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Round the World in 465 Days.

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ROUND THE WORLD
IN 465 DAYS

NOVELS BY JOHN CREASEY

*John Creasey is the author of many
crime stories, among them being:*

The Toff on Board
Kill The Toff
Fool The Toff
A Knife for The Toff
The Toff Goes Gay
Hunt The Toff
Call The Toff

Inspector West Cries Wolf
Inspector West Alone
Puzzle for Inspector West
A Case for Inspector West
Inspector West at Bay
Send for Inspector West

THE "DR PALFREY" STORIES

The League of Light
The Man Who Shook the World
The Prophet of Fire
The Children of Hate

THE DEPARTMENT Z STORIES

The League of Dark Men
The Department of Death
The Enemy Within
Dead or Alive

and he has also written

The Log of a Merchant Airman (with Capt. John Lock)
The Toff—*Play* (with Richard Fisher)
etc. etc.

ROUND THE WORLD
IN 465 DAYS

by

JEAN AND JOHN CREASEY

Illustrated

London

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AUTHORS' NOTE

It hasn't been possible to name one in ten, hardly one in a hundred, of the people whom we met as strangers and from whom we parted as friends. We shall always be grateful to them; and hope to meet again.

Jean (as well as the boys, unknowingly) is especially grateful to those friends who made it possible for her to visit the United States with John.

Both of us would joyfully start out again tomorrow!

J. & J. C.

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The book is based on letters written to friends in England—John writing some, Jean others. Some of these have been little revised; others greatly altered to fit in more smoothly with the book. The name beneath the date makes it clear who is writing; for Jean would hate to be blamed for John's work; and, naturally, John would hate to take the slightest credit away from Jean!

I

Preparations

OCTOBER 30TH, 1949

(Jean)

The idea and its reception

Now I know John's crazy. Without having given me the slightest warning, last night he suggested that we give up Number 10—*sell it!*—put the furniture in store, take the children away from school and go round the world. Of course, I said it was ridiculous, we couldn't possibly afford it. Anyhow, how on earth did he think we could get about in foreign countries with two boys, one six and the other seven? And what about his work? And their education?

All he did was smile and say that the only thing needed was *my* agreement. He's never driven a car because of his leg; last night he calmly said that a lot of people drive with worse disabilities than his, so he'll learn to drive, buy a car and take that with us. I said it would cost a fortune. He said he thought he could make the trip pay for itself! We'd start in South Africa, then India, and oh, it's nonsense, but it *is* rather wonderful to think about. Anyhow, he'll almost certainly fail in his driving test. But I wish he wouldn't keep getting ideas like this, although in a way it's better than the year when he decided to be a Liberal candidate in the Parliamentary elections.

I suppose it *is* as easy to write a thriller on board a ship as anywhere, but—oh, I'm too upset to write any more.

NOVEMBER 1ST, 1949

(John)

Hopes

On the whole, the idea went down very well. Of course it was a shock for Jean, and she hates the idea of selling Number 10. The rest will be all right, once she gets used to the prospect. I'll just let

things ride until she raises the subject—at breakfast tomorrow, I fancy! If we go next September, I'll have ten months to clear the desk and make plans. I'm hoping I can time it so as to see a Test Match in Australia.

JUNE 30TH, 1950

(Jean)

The house is sold—Planning—Driving test—Babs

We—have—sold—the—house! It took just half an hour. My lovely Number 10 isn't mine any more.

A Colonel and his wife called and John took the Colonel round while I cornered the wife in the drawing-room, where I'd planned the new couch and chairs, and—but never mind that now. I gave her all the grisly details about the kitchen quarters being so large and old-fashioned, then showed her round them, opening the door of that poky old coal-shed with the door that won't shut once it's opened and won't open when it's shut, and I thought I was doing so well. Then John appeared with the Colonel.

"My dear, I've bought it," the Colonel announced. Just like that.

I sat down and gasped: "Oh, *no!*" The Colonel's lady looked stunned and just managed to murmur "Oh".

Now I go round actually fondling the doors and taking dozens of last glances out of the windows.

Can you imagine the hectic days to come? What shall I store and what shall I sell? There'll be the packing for the four of us—we need clothes for twelve or eighteen months, winter and summer and for *all* occasions.

John's working all the hours there are, as usual, to get clear before we leave, and he's so busy organizing it's almost as bad as the election. I don't think he's finding it as easy to book passages as he pretends, he spends hours on the telephone and then dashes up to Cook's in London, or Australia House, South Africa House and various places. I won't let him drive up—oh, I didn't tell you. My dear, he passed his driving test, first time! We've a huge Humber Super Snipe on order and the boys can't talk about anything else.

This afternoon I have to go and see a headmaster about lesson books, and then some friends are coming in for drinks and to select some of our pictures to hang on their walls. It's better than storing the pictures, but when I think of not seeing those paintings for over a year . . .

Babs is coming to help both John with his work and me with the boys! We're going to *teach* them. Mummy will miss having both of us away for so long but didn't hesitate to tell Babs she should come.

JULY 5TH, 1950

(John)

Reflections

Things are really moving—I've managed to book every passage as far as the United States. Everything is a rush, what with arranging all this and writing like fury to make sure that I don't have too much to do while I'm away. But occasionally I pause to think . . .

Things don't improve much in this idiot world, do they? I'm not particularly worried about the Korean war spreading—I still think we're in for at least five years of global cold war—but whenever I pause to think about conditions in general, I get glum. Sometimes I wonder whether the trip isn't a kind of drug, to stop me from brooding.

Remember reading the original typescript of *Man In Danger* while sitting in a deck-chair on the lawn here? You scoffed at the idea of anyone analysing the world's troubles and submitting a solution in 96 pages, but I *did* try. Over a hundred and fifty review copies went out, and there were six reviews. *Six!* Including a church paper which damned with faint praise and ended up by stating that it hadn't the compelling power of the gospels. All I did was to ask people to live by the gospels, even if I didn't use accepted gospel language. The little book's been a complete flop. Money, time, hope—oh, forget it. I suppose I could be wrong about the world being in a mess, too. (If Jean reads this, she'll scream!)

Everything else can keep until we meet next month. Then . . . off we go!

II

South Africa and Southern Rhodesia

OCTOBER 11TH, 1950

(Jean)

On board—The three R's—Disappointing Equator—The ciné camera

The letter and the flowers you sent to the ship were wonderful, dear. I had no idea we had so many friends. We couldn't wash for several days because of the gladioli in the cabin wash-basins.

It's a beautiful ship, and the boys are spellbound, they can hardly realize we've really started. Nor can I! Everybody dresses up like mad, and we have to change three or four times a day, lastly into evening clothes. Can you imagine me hunting through masses of suit-cases trying to find that red velvet rose to tuck in my black dress, and John saying of course I had to forget his old bow tie, the one that never comes undone. I wonder if he guesses that I threw it away. I feel a bit guilty. As our cabins aren't the most luxurious on board, Babs and I spend hours grovelling to try to find the oddments we need.

The boys have started their three R's. It's a bit hard for them, though, as the other children play all day. Ours don't seem to mind!

On Sunday, John was roped in for a Brains Trust. The devil actually made me stand up in the crowded lounge—his answer to a question asking for a definition of the perfect wife. If only he meant it!

We crossed the Equator on October 6th, and it was dull and rainy. I thought that the sun always shone on "the line". There was a very bright and gay ceremony for children—King Neptune and his Queen were piped on board, children were "shaved" and ducked—but *not* Richard. He was terrified at the thought. But he had his moment when he met the *enormous* Captain Page (he must weigh 250 pounds). Richard, four feet high and 50 pounds, gravely volunteered to show him a short cut to the lower deck—and the Captain took it! He came in later while they were at their multiplication tables and told them they were the most sensible boys on board. How they worked after that.

The weather's been calm, although we've had one or two dreadfully hot days. I haven't seen a fish except in the dining-room. Now,

I'm going to seal this and post it so that it'll be taken off first thing in the morning, when we berth. Yes, we'll *be* in South Africa.

John bought an 8-mm. ciné camera just before we left and has taken a few shots. I'm *most* pessimistic about the results.

OCTOBER 12TH, 1950

(John)

Difficulties of writing on board ship—John and a few suggestions

I am almost depressed; come gale or deck-tennis, I meant to finish the rough of a book on board, crime with a day-to-day shipboard background, panic aboard and murderer lurking, but I'm only half-way through and we're due in tomorrow. It isn't so much the distractions of deck-games or being lured into talking, as the wind. It comes from all corners and through every window, porthole and companionway. I've typed with the paper flapping in the machine like a flag at the half-mast in a half gale, until I've been ready to drop the typewriter to the sharks. There is no quiet corner, except in the cabin, which boasts a humid 90 degrees if the fan isn't on; and if the fan is on, flaunts a wind. There is a full load of passengers and the more garrulous spring from corners or out of forty winks wherever I appear with the typewriter.

World news comes in the form of a few duplicated sheets obviously hammered out by a typist as much at the mercy of the wind as I. I pick up the bulletin with a sense of adventure to find sports news cheek-by-jowl with Korea and a Society or Hollywood divorce. The more important Stock Exchange prices are placed next to the football results; I read the results. Presumably some of the other passengers are interested in the latest price of tin, wool and what-have-you, but I've seen no evidence. There is a sprinkling of youngsters on board—that is, forty and under—and to me a surprising number of elderly Afrikaners, most of whom seem to be farmers. I have been bred on newspaper and pamphlet not to mention book propaganda which makes the South African Government a pale echo of Hitler's—and this Government is supported by most of the farmers. None, as far as I can yet judge, is a Nazi.

I was roped in for a Brains Trust, largely because of my industrious typing and a whispering campaign about being An Author. This was given a lot of innocent support from the boys.

"And what does your daddy do, dear?"

"Oh, he writes *books*."

"My dear, you know that rather fat man with the horn-rimmed glasses and the limp—he *writes*."

Of course the "Can we do anything to stop the drift to war?" cropped up. So I weighed in with my familiar naïve cry. If each would set his house in order—relationship with home, family, neighbours, business—we would draw nearer the necessary moral standard to influence world affairs by the pressure of united public opinion. But only addlepates would expect U.P.O. from people who, if religiously inclined, quarrel about the right road to heaven, and if not, quarrel about something else, such as the colour of skins, and do a little tax-dodging, customs-cheating, black-marketing and other forms of legal and moral malfeasance on the side.

An unexpectedly large number talked to me afterwards, most of them with the "it's a wonderful ideal but not practical" gambit. So I trotted out my favourite answer, that our "practical" approach had got us into two world wars, semi-starvation for half the world, tyranny rampant and democracy riddled with the twin diseases of fear and half-heartedness, not to mention a lot of "give as little as I can for as much as I can get". Supposing, said I, that businessmen put as much energy, effort and thought into making idealism work as they do into making sure they won't go bankrupt, mightn't we get somewhere?

This won the old familiar look from old and young, the horrified realization that I really mean it, the same embarrassed "In principle, I fully agree with you". You know, *your* reaction. Now remind me that I started off by telling you about my depression because I haven't been able to do enough towards feathering my own nest!

The trip? There's only one word—"uneventful". We did see a school of porpoises, as I thought; actually only dolphins gambol in the way these were doing, according to a passenger who talks with obvious authority and with whom I've argued—about my theories, not his facts!—more than most. Black, sleek shiny things, the dolphins—the only indication that beneath us are fish by the million from whales and sharks to tiddlers. This would have been a fascinating voyage had we been able to see beneath the surface; instead we've glided over the top and missed what matters. Life as usual!

OCTOBER 20TH, 1950

(Jean)

"Africa's come!"—The first Customs—Dark faces and Ali—The Cape Peninsula—District 6

My dear, Richard went bursting into Babs' cabin on the morning we arrived at Cape Town, and cried: "Auntie! Wake up! Africa's come!" Then he rushed into us, his eyes bigger than ever. We struggled into our dressing-gowns and went on deck. It was rather wonderful although a little disappointing, *smaller* than I'd expected. I mean, Table Mountain. The light wasn't very good and the mountain was just a dark mass with a lot of cloud on top. There were some other peaks, but none as high as I'd expected. The city looked so small, too. Scoopy stood rigid at the ship's rail, staring at the mountains, thumb in mouth. I hadn't the heart to make him take it out. Then Richard's went into *his* and his left hand came up in support. John and I crept away.

When we went on deck after breakfast, Table Mountain looked twice the size!

Getting off a ship is an awful fuss; hundreds of questions to answer on huge forms, documents to show, and then Customs. We'd been warned they were strict but the only real trouble we had was with a box of spare parts for Humpy—did I tell you we're going to call the car Humpy?

It's funny how John takes everything as it comes. The big shed was literally *swarming* with coloured people, many of them nearly black, and the boys and I just gaped, we couldn't help it, although every time I realized what we were doing I told the boys to stop, but could I blame them? None of us had ever seen more than one or two black people, I doubt if the boys had seen even one. Some were *so* black. John just went on arguing with the Customs men, but he lost. Afterwards he said no one asked him what was in the bulk of the twenty-three pieces, so he'd really won. I think he would rather jump into the sea than cheat Customs. I've never really forgiven him for declaring my crocodile handbag, when—but never mind. We were looking for a taxi to take us to the hotel when a man carrying a book under his arm came up and stared at us, and I cried: "Darling, there's a Toff!" The man actually had a *Toff* book. He turned out to be Victor Ruben, the agent of John's publishers. He took us to the hotel—the Mount Nelson. This has a long drive with palm trees on each side, their great trunks rather like

bottles and the fronds spraying out from the top. *Most* impressive.

We have the sweetest waiter in the dining-room—Ali, my first Indian. He's very dark with curly hair which pokes out of his little round white cap, he rushes everywhere and looks awfully hot, and he couldn't look after us any better if we were royalty.

Victor took us round the mountain in his Citroën. The views from the road, the different valleys with the houses in them and on the hillsides, getting sparser and sparser nearer the top, are superb, especially all lit up at night. We had a Sunday out with Victor, driving round the Cape Peninsula. The boys hoped they would see baboons in a game reserve there, but no luck. We went to the tip of the Cape of Good Hope, it's rather wonderful—breath-taking. John took some ciné shots, goodness knows what they'll be like.

It's still very strange, seeing so many coloured people. Some wear ordinary clothes and seem to love bright-coloured blazers. I've seen some Indian women in long dresses—saris—of glorious colours and so graceful. A lot of men have red fezes, they're Malays I think, and quite a lot are barefooted. It's confusing, because there are several groups of Natives. John seems to know the difference and—of course, you'd expect it of him!—he's met a coloured journalist who's taken him round District 6, which is supposed to be very tough. Now John wants *me* to go and meet the journalist and his family. What on earth shall I say to coloured people?

We got to a house in some rather poor district with brown-skinned people at the corners staring at us, and John driving—he's driven very little at night, and hates it—and in we went. Mrs Manuel, the journalist's wife, was darker than Mr Manuel who hardly looks coloured, but so charming. Their three children had been kept up for the occasion and shook hands very timidly, then were sent to bed. Some friends of the Manuels came in and everyone was very self-conscious until John started to talk. Then the men warmed up, and soon Mrs Manuel took a cloth off the table and showed *hundreds* of the loveliest little cakes. It was all delightful.

The next day we went out to Sir Somebody and Lady Blank, who have a lovely house at Wynberg, not far out of Cape Town. (John's had several photographs in the papers, and Sir B. . . . came up at the hotel and charmingly introduced himself as a fan!) The flowers in the 11-acre garden were beautiful; they seemed to have more colour than ours, and there are dozens of varieties I've never seen.

We've had several drives out, and spent a day in Stellenbosch,

part of it with a Dutch Reformed Church minister. They're supposed to be very rigid, but the minister and his wife couldn't have been more charming. A journalist from an Afrikaans newspaper took us round—the editor put him at John's disposal for the day. A really nice young man. I don't quite understand the feeling between the English and the Afrikaans-speaking people but apparently it's quite strong. The country was lovely. We drove through vineyards most of the time, and tasted several new fruits, the one I remember most being a little yellow one with a smooth black stone—loquats. Then we went over a farm with a jovial middle-aged woman and her son, who gave us tea in an *enormous* room, and afterwards took us round the farm and through the cellar and the wine vats. They store 7,000 gallons of wine in each vat. John says he'll use the farm in a book.

John's been furiously busy seeing editors and journalists. I've spent a lot of time looking at carved heads and figures I'm told not to buy because they'll be cheaper inland. We're all excited about starting on the road—I wonder how it will turn out.

OCTOBER 14TH—21ST, 1950

(John)

A nice young man—Early impressions—The editor who saw red—"Apartheid"—The Cape Coloureds—Asians—Putting the clock back—Cheerful Natives and philosophical whites—An Afrikaner editor with a twinkle—A Dutch Reformed parson—Wrong to prevent wrong?—Are Natives childlike? A vigorous repudiation—The war we thought we'd won—Causes of bitterness

A long silence from me will mean that I've died of heart-failure or have driven over a precipice. At the moment I am fighting a war of nerves. The mountain roads near Cape Town couldn't have better surfaces, but oh, the long drops! Other drivers don't show anything like my cautious approach and cheerfully jam on brakes within inches of the next world so that they may see the grandeur of the mountains and valleys from the comfort of their front seat. I prefer to get out and walk gingerly forward, hand-in-hand with the boys. It is magnificent but I have no relish for it as a tomb. There are moments when I doubt whether I'll screw myself up to tackle the long drive north, for I'm told that *these* aren't mountains, wait until I get further up, where the roads have a loose surface and the gradients are really steep.

Apart from all this, things are going extremely well. (If I except the moment when I scraped Humpty's black and glossy wing, and the ensuing argument with Jean as to whether I am or am not yet capable of driving.) Victor Ruben, Evans' representative, is exerting himself with far more goodwill than I deserve to show us round and put us right.

Getting the car ashore was one thing. Getting authority to use it, another. Money, money, money. Port dues, dock dues, garage; a morning paying insurance, another getting an international driving licence okayed. I waved my mass of documents, triptiques, certificates, and then paid up.

Out of the mass of first impressions, some just hit my mind and stayed—like the huge Native sitting on the ground in Adderley Street, the main shopping thoroughfare, with his back against a lamp-post. He wore a ten-gallon hat of gingery brown, a black-and-white check waistcoat, brilliantly polished orange-brown shoes and a yellow coat, and he sat with his legs stretched out, people stepping over him, traffic rumbling past; and apparently quite oblivious, he read a large Bible.

Having rid myself of the impression that I would find everybody with black or tawny skins walking on the kerb and all the whites on the pavements or in cars, and discovering that in the streets at least they mingle freely, I even became adjusted to the cyclists. Cyclists are not exactly cautious in England, Paris, Brussels or Amsterdam, but here—dozens of them appear to be learning to ride in the main streets. They dart into the road, perform like acrobats, beam at everyone whom they nearly knock down, and show a fascinating ability to dive for cover whenever danger comes close. Driving down any main street can be high adventure. The trams add to risk, cars are parked on each side, and at any moment black faces appear, white teeth gleaming, eyes rolling. If there is a split second to cross the road in front of the car, the whole body flashes into sight. Often two or three cross, hand-in-hand and at high speed, while brakes are jammed on.

Of course, there are white jay-walkers too!

As you know, I set out with three purposes: business, background for future yarns, and study, as far as possible, of the way people live. In a week, and God knows it's a silly time to spend anywhere if you want to find out what makes people tick, I've had some shocks and my eyes are a little wider open.

So far, only one man I've met really saw red on the subject of the Afrikaner and the present Government. He was the editor of an English-language newspaper, and—but whoa back! How much do you know? Probably about as much as I did before getting here.

There is the Nationalist let-us-throw-off-the-British-shackles Government in power, with a policy called *apartheid* which, loosely translated, means complete segregation of white from black.

There are several Afrikaner views on what *apartheid* really is, however. Some extremists say that the black and the white groups should live separate social *and* economic lives—that is, no black servants for the whites, no black workers in white-owned businesses. Although a few appear to think this is practical, most have dropped it. Another view is that it simply means social segregation—no mixed marriages, for instance, and two distinct communities, but economic interdependence. I've found few who really agree on what they mean by *apartheid* except that this social segregation is essential. Some see the whites as the superior caste, and the Natives as serfs; others would give the Natives a form of autonomy in their own reserves. The truth is that today true (full) segregation is impossible, for white and black depend too much on each other. The Government acknowledges this to be economically true, but rejects any idea that social equality is the proper aim.

The Government's supporters are mostly Afrikaners, that is, Europeans of Dutch (mainly), some French, German and other Continental descent, who have their own language, Afrikaans—which is Dutch with variations. The opposition is mainly English-speaking and of British descent, although a number of Afrikaners are with them. Smuts was their leader—and in many ways seems to be still.

In England and elsewhere there is a strong feeling that the Government's policy is so nationalistic that it's almost an emasculated form of Nazi-ism. The Nationalists under Malan make no bones about it—sooner or later, they say, they'll have a Republic. The rest say "over our dead bodies". Recently, the news has been almost exclusively about riots, civil disobedience, race-laws—all revealing bitter differences over the treatment of Natives politically and socially—over *apartheid*.

Now *apartheid*, in its social aspect, is as much part of the United Party's policy as the Nationalists. All Europeans (with practically no exceptions) believe in social segregation; and practise it.

I came prepared to find the Afrikaners a pretty grim and deadly lot; and all Natives downtrodden and victimized.

I didn't know much about the non-European set-up, knew vaguely of the two important minorities and several lesser groups. Here in Cape Province the Cape Coloureds make the biggest minority; there are approximately a million of them. This is their homeland; there aren't many in Natal, the Orange Free State or in the Transvaal. (Also approximately, there are 10 million Natives in the whole of

the Union and 2½ million whites, rather more Afrikaner than English-speaking.)

Once upon a time a white man wasn't too interested in the colour of the skin—a woman was a woman and neither monogamy nor contraceptives were in common usage. Hence the Cape Coloureds. Today a white man can be clapped in jail for rolling in the hay with a dusky beauty, and no white man is allowed by law to sanctify a union by marriage. That's logical enough, the union being illegal.

The Cape Coloureds are rather more than halfway between the Native and the white. They have good intelligence, some sort of education, and have a few outstanding people among them. With exceptions, their social conditions—housing, standard of living, that kind of thing—aren't good, but since 1852 they've had some kind of voting equality with the whites.

The Natives in the Cape also had this right until 1936 when they were deprived of it by the Union Government by a two-thirds majority. They were then given separate representation.

The other big minority group, the Indians, have few political rights but have very big commercial interests and in many ways form the most powerful non-white group. The Indians were brought over when labour was scarce or unwilling, to work on the sugar plantations of Natal and on farms. They have greatly multiplied.

During Gandhi's time and since, they have tried very hard to obtain some form of representation on various legislative bodies, but have failed. Any Indian will say, bitterly, that the English-speaking South Africans apply *apartheid* stringently to Indians. (I think that's true; but then, so do Indians apply *apartheid* of a kind between rich and poor and, although less viciously today, between caste and caste.) The Indians are the leaders in the passive resistance movement. With or without the vote, they have much influence on affairs and events here; especially on Native policy. Whether the influence is for good or bad is a matter of opinion.

The other minority groups, Cape Malays, Chinese and the like, which can be found in any big city, have no political equality, either.

You've read plenty about the fight against the Government's proposals to take away the Coloureds' (nearly) equal voting rights. (In fact they haven't full franchise, for it is limited by educational and income tests. Some people think that the educational test should be applied all over the world! Women have no vote, and there are other limiting factors.) The fight over these rights won't be decided until the next election, the Government having accepted, even if reluctantly, the judicial verdict. Still, Dr Malan will most certainly take away these rights if he can. To the Cape Coloured and to many white people, the Government's determination is disastrous—not

only putting the clock back, but also making black-white accord impossible, and (it is said by implication) making black-white enmity inevitable.

Now back to my editor.

He stormed at the Government, damned *apartheid*, said it would lead inevitably to serious trouble and even to bloody revolt. He didn't forget that the whites are outnumbered five to one. I've seldom met a man who seemed more sincere or more convinced that the nation is being led to ruin. He saw a huge country with glowing prospects being ostracized by the free world, and its internal prosperity being ruined because of the growing dissatisfaction of the Natives and minority groups, and a Government made up of dangerous extremists—backed by a Secret Society. (I didn't come across this but there's little doubt that one exists.)

Two or three other English-language editors took a less impassioned view. They were in general agreement but thought that the situation might eventually settle itself. They were worried about what might happen but not really convinced that it would. All told me to wait until I reached Johannesburg, *then* I would see how bad Native conditions could be. In the Cape, things weren't so bad.

Englishmen at the South African Broadcasting Corporation, people I met casually, all expressed anxiety but only one in four or five was really acutely worried.¹ While learning about this, I saw the Natives about the streets, looking cheerful enough, many of them well-dressed and obviously comfortably off, quite a lot driving their own cars, travelling on the same buses. It wasn't the picture I'd conjured up for myself, I couldn't see sullenness or resentfulness—which didn't mean that it wasn't there.

I went to see an Afrikaner newspaper editor—ostensibly about possible serial rights—and was prepared for a cold reception. Not a bit of it! The editor was delighted to see me, deplored the fact that more English visitors didn't try to hear both sides, introduced me to the fiction editors and—a thing that's never happened to me before—put one of his reporters at my disposal for a day. The reporter would take the whole family to Stellenbosch the university town, and to see one of "those villainous Dutch Reformed Church ministers". The man had a twinkle!

Heavy-footed, as always, I raised the subject of the attitude to the Coloureds and the Natives.

"Go and see them, mix with them," the editor said. "Find out for yourself if you think that they are fitted to have equal political

¹ As recently as December 1952, friends have written to say that "the situation here is greatly exaggerated in the newspapers". But it is clear that by the end of 1952 there was much more general concern and less facile optimism.

rights. Find out for yourself whether we ill-treat them. Find out whether they are any worse off under us than they were under the United Party. I say there was never a real policy for them, they drifted, they weren't happy—but there is a policy now. This will be altered and mellowed according to conditions and circumstances, today it is a little too harsh and, because there has never been a policy before, it is resented—by the English as well as by the Natives and the Coloureds. Go and look—no one will stop you, no one will try to keep you on one side of the fence. Take my reporter, and tell him what you want to do and see. Afterwards, go round by yourself, wherever you like.”

We had a good day in the country. My Dutch Reformed Church parson seemed no different from a Nonconformist parson at home. Oh, he was filled with prejudice of a kind; internecine strife among Christians remains the negation of Christianity; but I couldn't find any greater bigotry than, say, that of a Protestant for a Roman Catholic or vice versa and I'm quite sure that some of them lack bigotry; in the same way you will find truly liberal Protestants and liberal Catholic priests.

Our guide was a young reporter with good if rather heavily accented English, and I asked him whether he shared the dislike of and distrust for the Natives and the Coloureds. He didn't resent the question. There were some whom he respected for their intellect and as people, he said, it wouldn't worry him to be seen with them, to mix with them. There were others, servants in the family for many years, for whom he had a real affection. It wasn't the individual so much as the mass, and a situation in which non-whites were demanding more than their present mental development justified had to be met. Until now, it had been neglected in a policy of drift, but that couldn't go on. He didn't agree with all the Government's policy, but at least it *was* policy, and when it had mellowed, he believed it would bring about a great benefit to both whites and non-whites.

I'm not trying to argue that he was right—but he believed it.

I asked him what he felt about the Cape Coloureds; weren't they equipped to vote as well as the whites? Yes, he admitted, many of them. Then why take some of their rights away? He said carefully that it had worried him but there was little doubt that the Coloureds were using their vote to try to give to Natives and others not yet ready for them, rights that would only be abused and lead to more trouble. The only way to prevent a great wrong was to commit a lesser wrong.

I'm a Liberal—in case you didn't know!—and know most of the philosophical comment on that “wrong to prevent wrong”. I know

the theory of man's equality; but I also know that if you apply a theory all in one piece, you're likely to run into trouble. The more I saw of the situation, the more I agreed that the Natives are *not* yet fully developed, any more than children are. I discovered something else; in their attitude towards the Native's neutrality, temperament, development and absorption of Western concepts of cleanliness, culture and community life there seemed little difference between the Afrikaner and the English. Each *had* to agree that before political and social equality becomes possible there's a long way to go. The child-like qualities of the Native reduce both white factions to exasperation and resigned helplessness. Any white man, from either group, will explain exactly what he wants to a Native as he would to a child; he knows that this is nearly always necessary. Now if you had to explain to a twenty-five-year-old white man in exactly the same way as to a ten-year-old boy, you wouldn't regard that white man very highly. But over here you would take it for granted that such simplicity was needed for most Natives; you would regard them, rightly, as inferior in certain respects.

When I said this to highly intelligent Cape Coloured, a doctor who qualified in England, he said in effect:

"The age of 'ya Baas' is over. The various specious reasons advanced to keep the Native in a continual position of serfdom by explaining to the uninstructed that the Native's mental age is that of a white child of ten, has been easily disproved by the ethnologists. Dr Marais, in England, recently raised this age to fourteen, and if we wait a few years he may even raise it to twenty-one."

I'm quite sure in my own mind that an average mental age of ten to fourteen *is* accurate for the vast majority of Natives I've come across, in spite of the doctor. I am prepared to believe that it *should* be higher, and is low because we, the whites, haven't done all we should to educate them. I am convinced that there is no potential limit to the Native's mental development; but there is a serious and very low limit at the moment.

Ethnologists have not disproved that the present mental age is low; they've simply proved that it needn't stay low. But my doctor friend reasons wrongly, because he has been prejudiced against the truth by justified grievances. That leads to one of the worst aspects of the situation as I see it. No one—European, Indian, Coloured or Native—can be truly objective here. All are too deeply involved—emotionally, spiritually, historically and economically. I see this as a very grave danger—which is worsened by our (the overseas) ignorance about the situation; and further worsened by the ill-informed comments of U.N.O. nations—especially of India, which

is so deeply involved, emotionally and economically, in South Africa's affairs.

But to get back to the Afrikaner and the English-speaking South African. There is little difference between them in diagnosis of the problem; the difference is of approach to the methods of solving it. Most Afrikaners will say that social equality can never and should never come about, and I think the truest definition of *apartheid* is "making sure that the Natives, Indians and Coloureds can never reach social equality with the white races".

Most English people, on the other hand, will say that the Native should be brought along slowly to equality—but in general they don't believe that this will ever happen, certainly not in their lifetime (or their children's or their grandchildren's!). In short there is a difference in principle but not in practice between the two groups.

I begin to feel that in fact the basic problem isn't that of the Natives or of the minorities; it is first a quarrel between the two European groups, and it is then a problem common to much of the world: adjustment of European or Western philosophy and economy to the emergence of all Natives or non-whites from the chrysalis or primitive state.

A highly placed Nationalist politician recently said that "the British won the war but lost South Africa". He was talking about the Boer War. Now there is something to put a finger on. Prejudice stemming from the war of over fifty years ago (in fact, many more) fostered by some, and by most Afrikaner politicians. Prejudice, dislike and past resentment are fostered to create hostility. Many of the English wonder what it's all about. They can't understand the why of it, they only know it's here. They are forced by the Afrikaners (or by some of them, by no means all) into an opposing camp, and because there has to be something urgent to quarrel about, the quarrel rages over the Native and the Coloured head. But the present outward symptoms are of a white man's quarrel.

I can see you grinning. Well, I've another ten or eleven weeks to test it out. But I put it to an English editor, who said: "I wish a hundred more like you would come to the same conclusion and talk about it", and perhaps he wasn't just flattering me.

Incidentally, does this picture vary so much from the English scene? Two opposing groups, one hating the other for what happened yesterday, and everybody quarrelling viciously about it and forgetting there's a calamity just round the corner. Our calamity is economic, here it's the danger of civil war soon and native revolt later on (a lot later on). Both could be faced and avoided with the two groups working in harmony—but no, oh, no. Not a hope of unity; no common sense.

Jean's just asked me whether I'm writing a book. I have to stop, anyhow. A newspaperman who met us off the *Athlone Castle* rang up to say I ought to meet a Mr George Manuel. I was in the middle of a chapter of a serial I'm doing with an African background for an Afrikaans magazine—!!—and loath to break off, but I'm going.

OCTOBER 25TH, 1950

(John)

George Manuel—District 6 again—The Village of Please—Slums and an apologetic housewife—The gangs—Conversation with Cape Coloureds—More reasons for resentment—What would happen if the whites settled their differences?

We've driven about eight hundred miles and are still alive. No one could be more surprised than I. Two or three times during the past week I've called myself all kinds of a fool for risking our necks.

But this isn't about the trip, it's about the journalist I went to see at the suggestion of a reporter on the *Cape Times*. I didn't expect to find George Manuel, the journalist, a Cape Coloured. He is the only one, it seems, who makes a reasonable living by freelancing, partly for the English-language papers. He'd heard that I was interested in the political set-up, and offered to show me round. He had also learned that I write thrillers, and said that Cape Town's District 6 should give me plenty of background.

Manuel is light-skinned, talks easily and fluently and with the pleasant-sounding voice which so many Natives, negroes and Coloureds have when talking English. He's about thirty-five, married, with three children. He came to the Mount Nelson hotel to meet me, and waited outside—he wouldn't risk being shown out. (That kind of thing still makes me burn, but here at least I can understand it.)

District 6 is the notorious non-European area. Europeans once lived here, so there are some big houses, but the Cape Coloureds and the Cape Malays lived in the strings of small houses still found everywhere in the district. The owners, Europeans or Indians, wanted their rent. The Coloureds, earning small wages, began to share the houses so as to halve rents, and began the appalling overcrowding.

This now wickedly overcrowded, badly developed and in some ways sinister part of Cape Town is known by the older Coloureds

and Malays as Kanaladorp, literally: *The village of please*. Apparently "Kanala" is a Javanese word brought over by the original Malays who came as exiles or as slaves; and who, by custom, helped one another to build their houses. A different explanation is that it comes from the word canal—the largest canal of old Cape Town. The district lies in the shadow of Table Mountain and Devil's Peak, and some of the streets end abruptly on the lower slopes. Not far beyond, there are huts built under trees and in bushy scrub-land, and holes in the ground inhabited by Coloureds who live in primitive conditions and crawl out, by night, to forage for scraps of food. They're known as the Bergies; and they have fallen as low as men can.¹

Hanover Street, the main street in District 6, is a long, narrow, straggling thoroughfare. The children are bare-footed and often nearly naked. Men and women in European dress walk and talk with others wearing blankets. And the noise! How they love music and rhythm—whether from radio or gramophone. The hawkers chant, fish-sellers use wailing horns, the flower-sellers call their wares.

All the shops are busy—the herbalist's, the optician's, the tobacconist's; even the book-shops where the worst, most sexy kind of paper-backed books we can send are stocked.

Manuel and I walked along, talking to different people, who probably thought I was a detective. They were eager to please, their smile was strained, they were relieved when I passed on. I went into some of the slums, where the smell was foul and two and three families lived in one room. A bundle of filthy rags on a stone landing reached by a flight of narrow stone steps, chipped and broken in places, was a man's bed. Bed? His home. I also went into small cottages spick and span and smelling only of furniture polish. In one, the housewife kept apologizing because she had been out shopping and hadn't finished the housework. Nine out of ten families are eager to live normally, only the tenth is touched by the evil that has bred in District 6.

