.m. I couldn't understand a word but enjoyed the singing. We had lantern slides in the evening & altogether had a very pleasant day. I had some presents too. A hanky from Mrs Eastman & the same from Miss Simmons, two lovely plants from Mrs Jewett and a book, written by himself about the South Seas, from Mr Eastman. I also had several presents from the

natives. Our wee house on the jetty has been blown down but otherwise I think we are intact. I do wish it would clear up though, it is such a long weekend. Will you get the things on the enclosed list please? We are reduced to three saucers & about 6 cups, most of them chipped! I rather wanted to get breakfast things like the dinner service but it is 3 tins. The price. The one on the list is dark blue willow pattern.
I also want a Top Hat Cooker. I had an advertisement for one & thought it looked just the thing for here. Now Mrs Eastman tells me she has one & always uses it but of course I can't find the advertisement!
I made a flan for the "Astoria" by putting the pastry on the outside of a ~~pastry~~ sandwich tin but unfortunately I couldn't remove the tin without breaking the pastry, so if you could get me something I'd be very glad.
Once more I am finishing off letters, I hope this time they will really come.

Much love from

Honor.

1930/20

December 28th 1930.

Harry returned yesterday but it was so rough that no one else would land. Harry says they had an awful time getting to the passage & the waves were enormous. Our boat went out with the Scribe & chief Kaubure as well as the crew. When they got to the "Astoria" they said Harry couldn't possibly come ashore & Harry said "why"? "Will the boat be smashed going in?" they said they could manage to get back they thought but were not anxious to risk taking him. However in the end they took Harry & Elē & one suit-case which was wanted for boat work, & they left the poor Scribe & Kaubure on board! The wind is still bad so no one has come ashore yet. Harry says they had an awful time, instead of 200 recruits they have got about 24! They simply couldn't get the boats to & fro and have had several boats overturned. At Arorae the special flat bottomed boat the P. G. have, was smashed to bits under them & they had to swim ashore. Harry went ashore at Arorae by himself the first ~~day~~ time & was marooned for 3 days without food. Eventually he got out to the ship again & it was when they landed the second time that the boat was smashed. It's a wonder they weren't killed. One poor child was imprisoned

P.S. Mrs Eastman says she has slabs of Bournville chocolate, fruit, nut & also Mexican sent out in sealed tins & it is perfectly good. So if you would send us some we'd be delighted.

under an upturned boat but they got him out & took him to hospital but Harry says he is all right. Mrs Thomas says it's the worst westerly he has seen & he has been here for years. Of course it's absolute madness to try and recruit at this time of year.

Mrs Eastman came over last Saturday & took me to Rongorongo for the day. It was awfully kind of her as the weather was wretched & it took her 1½ hrs to get here, it usually takes about 45 minutes. She wanted me to see her Guides & had the meeting that evening. They really are wonderful, I was amazed, & I'm convinced it is the very best thing for them. Mrs Eastman is very anxious for me to take up Guiding & to be a travelling Captain, then we could have a company on each island. If you haven't passed on your books may I have them please? I shall have a lot to learn & it is also an incentive to learn Gilbertese quickly. Harry says I've improved since he went away.

Would you mind sending me B.I. Books occasionally instead of novels please?

Heaps of love from us both

Yours affectionately

Hono?