The evil is mostly in the gangs—the Globe Gang, the Jester, the Goofy, the Metro Spoilers, the Caspah Kids, the Killers. The lawless crooks, or skollies, joined by the hungry and the homeless, gang up; and they have their own colourful vernacular. For a ruthless "knife-artist", a chicken; for a pocket-sized tough, a *Gebakte* (literally, hard-baked). These and others use the single blade of a pair of scissors sharpened and turned into a dagger for stabbing into the neck; others use sharpened carpenter's files, razor blades concealed in handkerchiefs or in split wood, ornamental rings used as knuckle-dusters—oh, they know their weapons. They use them in gang

¹ I'm told that the Bergies have been "removed" since this.

fight against their own kind, seldom against whites. They use belts as thickly studded as dog-collars, bicycle chains which can fold up into the waistcoat pocket—and when used cause agonizing wounds. They will throw bottles of caustic soda into the faces of their victims; use the *aapstert*, a length of rhinoceros hide, which can flay a man open, the *sjambok*, which can kill without causing an open wound, the broad but sharp-pointed *slagmes*—the killers' knife.

They meet in their chosen corner, or *hoek*, to plan their raids, smash the street-lamp globes with catapults to make success easier. They traffic in *dagga*, also called *boom*, a herbal drug mixed with tobacco, and to kill the pungent odour when in cinemas—still called bioscopes in South Africa—they burn joss sticks, called *meang-stokkies*. They traffic in forbidden liquor, and they rob and they maim.

These are the skollies of Cape Town. They *are* bad. Are they any worse or any stronger than the criminals in other big towns? I don't know. I do know that the worst probably live next door to people who build their lives round their churches; and that the conditions of the slums breed more and more crime, here as everywhere. I also know that they're trying to clear the slums and I *have* to reflect that the slums weren't created by the present Government.

When they had overcome distrust of me, many people talked freely; I'm just reporting, now, not theorizing! Many of the lower classes do accept the white man as a superior; servant to master. Some are content; most of the others are apathetic or fatalistic; most are outwardly cheerful. But there is a fast-growing middle-to-upper class of Coloureds, regarded by the whites as their inferiors, who challenge this attitude. They resent it more and more. They see many whites who are no better educated than they and many who are worse; whose manners aren't anything to write home about. They see them in the illegal liquor palaces, drinking, drunk. They feel increasingly that the whites aren't really interested in them, only say they are for political ends.

They seem to prefer the English-speaking Europeans, who are outwardly more sympathetic and are less prone to talk about white superiority, but there is a growing feeling among the Coloureds that there isn't much to choose between the two groups. Neither is trusted, although individuals may be. At least they know where they stand with the Afrikaners. It is nicer to deal with members of the English-speaking group, but these expect servitude as a right; and *have* conditions improved so much? Is there any recognition of the increasing intelligence of the Coloureds? Is there any real belief that all men should have equal opportunity? If so, why don't the

brilliant Coloureds and Natives, the doctors, the lawyers, the university men who have proved their intellectual equality, get proper opportunities? Certainly they don't; many lead lives of frustration and hopelessness and those who could have been doctors work in the mines to earn a living. "What is the use of our sons working for university degrees, if they are not to have access to the professions along with the white man?" one man said.

I asked how often they talk like this. Seldom, they said, except among themselves; they were afraid of what would happen if they talked too freely to *any* whites. They remain subservient, as servant to master, but—they dislike it more and more. Oh, they've schools, a lot of facilities they used not to have, but the conditions for whites have improved much more swiftly.

I think that if anyone gave them a square deal and convinced them they meant to go on doing so, the Coloureds would rally to a man. There is no enmity for us—for whites. There might be, later. Soon? I shouldn't think so. On balance, they think they're more likely to get their rights from the English-speaking than from the Afrikaners, but they're not quite sure.

On balance, too, I should say that their resentfulness has been quickened by some of the steps towards segregation taken by the present Government, and that of late they've become more conscious of unfair treatment. Yet they long for a settled policy, for proof that more of them will be able to get out of the rut of servitude and inferiority, that they'll have a real chance to prove themselves worthy of equality with the whites. They do not want all this *at the same time*, although many teachers and other intellectuals are beginning to demand "full democratic rights" with the whites and are organizing the Coloureds and the Natives to this end. As I see it, this is dangerous because it means that they are asking for more than is yet reasonable. They are, thereby, strengthening the arguments of if not the justice of the Malan Government's measures. Because they have been given too little, they are demanding (or are beginning to demand) too much.

If the two white groups would settle their differences and get on with tackling the social problems—not racial, basically—maybe there would be a contented and united South Africa.

Meanwhile, I am not sure that the Nationalist Government will do only harm. It might do some good. I am *sure* that it wishes the Natives well (which few seem to think) but at the same time, means to keep them in their "proper place".

I still haven't found any major difference between Afrikaner and English in day-by-day attitude towards the Natives and Coloureds. Many of these realize this. They fear that if the two white groups

should unite, then they would pursue a more ruthless anti-Native and anti-Coloured policy. I do not think this is true at all, because unity of whites could only come out of a more liberal attitude in each white group.

One great tragedy is that the Natives, the Indians and Coloureds should even think there is this danger. We haven't given them any kind of confidence if they believe that all whites are the same and that there isn't any hope of social justice from any.

We whites haven't exactly made ourselves beloved.

Yet there are countless examples of the white man who is truly beloved by Natives. The whole thing is a gigantic paradox.

Meanwhile, District 6 doesn't change much, slum and brightness are cheek-by-jowl. With the marvel of its natural setting, Cape Town is a perfect spot for men to live in—if they could only learn to love their neighbours. Getting corny, aren't I? Or tired!

OCTOBER 27TH, 1950

(Jean)

Fatherly advice on leaving Cape Town—The mountains—Pot-holes—Vineyards—The road that disappeared—Dust and rain—The lights of Ladysmith—A feather duster—Oudtshoorn and bedraggled ostriches—The caves we couldn't see—Skidding—Barefooted Native—Mist and the Montagu Pass—Plettenburg Bay and a log fire—Port Elizabeth's snake park

When we started out from Cape Town, John read a little lecture, if you please. "We're going to drive through places we've never been, we're not experienced, we must be extremely careful", and so on. He's a *born* father—and ignored the fact that Babs is a ten times better driver than he. As a matter of fact he was nervous. Some of the mountain roads round Cape Town *are* a bit frightening.

The road north ran through the most magnificent mountain scenery, but we soon had a shock—ruts and holes in the road slowed us down to forty. John was driving when we hit a pot-hole. I thought the luggage was coming off the top.

"Slow down!" I cried.

"I'm only doing forty," John said, "we've two hundred miles to go, we can't crawl."

The road looked all right, but pot-holes (not corrugations, we'll come to those later) appeared out of nowhere, we kept bumping.

Up to then we'd been in pleasant country—green fields, vineyards and white farmhouses. Then we reached *real* wild country, and hills. The mountains were in the distance, but the weather wasn't good, quite warm but cloudy.

George Manuel had seen us off and hoped that we wouldn't run into rain. Somehow I hadn't thought of *rain*, although goodness knows it blew hard enough in Cape Town and we had a few rain squalls. (Did I tell you, we couldn't go to the top of Table Mountain because the wind stopped the cable-car from operating?)

The road seemed to disappear. It wasn't a *road* any longer, but just a rough stone surface. Oh, the dust! Then it started uphill, and there were one or two nasty corners. I sat tight, fearful about the luggage on top. I hated the thought of meeting another car on a narrow corner. The hillside was stony and dusty, with a lot of funny-shaped trees, cacti, and just a few goats and dirty-looking sheep. No *houses*. In fact, nothing—except that whenever we stopped, there was always someone, a native or a white child, to watch us.

Dust billowed out behind us. Whenever another car approached, I would shout "Windows!" and everyone would rush to close them. We were dry and thirsty. Every now and again we came to a little village, or dorp, with a petrol pump and a store which sold everything. People stared at Humpy. Then we turned a corner, and were on a mountain road which twisted and turned; the surface was just loose grey stone and dust.

The clouds ahead looked horribly dark. Everything was desolate, as if—I know it's silly, but as if the world were empty. John didn't say anything, just drove as fast as he dared, but we kept skidding a bit, and had to crawl near the corners. We went on and on. It was getting late. The boys were very good but you couldn't expect them to be perfect for hours on end. Then it began to drizzle. We'd planned to be six hours on the road, and had been nine; we hadn't seen a car for over an hour.

Now and again we saw lights, a long way off, but never ours—until we turned a corner, and there was our town—Ladysmith. It was a small place, two or three streets with very wide dirt roads, a few garages and shops. In the dusk and drizzle, it seemed miserable.

A solemn little native boy dressed in white coat and knickers came to dust off the luggage with a feather duster; I *had* to laugh. But I didn't laugh for long. John said *everything* would have to come off, and we would have to repack.

I said I couldn't. John said someone would have to, we couldn't

take that weight on top another yard. The boys dropped off in a twink, and John, Babs and I went into the big bedroom which looked a shambles. Clothes were spread about everywhere. John was going to pack two trunks and get them off by rail to Durban.

Then the next day—oh, the rain. The dirt of the streets had turned to thick, slimy mud. Even worse, it was quite chilly and damp, and I'd let John send all our warm clothes on!

We were soon driving through inches of thick, brownly-yellow mud. Mud, mud, mud. And the rain pelted down.

After about thirty miles that took us *three* hours, we came to a concrete road. We just slowed down and revelled in it. We'd almost forgotten that we'd chosen to come this way to see Oudtshoorn, where the main ostrich farms are, and the famous Cango Caves.

We *did* see a few bedraggled ostriches who looked more miserable than we were ourselves. It still rained. At Oudtshoorn there was a nice hotel, but it was miserably cold. Then John found that we couldn't go to the caves; the rains had turned mountain streams into torrents, blocking the road.

Next day we soon came to more mud, but I insisted on doing my turn of driving. I'd never skidded before, and to feel the car go out of my control was awful. It was a very gentle skid, really, and we came to a stop half-way across the road.

There was a crude little native hut near us, and an old native woman was watching—standing barefooted in inches of water. She asked us if we needed water to drink, and talked in quite good but halting English. Her husband watched from some trees. We gave them an orange each, and they beamed at us when we started off again. I couldn't help thinking about that old soul. At seventy, she had married off nine children, had lived in that spot all her life, and knew how to avoid pneumonia in spite of standing in water while chatting to me! And she could speak two languages.

Afterwards, the road wasn't good, but at least it wasn't muddy and slimy. Then we found ourselves in mountains again—and these really *were* mountains. Misty cloud hung over them, some of the time we drove through rain and fog. At places, we had to drive through a foot of water—the road across the rivers had been cemented, but there were no bridges. The twists and turns got worse, and there was *nothing* on the side hanging over the mountain. At corners I hardly knew how to stop from screaming. The gradient was so steep—one in nine or ten, John said. I was scared every minute in case the luggage slid off the top in front of us.

We got through it, and spoke to a garage man—who said that the pass through those mountains wasn't so bad, we had the really bad one ahead of us—the notorious Montagu Pass. And I'd let John

sell Number 10! Actually, we didn't find the Montagu so bad, partly because it had a wall of stones on the dangerous side.

The weather got so awful that we couldn't see a hundred yards ahead of us. What a sightseeing trip! When we reached our stop for the night, Plettenburg Bay, a holiday resort near a little village, beautifully placed on the Indian Ocean shore, the rain had stopped, though. There was a huge log fire in the lounge, the food was good, the service *very* good. I quite forgave John, even when he went into our bedroom to type a chapter.

Next day was so lovely and warm we stayed for a few hours, letting the boys play on the sands, taking photographs and lazing. (John's worried because he can't get 8 mm. ciné film anywhere and we've only one roll.) Soon after starting out, we hit *tar*. You'll never know what a thrill it is to see a lovely, straight, hard-surfaced road ahead. I caught *John* doing seventy-five. We drove a hundred and four miles in two hours, to Port Elizabeth.

It's a good-sized town, with some delightful small houses on the outskirts. John was to speak to Rotary there, so we had a whole day to relax and look around. You ought to have been with us in the Snake Park, where the boys were fascinated by the keeper, who let the snakes curl round his shoulders and neck, and made one spit at him. Ugh! Afterwards, we were told that the keeper who had entertained the King and Queen when they were here, died recently from a snake-bite.

I'm not sure I would like to live here.

NOVEMBER 1ST, 1950

(John)

Road-building—P.E. and East London—Architectural variations—Gas supplies and talk of water—The Port Elizabeth riots—Mountain passes and green valleys—Pampered Natives?

We've struck some foul roads and some beauties. Road-building is going on everywhere. Great graders are at work, bulldozers have cut through hills—sorry, *kopjes*—and mountains. It's a stupendous task. The cost, the manpower and the materials involved can't make any taxpayer smile.

I'm beginning to realize what it means to live in a land about ten times as big as England, with less than a quarter of the population—and four-fifths of that quarter of schoolboy-intelligence level

or lower. Harsh judgment? Of course I'm using English—Western—civilization as a yard-stick, and I'm more than ever sure that by that standard great numbers of the natives are underdeveloped; let's say adolescent.

We've had a quick look at East London and Port Elizabeth. On the map, they're big dots—they've fairly sizeable populations, too. But half or less than half are Europeans, and the Natives don't take up a great deal of living space. So a town of 100,000 people looks pretty small, especially when most of the buildings, except in the heart of the town, are one or at most two stories high. One gets an impression of spaciousness. There's something else—prosperity isn't quite the right word; indications of vitality, perhaps, and willingness to experiment. It is fascinating to see the architectural variations. The new houses have a clean, wholesome look. They're not afraid of colours in bricks, wall-wash or tiles, and in the better residential districts I haven't seen two houses that look alike. Each has a big stoep (veranda or loggia to us) and every window has mosquito—well, insect-proof!—netting frames. I've an odd impression that I can see the country growing.

Port Elizabeth has about 150,000 people now, 65,000 of them Europeans, or just 22 times as many as the 3,000 of our forebears who settled in 1820. That is, it was settled soon after Wellington, with a lot of help from Blücher, had finished Napoleon, almost at the tail end of our history books. Driving through the country has given me an idea of the task that 3,000 faced and I already feel a much deeper respect for pioneers. Here's an indication of the recent growth of the place: in 1934, a year after Hitler marched into the Saar and no one said boo, Port Elizabeth (affectionately P.E.) opened its present quayside; before then, ships' passengers and cargo came and went by tug and lighter.

There's a fine marine drive, which we were driven along by night, and the African moon shone for us. It's huge and it's yellow—don't let anyone say that it isn't.

The oddest thing I've learned, I think, is that P.E. is one of the four (or five) cities in South Africa with a gas supply. There's plenty of low-grade coal in Natal and the Transvaal, but transport is the trouble. The gas business here is run with the help of Fuller Peterson, whom I once knew in Bournemouth. He and his wife took us home for a nostalgic hour or two. (Those from home love talking of it.)

Port Elizabeth has made far greater efforts to give the Natives improved living standards; yet some of the worst trouble has taken place here. Why? I think that it's the old, old story of the little knowledge being dangerous. Both ignorance and wisdom bring

their own bliss; the adolescence of knowledge is the dangerous, the volcanic age. But if there is to be full progress obviously there also has to be this adolescence.

They have water shortage, too; rain is nearly everywhere a cause of joy or despondency. It might do us good if we knew that water doesn't really come out of a tap! Each house has good storage arrangements, and huge corrugated-iron containers to catch the rainwater; the gutters feed these containers or the underground tanks. A big dam project near completion *may* end their troubles.

The problem of water also cropped up in East London. Many people complain bitterly that Parliament is so busy with racial and language laws that little matters like water-preservation get forgotten.

East London is on the Buffalo River, and has a fort which was built in 1847—when troops were landed for one of the Kaffir wars. These wars to you and me are just paragraphs in a book, but here they are recent, vital history. I think I'm beginning to understand how different one feels in a new country. One has a greater pride, perhaps; a great sensitiveness—certainly a deeper urge to get on with *doing* things. Everywhere I'm told that "we've only scratched the surface so far, there are enormous untapped resources". I can believe it; in fact I can feel it. If only the two European groups would end their squabble, what prospects there would be.

On the road from the Cape the fertile valleys show up clearly in contrast to the rocky, cacti-strewn mountainsides. After driving for hours through grim grey mountain passes, I don't know anything more beautiful than turning a corner and seeing a wide, green valley, with a small white village (*dorp*) in the middle, the buildings clustered round a high wooden steeple, and farms dotted about the valley as far as the eye can see.

I have fun, calling in at small bookshops, and finding myself known 7,000 or 8,000 miles away from home. Books sell well, comparatively; there is a lot of time for reading, especially in the country districts. One of the nicest welcomes I've had was from Fogarty's, in Port Elizabeth, who had me signing copies until my wrist ached, and insisted on taking Jean, Babs and me to a "night spot" in the evening. We danced for the first time since the ship. I have a feeling that there is plenty of time here, the pressure isn't really on. The same impression came from the Rotarians in both places, who suffered me as a speaker, and in a true spirit of forgiveness, afterwards took us all into their homes. They can *relax*. They live—careful, now!—they can afford the comfort of servants and the knowledge that they're giving work to those who need it. Hours of labour for the Natives, in domestic and industrial life, are strictly controlled by the Government through the Department of Native

Affairs, and I haven't yet found any evidence of recent exploitation. If I believe all I'm told, the Natives are pampered—by this *apartheid*-ridden Government! Read that, as I do, as indirect and certainly unwitting support for the Afrikaners' claim that they really have a policy and are actually maintaining and extending social and educational rights for the Natives. Mind you, I'm just reporting as I go along—I haven't any idea what lies round the corner.

If there has been a disappointment so far, it is that we've seen practically no naked Natives. If you see what I mean. Kraals, blankets and that kind of thing. We've seen a few round mud huts on hillsides, and a lot of Natives—mostly dressed in tattered European clothes—walking along the road, each man carrying a stick with a fork at one end. They pin down snakes with these, and then stone the snakes to death. They have to get pretty close to the snakes! Incidentally, we haven't seen any outside the Snake Park at Port Elizabeth.

We'll be on the road again tomorrow, and we're promised real Native life across the Transkei.

OCTOBER 27TH—NOVEMBER 12TH, 1950

(Jean)

Umtata!—Our first kraal, mud huts and painted faces—Consequences of too much kaffir beer—Posing and disdain—Dirt roads and cowboys—Johannesburg—Thunderstorms—Bloemfontein—Pretoria and the Union Building, the Voortrekkers Monument—A model settlement—The Allelujah Chorus—Flies, flies, flies

Yes, *Umtata!* It's a small town between East London and the Natal border and I'm thrilled because at last we've seen Natives in their own primitive surroundings. It's rolling country, rather like parts of Hampshire and John says parts of Pennsylvania and New England, in America. The grass is yellowy from want of rain, but the earth looks very rich.

The thrill we had when we first saw a Native village, a *kraal*. Just a dozen or so round mud huts—there hardly seems room to stand upright inside, although we haven't been in one yet. Some villages are fairly close together, some stretch right over the brow of a hill, spaced out with fifty yards or more between them. There's usually a kind of garden or corral, with some tall maize (mealies) growing, looking very ragged. They look rather like windbreaks.

The huts are made with the stalks of these plants, I think. We saw one being made, with the Native builder sticking out of the top, plastering mud over the stalks. He stopped and stared at us and we stared back, then the boys waved. You should have seen his smile!

Some of the huts have primitive paintings on them—John says that he now knows where the impressionists get their ideas. Most of the markings are white, but some are yellow and brick red. The owner of the hotel we're staying at says that each painting has some special significance; it shows the tribal importance of the people who live inside.

The women paint their faces with the same stuff, too. Oh, it ought to be so funny, but it isn't. Those black faces and the very thick lips and broad noses—and the smears of white round the mouths and eyes which also have some significance. Some of the women wear blankets, often dirty old rags tied tightly about half-way up their breasts, but leave the legs free from the knees downwards. Some blankets are clean and obviously good. Some women have a twist of old rag round their heads. They carry everything on their heads, except the babies, who are tied to their backs; how the babies' legs ever get straight I can't think. We've seen dozens, and I haven't yet heard a baby cry.

Every now and again we see women who don't worry about any blanket; they come along looking as if they've two vegetable marrows stuck onto their chests! But we haven't yet seen one without beads round her neck, row upon row of tiny beads of white or bright colours.

The hotel owner brought in a magistrate who has spent his life among the Natives: the stories he told! The owner has been very good—showing us round, explaining the different things the Natives do. He has a collection of beadwork but he says he couldn't possibly sell any, the real stuff is seldom for sale, although the Natives make some specially for selling—mostly bracelets and necklaces. Everything the Natives use is decorated with these little coloured beads.

The tom-toms are sometimes decorated with them, even the handles of the spears, and the clubs and other weapons. We said that all the Natives we'd seen had seemed friendly and happy, and the magistrate agreed—they are, apparently, until they have a night out with kaffir beer, the local home brew! Then they'll fight and have "games"—hacking at each other with hatchets and spears; there have been quite a few deaths from this.

The women are still *sold* into marriage; with so many cows or goats and that kind of thing for a dowry. It's a custom that they haven't grown out of, and the authorities won't or can't break.

When we met our first Natives near a kraal, John was dying to

take a photograph, but we hadn't seen a white man or another car for hours. John slowed down, and about a dozen big men, all wearing rust-coloured blankets and with some kind of headdress, stared at us from a kraal which looked very neat and prosperous. John stopped and got out, briskly. Two or three stark-naked children came towards us, but the men didn't move. Scoopy and Richard wanted to get out. John took the camera and strolled towards the nearest hut, looking as if he had done this kind of thing all his life, but he made the boys stay close, and I could see he was ready to run!

Then he said something, and the men all grinned widely—many have beautiful white teeth—and looked embarrassed. John pointed to the camera, and they didn't nod or shake their heads, they just drew themselves up and posed! John came into his own, then, moved them this way and then that, had Richard and Scoopy join them, and got his pictures. Then he gave the man who seemed to be chief two shillings, and they almost cheered him.

Later we came across another kraal, not so prosperous-looking, and there only women and children were about. As soon as they saw the camera, the children, naked until then, grabbed dirty old blankets or bits of sacking and held them round their waists.

I *hate* this sort of regarding the Natives as exhibits, but it is fascinating and what we came to see. The children appeal to me, they all seem so completely carefree and pretty, with their frizzy black hair. Then there are the women who smoke little clay pipes!

Sitting outside a shop in Estcourt was a really well-dressed blanket Native woman with a brick-red blanket and neat, attractive headgear. She had a pair of new brown sandals—lying on the pavement in front of her!—and was rubbing her feet together painfully; (I know what she suffered.) She had a child with her, and John did his dumb-show of asking if he could take a picture. She nodded, and John produced a sixpence, which she promptly handed to the boy. John *crept* away.

Approaching Johannesburg we stopped at a very poor-looking hut, with no mud on the outside; it looked as if it would fall down, the walls were so old and broken. It was near the roadway, John went over with the camera. An old woman came crawling out, made funny sounds, and tapped her stomach; it seemed as if every movement hurt her. She came right up to a fence, just a strand of wire to keep the animals in, and luckily we had some sandwiches over from lunch. It was the first time I felt that anyone was in desperate need. It was heartrending.

There are lots of bullocks or oxen, drawing old carts, and sometimes a string of donkeys. A lot of the natives ride horses.

"Oh, look, cowboys!" Scoopy cried, when he first saw them.

They look well fed and prosperous, and John says they often own quite a lot of land and cattle. I suppose he knows. The *women* never ride; they walk and fetch and carry.

Driving into Johannesburg was dreadful. The traffic was much worse than at Cape Town and the roads are narrower. John had studied a city plan, and believe it or not, drove straight to the hotel, the Carlton; but he chose the back of it. So he had to drive round and round until he could find a space to park.

When the luggage was off, the car was driven away by a chauffeur for parking; there's no room in the streets.

I suppose I ought to be able to tell you a lot about Johannesburg, but—well, it's just a big city, although when we approached, the great slag-heaps of dirt brought out of the mines looked like a range of mountains. They're a yellowy-grey in colour; its hard to think they once contained fortunes in gold. And still do, John says.

There was a really bad thunderstorm one night, although few people thought it much; they have a lot of them at this time of year, apparently, and are always glad of the rain. John has been seeing editors and publishers, and photographers keep coming to take our pictures. I hate it—I nearly always come out looking like a hag. Perhaps I *am* a hag.

We left the boys with Babs for three days because John wanted to go to Bloemfontein, to see the editor of a magazine called *Out-span*. Bloemfontein isn't very big, and it's very flat, but there's something nice about it. The houses are delightful—dream places. The weather was perfect, no one seemed to hurry, everyone we met was friendly, although John says this is the heart of Afrikaner country where we're supposed to be so unpopular.

Victor Ruben drove us back to Johannesburg, *very* fast, in his Citroen. A lovely break.

Pretoria is beautiful. We missed the jacaranda trees at their best, but they were still lovely. They're trees covered, *smothered*, with a flower like a lavender-coloured laburnum, and there are rows of them down every street; the roads are carpeted with the petals.

The Union Buildings are most impressive and there are lovely terraces of flowers. Two Rotarians took us round, one of them an Afrikaner who would keep asking John what he thought about Henry Gibbs' book *Twilight in Africa*; apparently he'd met Henry, and didn't agree with a lot of the things he said. We were also taken out to the Voortrekkers Monument—you remember reading about the opening ceremony, I expect. It's one of the most impressive sights I've seen. It stands out on a hill, big, massive and—oh,

what's the word—*brooding*, somehow. Round the outer walls there are carvings of covered wagons which the old Dutch voortrekkers brought up from the Cape. I just try to imagine men, women and *children* toiling over the wild country we've driven through, with no roads, the only water from streams—and in the heat, and possibly among hostile Natives.

Inside, it's very dark; there's just a small hole, and the sun shines through onto a certain spot just once a year. Sculptors are still working there and Babs and I went to see them working. I had a talk with one, who came out from England not long ago. He says that he has years of work to do there, and among my treasures is a small chipping off the marble he's working on—a likeness of his own grandmother, who was one of the first to come out here.

A Rotarian took us round a Native settlement next day. It surprised us, being so modern and well-planned, a township housing ten thousand people. By far the loveliest moment was in a school-room where the choir was rehearsing. Their very souls seemed to be in their singing. I watched them all take a deep breath together; close their lips to hum; open them and show their lovely teeth while bringing out the loud notes; it was superb. You should have heard them singing the Allelujah Chorus.

Afterwards, *straight* afterwards, we went to the other side of the city and visited a mud hut, bigger than most. The middle-aged mother was coughing badly, she'd been sick for days. There were nearly naked children all over the place, and flies, flies, flies. Inside, scraggy, hungry-looking chickens ran about, and there were two dogs with their ribs poking out. In one of the two huts dried meat was hanging from the ceiling; oh, the smell! A few old wooden boxes and some threadbare blankets on a hard dirt floor was all the furniture. A kind of seat running round the inside of the wall enclosing the building was made of sun-baked dung.

It was so shocking, after the little bright homes in the settlement. Yet our guide said that sometimes families actually leave the settlement and go back to their kraal. It's so hard to understand.

NOVEMBER 11TH, 1950

(John)

Political or racial?—Bloody revolution or peaceful solution—Umtata facts and figures—Natives own land—Grievances and distorted views—Magisterial problems and simple divorce—Native and European police—What is exploitation?—Is Westernizing doing good?—Native pride—Vitality—"Little New York", the sixty-year-old city—A tram smash—The Native who goes home—A new culture—The Native who was sacked—Optimism—Editors—The High Veld, the Vaal River and erosion—Pretoria—An article in "Life"—Widespread crime—Police harshness, who is to blame?—A cause of nationalist intolerance—Could "apartheid" do good?—Kenya's "lesson" to Dr Malan

If I've learned anything, it's this: there is no clear political line between the English-speaking and the Afrikaner South Africans. They overlap, even on the racial question. I've met Englishmen who get excited defending Dr Malan; and Afrikaners who splutter and shout against the Government. Here is a political, not just a racial, struggle. In each camp I've met some men "who ought to know" who are convinced that there will be a bloody revolution within a few years; others believe that things will work out peaceably. I've met Englishmen whose attitude towards the Natives is one of unbearable and unjustifiable superiority; master to servant—no, lord to slave; and I've met Afrikaners who appear to be heart and soul in the task of raising the Natives' standard of living.

Possibly the English attitude is generally more benevolent and more tolerant; but most Afrikaners I've met are convinced that only the Government's policy can give the Natives a square deal.

At Umtata, a little town in the Transkei—a vast area of Native-owned agricultural land (reserves) administered by the whites—I had a revealing hour or two with one or two Europeans (English-speaking!) who have spent most of their lives working with the Natives. The place? It's miles from anywhere, boasts an unfinished cathedral, has nearly 3,000 whites and 4,000 Natives.

Before we arrived, I had a look at the *Year Book and Guide to Southern Africa*, which is a Baedeker, gazetteer and solid history rolled together, and learned a little about the Transkeian territories, which include Fingoland, Galekaland, the Idutywa Reserve, and are close to Tembuland, Griqualand East and Pondoland. Just romantic names? Not quite; a huge area of some 16,000 square miles with a

white man to every square mile and 75 Natives to every white man; where people *live*.

The white man doesn't own much of the land; the Natives own most, on a communal basis. "Alienation" to Europeans is forbidden; in short, the land will continue to be owned by Natives. Most of the whites are traders, missionaries and officials, and the trading stations are "strictly limited". The Natives have a "measure" of self-government but the real authority is the Chief Magistrate, at Umtata, who is responsible to the (South African) Minister of Native Affairs. Note this: the Natives pay about £174,000 yearly in taxes. There are 1,220 schools with 123,168 pupils, hospitals and other social *aides*, and in thirty years about two million pounds have been spent on roads (which are vital to Native economy). So someone else pays taxes, too.

(That Cape Coloured doctor, who is really cultured, is not allowed to go into a white person's theatre, although any white illiterate can. That is another cause for bitterness. That is another reason why, when I mentioned this subject, he promptly said that the money comes from the work of underpaid labourers in the mines and the farms, from permits and from fines. There he is less than just: his bitterness outweighs his detachment. Some of the money comes from the whites as a willing gift, out of a sense of duty and justice.)

Here, as I said, people *live*. How? In little mud huts crammed full of men, women, children and babies. In *dark* little mud huts, with earth floors beaten hard as cement; airless; often dirty inside and clean out. Verminous, too. For food, a stew or mess of mealies (corn) possibly flavoured with some semi-dried goat's meat; even beef. Some live in comparative luxury but all in mud huts—and many are able to go into town and spend money exactly how they wish. Here they marry, quarrel, fight, drink, work—work *hard*, some of them—and thrive. They have ancient tribal customs, and the Chief Magistrate's biggest headache is to administer the law within the scope and understanding of the Native tradition.

A sample problem: a Native marries and his wife brings a dowry of sheep, cattle or horses; after a few years and a few children, she walks out on her husband. What happens to the dowry? The magistrate has to satisfy the angry husband, the father who has a daughter back on his hands, and the law. I gathered that the magistrate's decision is seldom questioned, which is understandable, and seldom causes a grievance, which is remarkable.

There is some theft, mostly Native from Native, and the magistrate finds it hard to get evidence. He may know the thief; he had to prove his knowledge, which probably seem ridiculous to the Native. Investigations into petty thefts can go on for months, the

Happy Band in
District 6, Cape-
town.



First morning—
an hour out of
Capetown.





On the Transkei.



Bush scene—Northern Transvaal.

essential thing is to get at the truth and punish effectively but without severity. The witnesses don't really lie—they just didn't see anything!—yet the truth nearly always comes out.

There are more Native police than European, and while the Government frequently replaces English-speaking police with Afrikaners (cited by some as evidence of a deliberate plan to extend Afrikaner control of key posts) the Government does not, as far as I can gather, plan to cut down on the number of Native police. One sardonic Englishman said that the wages of the police all over the Union are so low that it's increasingly difficult to get Englishmen to serve, but the Afrikaner from the country districts finds the wage sufficient; hence the increasing ratio of Afrikaners to English in the police force and other Government departments, such as the Post Office.

"Perhaps you think the Government so villainously far-sighted that it deliberately pays low wages so as to flood officialdom with Afrikaners," he said.

"Who set the rates of pay," I asked, "this Government or the previous one?"

"There've been some increases lately!"

At Umtata and elsewhere, I've seen pretty strong evidence that the efforts to improve Native conditions are continuing. Part of the slow progress in the past has been due to lack of money. "Exploitation" by traders and for that matter by the mine-owners on the Rand (more of that later) may have lined the white man's pockets but beyond all possible doubt it has also improved the conditions in which the poorest and most primitive Natives live (or could live if they wanted to). It has enabled many to live in Western fashion, with radio, cinema, big cities, buses, bicycles and everything else, including clothes—including *shoes*. A popular pastime is to walk barefooted while proudly carrying the shoes.

You might ask: is Westernizing really doing them any good? And I'd say yes. It's giving some of them a fuller life and offers hopes of one far, far better than any primitive race has ever found by itself. I believe in civilization!

The few Natives in the Transkei who speak some English air it proudly; and if one thing stands out, it's the pride, a kind of natural dignity, which many show. I've taken dozens of snaps on the way across; only one woman and one child held a hand out. The nearer the big towns, the more the begging. (When civilization reaches its peak, there won't be any begging; I was ready for that one!)

The pride of the Native *and* the pride of both Afrikaner and Englishman in South Africa is something worth knowing. I suppose at home we've passed the stage of being consciously proud of Eng-

land. Pride shows in the eager telling of developments here, of potentials there, of the progress made in a hundred years or so.

There's a kind of flowing vitality of outlook, often concealed by a casual, leisurely manner, which touches everything. Yesterday, they say, we had nothing but an empty country; today we have a flourishing, prosperous nation, tomorrow—just wait until tomorrow. It's curious that even the jeremiahs who prophesy disaster seem to forget that when the politics aren't under review, and wax enthusiastic about what has been and what will be achieved. Nowhere, yet, have I found this so strong as in Johannesburg; everywhere the Europeans say: "This is the only country to live in." In that guise, nationalism is as strong in the English group as in the Afrikaner.

Johannesburg is often called "the little New York", which in its way is funny. The street plan is the same, though, and they've many taller buildings than London. It's a thriving, bustling, crowded metropolis populated by nearly half a million white optimists. *Sixty*-odd years ago it was a patch of flat country; then someone found gold. Someone else found gold not far away, a year or two back; another new town is springing up.

I didn't get to see the Native compounds, homes of the workers in the mines, and it's my one big regret. I've many swift, vivid impressions of the city—Alex Campbell, on the editorial staff of the *Star*, for instance, a friend of Henry Gibbs. Campbell, who came for a few years, still thinks he might go home (to Scotland!) one day. Quiet and yet definite in his views, not I think at heart worried by the "Native situation", he just said:

"If there's anything I can do to help just say so"—and I felt that I had only to say so.

Through him, I met one of the local officials in Native Affairs, a laconic, outwardly blasé and "cold-blooded" Englishman, who was sitting with us when he heard of a tram crash in which many Natives had been killed and injured. (In Johannesburg whites and Natives travel on different trams and buses, and the Natives' trams are the old ones.) His comment was almost cynical, but his expression betrayed how the news hurt him. He didn't say much, but went to the telephone and left soon afterwards.

The subject was tossed to and fro by the rest of us. The Natives and Coloureds need transport; in fact, demand it. The tramway stock is old, there's a limit to what can be spent, driven carefully there shouldn't be trouble, and anyhow, don't the newest buses, trains and aeroplanes crash? After a tragedy like this one, the habit is to damn the authorities for the old stock; who would be blamed had it been a newer tram? It was shockingly overcrowded, but no one has found a way of preventing throngs of Natives from scam-

bling on, even hanging on, in spite of the danger of being thrown off at every curve. I think it was Campbell who said shrewdly:

“It’s all part of the same problem. They ride on trams and they drive them; they drive cars and ride bicycles. They’ve a right to. They lack something that the white man has, it’s hard to say what, just that little bit of balance perhaps. It shows in their happy-go-lucky manner. Now and again this lack of balance comes at a crucial moment, and results in tragedy. But who is to say they musn’t ride trams, drive cars or ride bicycles?”

Well, who is?

In many country districts, the Natives live as they did many centuries ago, but most of the men go to work into Johannesburg or some other town or city. They amass a small fortune (to them), go home and spend it with their families and when it’s run out, return to the mines or factories.

In Johannesburg, I went to see the Big Shot of an Afrikaner publishing house—newspapers, books, magazines, everything. Incidentally, the Afrikaner magazine and book publishers want South African background, and are fighting to build an Afrikaans culture. Their sales figures are startling; I know of books which have sold more than a good average English sale for a similar novel—to 1½ million Afrikaners, against 45 to 50 million at home! They are avid readers, but in their own language want to read only about their own country. Most are bilingual, so if they wish to go further afield they read English books. (Very few English are bilingual.)

My publisher host showed me round what is probably the biggest printing and publishing plant in the Union. I’d already been through one or two English-owned factories, and couldn’t see any difference in the attitude of the Native or in the treatment given him. At this place, the Native canteen was spotless, the food excellent, the “boys” showed no nervousness or embarrassment with the Big Boss, who joked with them—as they expected, as they were used to.

One of the staff told me the story of two “boys” who took a filing cabinet into his office, went to enormous trouble to put it just where he wanted, and were nearly finished when he was called out of the room. When he came back, he found the cabinet on the right spot; not an inch out. But the handles of the drawers were *towards* the wall. He quoted this as an instance of the absurdity of talking about equality. I wondered if the boys had played a neat joke, but from what I’ve seen, I doubt that. No one had *told* them to put the handles facing the room.

Another man, also an Afrikaner, told me of a Native boy who turned up at a garage one day, fresh from his kraal. He hadn’t left it before, knew only vaguely of rules and regulations—he used

a stone plough and his wife ground wheat by hand. The brave new world faced him. He came slowly and with cautious interest. He watched a white mechanic dismantle an auto-engine, and became useful.

The mechanic would hand over a nut or bolt.

"Hold this, boy."

"Yaas, Baas."

"Not there, you silly fathead, there."

"Yaas, Baas."

The "boy" hung around, watched the white mechanic for *two days*, while the engine was being reassembled. No one knew where he slept, what he ate. Then the engine wouldn't go properly. The white mechanic couldn't understand it, and tried this and tried that, in exasperation. The Native moved forward and pointed to one wire with a faulty connection. The garage-owner gave him a job, on the spot. He worked there for months. Then another Native, who was allowed only to handle the bowser, became jealous and reported that the new boy had no "papers". A Native, under the new Government's regulations, must have certified authority to get a different job and to move from one part of the country to another. This one lost his job, but was given authority to handle the bowser.

"Why not rage against the Government for stopping a born mechanic from getting on?" said the Afrikaner who told me this.

"Why not?" I asked.

"It isn't so easy," the Afrikaner said. "If you don't control their movements, they'll go to districts which are already overcrowded, make another shanty town worse for the sake of easily earned money, and do no one any good. Many tribesmen slip over the border from Rhodesia and even further north, where they get what is called better treatment—but *much* less money. These keep South African Natives out of jobs. So each must have papers, to make sure that privileges—including the opportunity to work for fair wages and regular hours—aren't abused."

I've heard that kind of argument before, haven't you? It holds as good there as it does elsewhere.

I wish I'd seen the mining compounds. I didn't meet anyone satisfied with them. I did meet many who said that, bad though some are, actual living conditions were no worse than in many kraals. I was told that the hours of work are rigidly controlled, and that the Natives get better money than in neighbouring countries. They can, and most do, take much of this money "back home" and so help support the old folk who would otherwise drag out a drab existence. In short, there are aspects not readily seen by the casual observer.

Bill Redford, of the Schlesinger group, one of the big financial and industrial organizations (also a member of one of the liveliest Rotary Clubs I've visited), fixed a visit to the compounds for me; I had to cancel it, as well as a Sunday morning visit to one of the big Native dances. That was the only way I could visit Bloemfontein. I wanted to see the editor of *the* big English-language magazine; and also to glimpse the Orange Free State, *the* Afrikaner province.

Redford, a wonderful host, took a philosophical and certainly not a dismal view of English-Afrikaner relations.

"Don't forget it's a young country," he said. "The Afrikaners are comparatively new to politics, industry and finance. Of course they've made mistakes, but so have we."

From what I could gather, he worked with big Afrikaner interests amicably and willingly.

At one Afrikaner bookshop in Bloemfontein, dealing in books in both languages, Henry Gibbs' *Twilight in South Africa* was on show. They didn't like it; but they showed it.

It was strange to go and see J. J. Barr, editor of the *Farmers' Weekly*, who has used several of my serials over the years. And meeting Gordon Makepeace, editor of *Outspan*, which has a huge circulation, was an experience.

I entered a small, untidy office, and found Makepeace in his shirt-sleeves looking as if he were twenty-four hours behind publishing schedule,

"Nice to see you, Mr Creasey, what can I do for you?"

"That's easy," I said. "You can buy a serial."

"Do you mean that?" he asked bluntly. "Or do you mean, will I buy one of your books and use it as a serial? Because I won't. I want serials."

"All right," I said. "What length and instalments do you want?"

He told me.

"I'll write one," I said.

"It must have a South African background."

"It will."

"Right! I'll buy it. If I like it, I'll buy some more. What about articles? I'd like you to do one for me—how an author looks at people, say, three-thousand words, and I'll pay you . . ."

One of these days I'm going to see Gordon Makepeace again.

Incidentally, about the same time I heard from J. J. Spiess, editor of one of the big Afrikaans magazines, *Die Huisgenoot*, that he liked the first instalments of a South African background yarn I was doing for him.

Returning to Johannesburg in Victor Ruben's Citroen, I learned something about speed; more, about the magic beauty of the High

Veld in the evening. All the dryness and hardness of the land faded, there was a softening beauty everywhere, pools of water looked like mirrors reflecting shadows and the pale blue sky.

Next day, we crossed the Vaal River, which gave its name to the Transvaal, and waters vast areas of the land here. We stayed for an hour at Vereeniging, where the river is tree-lined; if it weren't for the mud brought down by rains across the dusty veld, the spot would be superb. The mud isn't just a blot on a beauty spot, either. It is precious soil on its way to the sea—erosion is a major problem here. Why *can't* the whites get together and tackle troubles of that kind?

The previous night we were at Kroonstad near the new gold-fields. Here—everywhere—I sensed that surging spirit of vitality and confidence in tomorrow once politics are forgotten.

A day or two later, we went to a settlement near Pretoria, where 10,000 Natives live on what we would call a housing estate and the Americans would call a project. It has shops, chapels, churches, schools, playgrounds, hospital, everything; the whole area is wired off, to try to make sure that people who don't belong can't get in. Africans are very family-conscious, distant relatives have an acknowledged right to share the floor in any mud hut; why not that of a modern house with running water and electricity? The Superintendent has discovered as many as ten people living in a room intended for two; and turfed eight of them out. He inspects every house as often as he can, but there are nearly three thousand of them, and he has limited help. He doesn't want to encourage one Native to betray others, and the Native community leaders try to handle difficult situations like that by themselves; the Superintendent only finds out by accident, or when trouble—such as a family fight—crops up.

He is a young fellow, full of enthusiasm as he took us into the homes and schools, showed us the roads, the well-tended gardens and the playgrounds. He stopped suddenly by the fence and kicked the two strands of wire.

"Did you see that article in *Life*?" he asked sharply. "That wicked article about conditions here? Did you see the picture of the woman and her child at a fence, like this—a compound fence? And the caption, suggesting she was in a kind of concentration camp? Did you notice that *Life* let its readers think the fence is to keep people in, not to keep people—and animals—out?"

"Yes," I said.

"And"—he was getting really angry—"did you see that part where we were accused of making Natives sleep on cement floors? Did you? And did *Life* tell you that Natives will lie on a comfort-

able mattress and twist and turn in discomfort and finally get out and go to sleep on the floor, because all their lives they've been used to sleeping on dirt as hard as concrete? Oh, that article in *Life!*" He was red with anger. "They showed the bad compounds near the mines, but did they show you pictures of this settlement? Or tell you that time and time again we have Natives here—better off than many whites in America—and that they sneak away, walk hundreds of miles back to their filthy huts, go Native again? Did *Life* tell you that?"

"No," I said.

I had read the article in *Life*. I'd had to. Every other journalist I saw mentioned it, English and Afrikaner; dozens of other people referred to it. Not all got red in the face with anger, but all were scathing. It was a one-sided article, much of it unjust; and if you find the Malan Government snapping its fingers at Uncle Sam, it will be at least partly due to the shocking impression that the article created here.

The young Superintendent, directly responsible to an English-language permanent official, was an Afrikaner. His ambition is to make that settlement a model, to expand it, to have others like it replace the mining compounds.

The editor of the *Johannesburg Star* bravely asked me to write two articles on my impressions, and the question of the whites getting together was the burden of them.

I didn't see any lions walking the streets of Johannesburg. I did find that it isn't wise for a white woman to go out alone after dark, except in the main streets. There is raping and robbery with violence—at least, always a risk of it. In drink, many Natives are unreliable; there is a great deal of crime—more than in most places—and that undoubtedly accounts for rough treatment of some Natives by the police (who are mostly Afrikaners, remember) and for some restrictive measures.

There's little doubt that on occasions, especially when an organized protest by non-Europeans (probably justified) looks like developing into a riot, that the police are harsh and brutal. I've read a lot of dispassionate accounts and talked to whites and Coloureds on this subject, and the evidence seems pretty clear. The law-abiding non-Europeans (that is, most of them) resent this harshness strongly. Wouldn't you?

I tried to find out whether the Malan Government should be blamed for all such harshness, and found that during Smuts's time, there were undoubtedly occasions when the police were pretty vicious, and were afterwards upheld by the Government.

This has to be remembered, I think: the charge of brutality has

been levelled against the police in England and Wales and in the United States; in France, in Italy; in most countries. The thing isn't racial, basically; it's the reaction of the police when their control of a situation would be lost without violence, which begets violence and viciousness. The police are frequently whitewashed—certainly the Native here usually gets the blame for resorting to mob-law, just as the mobs were blamed in the countries where it was white against white. Today, at home and in the U.S.A., the danger of mob violence is small because of the gradual education of the people who make the mob. Here, all forms of non-European education are far behind ours; and so methods outdated at home are used. I'm not trying to justify it; just trying to see causes and find reason to hope that it's a passing phase.

This *is* a new country, and in a hundred years has made astounding progress. In that time, Native prosperity and prospects have improved beyond all knowledge.

It's easy to forget that the whites have tackled the fantastic task of governing Native races which are centuries behind in mental as well as social development. As easy to forget that the education of the Natives has caused some—those quicker to learn—to be restless, to want to jump the centuries. Outside—all right, communist!—influence shouldn't be forgotten.

If I were asked to put a finger on one of the main causes of the Malan Government's bitterness and (apparent) fanatical nationalism, it would be this. Most criticism of South Africa comes from outsiders—English and American particularly—who don't know the country or its problems. The United Party encourages these outsiders in their criticism. The English-language newspapers at their most strident are frequently quoted overseas, Afrikaaner newspapers seldom get mentioned. I haven't read a single book or article praising the Malan Government—which has some grounds for assuming that everyone without exception is hostile. So, isolationism and intolerance (of other people's ideas) is fostered.

If I seem to be more amiable about the Malan Government than a good English Liberal should be, it's because I think that they're too much maligned. Why? Their public relations are dreadful; they haven't managed to tell us and we haven't troubled to find out about the conditions here which create many difficulties. On the surface, these difficulties are easily settled by theory; in fact it's not so easy. I'd be less than fair to the English-speaking group if I didn't say that it's the Afrikaaner (as a politician, not as an individual, perhaps) who seems to want to quarrel. The most fanatical of them are often brusque, overbearing and intolerant, and gradually they're making the English group angry.

And some of their own people, too!

After a little less than a month, I have a strong feeling that the Natives and the Coloureds will in fact be better off economically under *apartheid*, which will be progressively mellowed, than without it. That will bring more jobs, better pay, improved education, better living conditions. If there is a distinction between the United Party and the Nationalist Party approach to racial problems, it is that the Nationalists say: "Give the non-European a fair deal, bring him on so far but *never* real equality", whereas the English say: "Bring him along slowly, very slowly, and accept the inevitability that in some far distant day he'll be the white man's equal."

I think that Malan is doing some crazy things; that he's justifying much of the criticism of "fascist intentions"; but I also believe that he sees this as a problem which is being badly handled by the other Europeans and is trying a different method. Events in Kenya *appear* to justify him in his own eyes. He says: "We're not going to let our Natives get out of hand like that." So he goes on in his own way, certainly not improving, almost certainly worsening, relationship between black and white.

Only a common "White" policy, enlightened and progressive, will save the day over here. And I've a lot of sympathy with the educated non-whites who ask cynically: "But is there any hope of enlightened, progressive policies from *any* whites?"

They don't realize, of course, that only now are Europeans showing such policies towards Europeans in Europe! Great social gaps and hideous injustices are commonplace between white and white. But the situation is vastly better than it was. So, I think, is the position of the average non-white in South Africa, although it's far from good enough yet.

NOVEMBER 15TH, 1950

(Jean)

*Tar, dirt and corrugations—Desolation—The trading post—
Five Native women—Mountain Inn—Beit Bridge Customs and
a lion story—Deviation—Strip roads—Christmas beetles—
Baboons who threw rocks—Storm—Rhodes' grave and the
Matopos*

On our first day nearing Rhodesia, John got us all up very early, At seven the morning was perfect, but the sun got hotter and hotter, the heat closed round us, the *air* was hot. The first hour or two the

road was tarred; then we had dirt and corrugations—rather as if railway sleepers were laid down and covered with dirt and dust; *reddish* dirt and dust! The country became desolate, dotted with little trees which looked as if they'd given up hope of growing.

Johannesburg seemed *thousands* of miles away. We didn't meet a soul. Just now and again a car passed—going very fast. There were no cars, no mud huts, no Natives. That was the strange thing, we just didn't see anybody. Then one of the boys cried:

“Look, there's a house!”

It was a trading post with a petrol pump. About a dozen Natives sat outside, and an old man was working a sewing machine. It was so hot, even the black shadow from the overhanging roof looked brassy. John filled up with petrol, it's wise to do that at every pump, where the sign read: *Petrol Hear*. I longed to rest inside the cool store which sold *everything*—but oh, no. On, on, on!

It got lonelier. There was a strange feeling of quiet and loneliness; *emptiness*. When we did see a Native, bare feet trod softly on the stony ground, the toes spread out like fingers cut off at the second joint. I longed for the pattering of shoes on pavement.

The trees got smaller and smaller, became little more than scrub, and near the road everything that grew was covered with reddish dust. Sometimes we could hardly tell the road from the bush. Now and again one of the boys would cry out:

“Oo, look!” Each time my heart jumped, I was prepared for anything from lions to elephants. Then Richard would say: “Wasn't it pretty?” and it would turn out to be a lizard, bright colours caught in the sun. That sun *burned*.

We simply had to find some shade for lunch, and at last John saw a tree a few yards off the road, which gave a little. I felt quite frightened, half-expecting a horde of Natives to spring out from the brow of a hill and start shooting at us with bows and arrows.

John said “Spears and assegais.”

“Why not blowpipes and poisoned darts?” Babs asked.

“Oo, I wish they would,” said Scoopy. “Come with bows and arrows, I mean.”

“So do I!” Richard's great eyes shone.

When we got back in the car afterwards, John said his only worry had been snakes, but funnily I didn't think of them. It *was* funny, because the tree, about as big as a young apple tree, was almost perfectly round and its spiky branches curled and twisted as if hundreds of snakes had coiled round one another. It didn't seem quite so hot in the shade; in fact it was quite pleasant if we didn't move.

We were just about to leave when a bundle of sticks seemed to move towards us, from a bend in the road. We all stood petrified.

Slowly, five women, each carrying a huge bundle of sticks, at least four feet long, walked towards us. Two wore a kind of cotton blanket, the others only had ragged skirts, and even *I* was fascinated by their huge, long breasts. Their necks were literally covered with coloured bead necklaces and they wore huge metal rings on their arms and legs. They jabbered among each other.

"You must get a picture of these," I whispered to John.

He went up to them, and they stood dumbly in a row. He used sign language and two of them started to giggle. Then he lined them up, and took snaps; Babs and I and the boys made friends, and John took us all in the ciné. He smiled his thanks and gave one of them some money (ought he to pay, I wonder?). Off they went, the bundles giving them shade.

Soon afterwards, we reached a better road, with more Natives and an occasional car. We passed through a little town, rather like the towns you see in Wild West pictures. Our hotel was Mountain Inn. High up on a hill, not far from the Rhodesian border, it has wonderful views. Two "boys" came hurrying out for the luggage, we were given pretty little huts with everything we could want, including a shower and neat check curtains. The boys shared the swimming-pool with lizards and frogs. I looked down on the little town—Louis Trichard—which seemed so far away, and thought of that long, lonely, dusty road and the emptiness.

The service and food were good, the Native boys wore the whitest of white tunics, and the big lounge was luxurious, full of long-stemmed flowers which seemed to ooze the richest of blossoms and colours. But we couldn't stay. Oh, no. We had to go *on*. John and the boys were up at dawn, and by half-past six we were on the road.

It was hilly, with a lot of trees and some sheep; not really desolate; but before we reached Beit Bridge, and the Customs Post between South Africa and Southern Rhodesia, it got very lonely again.

On the ground near the Customs House was a dead six-foot python. I had to stop the boys from poking its fat, round body.

Inside, everyone was very friendly. They don't get many cars from England—and several of the officials read Creasey! They showed us some pictures of lion hunting, which some do in their spare time.

"How far away was that?" I asked, looking at a picture of a huge lion.

"Oh, only just off the road."

"The road we're going on?" I gasped.

He grinned and nodded.

As we left I wondered how on earth anyone could live amid such desolation, and tried to forget the lions. Then we reached a long bridge over the Limpopo River. There wasn't much water in it, but it seemed ages since we'd seen anything but dusty, sun-baked land.

You won't believe it, but soon the country—the bush—was worse. Barren, dry, with little spiky bushes, for mile after mile. Once I thought we really were lost. There was a deviation, or a detour (South Africa had been full of them), which ran for miles through this awful bush, with the sun beating down. Here and there we could see tyre marks in the dust, if it hadn't been for that I think we would have turned back, only John never will turn back. Then the boys shouted out together:

“There it is, there's strip!”

They pointed to two strips of tar on the road ahead. (We'd heard about the Rhodesian strip roads.) Each strip was just wide enough to take a wheel—well, not much wider—and whoever was driving had to watch every inch for fear of slipping off. We did nearly three hundred miles that day in the awful heat, meeting a car an hour, at most. Apart from Humpy's purring, there was just silence, until it was broken by a whistle like an express train. We stopped the car, thinking something was wrong. The noise was really like a million crickets, only harsher. John and I got out and investigated cautiously, in spite of the lions. On the branches of the bushes were huge, black, flying beetles. Ugh! Afterwards, we were told they were called Christmas beetles. We hadn't heard them until then—and since, we haven't been able to get away from them.

We were going to have some chocolate, but it was just a tacky mess, from the heat. We poured it away. This was November 12! How the boys stood it, I don't know, but they were arguing and playing in the back when they suddenly shrieked out. My heart went into my mouth again. Not far away were several huge monkeys, I'm sure they were gorillas though perhaps they *were* only big baboons. They watched us, and we watched them. We left first, because they started throwing rocks.

Near Bulawayo, a few clouds blew up, and suddenly there was a terrific crack. I've never heard anything like it; next moment there was one blinding flash of lightning. Storm clouds seemed to leap into the sky. But the rain didn't come, and we turned into Bulawayo. As a matter of fact, we nearly overturned into it; there was a great dip across a road near the centre of the city. It was a rain runaway, there's one at most of the crossroads. They really kept us down to thirty miles an hour.

Even the pretty garden and the fairy lights at the Palace Hotel didn't wake the boys up. A great fat centipede thing they found on the steps did, for ten minutes.

Next day, Roy Ovary met us (he was our table companion on the *Athlone Castle*), and took us for an evening drive to the Matopos. I'd never heard of it; I don't think John had, either. Cecil Rhodes is buried there, and there's also a memorial to a soldier named Wilson, who died in one of the wars with the Natives. The country was entirely different. Great rock formations everywhere, some boulders balancing on top of each other like giant marbles, looking as if they'd fall off any minute; they've been like that for hundreds of years. The sun was setting when we reached Rhodes' grave, high at the top of rocks (do you remember, the Queen came here and broke the heel of her shoe while climbing up to the spot?).

A Native soldier in khaki stood on guard—one stands there from dawn to sunset, every day. Bright-coloured lizards flitted about. The view was—well, I now know what inspiring is. It was so silent and remote, yet beautiful. Glades, in the distance, looked cool and inviting. The land was rocky and wooded, too. On the way back, a herd of sable antelope, startled by the car, raced away from us; we really held our breath. And the sunset over the great boulders and the rocks, lending a deep red to trees and stones alike, made it really magnificent. I'll never forget that evening.

I'd love to tell you about Victoria Falls, now—yes, we're at Victoria Falls—but of course John wants us to go out on a trip up the Zambesi. I'll write again soon.

NOVEMBER 20TH, 1950

(John)

Victoria Falls and the "Infinite"—Why no water?—Were the great men so great?—Rivers, erosion and waste—Dancing in the rain—No ciné film—Oranges the size of grapes

We've seen a lot in the last few days, but if I close my eyes I seem to see only one thing; and hear one thing. The fury of the water dropping into Victoria Falls and the roar, as if nature had built a mighty dynamo and put perpetual motion into it. It would be impossible to exaggerate its effect on me. It wasn't simply a case of making me feel small and insignificant; I've had that feeling often enough, over here; the loneliness and vastness of the country

compels it. It was much deeper. I remember feeling much the same at the Grand Canyon, in Arizona. Perhaps it's a sobering sense, that creeps up unawares, of being close to the infinite.

Read *that* again! It's characteristic of the timid, mealy-mouthed and materialist age we live in that "infinite" comes to mind sooner than "God". I'm catching the habit, too, telling myself it's because so many will sniff if not sneer at anything slightly religious. Maybe I'm quite wrong.

You can look up a dozen or more books which will describe the Falls much better than I can. So I'll be cantankerous again. The millions of gallons falling over this great precipice, a mile and more from bank to bank, could turn a desert into a new land flowing with milk and honey; and the Rhodesias and South Africa are handicapped right, left and centre by lack of water. Man—the white man—came and marvelled and then began to see what he could get out of the country rather than what he could put into it—as if the centuries hadn't shown him clearly that he would get far more out if only he would start by putting plenty in. The big water-conservation schemes now in hand in so many places should have begun before large-scale settlement, farming and mining. Is that really only obvious when looking back?

Cost? With labour as cheap (but well fed) and free a few generations ago, the cost would have been negligible compared with that today. Didn't anyone think of it? Or did a parsimonious Whitehall refuse the pleas of the great men of Africa? If the pleas were never made because the conception never sprang to the mind of the men, *were* they so great? Did the enormity of the land blind them?

I wonder how many Zulu wars there would have been had the first white men—or even those of the 1850's and later—come with a promise of making water available month in and month out, and done so. Would it have turned the treachery of Dingaan and other warrior chiefs into true friendship? All right, all right, of course I don't know. But I do know that there's all the water South Africa and the Rhodesias need in the Zambesi, the Limpopo, the Vaal and the other rivers. Today most of it is running away to the sea and taking millions of tons of irreplaceable soil with it. And the cry for water is so great that after long months of burning heat and wasting drought, the people—old and young, white and black, ordinary folk like you and me—run out into the streets and lift their faces to the teeming rain and dance for joy while being drenched. I've been told of people in Bulawayo who bring out chairs and sit as the rain smashes down, not only for the relief it gives them by clearing the air, but because the dread of a killing drought has been removed once again.

We didn't have a lot of time in Southern Rhodesia, and missed what I'm told is the loveliest part, near Salisbury, where the rainfall is better and the grass much greener and the trees almost reminiscent of home. Still, an awful lot is very dry. I didn't get to see a tobacco farmer, but was told they have had several good tobacco seasons.

Labour, I gather, is cheaper than in South Africa, and the Native more contented. I'm not too sure about that, because an awful lot of them seem to sneak down into South Africa for the bigger wage packets. But I haven't had a chance to meddle even mentally with the political and social problems in the Rhodesias.

I can tell you that 8-mm. Kodachrome film is as scarce here as it was in South Africa. I have part of a roll left and no prospects of getting more. We have to ration the ciné. When we get back, we're going to feel sick about the number of pictures we couldn't take. A man on the *Athlone Castle* said he might help once we reached here, but I can't find the beggar.

We'll be out of Rhodesia tomorrow, and heading for the Kruger National Park. Tonight, we're in a tiny spot, Glenlivet, where the earth is a rich red and the orange trees in the grounds bear fruit the size of grapes because of lack of water. An Irishman staying at the hotel has just told me that if I were to write the story of his life, then I *would* have a story to tell. Nothing changes, you see. (Not even the daily fight against mosquitoes.)

Bought two rolls of film in Bulawayo!

NOVEMBER 20TH, 1950

(Jean)

The Falls, luxury and the Rain Forest—The Zambesi and crocodiles—Hippos—Monkeys for tea—The great baobab tree—Our first giraffe—The zebra at the window—Zimbabwe ruins—More desolation and a storm—Scoopy sees a light—The Kruger National Park—"What if we meet lion?"—Our next "wild" animal—Birds with bloomers—A shade temperature of 107—Durban, Zulu boys and banjos—Zulu dancing and Christmas Day swimming—The church-builder of Margate—John hits a rickshaw

Victoria Falls were breathtaking—thrilling—frightening. Oh, I can't find the right words. We saw them after driving for miles

and miles—300 or so—through the most desolate country; a *long* way off, we saw what looked like a cloud of steam.

John stopped the car, and we heard the roar.

Then we reached the luxury hotel there. It seemed out of place but was it welcome! Servants were falling over each other to help. We were tired, but John couldn't rest, nor could any of us—we had to go and see the Falls. As we got nearer, we were almost deafened. Great clouds of spray rose up. Then we reached a spot where we could look at thousands of tons of foamy white water crashing over 350 feet into the great gorges. I wonder if Livingstone felt anything like I did. We just stood staring. Even the boys were quiet. I felt as if I were drawn towards the water, and hated to see the boys go near; I kept grabbing them.

When we got back to the hotel, a man laughed at our reaction.

"You ought to see it when the Zambesi's in full flood," he said. "It's really something then. You can hear it for miles."

"When's that?" I asked.

"Oh, about April. There's only a trickle coming over now." Then he relented, and added: "Of course, you can't see it so well then, the spray hides a great deal."

Perhaps we went at the right time, for once. Whenever we go, people say we're a month too early or a month too late.

Next morning, we put on heavy oilskins so as to stand under the trees in the "Rain Forest". The ground is drenched by the spray—sometimes we walked in inches of slimy mud. The Fall just went on falling, and if we slipped—well, we didn't! But I wouldn't let go of the boys. Then John and I wanted to get nearer the edge, to take some pictures, and the boys screamed.

Perhaps the strangest place was at the Silent Pool. We stood near the edge, and there's *nothing* to stop you falling over. The water below was as calm—or looked as calm—as a millpond. We could just see it moving, *writhing* is the word. It seemed to draw us towards it.

There were a lot of red flowers, rather like a spiky kind of chrysanthemum, only smaller, growing in the Rain Forest. Someone said they're poisonous.

In the afternoon we took a boat trip up the mile-wide Zambesi, saw hippos in the water and crocodiles under the tropical vegetation on the banks. We had tea on a little island where monkeys came up and begged for cake crumbs, then we went to see where the elephants had been a few weeks earlier.

All the time we were at the hotel, all we really wanted was to sneak across and have another look at the Falls. Everything else seemed unimportant although we did have a thrill when seeing the



At Estcourt.



Victoria Falls.



Mother monkey
on an island in
the Zambesi.



Near Chaka's
Rock, Natal.

giant baobab tree, 66 feet round at the base. Solemnly, each of the boys walked round it; and then John and I did the same. It looks as if dozens of big, fat, grey tubers are sticking up, but there's only one root.

The guide came in the car with us to Livingstone, in Northern Rhodesia. There were more avenues of the beautiful flamboyant trees, but *the* moment was when we were going through the small game reserve. The boys were dumbstruck at the sight of their first giraffe. You should have seen John's face when he was at the wheel and a zebra came calmly across and poked its head in the window.

I longed to stay, but oh, no. On, said John.

The road to Fort Victoria on another route to Beit Bridge was just about the same; the loneliness seemed awful. Right in the middle of nowhere was an astonishing place called the Zimbabwe ruins. No one knows who built the fort or city or whatever it was. It stretches a long way, the flat stones or rock the walls and buildings are made of seem to have nothing to stick them together. Some kind of civilization was there, and just vanished.

Then came the journey to the National Kruger Park. In some ways, it was our most desolate day's run. We stopped at a place for some tea, and it seemed—well, a million miles from anywhere, just a small "hotel" and hot, tired-looking people, one store and everything broken down. There are some mines nearby.

The road beyond seemed to be absolutely straight and flat, but loose stones and rocks were spread over it. It was getting late. John and Babs and I drove at over sixty most of the way. The stones crunched and popped and banged out of our way. To make it really uncanny, a storm gathered over hills on our right. The sky became overcast, then really dark. We could hear the thunder, see the fierce lightning and *see* the rain hurtling down, although we weren't in the storm.

"We'll beat it," John kept saying. "Those bungalows can't be far from here."

We saw no one to ask. The storm kept pace with us, just a mile or two away. Overhead it was darker. Then we saw a wayside bungalow.

"Stop!" I cried. "Go and find out how far we are from Sabie River!"

I'd forgotten there might be lions about.

So had John. He walked up towards the bungalow—and then stopped. I couldn't understand it. Then I thought:

"Lion!"

It couldn't be—but John looked so strange. He stood quite still,

then backed away. I could have screamed. The thunder roared, much nearer now. Then John reached us.

"Why on earth didn't you knock?" I gasped.

"You ought to have seen that *dog*," John said. "The brute just stood up and raised its hackles!"

We just went on, into nowhere. Then a motor-cyclist passed us. We waved, and he stopped. Yes, we were on the right road—we had about *fifty* miles to go.

It was getting dark. The thunder drew much nearer. Spots of rain fell, as big as half-crowns. When we switched on the lights, the road seemed eerie—until we reached a tar surface. That was a help, anyhow. Then the storm caught up with us. Rain lashed down, and now and again the most vivid lightning I've ever seen lit up the car. In the dark moments, we looked anxiously for the lights of the bungalows.

"There's a light!" Scoopy screamed suddenly. "Look, down there!"

It was!

We'd reached the Sabie River Bungalows, our home for the night—a really delightful spot, too.

Next morning we started out for the Kruger Park—the wild-animal reserve. I quite expected to be disappointed. We were to stay at Pretorius Kop, one of several camps inside the park. The camp was just a few dozen bungalows—rondavels—enclosed with barbed wire. In the middle was a big stove and a kind of copper, always filled with boiling water. We could cook anything, make tea, even do our washing if we wanted to. A big, cool store sold practically everything; there was a pleasant restaurant too.

The roads in the park are quite narrow, have a lot of loose sand on top, and just wander through the bush. The trees all seemed stunted, and the grass was sparse, too, but rather long. It was broken country, with a lot of what the Afrikaners call *kopjes* (big hills) dotted about. We had been told we might see anything on the road, including lion. And we were very *emphatically* warned that we must be back at the camp by a certain time; if we were late we'd be fined.

"But supposing we meet lion on the road?" asked John.

"Just crawl up to them and push them away," said the Chief Warden. "They'll move if you nudge 'em. *On no account get out of the car.*"

We started out with a passenger. The first "wild" animal we saw was a huge tortoise, crawling across the road. Our passenger promptly got out, picked it up and put it on Humpy's bonnet. So John had to get out and take a snap. I've never seen him move so quickly.

Soon, and it was enthralling, we saw a lot of buck, zebras (very dangerous, we were told, and no one has ever been able to train them), wildebeeste or gnu, the ugliest animals. Sometimes we would see them racing in great herds.

"They've been frightened," our passenger said. "Might be lion near."

Every corner, we slowed down and held our breath, hoping to see lion. We saw wild dogs, hyenas slinking away, one with the red, raw remains of a lion's kill dragging from its mouth, several eagles, a pair of the most astonishing birds—secretary birds—which looked like two old maiden ladies walking solemnly through the grass in their bloomers! Then we saw another giraffe, but—no lion.

We had almost given up when our passenger exclaimed:

"There's a pride—there they are!"

John *jammed* on the brakes, but it was so disappointing. There were four or five—lion, lioness and at least two cubs—about three or four hundred yards away, at the top of a *kopje*. They didn't move. Nor did we.

"Let's try to bring them nearer," our passenger said.

"Er—no, don't get out," John said hurriedly.

But the man *did* get out. So did John, with the cameras. He looked nervously over the roof of the car, and then actually tried to take some pictures. I'll bet they don't come out! I was right.

Next day we went to another camp, Skukusa; and it was over 107° in the shade.

I felt awful.

We stopped, as we'd been told to, near the Hippo Pool, where a guide would meet us. It would be all right, he was to be armed. Well, he *did* carry a rifle. Such a little, wizened-up native, in khaki uniform, he spoke in broken English and led the way. We hadn't brought hats—well, John and I hadn't. John tied knots in the corner of his handkerchief and put it over my head. We walked in single file behind the guide. Goodness knows what would have happened if anything had pounced from *behind*. I suppose nothing ever does. Anyhow, John brought up the rear. The boys kept darting out of line and John yelled at them. It seemed to take an age.

There were some trees and a lot of bush. The guide kept stopping and grunting and pointing downwards, and would say something like this:

"Dat rhino. Ver' bad, dang'rous, rhino." And we would look at a huge spoor mark or whatever they call it. Or:

"Dat lion. Big, big lion!"

The spoor looked enormous.

We reached the pool at last. Beautiful limpid water with rocks showing just beneath the surface, only they weren't all rocks. Some were hippos. The guide kept beating the water with a stick.

"Make hippo roar," he would stop to say, and then go on beating again.

The hippos did raise their heads out of the water but wouldn't roar or yawn.

Back in the car, I've never been so hot. How I longed for a cold bath. It wasn't until midnight that I had one—and then the water was tepid, and every time I moved, I started to sweat. I hardly slept—partly because it was so hot, partly because every now and then I'd hear an awful squealing. I'd been told we *might* hear lion killing a buck

Yet I was sorry to leave.

We had a fine run through the hills and valleys and great orange groves just outside the Park, and on to Durban.

Here, I've my own little kitchen! Everything's unpacked and I needn't go to a trunk or case for anything. Looking out of the window I can see the crowds on the lovely sandy beach and swimming in the Indian Ocean. Durban's a fresh, clean city with a fine marine drive—Ocean Drive—and it's full of interest. Shopping for Christmas in a cotton frock doesn't seem natural, but it's warm, although not as hot as we're told Durban can be. Nor as sticky.

When I go out shopping, I might pass a Zulu boy in white jacket and shorts strumming a banjo—and when I come back, he'll probably be leaning against a wall, fast asleep. I carry my shopping in a bag, but a Zulu woman will carry one on her head and probably a baby on her back. It's a strange mixture. Our two boys have a tremendous thrill whenever they see the rickshaw boys. These Zulus dress up in the most colourful finery, with horns, electric-light bulbs, feathers, odd bits of everything that's bright, and jangling bells on their painted legs. They prance about like horses as they draw their rickshaws—leap and rear up and make you fall back; how on earth they keep their balance, I don't know.

We've been lucky—again! The Banning family, who live in North Durban, have adopted us. They're friends of friends in Bournemouth, and have four children, wonderful for Scoopy and Richard.

New Year's Day 1951

Still Durban.

Thanks to the Bannings, we had a delightful Christmas, and bathed on Christmas Day—at a place called Chaka's Rock, where there's a natural swimming-pool. Coming away from there, we met

Zulus nearby all dressed up and having fun with tribal dances. The way they stamped and danced and flung themselves about, with other Natives making music with the tom-toms behind them, was enough to make me goggle-eyed. The leader had pieces of lion skin on, all of them wore a kind of red skirt. It was so much better because it was spontaneous—they were just amusing themselves in their time off.

We saw Natives in very different circumstances, a few days later at Margate, about a hundred miles south of Durban.

The Rotary Club looked after us thoroughly, took us everywhere—and Margate is a charming little place, quite new, with a beautiful beach and many modern buildings.

Miss de Jong the pianist (she'd been on the *Athlone Castle*) was staying in Margate. She was to help entertain at a Native Christmas party that afternoon, and we were asked to go along.

The Native settlement was new, the huts quite poor but *very* clean, the children had raced furiously—tiny girls carrying bowls of water on their heads positively *ran* without spilling a drop—and the mothers joined in. But there was something else.

The founder of the settlement is a thin old Native—the local “priest”. On his own, this Native *built* a little church. A carpenter and odd-job man by trade, this was his labour of love. It looks just a long, rather lopsided old shed, with a wooden cross on top of a wooden steeple, but it couldn't be more impressive if it were St Paul's.

Inside—where they have day as well as Sunday school—there is a tiny home-made altar and some children's drawings. At service times, it's crowded—all the villagers are Christian, because of that one old man. The Bishop of the diocese has authorized him to preach there, and he lives for his people.

Well, the South African trip is nearly over.

I hate to say it, there's so much more I could add, but I *must* start packing.

John hit a rickshaw! Thank goodness I wasn't driving. The rickshaw boy didn't or wouldn't understand what John said. No one was hurt, except Humpty's wing.

DECEMBER 30TH, 1950

(John)

*A plunge into politics—No oppression but much exaggeration—
The Native temperament—Zulu-Indian tension—The Durban
riots—Malan not always to blame—The case for moderation—
Malan and Hitler—The hope remaining*

With four days to go, I'll take a plunge. Malan and his Nationalists are convinced that the Native has shown no sign that he is ready for democracy; most Europeans agree with that. The Nationalists believe that any European who encourages Native hopes of attaining full democratic rights in the foreseeable future is either crazy or a hypocrite. They believe that the English approach is a form of appeasement and is wilfully misleading the Native. They cannot understand how anyone in his right mind can believe that the Native *will ever* be the equal of the white man. (There's the rub!) They take it for granted that he cannot be, and their policy is based on that assumption.

They see the democratic experiment on the Gold Coast as one which, if followed by others, would lead to absolute disaster to both Native and European; in fact they see the attempt to meet Native unrest and dissatisfaction by encouraging democracy among them as an open, almost an urgent, invitation to invite Communism among the Natives. They see themselves, in fact, as the saviours of Africa. "Mau-Mau can never happen with *us*," they say freely.

I have a most uneasy feeling that most English-speaking people here agree with much of this but don't say so. There's little doubt that Malan and the Nationalists think that a benevolent autocracy (rather than totalitarianism) is the right form of government, and is pretty sure that the United Party thinks so too. So the old Boer bitterness returns, stronger than ever, because the English oppose legislation which Malan's people are sure the English themselves believe to be really necessary.

No matter how strongly I disagree with Malan's methods I don't think they are oppressive in the common understanding of the word; I don't think he's anything like the villain he's often made out, and I know he gets blamed for a lot of things that aren't his fault.

You remember the reports which reached England about the riots in the Indian and Native quarter of Durban a few years ago. One felt the imminence of revolution. I've talked to a lot of people about

it, and the general feeling is that although the riots were bad, they were greatly exaggerated everywhere outside South Africa.

A great many people claim that the same is true of the Port Elizabeth and the Kimberley riots, which took place much more recently. I cannot speak of them fully; I do know that in general, Cape Coloured and Natives, Indians and others, are convinced that they will always be harshly treated by the police; but then, there are many Native police who presumably help to quell riots.

I was able to probe the Durban riots fairly deeply. Perhaps it's enough to say that over the years friction between the Zulu and the Indians had been getting hotter, for the Native was convinced that he was being exploited by the Indian. I haven't found anyone who thought the Natives were wrong about that. Of the 300-odd thousand people in Durban, some 100,000 are Natives and some 100,000 are Indian. The Natives, for the most part, are a cheerful, easy-going—some say lazy!—race, with great pride in family and tradition. Not so long ago they were great warriors who challenged the white man's might and fire-weapons. Courage in battle bespoke the man. Work? What were the women for? Yet in a very short time the Native has become a worker, often indifferent but sometimes very good. He's fairly well off, comparatively. He earns money. He can buy colourful clothes. He can play his banjo at street corners, or strum it going along the street wearing his gay blazer, big shoes and broad-brimmed hat, a dreamy-looking chap. He may have his wife with him, working for a white woman, and if so he'll share her *kia* at night. If his wife and family are back home on the kraal he'll get along nicely, thank you. In fact, he gets along nicely, t'anks *baas*, most of the time.

Probably to the surprise of many critics of colonial imperialism, he is protected against employers who want to work him too hard. He can buy all he needs for reasonable comfort. If he plays the fool his white "master"—he still calls him "master"—will bail him out, but if the same white master lays a hand on him except in self-defence, the law intervenes.

Yet the Zulu feels cheated, by the Indians. He doesn't like the Indians; in fact he looks down on a race which doesn't much care for battle.¹

The Indians, descendants of those who came to work on the sugar plantations and in the fields, may not be warriors but are often good, sharp businessmen. Dirt doesn't worry an Indian; poverty does. He is cautious and careful and, by the Zulu standard, miserly. He is shrewd, too. And what a worker! In the field, in his superbly cultivated garden, in his shop, he will work until he drops.

¹ Still true, I think, in spite of the alliance in passive resistance.

Gradually the Indians, or some of them, became wealthy: or at least, well-off by Zulu standards. And the Zulus submitted to work. The Indians started to run bus services and the Natives were glad to use them. Indians opened shops, for Native and Indian alike. They were allowed to buy land (the Zulu wasn't) since money talks. They built on it, and rented the buildings. (Today, Indians own much of Durban.)

It would not have been surprising had the Zulus resented the prosperity of Asiatics and the privileges granted them but not the native African, but Zulus are cheerful souls and not easily stirred to anger.

Then the Indians became greedy. Greed isn't an Indian characteristic unknown to people with whiter or darker skins. The Indians also began to cheat. *Stop!* Some of them did. Dishonesty isn't yet exclusive to any people or any race, and you can be cheated in the United States or in England quite as easily today. Not long ago, cheating was a form of sharp practice accepted in many businesses.

Some of the Indians charged the Native much more than they charged fellow Indians—for soap and cigarettes and things in short supply. They charged too much on the buses, also. By then, the Native had become dependent on the Indian shops and transport; he needed them, but felt that he was having a raw deal. Hate grew easily out of contempt.

The Indians had more money, much more money; and Zulu women realized that prostitution could be profitable. If Zulu men have a characteristic which has never been spoiled, it is pride. Knowing their young girls were being used by the Indians made hatred boil. One day, someone's head was pushed against someone's window and the window broke. The head belonged to a Zulu boy and the hand to an Indian shopkeeper, and the hatred boiled over.

I've read a lot and been told a lot about what followed. It wasn't good. The Natives became warriors overnight. They killed, pillaged, burnt and raped. It turned that part of Durban into hell for several days. At first the police did not take it seriously enough; when they did and reinforcements were rushed up, Natives with their blood up were flowing into Durban lusting to kill. Well, that's what it looked like and what has been assumed, but in fact the hatred was only for the Indians. They would pass white people, English and Afrikaner, on the way to murder and beating-up, and smile and wave and tell the white folk not to worry. That doesn't sound like the attitude of blood-maddened savages to me.

There were instances, well authenticated, of white folk in the streets watching—may they be forgiven, *watching*—the devilry, and not being hurt.

Once the police were in strength, order was restored, no one was victimized, emergency arrangements for housing the new homeless were made. I have not heard a single voice suggesting that a United Party Government could have handled the situation better.

You and I might say that the conditions leading up to the riots could have been prevented, and the riots thus avoided. But was there any likelihood that the men who could forget to get the water before starting farming, would think so far ahead?

One factor seems to me the most significant when looking at the present South African situation as a whole, including the general condemnation of the Malan Government. That thing is simply that the neglect which allowed Zulu hatred to simmer and then boil over was *not* that of the Malan Government. The Malan Government was about the only Government in the Union's history which had no responsibility for the Durban riots. The conditions were created before it came to power. So when the United Party and the rest of the world blames the Nationalists for the beginning and the end of all troubles, Malan's extremist supporters—men of evil genius if you like—will gain more support within their own party and the moderates will lose ground. We want the moderates to gain ground. Encouragement instead of blind opposition could bring that about. Antagonism, the onslaughts of other nations in U.N.O., the harsh criticism from the United States and, let's face it, the *Manchester Guardian*, will simply strengthen the hand of the extremists; extremists have never been much good to any country.

My own researches into the Durban riots make me wonder very gravely whether all we heard about the later troubles at P.E. and Kimberley is true.

Behind South Africa's internal problems, of course, stands the international complications: India stretching out a paternal hand, like a benevolent—I mean benevolent—Hitler, for her "lost" subjects, many of whom have a much higher standard of life than they would have back home with Mother India: and South Africa shouting "Hands off our problem". The other nations all take sides and, if not pro-Indian, are certainly anti-South African.

So Malan gets driven into a corner. No one else, he thinks, sees the problems clearly; no one else will be reasonable, so he *can't* be. In Cape Town and Johannesburg it seemed to me a simple matter of getting the two white groups together. From here, it seems doubtful whether they'll ever work in harmony. I'm absolutely convinced that if there were only one white group, the Native or racial problem would be seen for what it is: social. Malan's grave—his awful—mistake, goaded by his extremists, is to make it racial. Why haven't these Nationalists the common sense to realize that if South Africa

could show a settled, happy country with white and black living in harmony, and the Natives assured of gradual progress, that South Africa would be the hope, instead of the despair, of the rest of Africa? The darling, instead of the whipping-boy, of the rest of the world?

Whatever else may happen here, complete segregation of black from white will never be possible. The Nationalists will have to face that sooner or later. If they'd face it now, there might be time to win support and gain the understanding of the Coloureds, the Natives and the Asians. All of these have to be persuaded, *soon*, of genuine European goodwill. They are fast giving up hope of it.

I don't know if they'll be able to become true neighbours without more bloodshed.

Another tragedy in South Africa, of course, is the proof that the genuine magnanimity of the British after the Boer War, their honest desire to be friends and to be fair, proved almost fruitless. The Afrikaner attitude which has followed is a grotesque travesty of the philosophy that the soft answer turneth away wrath. (I know, our first answer wasn't so soft!) Had we beaten, then tyrannized, exploited, ill-treated and virtually enslaved the Boers, they could not be more bitter today. (Well, some couldn't.) It is one of the outstanding failures of a liberal policy applied internationally; and the greater tragedy, because at one time it looked like succeeding. Had Smuts been truly liberal with the non-whites I think it would have succeeded; in South Africa, man is reaping the whirlwind again.

Of course, there's a lot more . . .

But I'll finish by saying that Natal is more like England to look at than anywhere else here; that the abounding vitality and good things I saw in other parts of the Union are here in Durban, too; and that although Durban does get hot and sticky, December and early January have been very pleasant.

And—I feel as distressed by what's happening in South Africa as if I were a South African myself. It's such a wonderful country.

III

The East African Coast

JANUARY 12TH, 1951

(Jean)

On packing and unpacking—The “Karanja” and a half gale—Lourenço Marques and Portuguese—Delagoa Bay and a ducking for Richard—Beira—Mozambique—A coral island and a 450-year-old fort—Scoopy’s triumph—John trails a beauty—Babs going home

This damned packing and unpacking! I’ve just finished hunting for a pair of evening shoes. Richard *wouldn’t* hurry. Scoopy was a bit dreamy, too. They’re very good, but some of the other children on board the *Karanja*—quite nice cabins, just a comfortable size with about thirty other English passengers who are very subdued at the moment—don’t have any lessons. So my two strain at the leash and rush off the moment they can.

The last few days at Durban it was pack, pack and *pack*, dreadfully hot by day, too, and at night the wind—but I mustn’t complain.

We left Durban in a half gale (*John* calls it half) and I felt horridly sick and lay on the bed for hours. Next morning, Richard upset some violet gentian—he’d one or two nasty sores—on the cabin floor. *John* and I scrubbed and scrubbed and made it look presentable, but the handkerchiefs and flannels are covered with the beastly stuff. Still, the sores look better.

Next day the ship was steadier, and we reached Lourenço Marques about lunch-time. It was so *hot*. All five of us went ashore. I wouldn’t let *John* take a taxi and afterwards wished I had. We walked round many fine, wide, white streets, as far as an impressive Roman Catholic cathedral, which looks almost absurdly large for the town, but *John* says the population is nearly 70,000. The cathedral’s so white and pure-looking against a perfect blue sky. The glorious red flamboyant trees were out, too. I wanted to take some ciné shots and *John* argued about having so little film left, so I stalked off and the boys looked solemn as they walked with Babs.

We soon had a shock; no one we spoke to knew English; only Portuguese. *John* tried pidgin English on a Portuguese lad, and waved his arms about. A single-decker bus came along, with Polana on it; and we wanted the Polana Hotel.

Everyone, including natives, looked so tired. Several were dressed in dead black, and it seemed a mistake—black faces against black clothes.

There was a party at the hotel which overlooks lovely Delagoa Bay; it cost a fortune to go in. No one understood English. Chairs were placed round a big open-air arena, there was a lot of clowning and some races for children. Our boys watched for a while and then wandered off. Suddenly, I heard Scoopy scream. I jumped up in terror, as he cried:

“Richard’s fallen in, Mummy, Richard’s fallen in!”

There was Richard, climbing out of a swimming-pool; he’d *everything* on.

Afterwards, I remembered what a wonderful view there was from the hotel grounds, over the red cliffs which dropped almost sheer into a fine sandy beach.

Next day, the ship rolled so much I felt dreadful. It’s amazing how sea-sickness stops once it’s calm, though. We went up two rivers, the Busi and Pungwe I *think*, and reached Beira two days after leaving Lourenço Marques. It was after sunset, and the port seemed awfully dark, dusty and smelly, and reminded me (just the houses!) of some parts of Paris. We anchored out, and motor-boats ablaze with flares took us ashore. People were sitting out behind their mosquito frames. Hot wasn’t the word. We wandered round with one or two other passengers, and had a drink in a café where everyone seemed half-asleep. I read a big advertisement for a bull-fight;

“Oh, I wish I could stay for that,” I said.

“Then you’d wish you hadn’t,” said John.

“Nonsense. Look—it says twenty-five shillings in the shade, ten shillings in the sun. Do people really stand out in the blazing sun to watch a bull-fight?”

“Well, they wouldn’t pay ten shillings just to finance the show.”

Sometimes I could hit him!

The food on board is very good, although I now know I don’t like curry. The captain’s table isn’t at all stodgy, and Captain Mitchell keeps everything going with a swing. It was quite calm after Beira, on Thursday morning the sea was really like glass—just flat and shiny and motionless.

Was it *hot*!

We *had* to see Mozambique, though, the name itself intrigued me. It’s a coral island, and the old capital of Portuguese East Africa—and simply full of malaria, I learned afterwards.

The ship anchored out, and we went ashore on a launch. At the end of a long pier, a dozen natives were waiting with the shabbiest of rickshaws. John chose the poorest-looking, Babs and

the boys went ahead in another, bumping noisily over dusty cobbles.

Then we reached the 450-year-old fort, which is now a prison. Outside, a dozen guards in crumpled khaki drill and red fezes and rifles sat about. They all obligingly posed for photographs. The walls are fantastically thick and very high. An old man and a boy were selling curios just inside. One of the guards drooped round with us. His English was comical, but he made us understand.

In a kind of enclosed courtyard, we saw the prisoners. The "cells" were wide open, just big, dark barns, and the prisoners, some of them murderers and the worst possible desperadoes (John says, I suppose he knows) were making curios, shoes and clothes, and shoeing horses. They came out to try to sell us big floppy raffia hats, and looked everything John said. Dirty, unshaven, the lines on their faces ran with sweat. Fowls and two goats wandered about, and the smell! Further on, we walked by the walls, which were *yards* wide, with little iron guns placed at intervals, and between them, piles of old cannon balls, jet black against the white-washed walls. A long way off, a tiny white church stood at a point which stretched out into the sea. If only it hadn't been so hot and there hadn't been so many flies and mosquitoes.

We reached the shade of the gateway again, and were just leaving when John said:

"Look!"

I glanced round. A face was pressed against the bars of a window, and glaring eyes seemed to burn me. I shivered.

"I expect he's in solitary confinement," John said.

"Yes, sah." Our guide nodded vigorously. "He all alone. Bad man. Done bad things."

Richard and Scoopy kept looking back and talking in whispers about a *very* bad man.

Outside, the boys were anxious to bathe and we'd brought their swim-suits in case there was a pool. They ran off, John and I sauntered, and we were nearing the pool—just an ordinary outdoor swimming-bath—when this time Richard yelled:

"Mummy, Mummy, come *quick!*"

He was prancing about the side of the bath, I was sure Scoopy was drowning. Usually I hate to see John run, but he couldn't run fast enough this time.

"Quick, quick!" cried Richard, as if desperate. "Come quick! Scoopy's *swimming!*"

And so he was; he'd tried in Bournemouth, on board ship, at Durban, everywhere he could, and he actually learned to swim in Mozambique.

We sauntered back along streets so narrow we could easily touch

the walls of the houses on either side by stretching out both hands. The barred windows were small, the cream-washed walls almost blank, doors stood closed. It looked desolate. Now and again a door was open, and we saw a shop inside, fans whirring round, assistants serving in semi-darkness, trying to keep cool.

A native woman, her face painted with different-coloured stripes, walked past us. Up went John's camera. She turned her face away; John stalked her. Several natives, in European clothes, seemed to crowd round to protect her.

"Don't try again," I whispered to John. "They won't like it."

"Nonsense," he said.

He kept lowering the camera, then the woman would look round, he'd raise it again, she would turn her head and move on, surrounded by her escort. I was sure they looked threatening.

"Don't," I pleaded, "it's asking for trouble. Don't do it!"

"If she was really serious she could slip up one of these alleys," John said.

He kept trying, and nothing happened to us, but I was glad when we were on the loose wooden planks of the pier again. I wonder if the pictures will be any good?¹

Babs is coming home—to get married! She'll go back from India.

JANUARY 16TH, 1951

(John)

The Indian Ocean and cyclones—A sailor's story and a father's downfall—Dicing with death—Sport in the Union, retrospective—Unreliability of weather reports in the Mozambique Channel

Any idea that the Indian Ocean is always smooth can be forgotten. Sundry amiable officers said we were travelling in the wake of a cyclone. That wouldn't have affected my peace of mind much if one of them hadn't gone into great detail about the time when he was near the middle of one and—he said—every man aboard from the Captain downwards felt sure they would never see land again. Another capped it by one of those stories that seem incredible but are probably true.

He was, he said, second mate on an old tub which had to call at the Seychelles out of Bombay. He was going aboard when he

¹ They weren't!



Durban Rickshaw Boy.



Native market stall, Dar-es-Salaam.



On the road
between Delhi
and Agra.

Priest and
Temple at
Gwalior.



slipped and broke a leg, so the old tub sailed without him. It was never heard of again. A cyclone which smashed at Bombay harbour, tore ships from their moorings and did a fury of damage all along the coast, just swallowed it up. If I can believe what I'm told, it was drawn into the middle of a kind of whirlpool, with seas running and waves smashing in all directions, until it heeled over and was sucked down.

"I suppose that couldn't happen with a ship this size," I said, hopefully. (The *Karanja* is about 10,000 tons.)

"Oh, yes," said he, "it was bigger than this."

I carefully avoided telling Jean or Babs. Jean came up for tea, and the boys—who have joined forces with some other youngsters aboard and vanish at the slightest chance—decided that they would like some cakes. Young Scoop, sitting back like an old man, said calmly:

"Do you know, Mummy, a ship *bigger'n* this was sunk the other day, in a cyclone. And we're in a cyclone, now, or we will be."

"Soon," said Richard, with relish.

"Nonsense," I said sharply. "Someone's been pulling your leg."

"Oo, *Daddy!*" breathed Scoop. "How could you say such a thing? I was there when that *officer* told you about it."

Laughter took the edge off anyone's feeling of insecurity, but I swear that going round the deck Jean clutched my arm rather more tightly than usual.

At dinner the second night out, Captain Mitchell, a bright-eyed, quick-witted sailor with the best repertoire of yarns I've ever had the luck to hear, was in a reflective mood. Of course, we talked hurricanes and cyclones.

"Well, what do you expect sailing these seas at this time of the year?" he asked cheerfully. "Dicing with death in shark-infested waters ought to give you a thrill."

He confessed that he wasn't worried about this "blow", but had been worried often enough. The one time he remembered really losing his temper with an officer was when a youngster, fresh from England, said that he'd never been in a hurricane or cyclone, and hoped they'd see one this (that) trip. Mitchell told me *exactly* what he had said to him—and even in the telling, his voice and his look made it pretty clear that there are occasions when he knows that "dicing with death" isn't just a flippant catchword.

The stewardess, who keeps an eye on the children, is also librarian. I've been given a comfortable spot in the small library, almost free of wind and quiet except during library hours, and I've been hammering away.

By way of *postscript* to South Africa—it's a curious thing that

one of the most important aspects of life there, certainly one which struck me pretty hard, didn't creep into my earlier letters. Blame my political self.

The aspect? Sport.

You'd say we were pretty sports conscious at home, wouldn't you? Here, it's different; deeper. Sport seems to weave itself into the lives of players and non-players more, and *not*, as far as I can judge, because of the possibility of winning a fortune in football pools. Sport is part of the fabric of living. Everyone—I'm thinking more of the Europeans—plays. It's rather like the vanishing county type at home, with whom tennis, golf and other games are part of the daily round. Enthusiasm for cricket is much more general than at home, I'd say; there's a great deal of racing, fishing—including big-game fishing—swimming, pretty well everything.

It's part of the greater leisure that white folk have in the Union; most can afford both the time and the money. Bobby Locke is a national hero, and we could never say that of Cotton or any of our golfing giants, past or present—could we? The Natives and Coloured play a great deal, mostly on Sundays, and there's going to be bother because the Dutch Reformed Church doesn't like games on Sunday; in fact there's some talk of the Government barring gate-money games that day. The native clubs depend on the gate-money for their finances, and they can only play on Sundays. The fact that a lot of them are angry about the proposed ban shows how deeply love of Western sports is in the Native, too.

Is it as important in the Union as I seem to think? Let me put it this way: it seems to me that in a much greater degree than at home, sport is absorbed into the daily round, is as important and inevitable as a radio, eating and drinking and going to work. It isn't a thing apart. I get the impression that the game comes first but there's a much greater will to win than there is, sometimes, at home; and a far greater national consciousness—almost conscience—about doing well.

Mitchell says we'll soon be in the Mozambique Channel, where it can get rough and a hurricane can be nasty. He complains bitterly of the unreliable meteorological forecasts in these parts, too—I hope he doesn't know more than he's told us.

JANUARY 20TH, 1951

(Jean)

Zanzibar and the Sultan's palace—Arab castle and bats—Arab doors—Still no ciné film—The silversmith—Richard again—Dar-es-Salaam—Mombasa, Aly Khan, saris and a teetotal reception

Zanzibar is *everything* anyone ever said. In spite of teeming rain, we just gaped and gaped. The island's roads are narrow but the driver who took us round was very good. How I'd love to see it in sunlight. Carts drawn by the cows with humped backs, and the men who posed for pictures. Then the Sultan's summer palace with a huge heap of coconuts just outside the gates where the guards lounged and smiled at us—and washing hanging in the back garden!

There were neat little native villages, banana plantations, coconut groves with tall, bending trunks and spiky fronds way up. We saw coffee, cocoa, rice and oranges growing, and goodness knows what else—oh, cloves of course.

We went into the ruins of an old Arab castle; bats and owls seemed to stare down at us from the ceiling, which wasn't very high. The boys were nervous. Back in the town, with its narrow streets and alarming corners, cars seemed to tear along.

I'd heard of Arab doors, and these are wonderful, huge and polished, with brass studs, many of them with beautiful carving and intricate brasswork. All of them seemed closed. It was hard to think that people lived inside. Everything was still.

We had a very old guide, I was sure he wouldn't be able to make us understand. But his English was as good as mine, and he spoke in a deep, attractive voice and had the most courtly manners. Every step he took obviously hurt him. We went on through the rain, which just didn't stop.

John went into every chemist's hunting ciné film. Every other shop sold curios—Arab chests, the usual earrings, in wood, ivory and ebony, all fascinating stuff. John bought a few foreign stamps for the boys.

We went into a silversmith's, where an Indian in a white long coat and hat—like a forage cap—showed us the most beautiful silverwork, assured us we needn't buy, and really didn't seem interested in money. John had lost his cigarettes; the Indian tried to give him a whole packet.

I chose an evening bag, and then we took a rickshaw and went to the Zanzibar Hotel, at the back of the town. It was just like

pictures of old Arab houses. Lofty rooms, thick walls, arched doorways without doors, silent servants dressed in long white robes with royal blue sashes and scarlet fezes—and a bartender dispensing martinis and manhattans. That lunch!

Hot fried onions, boiled rice, bacon and black beans, cold gherkins and spring onions, all mixed up and covered with maple syrup. And a wonderful trifle!

When we got back, Master Richard had distinguished himself. (Some old men had brought curios aboard and the boys had wanted to buy some. No, I'd said, they'd spent their pocket money.) Richard had painted some sea-shells, sold them to a kind-hearted passenger for a shilling, and bought some foreign stamps. Discovering the stamps had been used, he had thrown them overboard.

Before Zanzibar, we called at Dar-es-Salaam and although I don't know what it was, the atmosphere was altogether different from the Portuguese ports. Going ashore in a lighter, the dock-workers looked—well, more ready to work, I suppose that's it. John called on the Rotary secretary, Ronald Hall, and his wife Margaret, and they welcomed us as if we were old friends. We swam in water almost too warm, lazed in the European Club, and at night went to the Ocean Breeze Club and danced under the moon or sat swinging in a garden seat and sipping our drinks. Heavenly. Margaret's one complaint was the difficulty of making a garden because it's so dry. But the weeds grow.

At Mombasa, beyond Zanzibar, John was like an old hen, wanting to get off before he was allowed to. He managed it, too! He said he wanted to see the Rotary people; I think he wanted to make a quick tour for film, he'd only got half a roll left. I hope to goodness what he has taken will come out—as well as the few shots I've taken. He watches me like a hawk while I'm using the ciné.

He came back looking pleased with himself. He'd met an old friend—the Port Medical Officer—we were due there in the evening. He'd seen the Rotarians, and was to lunch with them. He'd called at the book-shops, and been invited to a reception to be given that evening to Prince Aly Khan and Rita—who were making a tour.

I didn't know what to wear!

The reception was fascinating. Everyone who was anyone in Mombasa went into the grounds of a big house. Arabs dressed in their striking robes; Indians dressed in long coats and dhotis and the women in the loveliest saris you could imagine; and the Europeans looked a dull lot (their clothes, I mean). The fascinating thing was that the Indian and Arab women stood in a large group, and the men apart from them; the Europeans mixed, of course.

It was in the open, big trestle tables were loaded with food and

soft drinks (no wines, beer or spirits), and everyone hung about for the Prince. Then there was a rumour that Rita wasn't coming. She didn't come either—Aly came ahead, by air; Rita was travelling by train.

Then Aly Khan arrived, cameras clicked by the hundred—and John hadn't brought ours! At least we couldn't argue about who should try it. Aly Khan was taken to a little group of chairs and a few local Indians were presented, then one or two white people. I saw John speaking to someone he'd only just met, and he came back, almost purring.

"Like to meet him?" he asked.

"Aly Khan? Don't be silly, we won't be asked."

"It's all fixed," said John. "You're next."

I felt quite nervous, until the Prince started to talk. His English is perfect, and I wouldn't have thought he had any Indian blood. His mother was French, wasn't she? He was *charming*; and, I thought, a little bored. He'd been at receptions like this for weeks on end. Then John was called, they chatted, and off we went. Soon I saw the Prince looking at us, obviously trying to catch our eye. Mine or John's? John went across, they conferred seriously, and John returned.

"He thinks it's dragging and wants us to start dancing," he said. "We'll round up a few couples and begin—he'll come when he knows there'll be some others."

"But you don't *know* anyone," I protested. "How can you—"

I was just wasting my breath. John went up to someone he'd been introduced to casually a few minutes before, and soon half a dozen couples were ready to dance. Aly joined us, and we went to the dance floor—of red tiles, with a dance band which could really play. I suppose that was the first and last time I'll dance with a Prince. He was really pleasant—no side at all. Then we had a drink at the home of the book-shop man who had arranged the invitation.

The purser dances beautifully, and couldn't be nicer. There's a Rajah on board, just a nice, dark-skinned old man to look at; he's very polite but doesn't talk to many people. I've learned that there are a lot of Indians in the first class—they stay in their rooms most of the time, we hardly ever see them. John's talked to one or two. Oh, I forgot—we nearly left thirty or forty Indian passengers behind, they were late in returning to the ship; one man was hauled aboard through a hatch. The dockside scene with the women in their saris was quite lovely.

I wonder what India will be like?? The Indians aboard aren't really unfriendly, perhaps they're just shy. I get a funny feeling whenever I think of India.

JANUARY 20TH, 1951

(John)

A good word for groundnuts in Tanganyika—A rest from politics—Coincidence—Contrast between British and Portuguese colonies—The “African Moon”—Our white hunter—Goggle-fishing and tropical fish—The honest Arabs of Zanzibar—Gold-smuggling and a crime-writer’s shame

We’ve really enjoyed the voyage from Durban so far. Work has gone well, and I’ve been so smug that I could even survey without sadness some of the outer fringes of the groundnuts plantations where your money and mine vanished not into the Tanganyika air but into the dusty ground. I’ve never felt particularly hot under the collar about this. If it had come off, the natives would have had work and greater prosperity, and we would have had more food. The Government at home would have been entitled to a lot of praise; whether they would have got it or not is a different matter. As it is, levelled ground out here might show a big credit side if the war should come. Airfields aren’t made overnight in the bush of East Africa, which has become a vital strategic area in these days of long-range aircraft.

No one here has talked politics with me. By “here”, I mean Dar-es-Salaam and Mombasa,¹ in Tanganyika and Kenya (in case you haven’t a map handy), and although I’m assured it can be hellish hot in each place, it hasn’t been too bad for us.

The long arm of coincidence has reached me at last. It’s difficult to get ashore before a full medical clearance is given the ship. With a teeming mass of Indians below deck, over 1,000 of them, many from homes of incredible squalor and mostly going to the homeland for a visit, smallpox, cholera and other endemic diseases are possible. The marvel is that plagues are kept under control. Special permission to leave before all formalities are over is given occasionally. We hadn’t long in Mombasa and I was anxious to make one or two early contacts. So I went to see the Port Medical Officer. He looked up and said without a change of expression:

“Hello, John. When I saw your passport, I thought it was you.”

He was Alan Holmes, whom I’d last seen in Hampshire fourteen years or so ago. Then among other things, he was writing. Today, also among other things, he does a great deal of painting, and some of his native heads seem pretty good to me. We went to see him in the evening, and met his wife and young baby—and the lizard

¹ Not really in Kenya; leased to Great Britain.

(chameleon?) which occasionally darted across a wall to devour a mosquito.

"Useful things to have about the house," Alan said. "We have three."

The welcome to someone "from home" was—as it always is—very warm. The thing that I wanted to know, of course, was how they liked living in an East African port. I don't think I could myself, I've the big-city mind and habits, but like everyone or nearly everyone I've met, they seemed happy.

The ports are quite small, the European population very small, and just beyond the towns themselves the desolate bush stretches out endlessly. Roads are dirt tracks, travelling a journey through a dust cloud. Life in the raw is very near. There aren't many of the amenities which you and I have come to think of as essentials, but I couldn't escape the feeling that in many ways they have *nearly* found the right way to live.

The Natives? Well, we know about Mau-Mau, now. It wasn't evident, anywhere; but there was much talk of Natives being "fresh"; insolent; and little evidence of any attempt to see them except as servants.

In the Portuguese East African towns I had a feeling that there was a lack of—what was it?—efficiency? Order? A greater lassitude, a lack of briskness. This touched the Europeans and the Natives—and of course, the Indians. There are comparatively large—and very wealthy and influential—Indian colonies all along the coast. In Dar and Mombasa, everything seemed more brisk. One sensed an influence which, for instance, made those Natives who wore white long coats which looked like nightgowns, wear *clean* white coats. There was plenty of dust, as there is everywhere, every excuse for not being spotless; but many contrived to be. I couldn't tell the difference between the Native and Indian sections here and in South Africa. They looked pretty grim, mud and banana-frond houses—in fact houses made of anything that might keep out the weather. Roofs made of some kind of thatch with an occasional SHELL petrol tin or COCA-COLA or CADBURY'S chocolate advertisement for decoration, often looked likely to cave in under pressure.

From Durban, we've been followed or preceded by an American freighter, the *African Moon*. Chasing ciné film, I jumped at an invitation from one of the officers to go aboard.

We'd met on a trip up Mtwapa Creek, near Mombasa, where crocodiles lined the banks—well, we saw *some*—and our host was Commander Blunt, a white hunter who seems to have shot everything that can be shot in Africa. A mild little chap, too. First we'd bathed at a beach hotel at Shamza, reached through dense bush

along narrow roads with the branches touching the shooting-brake on either side. Everything seemed tinder-dry.

After another drive through the desolate bush we reached Blunt's house, by the creek, and climbed into a dinghy and were rowed to the motor-launch and climbed aboard, looking for crocs all the time. All signs of civilization vanished as the little river wound its way through the drab, dusty and lifeless bush.

The three "boys" with us did their job efficiently, and our host talked about the bush and hunting and a competitor for "excursions" who took passengers from visiting ships out to sea for goggle-fishing. I didn't know a thing about goggle-fishing, but our host regarded it as dangerous, because of the sharks.

Believe it or not, conversation with the American turned to 8-mm. colour film. He thought someone on board the *African Moon* might have some, so I accepted the invitation to go aboard. I found the skipper making his own coffee in the galley, a huge and genial man who told me to make the ship my own. I am persistently teetotal but came away having promised to keep my American company next morning, goggle-fishing. Among the sharks.

Next day, I was up early. The start was to be at dawn. To my surprise I'd slept, and to my regret, someone woke me. Out I went, moving into a taxi through the pale dust of the port which was still asleep. No patient, hopeful Natives squatted at their big baskets filled with carved heads, giraffe, buck, elephant, wood of several hues, all smooth and shiny but true Native craft. I'd stood and watched them going through the various stages from a block of wood to a shiny Native head. (Did I tell you that at Livingstone I saw the Natives sitting behind a little shop which sold everything from lion-skins to monkeys' paws, using their toes as a vice while they sawed hardwood and ivory?)

Here was I, then, going shark—I mean goggle-fishing. The only sharks I'd ever seen had been in aquariums, but I'd heard a lot of stories.

The American was at the rendezvous before me. No one else was about. The whitish, sandy beach sloped gently down to sea so smooth that it really was like blue glass. The sun was just rising; a faint, distant haze hid it but its light touched the pale-grey cirrus cloud and shone like moonlight on the water. A Native, dressed in a loin-cloth, paddled silently by in a canoe that had been hollowed out of the trunk of a tree; and the ripples touched but did not stir the fringe of sand.

Then came the boss, a tall, bluff Englishman, chatty and affable. "Haven't you any rubber shoes?" he asked, as if horrified.

"No," said I, apologetically. "Do I need them?"

"You'll cut your feet to pieces on the coral out there," he said. "Must have 'em."

"Well, I haven't any."

He studied my odd feet, and said thoughtfully:

"You could buy a pair." He ran the nearby shop.

"Not if I can help it," I said, and saw hope of staying ashore.

"They'd be no use to me, I have to have shoes specially made."

He studied my feet again, and nodded understandingly.

"I can lend you a pair," he announced, knowing that he would probably have to, anyhow. "The right one will be large enough, but you may not be able to lace the left up properly. Care to try?"

I gulped that I would. They fitted, more or less. Then two women, a girl and a boy turned up, equally prepared to face the menace. We climbed into a dinghy, were rowed out by a smiling boy, helped into a launch again, and then chugged our way out, our wake the only ripple. Everyone had the forced brightness which could possibly be associated with the early hour, and could also have been due to mental pictures of sharks.

Our host then demonstrated the breathing apparatus. I won't attempt to describe it in detail. It's a piece of metal piping curved at one end, with a pair of close-fitting goggles attached. The end (hole) of the curved part should poke out of the water, the other should stay in your mouth, enabling you to breathe. Simple. The goggles enable you to lie face downwards in the water without closing your eyes. If you close your eyes you don't goggle-fish; for the purpose of this sortie is to see the tropical fish in all their brilliant colours. I'm told that there are some highly civilized craft with glass bottoms through which you look without a special breathing apparatus or the need to swim.

We got out to sea; just a mile or so, but the shore with its fringe of coconut palms seemed a long, long way off. The sun was tinging the clouds with a rose pink; the morning glowed. It was warm. There was still hardly a ripple; a rough sea spoils the sport, and the wind which rises soon after dawn makes daybreak the only time for goggle-fishing.

"Now," said our host, "I'll go over and show you how it's done."

He fitted on his apparatus, which made him a kind of man from Mars, and slid overboard, then lay flat on the water and just floated, with his face immersed and the curved end poking out of the water. Easy. A girl followed. Easier. My American followed a little less smoothly, but he managed. The boy went next. The two women were watching me. I climbed over, cautiously, laid flat on my stomach and tried to breathe; it was so difficult that I forgot the sharks.

Two strokes and I took in a few pints of sea-water. I grabbed at the side of the boat, and it was way above my head.

Panic!

"Hold the rope!" roared our host.

I saw that a rope, with a number of floats tied to it, had been stretched out from the launch to a buoy. Beginners could draw themselves along this, if they felt nervous. I dragged myself along, and tried the trick of lying face downwards again, caught a glimpse of a piece of coral with an edge like a carving knife, and had a few more pints.

Coming up for breath, I was consoled by the sight of one of the women clinging to the rope and two others of the party keeping very near it. Then the American stood. Just like that. I gaped. Our host joined him, and they stood up where the sea, I knew, was ten or fifteen feet deep; and they chatted. They were on a coral ridge that was pin-pointed and easy to locate.

Then I tried again. I must have succeeded for at least thirty, possibly sixty seconds. It was a strange and curious experience. Breathless, sure that I was going to swallow more sea, anxious to be within a few strokes of the rope and more than a little conscious of sharks, I looked down on beauty and everything else was stilled.

They were tiny fish; I don't know what I'd expected, but not so tiny as this. There were shoals of them, and I can't hope to describe the colouring. I was able to pick out the formation of the coral, in its quieter hues of beauty. Then the damned air-hole went under and I was all arms and legs saving my life again. I tried it half a dozen times, never succeeded in working the apparatus for more than a minute or two, watching the others floating at ease and feasting themselves. I did tread on coral and now know how sharp it can be.

Then it was over. Back in the launch, everyone laughed and giggled and let the gentle wind dry them, and we were soon back at the beach.

Our host came into the dressing-rooms to change.

"Ever see any sharks out there?" I asked casually.

"Sharks?" he roared. "*Sharks?* I've been out nearly every morning for three years and *I've* never seen a shark. It's that blankety-blank-blankety old so-and-so over at blank, I'll have the law on him!"

It had been a wonderful morning. The American and I went back in the same taxi. He was going out again tomorrow. The *Karanja* was sailing that noon, so I couldn't; how, I said, I wished I could. And had he had any luck with Kodachrome film?

"I'm very sorry," he apologized earnestly. "I hunted the ship, there isn't a roll aboard."

There wasn't a roll in Mombasa, Dar-es-Salaam or Zanzibar either. Each place I inquired, they referred me to the one I'd just come from. In fact during the pelting rain in Zanzibar, I'd waited over an hour for a shop to open, having been told they had some. They had: it was 16 mm. They were expecting 8 mm. on the next aeroplane from Nairobi, due in that afternoon. We were leaving Zanzibar before the 'plane was due.

Talking of Zanzibar, which lies between Mombasa and Dar-es-Salaam, I left my silver cigarette case filled with cigarettes in the taxi which took us round. I'd paid the man off and hadn't seen him for an hour or more, so went gloomily to the office, which was also a huge curio shop.

A large, well-dressed Arab was sorry, no, it hadn't been reported, yes, he would make inquiries.

"Goodbye to that," I thought.

Hours later, at the quay, where the launches were bobbing wildly up and down on the choppy water, we forgot everything except the fact that we had to climb from the gunwhale to a swaying gangway.

The Arab appeared.

"Sir," he said, "I am happy. I have found your cigarette case. In it were the cigarettes. It was found by the driver. Sir." He handed it over with a bow.

"That's wonderful," I said warmly. "Thank you very much." I fumbled in my pocket. "Will you give this to your driver?"

"Sir," he said, "I am happy. I have returned your cigarette case. I did my duty. The driver did his duty. It is our duty to be honest. That is a reward in itself. I hope you enjoy the rest of your journey."

It had rained every minute we were in Zanzibar, we hadn't time to do more than glance at the Sultan's Palace, but I believe all the good things said about the Isle of Spices; especially about the people.

Well, we'll soon be in Karachi, and I'll add a Pakistan stamp—But I'm crazy! I forgot that we've been carrying smuggled gold! The Chief Steward, a very pleasant chap, was fined £200 or so for taking it ashore at Zanzibar. The story was in the Mombasa newspaper. My life hasn't been worth living, since then; crime-writer fails to smell out a smuggler under his nose!

And that reminds me of Gedge.

I'm not going to talk much about passengers, delightful though many have been, because they really won't mean a thing. But Gedge is different. He is a very tall, well-built Englishman with a fresh complexion, rather a high-pitched voice which is sometimes a little difficult to hear, and outwardly, an appearance of great solemnity. He has retired from the Diplomatic Service—he was in Brazil for years—and is now travelling the world or this part of it, seeking

an island or some spot where he can live in comfort on his limited income.

He'll forgive me for saying that few would suspect this sense of humour if they saw him pacing the deck, communing with himself; or sitting at a table, writing in his diary in a precise, remarkably legible hand. Amid the dust of Lourenço Marques, where his Portuguese (learned in Brazil) stood us in good stead, walking with umbrella round the old fort and prison on Mozambique, stalking along the wide streets of Mombasa, climbing down the swinging gangway, stepping—yes, the word is daintily—into a rocking launch, he is always the same. His hand is always first to help the next passenger; his bow is always precise.

Gedge could tell me that Zanzibar was one of the biggest copra producers on the East Coast, that Portuguese East Africa has large sugar estates, grows a lot of cotton, sisal and maize, whereas Tanganyika exports a lot of tobacco, has gold and diamonds as well as the usual sisal, grain, sugar and groundnuts (!), and Kenya grows a lot of cotton, too, some tea and even rubber.

Soberly, he will talk of the great potential in the Coast, of labour problems, of differences of character in the various races—Bantus, Arabs, Swahilis, Somalis and many others. He makes me realize—the whole trip is doing that, too—how little, how very little, I know about different parts of the world.

I'm going to bed. Jean's been gone for an hour, and in my wallet are her winnings at Housey-Housey. Afterwards we danced amid gaily coloured lights on the sloping deck, with the calm Indian Ocean around us and, no doubt, the sharks swimming hopefully below.

IV

India

FEBRUARY 10TH, 1951

(Jean)

Karachi, colour, dirt and dust—Our first camel—We lose the boys—Purdah—Bombay—Saris, dhotis and people—Clean vegetables—Joseph—Crocodiles again—The untouchable—Betel-nut—The circus—Beautiful women in beautiful dresses—Hindu temples—Ciné film!

If I hadn't seen it, I would never have believed Karachi existed. The colour! The dirt! The flies and the smells! It gives me a queer feeling to realize that it's all been going on while I've been living in Bournemouth and only knew India as a place on a map. It isn't India really, but Pakistan, and of course John says it isn't Pakistan, it's just one city.

Babs had a lot to do for her voyage back, so John and I took the boys ashore. There was none of the rather flat-featured Africans; most of the men were smaller and their features much more "European." Two or three horses and traps were waiting alongside, and John chose a driver who looked filthy.

The driver *squatted*; I didn't think a man could double himself up so. He invited the boys to sit next to him, and I had wild thoughts about the diseases they would catch. We passed hundreds of Arab dhows with their sails down, then had a long ride among empty, hot, dirty streets, until the boys shouted:

"Oo, look—a camel!"

That camel couldn't have been stared at so much in its life. The boys gaped at the way it put its big feet down, plonk, and the bells tinkling round its knock-knees; it looked as if it were going to fall down any moment.

Then we turned a corner into a narrow street jammed tight with people. Old men squatted at the side of the road with bales of wonderful coloured linens and silks, fingering them lovingly, talking earnestly with customers.

The women were swathed in yards of cloth, all bright colours. A boy pushed a handcart with a pile of dates on it; someone came to buy, and the boy waved his hand and a *swarm* of flies rose up—

and settled again before he'd started serving. Another date-boy had a fan which didn't seem to make much difference.

The colours and the dirt, the dark faces and bright eyes, men and children with sores all over their faces; beggars who were so crippled that I shuddered. Everything you could ever imagine on the stalls in the market, luscious-looking fruits, coconuts, all kinds of sickly-looking sweets. Half the buildings looked as if they were falling down and nobody cared.

We saw a huge square filled with old shacks made of odd bits of wood, leaves, palm fronds, anything that would stand up, roofs of old, torn canvas, old sacks tied together, and falling to pieces, tiny little holes as front doors—and children playing about outside in the thick dirt.

Dozens of camels plodded along, drawing carts slowly and deliberately. People ran across the road in front of them, of us, of cars with their horns blaring. There were dozens of bright-red cycle carriages—a kind of cycle-rickshaw—their bells tinkling every second. On the pavements *barbers* squatted in front of their customers, cutting hair, shaving men with huge cut-throat razors, cutting corns, cleaning ears—one was taking a man's tooth out!

A dozen women came round a corner, all dressed in dirty white, their faces covered with their gowns and a kind of lacework insert for them to see out of and to breathe through; yes, the *purdah* still exists. Were they *all* the wives of one man? Then another troupe came in sight, dressed in black. It gave me the strangest feeling to watch them. Most women showed their faces, although they seemed to be swathed in cloth; and it was so hot.

We reached the European part of the city, with wide streets and some good buildings; there were the mosques all over the place, the tops of them showed above the buildings.

We wanted a chemist, to get some more gentian violet for Richard and hoping for a ciné film. The driver said he would pull across the road. John and I went in the shop, leaving the boys with him. We got the gentian violet but no film, went outside—and the boys weren't in sight.

I just couldn't believe it, and flew at John.

"You should have made him wait here! That man might have taken them anywhere. Don't stand there, go and find them!"

"Let's cross the road," John said, "they'll be there." He can be *infuriating*. We hurried across; no boys were in sight. I knew I would never recognize the driver again. Wild thoughts ran through my mind. Perhaps they'd been kidnapped. They would be terrified. I could picture them being hustled away, crying.

John kept trying to calm me down. He wanted us to go different



Roadside scene,
Hyderabad
State.



Entrance to a
cave at Ajanta.



At Colombo.

Aboriginal
carrying child—
Nullarbor
Plain, Western
Australia.



ways, but I wouldn't go alone. We went to one corner; no sign of them. Then we reached the other.

They were coming out of a little café, licking their lips, and the driver beamed at us.

"Took babas for a drink, sah," he said cheerfully. "Very nice drink."

"*Lovely*," cooed Richard.

"Did it come out of a bottle?" John asked quickly. We'd been warned to watch everything they ate and drank.

"Oh, yes," Scoopy said. "Just like you told us. We watched the man open it."

I looked into the café. It was dreadful, a dark and dirty hole. I lectured the boys—they must never have anything to eat or drink unless we're with them.

"No, Mummy," Richard said, "and haven't those camels got funny faces?"

Back at the quayside, we saw an Indian in European clothes, wearing a red fez, and blowing on a reedy pipe—and a cobra coiled up from his basket. I felt that I'd seen everything.

But I hadn't seen Bombay, then.

The crowds outside the customs shed, watching us through the railings, many of them so dirty I couldn't believe it, little skinny arms poking through, for money. One of several who looked neat and clean, a nice-looking Indian of about thirty or so, with white clothes and a black cap and wonderful teeth, was Joseph, our bearer.

I was sure I couldn't cope with an Indian servant, but I didn't need to—Joseph coped. He knew everything, did everything, bought everything, guided us everywhere, looked after the boys, took them for walks, played with them, put them to bed, and slept outside their door, in his sleeping-bag. The only thing he wouldn't do was wash—our clothes, I mean. He ironed *very* well.

Walking along the streets, children in rags come running up, patting their bellies with one hand, holding out the other for an anna or two. Some of them look lovely, all look hungry. If we get out of the car two or three rush up.

"Guard car, sah, guard car?"

There might be a bundle of dirty rags in the road; and then the rags move, and a man's head appears, filthy, verminous; and pops back again.

There are dozens more of those awful camps, some of them beneath the walls of fine hotel or private buildings; it seems so—well, wrong.

In all of the crowded streets, there seem to be millions of people, all with dark hair—that's so strange. Many of them wear

only white. They walk across the road, ignoring cars, and jump out of the way only if a horn goes off in their ear. Driving is an ordeal, but John seems to take it in his stride. The streets are lined with itinerant pedlars, and men and boys walk about with little metal trays selling different sweetmeats and nuts—betel-nut, mostly. It's nothing to be walking along and see a man spit, and a huge blob of red appear on the wall or the roadway. This betel-chewing habit is beastly. All the men who chew look as if their gums are bleeding.

Most of the people are terribly thin. The women all wear saris, some of the men wear long trousers, but many just dhotis—a big cotton sheet wrapped round the waist and drawn up between the legs, rather like an outsize nappy. Everyone is friendly and pleasant, though. I thought there would be a lot of hostility, but we haven't noticed any.

Crawford Market, is a huge covered market where they sell everything. All the vegetables are scrubbed; I've never seen carrots, onions, potatoes, turnips—anything—looking to spotless. Many of the stallholders squat. They come after you for business, but are quite cheerful when you say no. Going in, we were besieged by pedlars selling combs, matches, hairpins, souvenirs, elastic—oh, complete haberdashery shops—and by the child beggars. They're everywhere.

Fritz and Eva Berger (they'd fixed Joseph for us—we'd met them on the *Athlone Castle*) warned us not to let the boys have ice-cream, and never to eat food unless it's been boiled or we prepare it ourselves, never to eat an apple without peeling it. Both being doctors, we felt they knew! I can understand why, now.

The Bergers have made everything easy; and Mr Willis, John's publisher, has put himself at our disposal, and obviously really means it. We went with him in the car, drove through bush country, with a lot of coconut trees, and came to the lakes beyond Bombay. Mr Willis pointed to a dark dot in the water.

"What's that?" asked Scoopy.

"A crocodile," said Mr Willis.

"Oo, I want to get closer," said Richard.

Apparently the lakes, which supply Bombay with its water, are full of crocodiles. Occasionally fishermen fall overboard, and just vanish.

A family of Indian fishermen, wearing only loin-cloths and—some of them—dirty coloured shirts, had built a blazing fire and were cooking fish. John took pictures, with the last roll of colour film. The women turned their backs, but they were all friendly enough.

At a level crossing, half a dozen big, burly men, wearing huge turbans, came through carrying yokes on their shoulders and big

brass, covered bowls at the end of the ropes. These were the milkmen! Nearby was an open-air market, so colourful that it didn't seem real. The sun shone on the aluminium cooking-pans and eating-dishes, on those wonderful rolls of cotton and silks, and the flies fed on the dates, on sugar—just sugar-cane, cleaned and cut into pieces, looking rather like green rhubarb.

Colour—beauty—dirt—squalor—ugliness. Some of the men are startlingly handsome, their dark skins show up their fine eyes, and some of the women are really beautiful. They carry themselves perfectly. At Juhu Beach we saw some bathing *in* their saris. They changed without uncovering themselves, then stretched out the wet saris and dhotis to dry in the sun.

Richard started to come up in bumps, and we couldn't make out what it was—until John went into their room to see if they were asleep, and saw the *bugs*. Beastly great things—swollen with blood they'd been sucking. It was pretty bad for a day or two, but after the bedding was fumigated, we got rid of them.

The oddest thing happened at the hotel this morning. A man sneaked into the apartment, sidling against the wall. His clothes were dirty, he had a long drooping moustache, sad eyes and—well, I think the saddest face I've ever seen. John spoke to him, and he just uttered a strange sound and went sidling past, into the bathroom. When the man had gone, Joseph told us he was of the sweeper caste, an untouchable, the only caste which will clean lavatory basins and wash lavatory and bathroom floors.

I don't think I shall ever forget his face.

At a circus the other evening, it was queer to be almost the only white people there, and there were very few women. Indians sat round, chewing the beastly betel-nut. We were offered a small block of Cadbury's chocolate at 2s, four times the home price. Many things, including fruit and cereals, are wildly expensive.

But that circus! We *saw* a man lie on the ground, have a board filled with four-inch nails placed on his bare chest, and then saw horses walk over the board. I felt as if the nails were going right into me. But the man jumped up, and there was no bleeding, no marks at all. He grunted and snorted as if he were coming out of some kind of trance. Down he went again, and an ordinary plain board, without nails, was put over his chest. Then an *elephant* was led into the ring, and walked on to the board. The elephant *stood* on that board with all four feet. Next minute, the man jumped up, snorted and roared fiercely, and drummed his fists against his great chest.

There were some other wonderful turns, too, but no *finish*—and what was so strange, hardly any applause except from Europeans.

We let Joseph take the boys, next day, and expected them to come back marvelling. They complained they hadn't taken enough sweets!

"Did you see the elephant walk over the man?" I asked.

Scoopy reflected, and then nodded. "Yes, wasn't he a strong man, Mummy?"

"Why *can't* we have ice-cream here?" asked Richard. "We could in Africa. I like Africa better."

"So do I," said Scoopy, thoughtfully.

"Just because you can have ice-cream when you want it?" John asked.

"No," Scoopy said. "Because all the natives smiled, like Joseph. I *like* Joseph."

I hadn't realized it before, but not many Indians smile. Perhaps they're more serious, and goodness knows, they have reason to be.

I love to stand at the corner near the Central Station and watch the throngs of white-clad men, mostly bareheaded and with that jet-black hair, all going to work.

There are some *wonderful* buildings, and the Marine Drive, has some fine modern hotels and clubs. It goes round in a half-circle, nearly a horseshoe, and with a wide boulevard where nearly everyone drives too fast. At night, when all the lamps are lit, it's a kind of fairyland—they call it the Queen's Necklace. I'd expected that all the statues of Queen Victoria and the kings would have gone, but they're all there.

You can never get far away from the dirt and the squalor and the awful poverty, and that feeling that a lot of the people walking about are hungry. It makes such a contrast with the European parts, such as a club called Breach Candy. There's a fine swimming-pool, sweeping lawns, superb service. It's open only to Europeans, right in the middle of Bombay, and when you're there you forget what's outside.

Fritz Berger and Eva are extremely busy, but they've more or less adopted us (like Mr Willis and, in his way, Joseph). Meals at their lovely flat, visits to different clubs—they've made sure that we've seen nearly every side of life here, including a day at the races, at Mahalaxmi, on Sunday.

I *wish* I could give you some idea of the beautiful colours of the saris, and how graceful they look even on plump women. Most women have superb complexions, and most speak perfect English—well, those whom the Bergers know. Now and again we meet a Hindu woman in European clothes and it looks all wrong. Eva says that European women in saris don't look right either. The Indian women don't seem to wear belts, don't worry about a

waistline or a flat tummy. Walking round the paddock and the enclosure at the races was an experience I'd love to have again. Those saris! And, in the enclosures, the thousands of dark heads, not a fair one among them, showing up against the white coats and the brilliant green of the grass.

Many of these beautifully dressed and beautiful women are Parsees. When a Parsee dies, the body is taken to the top of a high tower and left for the vultures to pick at, until the bones are clean and fall down through the iron grille. To me, it seems awful. To them, burying the body seems just as bad.

We were invited to a gathering at Lady Bomanjee's house. Everything you could find in the most luxurious home in England was there—a private theatre, and wonderful hospitality, although—no drinks. The Bombay Province is under Prohibition, and everyone seems to observe it strictly. There *are* ways of getting some, but permits are strictly controlled.

I suppose I was hopelessly ignorant, but I hadn't realized how able and up to date many of the upper-class Indians are; their manners make some of our men seem like farm-boys. But the thing that I can't get out of my mind is the contrast—all this beauty and wealth side by side with the dirt and poverty and hunger.

Fritz and Eva took us to one of the native quarters—that's wrong, but you know what I mean. We went down narrow streets, just the little group of us, only Hindus around us. Passing the small temples we would hear little bells ringing, something to do with the religious services. The men had left their shoes outside each—they take them off as European men take their hats off going into church. Now and again we could see inside, glimpsing the idols—cows, snakes, birds—which I understood they worshipped. John says they don't—they worship God—Krishna?—through them. It's so strange, seeing a cow with a hump on its back in one of the side streets and knowing that it's held sacred.

I don't exactly *like* it, but I'm fascinated.

We've seen the South African films—not bad at all. *Some* shots were awful, but John took some beauties. It was really a thrill.

Triumph—John bought two rolls of film from Kodak's in Bombay.

The boys are on multiplication and long division!

FEBRUARY 15TH, 1951

(John)

Badly shaken—Smallpox on the temple steps—An Indian village—The dead city—Ellora caves—The mood of the people—All-India Radio—Red tape—New endeavours on the farms—The population problem—Fear for the future—John drops a brick—Hindu films—Hindu tolerance—Joseph's religion

I'm shaken; badly shaken. If I had to sum up my feelings about India at the moment, and even I know that three weeks doesn't mean a thing, it would be this: "I'm less appalled by the way in which so many millions live than by what seems to be the evidence of how much we didn't do when we were in control." You see, I'm empty of original thought, full of platitudes, and lost, in the sense of being overwhelmed. It isn't so much that I don't understand half—a quarter—of what I see and hear; it's the dismal feeling that I shall probably never really understand it. Perhaps that's why I get angry about British responsibility for conditions; and then have good cause to wonder whether we were truly responsible, or whether the task wasn't simply too big for us.

Travelling by train through some of the desolate, arid heart of the country, seeing rivers flowing full but irrigation covering too little of the nearby country, how *can* I help criticizing? I'm told that irrigation has been handled well in other parts of India, but there's an awful lot of places where practically nothing has been done.

When I talk to Europeans, some Parsees, some leading Indians (Hindus) I'm assured that the British did a great deal. Hospitals have brought rescue from some of the deadly diseases—many but not all of the hospitals were started by missionaries, of course—and I'm assured that trying to solve the problem of feeding and bringing some degree of social welfare and elementary hygiene is like punching at a pillow. The swarming millions, filled with stoical prejudice against new customs, oppose, oppose and oppose. I'm told that if we'd never been here, things would be very much worse than they are, and that's easy to believe.

It's the old question, I suppose—whether one should assess on a basis of what has been achieved or on what hasn't been.

Here's the kind of thing the defenders of British rule will quote as an example. It sprang from the simple reporting of an incident when we visited a Sikh temple in Delhi. Women with their children swarmed round us, many with babes in arms, many obviously half-starved and ill. Our Hindu woman guide drew Jean aside.

"Have your children been vaccinated against smallpox?"

"Against everything!"

"I'm so glad. You see that child there. She has smallpox."

There was the child, in the open, with other children playing round her. Our guide was a most charming and cultured woman, strongly pro-Congress, I gathered, and once an opponent less of Great Britain than of British rule in India (but who showed no sign of rancour). She said something like this:

"It is so difficult. The epidemics begin because people will not report such illnesses. Often, if the first child taken ill had been seen by a doctor, thousands would have been saved. But no. With many families, the doctor is suspect, and would send the child to hospital. The offer of free treatment makes no difference. The child with smallpox will be kept indoors, yes, but others in the family will wander in the streets, playing with other children, the parents will go about their daily work. So the plague spreads. It is hard to make them understand what is good for them."

"You see?" say Great Britain's defenders, hearing this.

"Some are learning, some will send for a doctor," the guide said. "But there is much prejudice, reluctance to change, refusal even to try to improve hygiene and living conditions."

I don't know. Masses of the people appear to live in conditions which make them utterly indifferent to life. They exist, they will die. How could such people be anything but fatalists? Without the reincarnation creed of the Hindu religion they would have no hope. The trouble is, their faith makes them indifferent to how they live today and—it seems—encourages resistance to any measures to improve it. Yet it didn't discourage determination to rule themselves!

I'm not convinced about hygiene. If the people were as immovable as some make out, how can one explain the sight of women washing on the banks of the rivers, beating the clothes with stones? How can one explain the man—one of many—who walked to a tap through the ankle-deep dust and dirt of a village, squatted down and began to bath. Finished, he slipped a clean dhoti on and pulled the wet and dirty one away, and then walked off—through the dust and the dirt.

"They're always washing," one of the officers on the *Karanja* told me. "I've seen droves of displaced persons in one of the unspeakable camps, queuing up for the one or two taps which serves thousands of people. But conditions won't let them keep clean."

We were being driven (at wild speed!) from Delhi to Agra, and stopped at a village to take a picture of a camel, goats, chickens, hogs, children and dogs with their ribs poking out against the skin.¹ We took the picture, and then saw a dead donkey and the vultures

¹ We took a train for our Indian tour, leaving Humpy in Bombay.

pecking at its flesh and the hogs sneaking in when they could. The bones would be cleaned, I was assured, before sundown.

In this village, the women were drawing water at the well with brass pitchers burnished so brightly that they shone in the morning sun; no laziness, there. They walked away, slowly and gracefully, with the heavy pitchers on their heads, apparently oblivious of curious passers-by.

Not far away was the "dead city" of Fatephur Sikri; dead and un-lived in for three hundred years—abandoned by its founder, the Emperor Akbar, because of lack of water. (Short-sightedness over water isn't a modern prerogative, you see!) High on a hill, commanding views over the flat land beyond, three hundred years ago it was a thriving town with its marble and red sandstone palaces and great courtyards and the carving which one finds everywhere—beautiful craftsmanship by patient men who were satisfied only with the best. Labour was no problem then. In the great deserted courtyards the carved pagoda-like stones on the walls stood against a sky so blue that it had to be seen to be believed.

There was the courtroom, where Emperor Akbar sat with his advisers, and where the meanest of his subjects could come and lay complaints against their neighbour. Close at hand was the great iron stake in the ground, where an elephant was always tied; if a crime merited death, at a wave of Akbar's hand the man was thrown to the ground and the elephant stamped him to death. The past seems to be buried in the dusty soil.

Walking round the fantastic caves at Ellora, some carved out of solid rock, looking at the huge figures of Buddha lit now by spot-lights, murals and mosaic work done by craftsmen centuries ago, the feeling of a living past grew stronger.

"Many thousands must have lived here to build these," said the guide, "but there is no trace of the people—no trace at all."

I was prepared to be disappointed by the Taj Mahal but a single glance at its white majesty silenced me.

It's easy to picture the Mogul hordes sweeping over the dry, flat land around the Taj; easy to imagine the natives fleeing in terror—or submitting. Or *submitting*. How could life under one ruler be worse than under another? How could it be *today*? I can well believe that these patient, hungry, tired country-folk would readily believe a change could only be for the better. Then I remember that these, or people with the same fatalistic acceptance of their dreary life, know the horror of great plagues, great famines and the blood-letting of religious wars. Do they resist the disasters or just let themselves be immersed?

I looked for evidence of hostility towards the English and found

some political antagonism. Joseph (our bearer) told me that people in the villages were saying that they wish the British Raj were back, things were better before. But in the cinemas, if an Indian film is shown and the Union Jack is brought down by a bullet or an agile boy, the burst of cheering raises the roof. Yes, yes, in the towns, Joseph says, not in the country.

How are they handling the problems now that they are masters of their own future? I think they're finding it more difficult than they expected. Red tape has a stranglehold. So many junior officials are fussy and self-important—for instance, they gave me much more trouble with the car than they need; a senior smoothed it at once.

But they're coping.

Moreover, they have started a system of giving technical aid to the villages and small farms, sending experts to train farmers in new methods without increasing costs. Old canals are being dug out, wells sunk, local irrigation is being started. Why on earth this wasn't done fifty, a hundred years ago, I don't know. Today, with *American technical help*, a brave attempt is being made in 16,000 villages, or country districts. Don't let anyone tell you that we did try; this is something new.

There are other pointers. The All-India Radio struck me as being extremely well-managed (better than most) and has very good studios. Capable men are doing a first-class job. But the size of the problem is frightening. I doubt if a combined Washington and London administration with the best men from each could cope here if they had to manage on India's present (as apart from potential) resources alone. Yet man-power, key to most economic problems, is plentiful; prodigal; wasteful beyond words. Twenty million Indians, now alive, will die before they are twenty-one years old. Millions die in childbirth. Starvation and famine kill off millions more. Perhaps birth control *is* the only answer—less people to share the same amount of food.

That's our problem at home, too!

I find myself admiring more and more what the Indian leaders have done and are doing, and watching the terrific fight that a few brilliant men are putting up against mass ignorance.

At the same time, I have a nagging fear about the future. Nehru is a moderate; but Congress may not be the power in the land for ever—some say its days are numbered. I find myself wondering what will happen if an extremist (nationalist) government ever rules India.

In South Africa and all up the East African coast, the Indian colonies are big and wealthy, and have in some cases a measure of financial control. In South Africa especially, Manilal Gandhi

(Gandhi's son) is leading a movement which, to say the least, adds to South Africa's troubles. The Indian Government often takes the lead, in U.N.O., in criticizing Dr Malan—although there's little doubt that the Indian colonies get privileges and advantages which many would not get in India; generally they live better.

Anyone who reads knows of the strong Indian colonies in Malaya, Indonesia—in fact, all of the Far East. One day India may, when (if) economically sound and nationalistic in outlook, take more definite steps to “protect” those Indian minorities. There are all the makings of a Sudetenland on a vast scale throughout the East, where European (Western) influence is waning.

Today, sitting on the fence between the West and Russia, there is a possibility, even if remote, that India might go as China went. Then these big colonies, already agitating in many places, would really become a vital factor. With India—as with China and Russia—the Oriental mind, differences of moral and ethical standards, and that sense of timelessness or of the unimportance of time, would make negotiation difficult. Sometimes I wonder if the West's greatest fault isn't its sense of urgency. I am sure that a most—the most—important thing is to find a really compelling common purpose with that part of the East not yet under Communist control.

Everything is absorbing.

I went to talk to a literary group and dropped a brick by pointing out the great efforts that the Afrikaner is making to build a new culture and suggesting that India was a parallel. Of course, it was damned silly and although that's what I said it wasn't what I intended to convey. The chairman, very gently, took me to task; Indian culture goes back 3,000 years; some even further. One senses that; but culture and even civilizations aren't necessarily bedfellows of social progress. I'd been trying to point out—no, remark on, they knew!—that a new culture could come with the attempt to create *one* Indian language (Hindi) common to all the peoples of India and used bilingually with the native languages. At present there are dozens—hundreds—of languages. They will never be replaced by Hindi, but if everyone could speak Hindi, one of India's greatest problems would be solved.

I saw several films in Hindi; technically some way behind the West, there was a great deal of good stuff in them and—the oft-forgotten but primary purpose of a film—they entertained the audience. Films may well spread a desire to learn a national language; the influence of films on less-educated peoples—some Indians, African natives and obvious others—is much, much greater than it is on the semi-educated West.

The Bombay Rotary Club opened my eyes again. There were

some Europeans but the majority was Indian. I'd been asked to talk on the English political scene. The intentness of every man wasn't a reflection of my talking but of an absorbed interest in the subject.

The differences in religion, especially between the Moslem and Hindu, fascinated us, and we didn't know which Joseph was.

Had we lived in Pakistan, we probably would have known; it seemed long odds against a Hindu living there. In Karachi, we'd seen empty dwelling-places, deserted Hindu temples, all with an air of lifelessness. When partition came—and in the grim days just before it—the Hindus had been driven out, often at the point of the sword. Many left their bodies in what is now Pakistan. I'm told that while the Hindus breathed most fire, the Mahommedans said little but used the sword more freely. Whatever it was, I saw no signs of a Hindu population in Pakistan. In India, though, there are thriving Moslem colonies, tolerated if not welcomed.

So Joseph might have been either.

I asked him which. He'd never looked at me reproachfully before, and he answered in a low-pitched, almost sorrowful voice:

"Me, sir? I'm not Hindu. I'm not Moslem. Me, sir, I'm *Christian*."

Then he told me this story: At the time of the "troubles" he was bearer to a white man in Calcutta, who wanted to get away. There had been rioting, killing, pillaging. Joseph went outside cautiously, to see if the road were clear. Lying in the gutter was a Hindu; lying a few feet away was the Hindu's head. The blood was fresh.

Joseph turned back, but couldn't escape two Mahommedans who ranged themselves by his side. Both held knives; one blade was wet with fresh blood.

"You are Hindu," one man said.

"No," said Joseph. "No."

"You are not one of us."

"No," admitted Joseph, "I am not."

"Then you lie!"

"No," said Joseph; and he told me that he did not know how he managed to speak calmly. "No, I am not Hindu, I am Christian."

They stalked away.

I'd always believed that apart from the leaning towards violence, inherited from the Prophet, the Mahommedans were nearer Christian than the Hindus. I doubt that now. I'd always regarded the Hindus as idol-worshippers, God forgive me for my ignorance. One of them explained, as I might explain a simple thing to a child, that they believe in one God who shows himself in many ways and many guises.

"You worship God, through Christ," one Hindu told me. "We worship God, through the sacred symbols."

They really worship, too; religion is part of daily life.

One can, and many do, attack the Brahmins or the High Priests scathingly for building up the vicious caste system, trying to maintain it, often making a fortune out of it. Is the history of Christianity so much cleaner? Have none of the priests of Christ failed both God and the people, betrayed and tricked and cheated them?

If you hear the story of Buddha, too, from a Buddhist who will take the trouble to talk and explain to a poor, simple Christian, you will learn of his disciples and the way they followed him.

FEBRUARY 12TH, 1951¹

(Jean)

"I hate and love it"—To Agra with a madman—The Taj Mahal—The first day of spring—A journey by train—A weird sight at Jalgoan Station—Delhi, New and Old—Gandhi—Shoes on and off—Funeral pyres—A modern temple—They pray for a son

I hate it and I love it. I hate the dirt and the dust, which gets into the train, the car, everywhere; but every now and then something so breathtaking appears that I just can't speak. We're back in Bombay, after ten days, mostly in trains or in Delhi.

Perhaps I'd better start with the most fantastic day.

We got up very early one morning and were driven to Agra from Delhi. We had the most remarkable Frenchwoman for a guide, so charming—but not so *chic*. I'll call her Lucille! The car was a very old, rattling Ford shooting-brake. The young Sikh driver was a madman. I've never been more terrified (even next to John!). The dust choked us all. It was a three-hour journey, and half-way there I wished I'd never set out. Then we saw the Taj Mahal.

Oh, it—it's superb. So white and beautiful. When I drew nearer, the semi-precious and precious stones showed up, lapis lazuli, rubies, amethysts, emeralds—I can't name them all—inlaid in tiny pieces to make perfect patterns. I'd been told that it took twenty thousand men twenty years to build, and that seemed silly—it doesn't now.

¹ *Itinerary*: Bombay to Delhi by train, Delhi to Agra (the Taj) by car—Delhi to Gwalior (about middle of India) by train—Gwalior to Jalgoan (taxi) to Aurangabad in Hyderabad State, then by train to Bombay over the barren Western Ghats—say 3,000 miles.

And to think it's a tomb! She, the Emperor Shah Jahan's wife I mean must have been lovely. It's silly, I know, but I hadn't expected so many Indian sightseers; just like Hampton Court at home, whole families with fractious children, and I'm sure with aching feet, walked about, and everyone felt the beauty of the Taj.

Even on those filthy roads there were beautiful things. It was a Sunday, the first day of spring. All the children and the women wore primrose yellow—saris, coats, scarves, everything. Most of the men wore something yellow, too. Carts drawn by teams of oxen were crowded with ten or fifteen people although there was room only for five or six. All were brightly dressed, going to or coming from some village ceremony. How we missed crashing into one or two of them, I don't know. The pace got fiercer, until John bellowed "Stop!" and when we'd stopped, just said to the driver:

"If you go over forty again, I'm going to drive." The Sikh, only a boy, was much better after that.

Our train from Bombay to Delhi was air-conditioned, very comfortable and nearly dust-proof, but the rest of the journey—it was awful. Dust *poured* in. At every station a boy with a dustpan and brush would jump in and start sweeping it away, filling the compartment with clouds of dust. I soon stopped that.

As we pulled into the stations, tiny, ragged boys would scramble up at the windows from the track, begging. They'd squeeze between two trains, and climb underneath the carriage—they were everywhere. If a turbanned porter drove them away, they came back as soon as he'd gone. On the platforms, men pushed little carts, piled high with fruit and spicy Indian foods; others carried brass water-bottles and walked along filling cups which were being held out of the windows. All kinds of curios were offered, toys for the children, cheap bangles and bracelets, models of the Taj Mahal, fans made of peacock feathers—oh, I can't tell you. Everything was so cheap, a welcome change. At one station, Joseph bought a toy each for the boys and a little model of the Taj for me.

There was always a tray of that beastly betel-nut stuff. Mangy dogs that looked like skeletons, chickens, goats, everything you would find in a village, were crowded on the platforms. We went along to the dining-car one evening, the food wasn't *too* bad—I can't get used to seeing the Indians dipping into little bowls with their fingers—and a man opposite would eat a little, then pop a piece of betel-nut wrapped into a bay-leaf into his mouth, and chew *that*. He took the bay-leaf out of his pocket with a lot of dirty odds and ends.

Joseph looked after the boys while we went to our evening meals. He was in the servants' carriage, just behind—with his sleeping-bag

on a wooden bench, and a sweater which John bought him for the journey because it's colder in Delhi than Bombay. The other carriages were crammed.

At every stop, Joseph would turn up, beaming, to see if we wanted anything, haggle if we wanted to buy, or shoo the pedlars away.

I put the boys to bed on the train one night, and there was a line of dust all round their heads and shoulders within a few minutes. It just streamed in at the closed windows. I was sure they wouldn't get to sleep, but in ten minutes, they were dead to the world.

We had to hire our bedding from Cook's, and it was all spick and span—for the first night. One just couldn't keep anything clean. Every night, Joseph came to make up the beds, and every morning, to fold them up and tuck them into their hold-alls. There was a small folding-leaf table in each carriage, and John squatted there at work on a manuscript and I actually did some tapestry.

I think one of the weirdest sights was at a place called Jalgaon. We spent a night there—we were going on to Benares, which everyone says is a tremendous experience, but I just couldn't face another two days on top of the ten we were doing. So John had a lot of trouble, in Delhi, rerouting us. He managed it, although Cook's there were closed for a religious holiday. We had to catch an early train, and when we reached the station, *hundreds* of people were sleeping on the dusty ground of the station approaches. They looked like bundles of old rags, with a head showing here and there. As dawn came, they began to wake up. There was such a coughing and spitting and stretching and scratching; the place seemed to come alive, slowly, and a dirge of that beastly sound greeted the sun.

On the platform, a porter began to sweep the dust and litter—carefully sweeping *round* the people who still lay asleep.

The new Government buildings and the wide roads at Delhi were a different world from the crowded, narrow, smelly streets of Old Delhi. I don't think I'll ever forget the night journey back from Agra to Delhi, through villages where tiny lamps glowed at houses, shops and on the traps and carts of the pedlars showing their dark faces in the yellow light.

We had an introduction to Mr Singh, of the Cement Company in Delhi, and he proved to be a young, *very* handsome Sikh. He put his car and chauffeur at our disposal for a day, and seemed really upset that he couldn't drive us himself. We visited old tombs, the ruins of an old fort, where the boys loved climbing about and shouting to the monkeys in the road below, and Kutub Minar—a huge

tower, sixty feet at the base and nine at the top, has five stories and 386 steps; we did *not* walk up, just craned our necks.

In the afternoon our guides were two young Indian students, who really rushed us around—and every second was worth it.

There was the Rajghat, where the body of Gandhi was cremated, just a cement square surrounded now by neat lawns, so simple and impressive. As at all holy places, we had to take our shoes off to go in.

Then the seventeenth-century Jumma Mastid, the biggest mosque in India; the steps were crowded with men just sitting, old men, hungry—some of them dying. Some were wrapped in bundles of rags, and looked dead. Some *were* dead.

The narrow streets nearby were absolutely jammed with people, but no one took any special notice of us, except the children, begging.

At the top of the steps we had to take our shoes off.

“What, *again?*” protested Scoopy.

Richard sat down and took his off, resignedly. There are always attendants to look after the shoes, and in most places a kind of slipper one can put on if one can find the right size.

The boys were able to move around a little on their own in the Fort at Delhi, Scoopy carrying a four-engined plastic aeroplane and Richard a little Dinky toy. Sometimes I’ve wondered if they’ve been bored, but I don’t really think so. They’re beginning to take in a little what the guides say, and they’re full of questions. I think Scoopy remembers a great deal—and he notices everything. Richard’s chief interest is to get into every photograph we take.

I’d learnt about the burning ghats at school, but didn’t dream I would ever see the wooden fires burning the bodies on the long cement slabs like they were at the Nigabodh Ghats. Just outside, men were sawing and chopping logs for the funeral pyres—like gravediggers. Several hogs were running about and John tried to take a photograph of a white bird on the back of one—like the tick-birds in South Africa—but Richard rushed to get into the picture and frightened both bird and hog away.

People, mostly refugees, *live* round the wooden walls and the gates of the place, where the air is filled with a sweet kind of burning smell. I was glad to leave; but glad I’d been.

We visited a Sikh temple—did you know Sikhs never cut their hair because the founder of their religion warned them always to be ready for battle; and that they tie their astounding turbans themselves? They’re mostly big, handsome men. Grave and courteous, too—and someone said as fierce as they sometimes look. The temple was downstairs, flowers were strewn about everywhere, whole fami-

lies seemed to be having a kind of picnic. Strangely, perhaps, I was most impressed by something new, not old—the Birla Mandir Modern Hindu Temple, as different from the old buildings here as our modern buildings are from the Tudor. There are carvings of elephants, animals of all kinds; pink and white walls and fantastic inlaid pictures—the story of Krishna and the psalms, so to speak, of the Hindu religion.

The boys stayed in the car; they positively refused to take off their shoes again.

I *wish* you could see the Mogul Gardens, near the Government buildings. The flowers were beautiful beyond all words. There were acres of them, and watching little old gardeners squatting at their work made me forget the dirt and the dust just a little way off.

On the way back to Bombay we stayed at a State Rest House at Gwalior, a huge building with great high rooms, mosquito nets over the beds, and an air of decay. We went out in a *tonga* (horse and trap) to see the Maharajah's Palace. This was a huge, white building, built round a courtyard, and inside there was a miniature electric railway running round the long horseshoe-shaped dining-table, where in the old days, brandy and wines used to be driven along to the guests. The boys longed to see it running.

There were great chandeliers, with over a *thousand* lamps in each, in the great ballroom.

Back in Bombay, longing for a bath, we found the hotel half-built, and the bathroom half-finished, with just a tap and a bucket. There were the boys to bath, and all the clothes to wash because there wasn't time to send them away. I could have cried. Instead, I suppose I just shouted at John! But Mr Willis came round to see if he could help, the Bergers sent their car for us, our last evening in India was quiet and delightful.

I forgot one of the most touching things. In the wrought-iron grille window of a magnificent marble tomb there were thousands and thousands of little pieces of thread, tied on. Pregnant women come and tie the thread as they pray for a son.

V

Australia

MARCH 11TH, 1951

(John)

Leg-irons, whips and a cold-blooded murder—Blackboys—Western Australia and pride in Perth—The lions' den—American v. English cars—The Nullarbor Plain at 107° in the shade—Gold in that thar smoke!—Aborigines and civilization—Adelaide—Don Bradman—Water, water

It's nearly four weeks and something over 8,000 miles since I last wrote; and in its way, 2,000 years or so. There is nothing old here in Australia whereas everything seemed old in India. There don't appear to be any slums, either. I did look down into the pit of the gallows at the old prison at Fremantle, and saw the leg-irons and whips which were used not so long ago on the wicked who stole sheep. I also had a chat with a woman who is serving a life sentence for a pretty cold-blooded murder. And I was told that the bugs in the old prison are the biggest in Australia!

Nothing old in Australia? Well, there are the blackboys, trees with their thick black trunks having a tall stick and a few spiky leaves sprouting out at the top; they grow an inch every twenty-five years. I stood by the side of one taller than I, which makes it about 1,800 years old; and was told by our cheery host (this was near Perth, Western Australia) that the tallest known specimen way down near the forests in the south-western tip of the state, was over 3,000 years old; a party of campers cut it down for firewood.

Listening to that story, I remembered standing in the Fort at Agra, and looking into a tiny mirror set into the wall of the Shah Jahan's palace. In the mirror one could see a tiny reflection of the Taj Mahal which was several miles away across the plain. Someone had cracked the mirror.

We were with a little Frenchwoman and surrounded by a dozen or so Hindus, old and young. The Frenchwoman saw the cracks, went pale, spluttered in French, and then stormed in English.

"You wicked, ungrateful idiots, you vandals, you ignorant, worthless, uncivilized brutes, look at what you've done! You ought to be sent to prison. I could smack your faces, every one of you!"

We were the only Europeans present, but several Hindus knew

what it was all about. I had an uncomfortable moment before there came an uneasy shuffling of feet, many hangdog looks, an apologetic Sikh—and we had the damaged mirror to ourselves.

You see how often and how easily my mind slips back to India. One day at Colombo did little to obscure the Indian picture, although it's fading after ten days at Perth, the trip across the Nullarbor Plain and a few days in Adelaide.

No one has talked politics or social problems with me yet! I fancy that most Western Australians have an amused glint in their eyes when they talk of the rest of Australia. Several have pointed out that this state covers a third of the continent, but that no one has really started to develop it. There is great pride in Perth, with its lovely setting on the Swan River; much friendliness and a police force which, I'm assured, has very little serious crime to worry about.

"If someone does commit a crime, where's he going to for safety?" asked one of the C.I.B. (Criminal Investigation Branch, not Department.)

"How do you mean? I asked.

"Well, he hasn't a chance of getting away. There's the sea on two sides, the desert on a third and nothing much to the north. So we don't get many imported criminals from Melbourne and Sydney, where they know all about crime."

But on the great day of the annual police picnic, a woman had been found mauled to death in the lion's den at the Zoo. Murder? Suicide? No one knew then.

Reflections on Perth: friendly people, mutton chops, the largest, most luscious, perfectly cooked mutton—no, *lamb*—chops I've ever tucked into. American cars and my fierce argument with host Dick Simonssen because I'd said that English cars were better.

"It just isn't true," said Dick. "We wish it were. Why, one of your biggest car manufacturers came out here a few years ago to study the needs of the market—we've plenty of rough roads—and went back promising us just the medium-sized car we needed. The groans that went up when it came! It just wouldn't stand up to work in the country. So what happened? An American company sent out a live man who studied the ground, the company built a factory with American finance, and now we have the Holden, a medium-sized car that does everything we need and has plenty of leg- and body-room. So Australia's first home-built car is really an American—it could have been English."

"But will the Holdens last?" I inquired hopefully.

"Where did you get this crazy idea that American cars don't last?" demanded Dick. "Look at that—and that—and that!"

"I hadn't seen so many old cars on any roads in my life. One in three seemed fifteen years old or more, and I rode in a 1926 model.)

Dick pointed to three veterans.

"All American, all at least twenty years old," he said. "We wish English cars were better, but take it from me, most of us would buy an American car if it weren't for the dollar shortage and import restrictions. English cars are all right for the cities and short runs, but for a country where a hundred miles' drive out to tea isn't unusual, they just don't stand up."

There are times when even I know I ought to keep my mouth shut! But I didn't.

"I've a Humber Super Snipe——" I began.

"Oh, they're all right," conceded Dick, "but look at the price. Nearly twice that of an American car of the same size. They're old-fashioned in body design, too—why, there's nearly as much room in my Holden as there is in your Snipe!" (There was.) "They eat up petrol, and they're a bit too low on the ground."

I had to confess that I'd found that true in South Africa, and that I'd had the exhaust pipe lifted.

"It makes me mad," said Dick.

He wasn't very mad. In fact he told me I'd been wise to have the car sent on to Adelaide and not to drive across the Nullarbor Plain. The Nullarbor, I was told, was about 2,000 miles of nothing, beginning more or less at Boulder City where they first struck gold, and ending not far from Adelaide. In places the road surface was pretty bad, Dick said, although not too bad. Water-supply is a great difficulty, petrol another.

A lot of cars cross the Nullarbor, and Dick admitted that some of the little English cars get across without trouble. It's been done in a Baby Austin.

The transcontinental train journey was hot from the start; Jean was bowled over. It was difficult to take real interest in the big pipe, which ran along the track most of the way, and carried water to Boulder City from a pumping-station near Perth. The story goes that the engineer who conceived the pipe-line prophesied the exact time when the water would appear. It didn't. He killed himself. An hour later, the water gushed out.¹

We were late at Boulder City, where we had to change trains because of the different gauges. Three Rotarians—warned by Dick.—met us when it was a hundred and five in the shade and the Lord knows what in the sun. Nearly all of that city is in the sun. Still, Jean was game, we were whipped round in less than an hour,

¹ I was also told he committed suicide years later!

shown the spot where gold was first found, taken along the Golden Mile, told that the dust and slag-heaps now are being treated to get the gold out, and—believe it or not—that there is gold even in the smoke from the furnace chimneys.

Back in the train Jean's headache was worse. The sweat oozed out of us, even the boys flagged.

It wouldn't be honest to say that the train was a luxury model, although everything essential was there; including showers. The queues for those showers! It was the only way to imagine one was cool even for a few minutes.

At the wayside stops, none more than a collection of small houses, stepping out of the train was just like stepping into a furnace. One just hugged the train for the little shade it gave. The few aborigines who came up to offer their pitiful little carved kangaroos and boomerangs, looked as if the heat had dried their blood up. They were filthy and verminous, and one old man who threw a spear for me—I had difficulty in making him understand what I wanted—seemed hardly to have the strength to hurl it.

Apparently most of the hale and hearty aborigines were away; a British film company was making a film and needed extras. Civilization marches on.

I was told that the natives from this district are in a bad way, and to see aborigines at their best one needs to go into Northern Territories and Northern Queensland.

Nothing "old" in Australia? I'm reminded that the aborigines come from the oldest known human stock.

It was never cool on the train; even the air-conditioned dining and lounge cars quickly became hot and stuffy. Windows had to be closed, to keep out the dust-laden, oven-hot air. It did get more bearable towards night.

I stayed in Adelaide on arrival, to look after the big luggage; Jean and the boys went on to our hotel at Largs Bay. I arrived a couple of hours after Jean, who had almost collapsed. Most of the luggage she had brought was still at the foot of the stairs. The two cases she'd needed for use she had carried up herself.

There was little indication of labour shortage in Perth; there's plenty in Adelaide. It seems to affect practically everything one does or wants to do. Doubtless it does me good to have to put the air into Humpy's tyres (he's arrived safely) and a few other odds and ends. South Africa spoiled me, there one did nothing for oneself. I've learned to be prudent, too; few garages here are open even for the sale of petrol on Saturday afternoons and Sundays.

There were a lot of rough edges, but it's surprising how many of them soon smoothed out. The manager who wouldn't help Jean

with her cases, for instance, gave her a huge bunch of grapes, just out of good fellowship. He couldn't get general help but managed to keep his bars staffed, and the rush for beer outside and inside that hotel, between five and six o'clock, was—well, stampede's the word. It's general everywhere, because the pubs close at six, and thereafter, South Australia is dry; to drink is illegal unless one has the foresight to have a few bottles in one's hotel bedroom or one's home. New South Wales and Victoria are the same; the other states have later hours.

Adelaide is well laid out, with a green belt enclosing it. It was hot if not unbearable; but everywhere the grass was scorched. In a nearby forest fire, not long ago, three policemen were burned to death; they ran in front of the flames instead of through them. It must take a hell of a lot of courage to run into a fire.

If I had to commit myself to the most memorable experiences here so far, it would be meeting two different people; and how different!

For one, Don Bradman. I geyed him a little when talking to his Rotary club (Adelaide); the club seemed to enjoy it; had he? He made a point of staying behind, had obviously been amused, chatted amiably—and shook me by saying that he wasn't too sure how *I'd* feel about talking to him, he'd only written a couple of books! The hardest thing was to realize that this modest, unassuming man was the world's master batsman for so long.

The other man I must talk about is Bob Paton, the editor of *Radio Call*.

I'd better lead in with a brief discourse on Commercial Broadcasting. It's my first real experience of it, and it works very differently from the refinement and decorum of the B.B.C.

To cater for the listening public thoroughly—and believe me, they're well looked after—surveys (a kind of Gallup poll) are made almost passionately to find what is most popular. There are also the radio magazines. Each state has its own. Adelaide's is the *Radio Call* and Bob Paton is the editor.

I thought I knew everything about editors. This man is the most tearaway human dynamo I've yet met. How he talks and how he works—and how he knows what he wants. We had a terrific session or so. To hear and look at him, you would imagine him the toughest, hardest-hearted and most ruthless individual fathered by Australia. Almost by accident I discovered that he was to get up about six, on Sunday morning, to work all day for a big charity effort.

It hasn't been so easy to get adjusted as it was in South Africa, and there isn't quite the same element of the picturesque. The most lasting impression, so far, is that there's a tremendous lot of Aus-

tralia, glowing prospects, and the cry everywhere is the old familiar: water, water; if only we had more water—and manpower, too.

Ever think of a tap as a thing of beauty?

MARCH 24TH, 1951

(Jean)

*Heat—The “Strathnaver” and lumbago—Colombo for a day—
Trots—Well-dressed women of Perth—Hotels—Koala bears and
a Scottish snake-charmer*

Oh, it's so hot. Baking hot. I didn't realize that it could be like this in Australia. I've *never* felt so dreadful with the heat, not even at Skukusa in the Kruger National Park. The train journey from Perth to Adelaide was really one long ride in an oven. John *worked*. It made me feel ill even to listen to the typewriter. He kept grumbling because he couldn't get a steady table. Now I'm sitting up in bed, with sinus trouble again, and I must get better because, we're due to leave Adelaide tomorrow.

It was hotter than we've known it on the *Strathnaver*, coming from India to Perth, but I do enjoy shipboard life. Usually John does, too, but he didn't this time. We'd met But Payne (he was on the *Karanja*) and his fiancée, and started to play deck tennis. Suddenly John bent double. Lumbago!—and no osteopath to put it right. He wouldn't sit and do nothing, so he stuffed cushions behind him down in the cabin where the heat was stifling, and worked morning, noon and part of the night. Except at lesson times, we hardly saw the boys. Shipboard's the life for harrassed parents.

We went ashore at Colombo, Ceylon. John hoped to hire a car and go seventy miles to Kandy and see the elephants in the fields, but there wasn't time, so we had a motor-coach ride instead. Everywhere seemed much cleaner than India, and the people seemed happy. We stopped at a Buddhist temple where there were huge statues of Buddha—twelve feet high at least, quite modern, painted in bright colours. The strangest things were the pictures of Buddha talking to his disciples. I'd never thought there was anything remotely like Christianity in Buddhism—had you?

On the second Sunday aboard, the boys protested for the first time at having “Sunday school”. We usually read a little from a children's Bible, John talks solemnly, and we all sing the only hymn we can all remember right through—“All Things Bright and Beauti-

ful"—and the boys can nearly recite the Lord's Prayer. We've kept it up even in the car. Richard's more interested than old Scoop, who's always drawing.

"A lot of people didn't think writing was going to be any good for me," John says whenever I argue about encouraging art.

At Fremantle, the port for Perth, the customs were the most trying we've had. They opened nearly all of our twenty-three cases. The women were very nicely dressed in Perth, all in light cotton frocks, of course, and my dear—the hats! I've never seen so many hat-shops, or shops where you can buy everything you need for home millinery.

The Rotary Club produced Grace and Dick Simonssen, who were dears and promptly introduced us to the beach—with their son and daughter. The boys were thrilled by the big rollers, the surfing and the bronzed life-guards. It wasn't midsummer, but was boiling hot.

The Simonssens took us out for a delightful day's drive to the national park at Araluen; it's really beautiful, but apparently at its best with the spring wild flowers. We didn't miss the lovely fluffy kookaburras, birds with a horrid laughing call but the most beautiful things to look at. Grace puts little pieces of meat on the clothes post and they come and feed every evening, but of course when I see them I never have the camera. They've just built a barbecue in their garden, for outside parties—everyone cooks his own meat and sausages over an open fire. It's done a great deal here because they can rely on the weather.

I'd never been to the trotting races—the Trots—before, and Malcolm Uren of the *Broadcaster* and his wife took us. The sight of the horses racing round with the little metal carts (sulkies) beneath the floodlights was fascinating, and quite thrilling. The races take so much longer than ordinary racing; it's much more of a spectacle.

Life *is* queer. I've wanted a family studio portrait for years—and didn't get it until we met the Burnells (Rotary again) of Unley, near Adelaide. They've taken a beauty. It's so easy to take hospitality for granted and I hate doing that. The Burnells go to tremendous trouble to help us; like so many people.

Adelaide is different in many ways from anywhere else we've been. Service in the hotels is pretty poor; they make the beds and provide meals, but that's all. Still, we've been better off out here at Largs Bay than in the city itself, where the temperature has been over 90° in the shade for weeks on end, and often over 100°. It doesn't make any difference to John, but I *hate* the heat, especially with this miserable sinus trouble. My legs ache so, too. Still, it's beautiful in the evenings, walking along the silvery sand. The sight of all four of us paddling must be quite something!

The koala bears certainly are; they're the most cuddly, sweet, drowsy little things you've ever seen—but very scarce (like kangaroos, we've only seen those in zoos). But there's a farm for them in Adelaide. Along we went, admired, then called for an ice-cream, and were approached by the owner, who came up in a wheeled chair and asked John if they'd met before. It transpired that he'd seen a photograph . . . and within minutes we were asked to his home, for tea.

Here was a man so handicapped that many would have given up, and he was bounding with ideas. Working with him was the loveliest little Scots girl—snake-charming! She actually lets huge snakes twine themselves round her when she's wearing only a swimsuit; and she swims in the water with them.

"I suppose you've been well-trained," I suggested.

"Oh, no," she said. "I'd never seen a snake before I came out here a few months ago."

Wonderful, isn't it?

MAY IITH, 1951

(John)

No politics—Immigration problems—Housing shortages—Strikes—Contrasts in service—An Australian's theory—World-beaters—Sydney and Melbourne rivalry—Is my leg being pulled?—Vast distances—Gum trees and forest fires—Fans in Adelaide—Truth and fiction—A bad man and a "world-famous" criminologist—Friendly police—The place of sport—"Home"

I could easily attempt a long, detailed, "searching" analysis of the Australian political and social situation, bespattered as usual with odd factual items on which I generalize from the particular, and guaranteed to give a laugh. But I won't!

Looked at quickly and from England, it would be easy to think that South African problems were much more involved than those here, and that I would hesitate to take any plunge into South Africa's but jump cheerfully into these less troubled waters. I don't think I'd like to jump. There are problems. Not the least, here in Sydney there are frequent blackouts when offices and, I'm told, factories can do nothing because there isn't any electricity. Politicians attack (a) the present Government and (b) the past Government, the one for not making the best of things as they are, the other for not show-

ing far-sightedness in planning for generating stations and power plants and water supplies.

There's just been an election, and Menzies is back with a slightly reduced majority in one sense, but with firmer control in another. He was in office; he is now in power. Socialism is in opposition; I wouldn't like to guess how long it will stay there.

The Government has to face those problems and they don't look to me the kind that can easily be solved. It's a curious situation, and basically the trouble is probably shortage of man-power; although I've heard it said that the man-power's here, the man-hours aren't. A nice distinction, and I seem to have heard it before somewhere. In fact the influx of some 200,000 immigrants from Great Britain and Europe every year adds to man-power but also to consumer demand; there's a time-lag between the arrival of the "New Australians" and their impact on production; it's easy to forget that. These immigrants, essential to the country, need food—some of this comes from the export quota (ours!) and some from normal home consumption, which brings about shortages *and* high prices.

Houses are scarce, and building operatives have a very short week—but many of them work like furies during the week-ends on private jobs. There is periodic trouble with the "wharfies" (dockers); it's front-page news day in and day out.¹ Communist-inspired? That's the popular view, but I can't believe it's the only explanation. The trouble seems to be fairly general but shows up most vividly, if not at its worst, at the docks. Unwillingness to work? Again, there's a lot of evidence that it isn't the one answer. Perhaps one or two personal experiences will show more clearly what I mean.

At garages, in shops and elsewhere, especially in hotels—oh, the country hotels!—I've often been given unwilling, surly and incompetent service in a business deal. But when I need help for which payment isn't involved, the same people will take a lot of time and trouble to help, and do it in the nicest way possible.

Bring morning tea? Hell, no! But they'll give you as much as you like and have a chat if you go down to the kitchen. Pump your tyres up at a garage? There's the airline. But they'll pump up your tyres for you on the road, if you've met trouble.

Newcomers from England undoubtedly find it difficult to get used to. We Pommies aren't popular. But many Englishmen I've met are quite emphatic that after a few years it's the *only* country in the world. The troubles at the immigrant camps about which we hear so much, reflect these difficulties of readjustment. Australia is much, *much* different from the expectations of most immigrants;

¹ Much less in 1952/3, I'm assured.

life is different; certain conditions which we regard as hardships they take for granted.

I was talking to a man (once a crime writer whom I knew in England) who is respected by both political parties. He had a novel explanation of some of the problems.

"We're a Pacific nation, Creasey. Natives everywhere in the Pacific are indolent by our standards—the heat, something in the air, gets into them. Immigrants arrive from home or elsewhere, for a year or two they work with gusto because they're not yet affected by the Pacific climate, then gradually they slow down. I think it's a question whether immigration will be frequent, strong and continuous enough to offset the gradual slackening of effort. We need continual transfusions of new blood. The trouble is that many British immigrants find things different from what they'd hoped, get cocky, talk about things being better in England and are bluntly told they might as well go back, if that's how they feel."

"What about the influx of European immigrants?"

"They're not absorbed yet. We don't know how it will work out. It's a big experiment. A lot of people see it as the beginning of expansion on the lines of the United States."

"Don't you agree?"

"I just don't know," he said.

I'm not sure that he was right in everything. Broken Hill, where fortunes are made out of steel, is one of the most vital places I've ever seen. There's a tremendous pride in the things they've achieved and are achieving.

Many raw materials have been found; we know the value of the rocket ranges and the atom islands. Vast regions haven't yet been prospected. Fortunes still lay buried; much of the wealth of the world is probably waiting to be dug out of dry, barren earth which irrigation can make fruitful. Big new dams are under way, all objects of great local pride—but oh, lor', why weren't these made *years* ago? The water shortage here is almost identical with that of South Africa; water was never accepted as the key to Australia's prosperity until the demand for it became far greater than existing schemes could supply. There are regions where they have enough—Perth, for instance, and Melbourne—but no indications yet that everyone realizes that the first essential for any new project is water. At least, no one seems to say so.

I should think that if water and irrigation had been properly handled fifty years ago, neither South Africa nor Australia would today have a serious problem.

On the whole, wages are good. On the whole, there is a high average standard of living. I saw some slums in Sydney and Mel-

bourne, but very few compared with most large cities elsewhere.

The rivalry between Sydney and Melbourne is so sharp that it's almost funny. It would be easy to take it too seriously, although most of the citizens laugh at it and themselves. Still, Melbourne folk still talk of Sydney's pride in its three claims to fame—the Bridge, the Harbour and the fact that it's easy to get out of! Sydney folk still talk of Melbourne's River Yarra being the only river in the world which floats upside down. The innocent asks what that means, and gets his answer promptly:

“Haven't you seen the mud *on top*?”

A Melbourne man told me that one—and he told it while keeping a straight face. I was almost fooled. The more I see and the more I hear, the more I wonder how often my leg is being pulled (and those of all visitors). A man might say quite solemnly:

“We're the greatest people in the greatest country on God's earth,” and watch you closely. If you take the claim to be meant at its face value, feel a little sick and *show* that you do, you'll get a spate of “how wonderful Australia is”. But if you grin, and say:

“Oh, yes—next to us.” Or “Next to how many other countries?” you'll get a quick grin, and probably have made a friend.

Melbourne has the reputation for having the greatest culture, Sydney for being Australia's greatest industrial centre, but it's not as clear-cut as that.

Rivalry between places is keener because there are no national newspapers—distribution is the trouble, there's a lot of Australia—so the Melbourne papers naturally have a strong Victoria slant, the Sydney papers are much more concerned with New South Wales than with anywhere else in the world. Yet anyone, anywhere, will speak with friendly, almost wistful fondness of Perth and of Brisbane.

“The people are different there,” they say. “There isn't the cut-throat competition that there is in Melbourne and Sydney and even Adelaide.”

Brisbane is hotter, with its sub-tropical climate—bananas and sugar-cane grow freely in Queensland. I'm told that some boats going up Brisbane's river have to stop and clear their condensers of jellyfish several times. I'm also told that people have walked across the river on the backs of millions of huge jellyfish, at the right season of the year. Just a story?

If there's a more beautiful spot in the world than Sydney Harbour, I've yet to see it. If there are worse stretches of main roads than some in New South Wales, I've yet to drive over them. Some are perfect; but recent heavy rains and floods have made a great number pretty bad and there are many stretches of dirt road, every bit as

bad as South Africa's worst. Victoria and South Australia had the best main roads we travelled on.

The gums (eucalyptus) are practically the only indigent trees, and they're in great variety; there are big forests and no apparent shortage of growing timber, although there's plenty of shortage of dry.

One of the most harrowing sights I've ever seen was a forest, after a fire. We drove along the Ocean Drive, looking out on to the Great Australian Bight when in sight of the sea, and for hour after hour saw only blackened trees, some still smouldering. It was appalling. Once they get a hold, there's no stopping the fires. Often we would drive through a kind of ghost forest, with the dead skeletons of trees from past fires on either side. I was incautious enough to say to a man in a café that I was shaken by the evidence of disaster.

"You don't know what you are talking about," he said. "We have to have the fires. It cleans the earth. Nothing else can. That forest you've just driven through will be a wonderful place in twenty years' time."

Even now I'm not *quite* sure whether he was pulling my leg, or really in earnest.

The Toff's already been broadcast a lot here, and some of my other books will be adapted thanks largely to that bright-eyed and cheerful Western Australian now in Melbourne—Ron Haig-Muir—and to Hector Crawford, one of the bigger radio people. They're even going to adapt some of my Wild West yarns! At Melbourne, Crawford and his sister, Ron and several actors in a series of the Inspector West yarns went to have a look round the police headquarters, to get local colour. I haven't been into a better police building anywhere, nor been more amiably greeted. The librarian even wanted my autograph on several books on the shelves; so policemen read the stuff!

One of the most kindly fans I've ever met was at the Adelaide Police Headquarters; he dug out several more for me in the building. I've seldom found real enthusiasm—usually it's a kind of mild cynicism—among police before, and at Sydney I tried to find out why. As usual, the Chief gave a ready "yes" to a request for an interview. We had reporters, there were lots of photographs, and then Superintendent Delaney and I were left alone for a few minutes.

"When I say I'm glad to meet you, I mean it," he said. "I've read a lot of your books."

"Really?"

He grinned. "Didn't you realize people read them?"

"I thought policemen only scoffed at thrillers."

"Now I'll tell you why I like yours," said Delaney. "You don't

make the cops look like fools all the time. You give them a fair deal. You get *some* of the details right, too!"

Then reporters came in and one or two senior Criminal Investigation Branch men. The talk drifted to truth being stranger than fiction. I argued.

"What about the Shark Arm Case?" asked one "A shark was caught for Sydney Zoo. While in the tank, it disgorged a human arm. The police were called in, identified the arm, checked and found that the sailor had last been seen *on land*, checked further, and eventually caught his murderer. I don't care what you say, no fictioneer can beat that."

"Don't be silly," I said.

"All right, beat it."

"Stop at your words *on land*," I said, "and continue something like this: The police got no further with their investigations, but a month later a shark was caught for the Melbourne Zoo, he disgorged the sailor's *other arm*—"

Superintendent Delaney did much more than flatter me and my policemen. He asked me if I would like to meet a really bad man. Of course I said yes, expecting him to be in jail. Oh, no. He was as large as life, living in a small, mean house in a tough district of Sydney. He was known to be a killer; known also to have the nice habit of breaking the top off a beer bottle, when angered, and jabbing it into his victim's face. A few days before, his nephew had been staying at his house. The bad man and his wife and children went to the pictures, leaving the nephew at home. When they came back they found the nephew dead, with bullet wounds in his head.

The nephew had been lying on a couch which the bad man often used.

The bad man's alibi was water-tight, and he had no known motive—but he had a lot of enemies. One theory was that the nephew had been killed in mistake for the B.M. One of the C.I.B. officers took me outside to show me the backyard approach to the window. There was a little narrow alley, leading from a tiny yard, and every square inch of that alley was covered with beer bottles which had the tops knocked off; jagged edges stuck up (evidence that the bad man expected an attack). Anyone approaching the back of the house would be unable to get to the window without stepping on those bottles and making plenty of noise, but—someone had reached the window and fired through it at fairly close range; and there was no sign that the bottles had been disturbed.

"Now come and talk to him," said the C.I.B. man. "Ask him a few questions. There's still a lot we want to know." Believe it or not, he spoke with a straight face—which shows what I mean about leg-

pulling? "We'll introduce you as the world-famous criminologist."

And he did.

I've met a lot of crooks, including not a few known to be ruthless, but I haven't looked into a face like the bad man's before. All the extravaganzas of my yarns became truisms. The man *looked* bad; he was a killer, and looked that too. He had thrice been acquitted of murder; he admitted one killing in self-defence. I'm not going to try to reproduce the dialogue, but I didn't feel half as confident as any of my heroes. I was chiefly concerned with not making a fool of myself. But it's worth recording that he said quite frankly:

"I know I'm bad. There isn't anything I can do about it. I'm just bad."

No heroics, nothing boastful; just an admission of facts.

As it often is in books, too, his wife seemed an ordinary, matter-of-fact little woman.

"I don't know anything about what he does outside, I just keep his home and look after the children," she said. "When he's away he's away, when he's home, he's my man."

Coming away, we shook hands all round. Standing against a wall on a corner opposite were two toughs reading racing form.

"Our boys," said the C.I.B.

"Just as I put 'em in the books!"

"Maybe! See that house next to the B.M.'s?"

"Yes." It was small and unimpressive, with boarded-up windows.

"Day and night there are armed men inside there, watching. If anyone should raid it, there would be a fusilade of shots."

We were just outside; and the driver couldn't move off quickly enough for me. I still don't know whether he was pulling my leg, either!

There is terrific concentration on and preoccupation with sport; they play to win and—they win! After all, they are the only nation which seriously challenges and sometimes defeats American superiority in tennis, for instance. I have an impression that, if stirred, there is practically nothing they couldn't do. They feel the same.

Are they "pro-English"? Some are, passionately. As many seem to see their future tied up with the United States, on whom they are militarily dependent. Many say that Australia should be the capital of the British Commonwealth. Affection for the Monarchy isn't very vocal, but I feel that it goes deep. They are realists, spades are spades, the sun is hot, there's a fortune to be made here, some immigrants love it, some don't like it at all, and I met no one except a few European immigrants who didn't refer to England as "home".



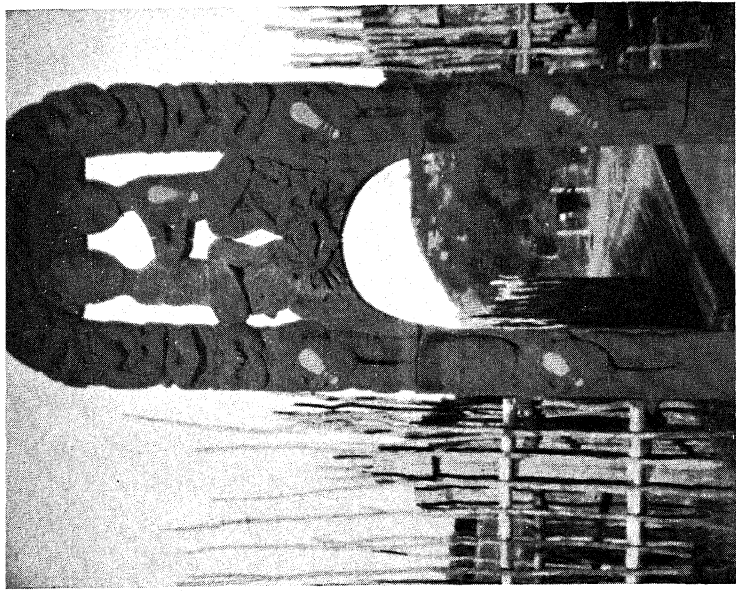
Forest scene, South Australia.



Sydney Bridge.



By the sugar cane, Queensland.



Entrance to the Pah, Rotorua.

MAY 17TH, 1951

(Jean)

Sinus trouble and heat—Sheep farm—Beautiful birds—Cooler in graceful Melbourne—Trees that shed their bark—Rabbits—Canberra and a broken record—Sydney Bridge and Harbour—Creeks and snakes—Manly, N.S.W.— Strikes—Humpty's first 10,000

The day we left Adelaide, I felt dreadful with that sinus trouble. The heat was as bad as on the train. There was a hot north wind, clouds and clouds of dust, and smoke from forest fires. Richard's always hated fires and was nervous, all of us were crotchety, but looking back it was really an experience. The dust and smoke hid the sun most of the time, and it got hotter and hotter.

When we reached Horsham—300 miles in 8½ hours including stops!—I felt better. The evening was quite cool, and we were met by some Rotarians, the Dowlings and the "Dr" Jones's; the party didn't break up until 3 a.m. (The boys were in bed, of course. They always drop off in a trice.)

We went out to "Melrose", a sheep farm, where they rear about 15,000 merino sheep. These were being "crutched" with electric shears. It isn't shearing, but sheep get a lot of maggots and flies in their wool and crutching removes the flyblown stuff. The Melrose brothers took us for a drive round the farm, thousands of acres of it, and showed us their records in a room with a huge window and a lovely view. On much the same ground, their grandfather made a profit of about £75 in his first year; last year they made £30,000! They win prize after prize for quality, too, and I've a sample to take home. I was astounded to learn that one pound of merino wool spins nineteen or twenty *miles* of yarn. The sheep are rather disappointing, rather grey and dirty-looking from the dust.

Thank goodness it's cooler. I even bought the boys two cheap blazers.

I've never seen so many beautiful birds, mostly parrots; or so many magpies. You should see us stalking them with the ciné!

The Ocean Drive wasn't quite as beautiful as I'd hoped, but the brightly coloured birds were everywhere. The tree ferns, just like the ordinary bracken at home on top of tall, slender trunks, are so beautiful.

The weather was much cooler in Melbourne (a graceful city), and we had some rain. It seemed ages since we'd even thought of

rain. Most of the country is a kind of yellow-brown, except for the lawns there's hardly any real green apart from the olive green of the gum trees. These don't shed their leaves but their bark, and it's strange to see some trees with shreds of bark hanging over the branches, and others white where all the bark's come off.

Oh, and the dead rabbits. We passed hundreds of them hourly, on the road. They get run over at night, sometimes a dozen at a time. They can make the road very slippery, too.

John's often been like a dog with two tails because we've seldom lost our way, but Canberra was his undoing. It's a beautifully planned little city, but there are two parts—the Government part, I suppose you'd say, and the Civic. There are only a few miles between, but we went round and round as if in a maze.

The pin-oaks there were a glorious colour—it was autumn, remember. We went into the Parliament House, a spacious white building, and to the really wonderful War Memorial, which is really a museum. The boys had fun, seeing the costumes of different ages of fighting men, a lot of wax models in what must have seemed like fancy dress to them, and some most realistic battle scenes.

It was really cold, there—and John had us up soon after six to go on to Sydney.

That bridge! I'd heard so much about it, and I expected to be disappointed. I suppose it isn't exactly graceful, but it's *massive*, and the harbour it crosses is breathlessly beautiful. The blue of the water, the islands and the long rollers at the surfing beaches are really something.

We stopped at Sydney for a few days, a nice old-fashioned hotel, the Wentworth, with *porters*; but a pot of tea for two cost 6s. Then on towards Brisbane. It was a pleasant road over innumerable creeks—but I ought to tell you about the creeks. There are thousands of them; we always seem to be crossing little bridges, and each creek has a name. Dead Man's Creek and Little Boy Creek and that kind of thing. The country in the north of New South Wales is lovely, though, and so is that in South Queensland, with many houses on stilts, to protect the wood from white ants. We were back among banana and sugar plantations, and there were whole hedges of pampas grass, lovely in the sun, and some pinky tall grass grew along the roadside.

Driving through a forest near a place called Taree, John suddenly stopped at a road sign.

"Oo, look!" screamed Richard.

"A snake!" cried Scoopy.

I was just getting out of the car. They scrambled off, and I shouted at them.

"Boys, come back! Come back!"

"What's the trouble?" asked John.

"They've seen a snake!"

"So have I," he grinned. "Look."

The snake was hanging from the signpost, and must have been a yard long. It was quite dead—I didn't need to ask, I only had to smell it. Apparently it was a warning that picnics aren't healthy in the grass.

At Brisbane, we had a service apartment; a *kitchen*. But I wasn't too enthusiastic, after looking at some of the prices. I could buy lovely cauliflowers at 7s 6d each! We had quite a hunt for a little tea, eggs were rather short, and we couldn't find the right place for milk. John eventually begged the tea from a greengrocer's.

It takes a day or two to get used to different shopping customs. It would take me more than a day to get used to the parking laws in Brisbane. If you park where you shouldn't, the police will come and force the lock of the car, drive or haul it away, and you pay not only a fine but the cost of the hauling. We *garaged* the car for the first time since Johannesburg.

No one makes the slightest attempt to cheat, not even when it's easy.

The boys listened to John at Brisbane Rotary—as special, very silent guests. I asked them what they thought of it.

"I didn't understand why they kept laughing," said Richard. "It was only Daddy."

I wish we'd had longer in Brisbane; but I chose the wrong husband for that. Back to Sydney, or rather Manly, where we are now. We went to see the Kerners, friends of George Insley (who's looking after things for John at home). They're an Austrian couple who got away when they were likely to be taken off by Hitler's men, just before the war. Listening to them made me realize how lucky we've been.

With them, Briggi their daughter—who fascinates Scoopy with her drawing and painting—their little Richard who just won't go away from me, we've been very lucky again. Several Sydney Rotarians have been wonderful at making us at home, too, looking after the boys so as to give us some free time during the day. People *are* good.

We had a few days of real worry, though; the luggage that was sent on from Melbourne arrived ten days late.

Then I had a worry. John had to fly to Melbourne on business—he sold some books to radio for adaptation, and just had to go. I hated the thought of him flying, and was just deciding that the plane had crashed when I got a telegram. It read:

"No more ships for me."

But I'm still a bit uneasy. There's a shipping strike on, and we might have to fly to New Zealand. The boys are thrilled beyond words, but—well, I don't know.

We've just put the first 10,000 miles on the speedometer. Only once was I really scared, when we met a timber lorry on a nasty corner on an unmade road. I still don't know how John dodged it.

Oh! We've seen the ciné films of India; they're almost perfect. If *only* we'd had more film. John's been promised *one* and that may be all we can get until we reach America.

VI

*New Zealand, Australia and
the Pacific*

JUNE 12TH, 1951

(John)

*Pungency about dock troubles—The Auckland dock "battles"
—Labour troubles—Rotorua and 10,000 feet of timber a minute
—Long week-ends—Green hills—A borrowed car—Hospitality
—Black and white living happily side by side—How to get to
the U.S.A.?*

We've run into our first real snag. It had to come sooner or later, I suppose, but why did it have to be when we are at the furthest point away from home? The *Aorangi* won't be sailing. Australian dockers (wharfies) and sailors are refusing to handle or man the ship out of sympathy with the striking New Zealand dockers and sailors.

Who were the original idiots who, knowing we lived by the sea and that the Commonwealth's strength depended on the sea, allowed working conditions at the docks at home and nearly everywhere else to become so bad that strikes were inevitable? Who created the conditions which allow Communists—and all those reactionaries which are often called Communists but aren't—to thrive like this? Their power is almost as great as that of Governments.

There is so much good in Australia, so much delightful in New Zealand, but it isn't possible to think for long about either country without realizing that smooth dockside arrangements, satisfied dockers and adequate machinery are vital to the trade and therefore to national prosperity, yet there must have been more dockside strife and bitterness in both lands than anywhere else in the world.

Holland, the present Prime Minister of New Zealand, took a pretty strong line. So did Menzies, in Australia. Later, things grew much quieter, as if a bluff had been called. But we suffered—and so did the man-in-the-street. In New Zealand, for instance, there was a shortage of many things including cement and other building materials, largely because of dock strikes. It's hard to connect long delays over that new house you long for, with the dozens of cargo boats hove-to, just off shore. Sugar was short, though, as well as a number of other household goods, and that brought the connection home to nearly everyone.

To the visitor, the sight of cargo boats by the dozen, riding at anchor, holds filled with goods and raw materials desperately needed ashore, made it a modern Alice in Wonderland.

At home, we'd all heard vaguely of dock troubles in Australia and New Zealand. I don't think it really made much impact. Our housewives didn't connect temporary and extra shortages of, say, butter and cheese, with strikes in Australasia, or with the fantastic slow-motion with which ships were often unloaded and loaded. The turn-round of cargo vessels is, I'm told, taking three, sometimes four or five, times as long as it did fifteen years ago, in spite of machinery installed to speed things up.

As always, there's a lot of exaggeration. Reading the Australian (and English) newspaper accounts of the pitched battles between dockers and the police in Auckland, for instance, it seemed much worse than it was. There have been clashes, but most seem to have been made out to be much more serious than they were.

There's been one today; outside the actual dock area, no one had any idea that it was going on. The only apparent effect on the daily life of the people is that the police move you along if you stand talking in the middle of the pavement. You can stand by shop windows or on the kerbs, but must leave a clear passage down the middle.

While I'm on the subject of troubles—I don't think I've heard any more bitter talk, anywhere, about workers by employers. If you listened to them all, you would believe that New Zealand is going hell-for-leather towards total ruin. (Which is nonsense.) Political motives? I don't think that's the only answer. Where there isn't enough labour, labour does get spoiled.

"I daren't tell a man off for being late every morning or doing a poor job," said a small builder the other day. "He'd just walk out and get another job. Everyone's so desperately in need of labour that they grab what they can."

I suppose that's true, too.

"The thing that worries me," went on my small builder, "is the effect on the young people. They're worse than the older ones. Give me a man of forty-five or fifty and I'll get a job done, but with the thirty age group it's bad and with the twenties it's impossible. They *won't* work."

He agreed that there were exceptions.

I find it absolutely impossible to believe that these New Zealanders, young or old, are lazy, self-centred and wasteful. They're the nicest folk. Lazy? They kill themselves at week-ends, at their various sports. As in South Africa and Australia, sport is an integral part of life, not a recreation. Fishing, hunting, shooting, climbing, racing—it's a fascinating life for the young. They thrive on it. I

don't believe that there isn't a way of turning more of this natural vitality into needed production.

The irony is that there's so much evidence of long-sightedness on the part of various governments. Roads are good; they claim to have more cars per head of population than anywhere in the world.

Near Rotorua, the thermal springs region (unbelievable), there's a great forest of pine and fir, where timber grows at the rate of 10,000 surface feet a minute. They claim that it's the largest timber-growing area in the Southern hemisphere—and that the sawmill, *started when the afforestation began*, is also the biggest south of the Equator.

The long-term planning is equally apparent with sheep, cattle and dairy farming. One gets a feeling that most New Zealand governments foresaw what would be needed many years ahead. What they didn't foresee was the labour shortage.

One of the lesser shocks was going out on a Saturday morning and finding *all* the shops shut. Week-ends start on Friday afternoon. Employer and employed like it, and perhaps it's a good thing. We self-employed martyrs (!) can't judge, we have all the incentive we could ever want.

If one could forget the appalling amount of work waiting to be done, although working weeks and hours are so short, New Zealand is a delight.

The green fields, the hills with closer folds than at home, the softness—I'm talking about the North Island, the strike's stopped us from taking a car to the South Island which we're told is much more rugged—and the manner of the people, combine to make it more than home from home. It's the only place we've visited yet where I haven't heard a word of criticism about England; they know more—not enough but more—about us than anywhere else. They want to find out as much as they can.

Hospitality? It's unbelievable. This will give you an idea. I'd nine speaking dates at Rotary clubs, easy by car but impossible to do by rail or motor-coach. So I went to Walter Norwood of Dominion Motors, a member of the Wellington club.

"We can soon solve that for you," he said. "We'll lend you a car."

"Careful," I warned. "We'll be here for a month."

"That's all right."

"I've done very little driving, except in my Humber."

"I'll take a chance on you," he grinned.

That began a whirlwind of hospitality. One club passed us on to the next, whether I was due to speak or not, and we had no problems. People we met by chance were as friendly. Even when I

had to leave an Auckland hotel which just didn't measure up, the manager "quite understood" and couldn't have been more helpful. On the other hand, he wasn't optimistic. The hotels were all full, for the races. A quick round of calls convinced me that was true, so on a Sunday morning we started out to see what luck we would have a few miles away. Two amiable taxi-drivers sent us to Bucklands Beach, about twelve miles out, and to "Holidene", a little private hotel. There we met the Roberts, a couple who just could not find any way of doing enough for a family from "home". It was ideal for the boys; we'd fallen on our feet again.

At garages, shops and hotels, there seemed only one desire; to be as helpful as possible. I don't think we were just lucky all the time; it's the nature of the people. They have a disarming habit of laughing at themselves, too—there's a little book called *From N to Z*, a delicious satire of New Zealand and New Zealanders by a New Zealander. It gives a pretty accurate picture of the place and the people.

If anyone wishes, they can dig back to the days of the early settlers and show some ugly evidence of the white man's betrayal of the natives—the Maoris. You'll also find some evidence of *some* honesty and much good work.

Looking at the scene today, one gets an impression that at last there is a country where white and black live happily together. Of course some white folk remain prejudiced, and some Maoris go under to drink too easily. But the Maoris generally seem to get a square deal socially and with education. There is a large proportion of professional-class Maoris; colour doesn't affect the size of the pay packet. They've great natural dignity and it's easy to believe that in the Maori wars they showed magnificent courage.

Will the same happy situation come in South Africa, I wonder?

Mind you, the problem is different—the number of Maoris is much less, and there is no white man's feud.

Our borrowed Dodge has served us well. Most cars here are English, but many folk have an almost guilty preference for American models, especially people who are likely to travel off the main roads. All these are comparable with most in England. Some of the lesser roads are pretty bad, though, and more treacherous because there's a lot of rain.

The food is first-class, if nostalgic—English cooking as we knew it when we had the best food to cook. Hotels have a pleasing habit of laying out a supper dish of a big cold joint and a huge piece of cheese with a seemingly bottomless pot of tea and coffee; guests just help themselves. Morning tea isn't regarded as a luxury or an "extra".

As you'll gather, we like it.

I'm still friends, for instance, with the people at Thomas Cook's

office, and they can't have met a bigger nuisance. After all, I'm not the only one who wants to get to the States and who can't go on a big passenger ship.

Well, I haunted Cook's; they were sorry, there was just nothing could be done. I didn't believe it. I cabled and telephoned Sydney—or they did, for me—and eventually we found room for the four of us, Humpy and the luggage on an American Liberty ship due to leave Melbourne on Saturday, June 16th.

I cabled Sydney: "Please put car and all luggage aboard freighter *Alameda* we'll get there somehow."

Getting there wasn't so easy, as the only two passenger ships plying between New Zealand and Australia were off the run because of the strike, and air passages were precious. The task of getting four seats on the same craft looked impossible. Jean hated the thought of splitting up, especially by air. I did too, but didn't say so. Now we've been promised seats on a *Constellation* which is carrying New Zealand troops to Australia, en route to Korea. The flight has just been laid on; a sobering thought.

JUNE 13TH, 1951

(Jean)

A driving test—Wellington's Marine Drive—Masterton and earthquakes—White, fluffy sheep—New Plymouth and Mount Egmont—The Waitoma Caves—Richard's achievement—Rotorua's thermal springs—Washing day—A Maori "pah", Guide Rangi and a question—Paua shells and kauri trees—Dentists, lessons and a Constellation

New Zealand's a delightful little country, but I almost wish we'd never come. These strikes! It's a pity to be depressing, because we've had a delightful stay here. John was even *lent* a car—but had to pass a test.

He pretended it didn't worry him, but driving a strange car, a Dodge, and in unfamiliar traffic, how could it fail to?

He came back with a licence.

"Good for Dad," Scoopy greeted him. "Do you think you can do *eighty* in an American car?"

"Not if I know it," I said.

"Mummy, I think you're silly," declared Richard, looking up at me with his great eyes. "It's meant to do ninety, so why can't Daddy drive at ninety?"

"It isn't meant to do anything of the kind."

"But it is," insisted Richard. "It says so on that thing the speedo—speedo—"

"Speedometer, you ignorant child," said Scoopy.

"Well, it says ninety, doesn't it?"

We went for a drive round Wellington's lovely Marine Drive and didn't do more than forty. I had a turn at the wheel; the car was easy to drive but rather strange.

I've bought a hat! To match that purple coat—*exactly* the right shade, too.

We had a lovely day at Masterton, where the boys were taken off our hands. In the evening everyone started to talk about earthquakes. They feel them badly, Masterton's practically on the fault in the earth's crust. They say it's peculiar driving along the road, feeling nothing and yet seeing the fences swaying. I can imagine! They don't have many bad ones although they often have tremors. At Napier, not far away, there was a very bad one some years ago, with hundreds killed. It altered the whole harbour; where the sea used to be, there are now walks and gardens.

One of the most noticeable things is the whiteness of the sheep. Because there's more rain, there's little dust, and the wool gets washed. They're beautiful and fluffy—thirty million of them, about fifteen sheep to every man, woman and child.

We were driving along when a huge flock of sheep came towards us, a white, fluffy mass. Two or three Maoris on horseback were with them, and I asked one if he knew how many sheep there were.

"Yes, ma'am—ten hundred and ninety-one," he said in his deep voice. "Exactly ten hundred and ninety-one."

The countryside, or bush, is beautiful and green. I've never seen anything lovelier than the tree ferns; they're everywhere, rather like coconut palms with the ferns (bracken) spreading out from the top.

Driving from Hawera, we saw Mount Egmont all day, with the sun shining on the snow-capped peak; it looked superb. The boys wanted to go and play with the snow.

"No, we just haven't time," John said. Of course.

We knew no one at New Plymouth, where we were to stay that night—but two Rotarians arrived at the hotel, to say hallo, and one said, in horror:

"You *can't* leave New Plymouth without having a look at Mount Egmont. It's our National Park!"

"I'd love to go," I said hurriedly.

"The trouble is——" began John.

"I'll call for you and the boys in the morning," said the Rotarian.

He came—and brought a big box of chocolates with him.

We drove up long, steep narrow roads, after waiting at a small lodge for a car to come down, there being no room to pass. Imagine the boys' excitement when we saw *snow*. At the end of the road we parked the car and walked half a mile towards the top, the boys having snow-fights all the way.

Next day, we saw the Waitomo Caves.

Imagine going into the caves at Cheddar Gorge, with the same stalactite and stalagmite formations, beautiful colours, eerie shadows and echoes, and suddenly coming to an underground river. Imagine being in absolute darkness, broken sometimes by a dim torch-beam, climbing into a boat that rocked when anyone stepped into it, and all in silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," whispered the guide, "we're now going to see one of the wonders of the world, but you *must not make a sound*. If you do, all the glow-worms will put their lights out."

(John whispered that he didn't think they would!)

"Boys," I said, "did you hear that?"

"Yes, Mummy," said Richard sadly.

"I'll bet *Richard* starts talking," said Scoopy, disgustedly. "He's *always* talking."

"I won't say a word!"

"Quiet, *please!*" whispered the guide.

I felt Richard's hand very tight on my arm as we started off. The guide pulled the boat along by a wire up in the roof. At first, it was just pitch dark. Then one or two little pin-points of light appeared. Suddenly, the whole cave seemed dotted with tiny little bluish-white spots. They were in the ceiling and on the rocks at the side, near enough to touch.

The water lapped against the boat. Richard held his breath. We seemed to go on for ages, with the glow-worms still and silent. I've never felt quite so strange—a kind of mixture of nervousness because it was too eerie, and of wonderment.

At last, we got back to the landing-stage, and the guide said:

"You can talk now, folk!"

"*There!*" Richard exploded. "I didn't say a word. I *can* keep quiet if I have to, can't I, Mummy? Daddy? Scoopy was wrong, he——"

"I jolly well wish you had to keep quiet more often, that's all I can say," said Scoopy.

"Shssh. The guide's talking," I said.

"You've just seen one of the wonders of the world," said the guide. "No one knows the secret of the light in the glow-worm. It's cold light—no heat at all, I'm told. They've been here ever since the caves were discovered, no one knows how they breed or how they

first got here. Now we'll stand over there, and I want you to sing a song, any song will do. Just to hear the echoes."

Everyone stood silent, feeling silly—except John. He began to bellow:

"*Daisy, Daisy, give me your answer, do.*"

"Ooh, I know that one," said Richard. "Daisy, Daisy——"

The huge cave was rather like a church, the echoes seemed to soften the singing; even John's.

"Thank you very much," said the guide. "Very nice indeed. Now I wonder if anyone can tell me how to remember the difference between stalagmites and stalactites?"

"Keep quiet!" I hissed to John.

"It's easy," said the guide. "The tites fall down and the mites grow up. Tite—tight with a g, see."

"Mummy," said Richard, when everyone had finished laughing, "what does he *mean*?"

"Yes, why do tights fall down?" asked Scoopy.

"We'd better hurry," said John, "or we'll lose the others."¹

Rotorua was as breathtaking in a different way.

We'd heard about the thermal regions, everyone promised we would thoroughly enjoy Rotorua, but I hadn't any clear idea of what it would be like.

It is a small town with a big Maori village within it—I haven't seen so many natives since we left South Africa. Their skins aren't so dark as the Africans', they've lovely teeth, most of them smile a lot, and they speak such nice English. The amazing thing is that at Rotorua, they do their washing in the thermal springs—just squat by the hot pools and use soap and powder, then rinse them in another hot pool close by—and the young children play about in yet another hot spring, a kind of home-made swimming-bath.

The steam from the springs beneath the ground comes out in *thousands* of places. One stands on a hill and looks down on steam slowly rising from gardens and pools, from bush—it's rather like looking at any small town at home with smoke rising from hundreds of little fires.

We saw the big geyser shooting boiling water high up into the air, and a boiling spring next to an ordinary river, where trout are plentiful. I'm *told* you can catch trout with one hand and cook it by holding it in the water on the other side, with the other hand! John was all eyes and ears—especially when told that if anyone falls into a boiling pool, they just disappear. The bones *might* turn up, some day. It's a little frightening to see cracks in the earth just off the path, and to know that fresh outbursts appear frequently; the ground just caves in.

¹ Afterwards, we explained "tight". "Oh, you mean *drunk*," said Scoopy.

The boys *would* wander, and John was glued to the camera.

We had a charming Maori guide, Rangī, and she told Richard to go and put his hand in the river. He did.

"It's just ord'n'ry water," he announced.

"Now dig your fingers into the sand underneath," said Rangī.

He dug—and pulled his hand away sharply.

"Oooh, it's *hot*! Why, it's *hot* underneath and *cold* on top. Mummy, it is! *You try*."

In places, there are pools of boiling mud. One stands and watches the mud plopping up and down, hissing and steaming.

There's a strong smell of sulphur; one night we were out late and weren't sure of the way back; we knew we were right once we smelt the air. How tired the boys were, that night. But they're usually in bed by seven, asleep by ten past, and awake at half-past five next morning. Well, Scoopy is; Richard's a sleepy-head; that year between them makes such a difference.

We went through the Maori *pah*, or village, and the boys could talk of nothing but cowboys and Indians. "This is just how the Red Indians live, isn't it, Mummy?" Rangī was still guiding us, and she showed us the stockades with a double row of tall posts sticking out of the ground. When invading tribes attacked a *pah*, they got through the first fence but were trapped between that and the second, and didn't have a chance. I suppose it's no worse than the way we behave these days, although it looks horrid. Some of the carvings are perfectly done, although the figures are grotesque and most of the faces are carved with tongues hanging out. These are all part of the old Maori religion; most Maoris are Christian today.

It's so hard to believe that these smiling, friendly people used to be cannibals. Well, it's hard for us to believe it, but not Richard. He'd heard they had been cannibals and of course wanted to know what it meant. I wasn't sure what to say, but John, as usual, said tell them the truth.

"Oh," said Richard, when he knew.

"Really?" asked Scoopy, interestedly.

They didn't say anything more at the time. In fact they didn't say anything about it until we were at the *pah*, when Richard turned solemnly to Rangī, and said:

"Please, when did you last eat a man?"

Rangī didn't laugh or look shocked, just took the question quite seriously.

"I've never eaten a man," she answered. "But my grandfather did."

Neither of the boys said a thing.

Rotorua was everything we were promised. The boys revelled in

it, too. Scoopy goes round noticing everything, it's amazing how many things he finds that no one else would notice, and Richard chatters, chatters, chatters. Scoopy sticks to his drawing, too.

At Tauranga, on the west coast, we spent an hour on the beach picking up shells of all colours. There's a most beautiful shiny blue shell, with many colours in it, called *paua*. The Maori carvings, nearly all of a very dark, hard wood, are most attractive too.

Going to the north of the island to see the great kauri forest, I didn't think we'd ever arrive. The last two hours' driving, one evening, was over some of the wildest and loneliest country we'd seen. Eventually we got to a place marked on a map; it was just a post-office, two or three houses and a hotel that had been burned down. Some huts had escaped, as well as the local inn; we had two huts. After dinner, we went into a huge room, with a table-tennis table up, two or three of the oldest armchairs you'll ever see, a big log fire, two other guests and a half a dozen Maoris. One of these was a little worse for drink, and kept telling me how beautiful I was. John finally got him to play table tennis.

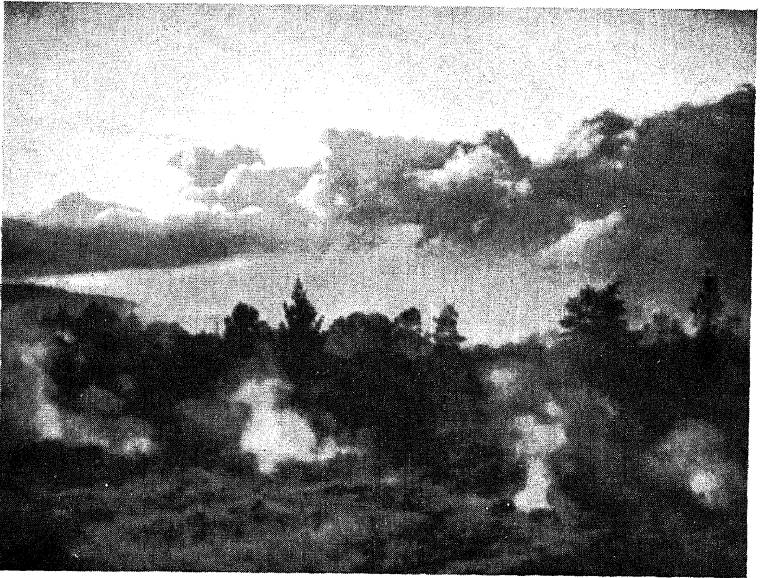
Next morning, in a thick mist, we had to go to nearby baths and wash-houses, supplied with thermal hot water; none was laid on to the huts. The boys cleaned their teeth in the garden, and we all had a thermal bath.

We reached the kauri forest that day. It's very dense, but there aren't many kauri trees on the road. Most are hidden by the smaller trees, deeper in the forest. We parked the car on the rough road and walked over the trunks of trees laid down to make a path through the mud. But it was worth it; the tree was enormous—45 feet round at the base, and 3,000 years old. Someone told John there was 72,000 surface feet of timber in that one tree. The kauris are really something—they grow so straight, with the lower part of the trunks clear of branches, which start near the top.

When we got back to Auckland, John was really upset. The Frederiksons, who sent us parcels during the war, lived near the forest. He thought they were much nearer Auckland, and got the name of their village mixed up—that's easy with Maori names, like Wawera and Hawera, Waimate and Waitemata and Waitara. But we just hadn't time to go north again.

One gets a feeling of *quality* with everything here. It's very like England, yet a friend of a friend in Bournemouth who's been here for twenty-five years, says she's still homesick. But a man I met *by chance* and whom I'd last seen in Bournemouth fifteen years ago, said he wouldn't go home for a fortune.

We owe a lot to Rotary. It takes weeks to get an appointment with a dentist over here, but a Rotarian dentist looked at the boys'



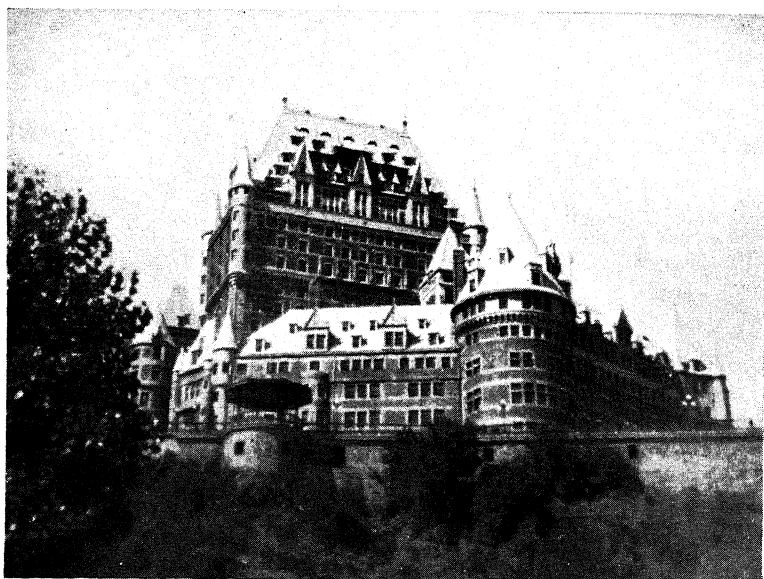
Cloud and steam, Rotorua.



At Rotorua—washing in warm thermal water.



Near Apia, Samoan Islands.



Chateau Frontenac, Quebec.

teeth, and mine, at twenty-four hours' notice. I've a chronic abscess, or something, but it's never troubled me yet and he says don't disturb it until we get home. The boys, even Richard, take the dentist quite calmly. Richard's teeth need a lot of attention, apparently, and must be seen to before we get home. It isn't all honey, living on the move like this, but I think I enjoy it more as the weeks pass.

I worry about the boys' education, but I suppose they *are* improving. I can still ask Richard to spell "was" and he thinks and deliberates, then says:

"S—A—W."

John doesn't seem to think there's anything to worry about, and whenever I can sneak a look at another child's exercise book, I do; ours *seem* to be well up with their age group, anyway.

The boys are hopping with excitement. "We're going in a Conshellation, Mummy!"

JUNE 25TH, 1951

(Jean)

A sprained ankle—A coach trip—Country hotels—More dock troubles—Horses aboard the "Alameda"

We're still in Australia—and I've been lying up for days with a badly sprained ankle!

We reached Sydney on time but the *Alameda's* sailing was delayed (it was said) from Friday until Wednesday. It was almost impossible to get into hotels, so John had the bright idea of going with a coach party, with hotels found for us. This was on the long coast route of New South Wales, which we'd missed before so as to go through Canberra.

The coach-driver was helpful and friendly if earnest. Every time we came to the mouth of a river, he would say: "This is a *very* fine body of water", and then enlarge on it. As a matter of fact he was right—and water is so important here. Incidentally, we crossed by ferry after ferry in the coach (and earlier, in Humpy) and all of the ferries are free. For a day and a half we drove through a great forest of eucalyptus, along dirt roads, often through driving rain; and we saw our first kangaroo, leaping through the trees. But the water and the driver and a good crowd of passengers couldn't make up for the dreadful country hotels. In one the primitive water-supply broke down completely. In another, we

sat and shivered until John went into the yard, chopped wood, and lit a fire. In—but it's not fair to go on.

We reached Melbourne docks after dark. Goodness know how, but I tripped and fell. Had to have a doctor, and elastic bandages.

Sometimes I felt I could murder these dockers. Every hour, they stopped at a whistle for a "smoke-o"; they seem to stop two or three minutes every hour. *Work!* We were taking on a lot of Australian currants and sultanas for Canada and America—oh, and a Pacific island—and I sometimes thought I could put the boxes into the holds quicker myself. If it rained, the whistle blew and they all stood round with their hands in their pockets, and we *waited*.

Yet when I fell down, they rushed to help. Every time I left the ship, I think they'd cheerfully have carried me up and down the gangway.

We didn't leave that Wednesday, either. Sailing was delayed until Saturday. We didn't leave on Saturday, it was delayed until Sunday. We left Monday, after reaching the stage of praying that it wouldn't rain. John would come into the cabin, where I had to spend most of my time, with the latest weather report. Whenever that damned whistle blew, I got a heart-attack. Did it mean another "smoke-o", or did it mean rain?

There are twelve passengers on board, and we're not going to like some of them. The smell of cooking and fat from the dining-room is revolting now, goodness knows what it will be like when we're at sea. The cabin is a three-berth, the boys sleep with me and John's sharing with two Americans (one's rather nice). All the furniture is made of steel, and nothing fits properly. There's no lounge but we can use the captain's room.

Still, there are the compensations. John met Hutchinson's Australian agent, a Mr Voss Smith, and he and his wife gave us a wonderful send-off. Dinner—there would have been dancing but for my ankle—and an afternoon at the races, while the boys went to a picnic with half a dozen other children.

There was great excitement when four race-horses were to come aboard, with their trainer and jockey—a peculiar kind of export to America. We'd been told they wouldn't come until just before we were due to sail. It had been a kind of barometer.

"No horse-boxes alongside yet," John would come and say. "Be patient."

I could have thrown a book at him.

But Scoopy came hurrying into the cabin one morning, and breathed:

"The horses are here!"

My heart leapt. "No!"

"They are, Mummy! Really."

Then John came in, and helped me up on deck. There were the horses, one with a kind of strap under its belly, ready to be hauled aboard by crane. It seemed certain that we were going to sail, but I forgot that as I watched the horse. It kicked and screamed the moment it was off the ground; everyone just stood gaping. I wanted to shout at the men to stop; *John* was only interested in the camera.

They let the horse down again, then blindfolded it, and one of the stableboys hung on to the sling and soothed it as it was swung aboard. The others were dealt with in the same way, and gave no trouble.

We thought it wouldn't be long before we were off, until the boys wandered into the cabin.

"We aren't going to sail today," announced Scoopy.

"Oh, we are!"

"No, we're not. Tomorrow, at six o'clock in the morning."

"Twelve o'clock, lunch time," Richard corrected.

"It's six! I heard the Purser telling a man."

"It's twelve!" breathed Richard. "I heard the Captain telling a lady."

"It really looks as if it *will* be tomorrow," John said. "All the hatches are down, except one."

Goodness knows when it will be. At least my ankle isn't hurting so much. The Melbourne doctor insists that I don't use it; John rubs it twice a day with embrocation. John tramped Melbourne to find a walking-stick for me, and couldn't. The purser offered a crutch! There's no doctor on board, I do hope the boys will be all right.

JULY 18TH, 1951

(Jean)

What a voyage!—Trade winds—Wong—Bill Brown—"Gimme Gold Label"—Apia, Samoa—Missionaries and mosquitoes—Birthday cake—Two Mondays—Puget Sound and dollars

Oh, what a voyage, what a voyage! It was a hundred times worse than I'd feared. We got off about two o'clock on the Monday, and it was quite calm when we went to bed. About two a.m. I woke up, terrified. Someone was stumbling about in the cabin! There

were noises everywhere. I couldn't get the light on, the boys didn't wake up. The ship was rolling, and I nearly fell out of my bed—and Scoopy was in the top bunk.

I managed to put the light on, as a drawer from the dressing-table shot right out. The tinny steel made a dreadful din. Then as the ship rolled the other way, it crashed back again. Toys, books, oranges and apples fell to the floor and rolled about.

For eight days and nights it was like that. Nights were a nightmare. Even John slept badly—the boys didn't, thank goodness. With my ankle so wobbly, and seasick all the time, life wasn't worth living, and the food—oh! So rich, greasy and spicy. I hope all American food isn't like this. It's *crazy*, too. There's a little girl on board, three years old, and the steward banged a steak in front of her, overlapping the sides of a big dinner-plate.

"It's too much!" her mother protested.

"Forget it, forget it," said the steward. "She don't eat it, throw it overboard, the sharks, they'll eat it."

John campaigned to get plainer food for the children, and things did get a little better. For days, I couldn't go into the dining-room, the smell just made me feel so sick—and I couldn't hurry to the side.

Wong, the Chinese deck-steward, is a cheerful boy with a mop of black hair that hasn't been cut for months, but I can hardly understand him. He talks so quickly and always seems to have a plum in his mouth. One morning, I felt a little better and thought I'd try some breakfast.

"Now, Wong," I said carefully, "I want one boiled egg and two pieces of dry toast. Understand?"

"Yes, ma'am, I know, just leave it to Wong." He rushed out—and rushed back, twenty minutes later. In a basin were *five* boiled eggs; on a plate, three pieces of thick toast, running with butter. "Just what you want?" grinned Wong.

"Wong, I said one! And dry toast—"

"You don't want all the eggs? Okay. Give dem to the boys, play ball with them. Or t'row dem overboard to the sharks. Who cares?"

John spends most of his time in the Purser's cabin, on the bridge deck, hammering away on the typewriter; he says he's wedged the chair and every time the ship rolls his hands rise off the keys, he has to wait until it steadies before he can type. Even he's been seasick once; I've never known him even slightly affected before.

The Captain's a friendly old thing and after all, the ship isn't a liner, but—oh, what's the use of grumbling? It's nearly over and for the last day or two it's been beautifully calm.

I used to stagger against the Captain, and he'd laugh and say:

"You think this is bad? This ain't bad. This is good. Why, last

trip, we had some rough weather. Yes, ma'am. See that chair in that corner? Why, we would roll and next thing you know, the chair would be in *that* corner. Let me tell you something. There was a little girl on board, standing right where you are. We rolled, and she turned upside down. Yes, ma'am. I caught her as she came down. Steady, ma'am, don't go falling and hurting yourself."

I can't drink the coffee, it's so strong. There aren't any rules and regulations, though, so John makes tea two or three times a day in the little galley off the dining-room. The tea is in little bags, you pour the water on to them. The cups are thick and the milk's out of tins, but it's *tea*.

Now we've got to know them, several of the officers are most friendly, and there's a delightful American passenger, Mr Meyer. There are two Australians, Des MacCormick and Bill Brown, the trainer and jockey looking after the horses. I honestly don't know what we would have done without these three.

The horses have special quarters with a kind of paddock on deck; there's two feet of sand for them to exercise on, so that they won't damage their legs. The first few days (when Des *or* Bill was with them every hour of the night and day) the horses hated the way the ship rolled, but they're getting used to it. The boys haunt the stables—and the things I'm learning about horse-racing! I'd always looked rather suspiciously on "horsy" people; I won't in future.

Bill Brown showed us his riding gear, everything made so beautifully, and I hardly seemed to have anything in my hand when I held his featherweight boots. The boys grabbed the whip! Bill demonstrated the different ways of holding it and how it's twisted round in the hand while racing. He says he hardly ever uses it. You should hear him talk about "wasting" to get his weight down; he often has to steam off eight or nine pounds just before a race. He diets, too—says he feels like death before a race but once he's in the saddle, he forgets it all.

Our evenings? Des, Bill, John and I and Sheila (mother of the three-year-old) gather round the table in the Captain's room, and play Chinese checkers and dominoes, and eat chocolates. About ten o'clock, John and one of the others go to the kitchen, cut sandwiches and make tea. Then we chat until about midnight, and off to bed. For two weeks the radio made all kinds of scratchy sounds, and when we could hear anything it was baseball! Then one night the crackling stopped, and a choir sang:

GIMME GOLD LABEL, GIMME GOLD LABEL,
GIMME GOLD LABEL—BEER!

We all stood up and cheered.

Then the crackling started again, but from then on we did get spells of music from Hawaii; after twenty-four days, "Sweet Violets" sounded like Beethoven.

We reached Apia (in the Samoan islands) after eight rough days and nights, with the wind always coming from the same direction—Trade winds, apparently—and blowing soot and smoke over everything; on deck, one couldn't keep clean. The morning we arrived at Apia, all was calm. The island, very hilly and green, looked enchanting. The little white buildings and the churches were so appealing. No sooner had we dropped anchor than the little canoes, with floats to keep them steady, paddled about the ship. The Samoans offered all kinds of oddments and carvings in exchange for cigarettes—which are very cheap on board. There wasn't a minute, day or night, when the canoe men weren't circling round hopefully.

Some of their models are beautifully made. They won't sell for money, but for really good carvings they want suits of clothes. It's the funniest thing to see an American sailor at the bottom of the gangway, handing old clothes over to a native who's standing up in his canoe, which looks as if it will topple over any moment. The native turns the clothes inside out, looks at the sun through them, tries to pull them apart—and then they start bargaining. It's all very friendly. When a deal's made, the suit is rolled up and tucked beneath a tiny seat. The natives move about the narrow, flimsy-looking canoes as if they couldn't fall overboard if they tried.

We wanted a smaller model of a boat than they usually make; John talked with a Samoan whose English wasn't very good, but made him understand what we wanted. He came back next day with a perfect little model, and a nasty gash in his hand.

"So small, I cut myself," he said. "I used making big boats."

"I'm sorry about that," said John. "It must be nasty. I'll give you more cigarettes, to make up for it."

"No, sir, please, thank you! Two cartons, that was the bargain, I keep bargain, you keep bargain. The cut—my own silly fault!"

We had one whole day ashore, driven by a Samoan in a big old American car. Enchanting is the only word. The grass is so green, the trees bushy, everything seemed to grow there. Bananas, coffee, cocoa, coconuts, you know what I mean.

Robert Louis Stevenson died at Apia, but his grave is right at the top of a wooded hill far too steep for us to climb. We visited his house, taken over by the Government (John says this part of Samoa is held under mandate by New Zealand) but just as Stevenson left it. Funny, isn't it, that he once lived in Bournemouth, and Skerryvore, his house, was blown to bits by a bomb. One doesn't think about bombs in Apia. I can understand anyone wanting to come

and live here; it's peaceful; just peaceful. And everyone seems happy.

The villages are so clean and fresh. The houses stand round in a kind of circle, with fine lawns in front of them. All the roofs are thatched. There are no walls—just a kind of home-made Venetian blinds, which they keep up most of the time. You can look in and see the big double bed in some of them; or pillows and cushions on the floor, for the children.

I went ashore one evening, a guest of a family the Purser knew. We sat around on a pebble floor with rugs beneath us, surprisingly comfortable. The wife was a big, fat woman, who'd had ten children. After some singing, she began to dance. She moved as if she were as light as a feather, and I've never seen such rhythm. She enjoyed herself so much, too, couldn't stop smiling, and there she was, flopping up and down, up and down.

During the day trip we stopped outside a little house and the whole family, mother, father and about fourteen children, from fifteen or sixteen downwards, gathered round. John asked if they could sell us some coconuts—and the oldest boy climbed a tree which towered above us, and tossed them down. Our boys just gaped. The Samoan climbed down again while John worked the ciné, took the husks off the coconuts and then cut the hard shell with a knife and lifted the top off. The milk was cold and delicious, but the meat was pappy—too young.

We took some snaps, and the mother asked timidly if we would send a print. It's funny to think you can post a letter which will be delivered to that house without walls, with coconuts and bananas growing in the back garden and the Pacific Ocean in the front.

On the way back, two Samoans ran after us from a village. John opened his window, and one thrust two coconuts into his hands.

"Please, to show you how glad we are to have you as our guests," he said. "Please be good enough to accept."

Somehow, that explains the Samoans. They're very clean and houseproud, and the schools—all missionary schools—are thronged. Men and women and children all wear sarongs, just a foldover skirt; different schools wear different colours. They're as brown as berries and look very healthy, but there's some malaria, I believe.

The old Captain was with us one morning and saw a crowd of older school-children. He shook his head sadly.

"Only two troubles with Apia," he said. "Just two troubles. Missionaries and mosquitoes. Get rid of the missionaries and mosquitoes and it would be a wonderful place."

I've never seen missionary work which had such obvious results!

It was very calm on the morning after we left Apia—on my birth-

day, July 6th. The cook made me a huge, fluffy birthday cake. The wind still blew from the same place but it was much calmer, and we had no really rough weather after that. We did have *two* Mondays; we gained a day crossing the Pacific, although I simply can't make out why. Of all the voyages to have a day that doesn't exist anywhere else in the world!

Now I'm sitting on the red steel deck, with the boys playing against the rails, looking at the coast of America across the calmest water I've ever seen. We'll soon be at Vancouver. Then into America—I'm much more excited than I expected to be.

Vancouver, June 21st

I'll never forget the excitement as we sailed along Puget Sound and under the big bridge (a new one) into Vancouver Harbour. It was like being home again, except for the lights at night. They're so brilliant and colourful.

Twenty-six days on that Pacific in *that* ship—oh, well it's over. The last few days were perfect, too. Not too hot, and absolutely calm sea—we saw a lot of porpoises and our first whale! We could see him spouting up the water, and his back glistening on the surface. I doubt if our pictures will come out, but the boys are joyful—at last they've seen one.

Vancouver is set in some of the loveliest country I've yet seen. A Rotarian took us for a run round last evening, and the view of the city from the hills outside is lovely beyond words.

It's funny to be handling dollars; to see how different many things are here—drug-stores, for instance. And we can get as much ciné film as we want! (Now, it's dollar shortage.)

We would have stayed a week or more here, and gone inland to the Rockies, but as we're three weeks late, John says we *must* go south. He wants to make up the time in the first part of the trip, and get to Chicago by August 14th. That gives us just over three weeks, and we'd allowed six. It's going to be a rush, and I'm a bit nervous. They say the traffic is very fast across the border, and driving on the right instead of the left will be tricky.

"It'll be all right, if we're careful," John says. He's hardly the same driver, nothing seems to worry him. (He says we've just about earned our passage, so far, too.)

The boys are so excited about America they can't keep still. They've bought their first toy in Canada—out of their weekly pocket money. They can talk about nothing but dollars and cents. John gave them an examination just before we arrived—they didn't do at all badly, and I suppose they have learned *something*. In fact, haven't we all?

VII

*The United States of America
and Canada*

AUGUST 2ND, 1951

(John)

How to drive on the wrong side—Near miss—Tension, a Super Market and night traffic—Highway 99—The Old Oregon Trail—California—The Golden Gate Bridge—The difficulty of being dispassionate—Sex with a dash of mystery—Anti-British sentiment?—107 again—Cars in Hollywood—Tomorrow is another opportunity

Greetings from the U.S.A. From Hollywood, to be precise. I shan't sell anything on this visit, but at least some people who didn't know before, realize I exist; and there's always tomorrow and next year.

We are still alive.

That may not surprise you, but there are moments when it surprises us. It isn't so much driving on the right instead of the left. It isn't that one can't see the driver in front signalling (if he ever does); it isn't that when I do manage to see a signal, the driver's hand usually shoots out towards the left and he promptly turns right. These are the risks of strange roads and unfamiliar rules. It's not even the fact that speed is comparative. I'm getting used to doing fifty along a road which has four or five traffic lanes, dozens of large notices saying SPEED LIMIT 40, and having a man on the rear bumper, hooting like the devil to push me up to sixty. (And being ignored.)

It's the unexpected.

Take our second day. I had hopefully planned to go slow and get used to driving on the right, but it isn't possible to go slow without inviting a helping push from behind. It's no use taking the inside lane of three or four or more, because traffic using that lane is going to swing off to the right, without warning; it doesn't use that lane unless it's going to turn right, or it shouldn't. Or else there is truck traffic, and the trucks—lorries to us—are mammoths which roar along on the flat and slow down, often quickly, when they reach an incline. It's easy to get used to this, and half the trouble is that I can't see the signals—these truck-drivers *do* show where they're going—unless I'm laying so far behind that I haven't a hope of passing.

Imagine, though, travelling at sixty, being passed by big cars on

either side (illegal? Who cares), having the whine of cars for ever in your ears, and then hearing an engine which is obviously missing on two or more cylinders, almost alongside. Imagine hearing that gradually overtaking, on the "wrong" side; imagine trying to keep very straight because there is certainly something coming up on the right. And then, if you can, imagine a booming voice:

"Hey, you, mister!"

At first, I didn't believe it. Then I thought: "Cops, I've done something wrong." I dared to glance right. It was a man in a singlet, a peaked cap, three days' growth of beard and a big cigar.

"Hi, fella!"

I gave what was probably a sickly grin. He edged nearer. Inches separated our running-boards. (His car, being twelve years old or more, also had one.) I could have stretched out my right arm and touched his shoulder; but I don't think my hand would have left the wheel, even if I'd instructed it to.

"Hi, fella!"

I was sure I'd a puncture—a "flat". Where the devil should I stop?

"What's the trouble?" I called.

He wasn't looking at the road; he was looking at me. We were still doing sixty; there was a car on my tail, so I had to.

"There ain't no trouble. I just want to ask you something."

"What is it?" I bellowed at the windscreen—known here as wind-shield.

"Don't you feel funny, driving on the wrong side of the road and the wrong side of the auto?"

"Funny!" I dared to glance at him. "I don't feel funny, I feel terrified. And I'm on the *right* side of the car, aren't I?"

Right-hand side, if you see what I mean. It was a mistake; a great mistake. It struck him as a wonderful joke. He took both hands off the wheel, rescued his cigar which was falling, and roared with laughter. I couldn't stand it any more. I put my foot down, and touched seventy. Two minutes later, he clattered past me, still on the wrong passing lane, waving and grinning.

Not two hours later, we were driving through a small town. Jean had stopped saying: "I can't stand it, you must slow down or stop, I can't stand it." The speed-limit signs said forty, no one was doing less than fifty except me, and the needle was on forty-five. Cars were parked along the kerb. One turned out. Just like that. We weren't three yards away from him. I wrenched the wheel, jammed on brakes, somehow hit the horn. By the grace of God, nothing was passing on our left. The face of the other driver and his passengers were like gargoyles, set in fear. I heard a funny little tick-tick-tick sound; and we were past.

I didn't stop. Jean just leaned back and closed her eyes. The boys were silent. I didn't even glance back. It was an hour before we stopped for petrol (gas) and I looked at the car. The rubber on the running-board had about a dozen little marks from the "collision".

"I can't stand it," Jean said. "I just can't stand it."

"I don't know what you mean," said Scoopy, "we're sitting *all* the time."

Neither Jean nor I laughed. This was serious. The speed of the traffic and the mistake of beginning the run on a Saturday and having our first full day on a Sunday, when all America and his wife come on the roads, was almost too much. One couldn't safely go slow. We didn't feel that we could safely go fast. Curiously, I felt quite normal, but Jean was really ill.

"It'll ease off," I said. "It's bound to ease off."

"If it doesn't, I just can't go on," Jean said.

She hadn't slept the first night. It was warm but not overpowering, and we'd pulled up at our first motor court—or motel. That is, we had pulled the car up outside the little hut where we were to sleep, paid \$7.50 for the four of us, and been left to ourselves. There was a shower, toilet, two chairs and two beds. Within sight there were a dozen restaurants and snack-bars. We had strolled down the road, crossed it nervously, and wandered round a Super Market which temporarily drove all Jean's nervousness away.

Super Market was right. A vast store, selling everything one might want to buy and certainly much that one wouldn't; one went round, selected the wanted packet, put it in a little wheeled basket supplied at the entrance, pushed this to the counter, had the goods checked and priced and added up on a calculator, and then left, carrying two huge parcels with supper, breakfast and next day's lunch. It probably wasn't but the store looked as big as the Olympia.

I got a blinding headache. Just in sight was the snow-capped top of Mount Rainier, a skyline of unreal grandeur, but we could hardly bring ourselves to look at it. The boys were fractious. We waited for the quiet of the night, and didn't get it. Cars passed one after the other, whining, humming; now and again there would be a moment's lull and we would go tense, waiting for the next one; and the next one always came, with a dozen or so swishing by in quick succession.

I dropped off and woke with a clear head; Jean hadn't slept, and felt as bad as she had on the *Alameda* (of sad memory). The boys decided to be angelic, which helped. We were late starting off, and time really mattered, but I could see the probable need of resting up for a day or two, if we could find a quiet place.

On this main road, Highway 99, one can drive straight down the

west side of the U.S.A. on a wide, smooth highway, lined with motor-courts, occasional shops, huge clean garages and a never-ending string of restaurants, cafés, snack-bars. All one reads is:

HOT DOGS: FRANKFURTERS: HAMBURGERS: GRILL. GAS 26c. CLEAN REST ROOMS. BEST BARBECUE. TRY OUR STEAKS. ICE CREAM, ICE CREAM, ICE CREAM. Cars, trucks, cars, trucks, GREYHOUND BUSES going at crazy speed (it seemed to me), CARS, TRUCKS, GAS 25c., ICE CREAM, TRY OUR STEAKS. THE SERVICE CLUBS WELCOME YOU. ROTARY, KIAWA, LIONS. HOT DOGS: SHELL. ESSO. TEXACO. HAMBURGERS: ICE CREAM, ICE CREAM. MOTOR COURT. AUTO COURT. SUPER MARKET. DANCING TONITE. WE NEVER CLOSE OPEN NITE OR DAY. ICE CREAM. CARS, TRUCKS, GREYHOUNDS with their high-pitched, alarming whine. GAS 23c.

Exaggerated? Well, it's a bit impressionistic. By night, every sign was lit up, red, white, yellow, blue, green lights flashed on and off. AUTO COURT—VACANCY. MOTEL—NO VACANCY.

After that first bad night, Jean felt the almost hypnotic effect. The boys marvelled and had only one complaint.

"Why *must* nearly every car pass us, Daddy?"

We had a picnic lunch and I sneaked a look at the map. Highway 101, the Pacific coast road, had been warmly recommended, but I'd been warned that it was slow and in parts tricky with bends and, further south especially, with the timber-trucks.

"I don't mind what we do, if only we get away from this traffic," Jean said.

So before reaching Portland, Oregon, we turned off 99 and on to 101; and the world changed. We were suddenly enclosed in forests. In Washington we'd seen them in the distance, actually passed them but had no time to look; now, we were on a normal road, of average English main-road width; not much traffic, cars travelling at a speed we could safely pass. We stopped at a motor court on the Old Oregon Trail. It was new, clean, delightful, our hostess was anxious to help all she could. Across the road was a little restaurant with its inevitable soda fountain; a boy at the motel was eager to entertain ours—a nicely behaved little chap, who did a "swop"—Scoop now has a baseball bat. We were in the country, with blessed country quiet, and Highway 99 might have been a thousand miles away.

So, within forty-eight hours of entering the States, we had the first lesson—the contrasts between place and place, people and people, roads and roads. I hereby swear that I will never generalize about the U.S.A.

We slept.

For a few days, the roads were quiet, towns were small, we drove through forests, found the timber-trucks no problem because every

mile or so there are spaces for them to pull in to let faster traffic pass; and they pulled in. We spent a night in a motor court buried deep in the forest. We left Oregon for California, where there was a fruit inspection at the border, to avoid carrying tree diseases; there the speed limit was changed. We drove through the redwoods and I've never seen nor expected to see trees like them—they made the kauris of New Zealand seem like saplings—then crossed the Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco, where mist spoiled the view but couldn't spoil the majesty of the bridge.

I'd read about the Barbary Coast; plague spot; mecca of whores and prostitutes, home of vice and corruption, of organized crime and Vigilantes, public hangings, political graft, all not so many years ago. I knew about the great fire following the earthquake; and people had said that San Francisco was a lovely city today. It is a place of enchantment, traffic is well-regulated, the people friendly and helpful, the houses on the hills are clean and new and bright with colour.

We had three quiet days there, in a hotel where the charges were lower than I'd expected, then went on to Yosemite National Park, which will take a lot of forgetting, and into Hollywood.

When I was on the East Coast in 1948—squeezing in a rushed train trip to Grand Canyon in Arizona—I'd been fascinated by America and the Americans. I still am. I came to seek the secret of writing to please American readers; the success of this part of the trip depends on doing so, but it will be quite a job. One difficulty is that, being fascinated by the country and the people, it's hard to think, to be logical, to analyse. Is analysis possible? The few days we've been here already suggest that it isn't. Judging from the 25-cent mysteries in the racks at drug-stores, cigar-stores, in fact nearly everywhere, all that is wanted is a dose of sex with a dash of mystery and maybe a chaser of sadism. Yet in the next rack are 25-cent books by the most conservative writers of English mysteries; and these will be cheek-by-jowl with classics published by the same firm.

I'd seen enough of the newspapers before not to be excited about the thick twice-daily wads; the huge advertisements and the mighty headlines, with sensational stories of corruption in high places challenging murder write-ups. I was prepared for the columnists writing with an apparent vindictiveness which would shake if not shock most readers at home. These haven't changed. Nor have the big social pages or the sports sections. But, sandwiched between sensation and (apparent) gross exaggeration, there are calm, well-balanced news stories which wouldn't be amiss in our *Times*. Here I go, you see, stressing the obvious; the contrasts.

I had half-expected some indication of anti-British sentiment on the West coast. It seems to work the other way round. People in motor courts, others who are quick to place or to query our accent, seem delighted to say hallo to visitors from England. "Why don't more of you folk come out here?" The car isn't exactly admired; it's *small* by their standards; but several people and one or two garage mechanics have talked about "quality" and "We don't make cars like this over here these days".

Hollywood?

We arrived after a 300-mile journey across the desert, in a temperature of about 107, a hot wind and some—not too much—dust. We did not enjoy it. Jean had as bad a day as she's yet had. But after we'd settled in at the hotel, its charges more reasonable than I'd expected, she couldn't rest; we had to go window-shopping!

It was the first time on the trip that we didn't reach the end of the day's run as planned. Signs lured me on to the wrong road—and we reached Hollywood at the height of the evening rush hour. I'm told that public transport is bad here and that there are more cars per head of population than anywhere else in the world. I believe it. Cars, cars, nothing but cars; big, sleek, colourful, chromium-plated cars, looking like monsters with radiators snarling and ready to devour the careless. When we'd driven through the worst of it, we turned into a garage and I parked until the traffic thinned out.

It was *hot*. We had a snack at a soda-fountain where the friendly girl looked as if she had first come hoping for stardom and still talked like the original dumb blonde. The food was excellent; it has been since we landed. But it's expensive (to us). We've decided to cut out lunch, have fruit instead, and work on two meals a day—if Scoopy agrees!

Driving round Beverly Hills with a guide, there was an interesting sign of the times. Many stars are selling off parts of the grounds of their houses, and smaller houses are being built on smaller plots. Taxation symptoms.

There are a lot of rough edges and more than a few rough diamonds; curtness contrasts with charm, boorishness with exceptional courtesy. But as I drive and as I look round, the thing that takes hold of me is what they've done. It's only a few years, as our civilization goes, since this was almost virgin land. The bridges, the buildings, the roads, all seem to have come as if someone had waved a magic wand. Nonsense? Maybe it is, but one gets—all right, *I* get—an impression of tremendous power and performance, something I haven't sensed for a long, long time. Some folk accept that life's worth living, in spite of the complaints; here, one feels that the vast majority think that life's *wonderful*, there's noth-

ing so big that it can't be done, nothing so difficult that *we* (they) can't do it. Looking back over a half-century or so, there's the evidence; the task was big; to a lot of people it would have seemed overwhelmingly difficult, but it's been done. What comes next?

Tomorrow isn't just another day, tomorrow is another opportunity.

And for today and tomorrow, there'll be plenty of everything to go round for everyone prepared to work for it. I don't think it ever occurs to anyone that the day might come when there won't be. Isn't that as good a frame of mind as any in which to look at the future?

I complained about lack of water because of lack of foresight years ago, in South Africa, India and Australia. Cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles and Hollywood, the great orchards and orange groves, the thriving people, are a living proof of an earlier generation's foresight here.

I wonder if I'll get jolted out of this mood.

AUGUST 2ND, 1951

(Jean)

Charlie Chaplin's home—Footprints in cement—Beverly Hills and a film studio—High and low prices—Lights, lights—We run out of petrol—"What does G.B. mean?"—Our first sky-scrapers—A green Cadillac and breakfast—Oranges and peaches—The magnificent, marvellous redwoods—The shop in a tree—San Francisco's beauty and night life—A twelve-mile bridge—Motels—Yosemite National Park

I've seen the homes of Charlie Chaplin and dozens of stars, and stepped into footprints of a lot of others. At a big cinema here stars have made foot- and hand-prints in cement, and also their signatures; crowds of people try to find out if they've the same size foot or same shaped hand as their favourite star. Most of the women seem to have such tiny feet. We've been through Beverly Hills, dry and almost barren in places, not green as I'd expected. Every film star's house seems to have its own swimming-pool, and they compete with one another to get the most unusual shapes.

The gardens, many built into the hillsides, are beautifully laid out; in the roads where the houses are closer together, there are beautiful tree-lined avenues and sweeping lawns. The houses are nearly all white; delightful. The place *oozes* money.

We've been through a film studio, and had lunch in a restaurant with dozens of actors made-up for a Wild West film. Luckily, we'd met a couple with two boys, so ours had something to do but stare.

It was the queerest sensation, to drive along streets belonging to old Wild West towns—all wooden, mostly one-story buildings, looking derelict but brought to life whenever this particular studio is going to make a western.

There's a big pool, with some tropical fish, a shark and a few other big fish—whenever you see a sea film made there, they're the same fish, a guide told us. We saw lots of "sets", interior and exterior, and I feel I'll never really enjoy a film again. (John says nonsense.)

We've been out to a night-club too; we'd been warned that it would be dreadfully expensive. It was most reasonable, a really good meal—oh, how much better the cooking is here than on that ship!—and a beautifully decorated room, with subdued lighting. It isn't necessary to have a meal; you can come for drinks and see the floor show (very good), all for a dollar or two.

Some things are surprisingly cheap; some are a fantastic price. Cotton dresses are practically *given* away. The selection is almost unbelievable, we never had anything like it at home even before the war. Nylons are cheap, too—and there is nylon everywhere, everything wearable seems to be made in nylon. But woollens and serges are sky-high.

It's so hard to believe that I've just come back from walking along Hollywood Boulevard and Sunset Boulevard—fine, wide roads, jammed with cars. The shop windows are so attractively dressed and cunningly lighted, they almost draw you into the shops.

Lights, lights, lights—there seem to be nothing else, after sunset. It's dazzling, unreal, fascinating. I'll probably keep using that word. *Everything's* fascinating.

I simply had to tell you about Hollywood first, but there's so much to write about earlier on the trip. We cut a few days off the stay at Vancouver and by doing a little extra mileage each day, made up for lost time.

At first the traffic terrified me.

It wasn't so bad in Canada. I was a little nervous about John driving on the wrong (the right!) side of the road, but it didn't seem to worry him. Then we crossed into the States at a little place called Blaine. The customs buildings looked so well together, and there were gardens and lawns outside; a pleasant gateway, with helpful officials. (Oh, I must tell this. Petrol is much dearer in Canada than the States. John decided not to fill up the tank until we crossed the border, and—we ran out? There hadn't been a garage for miles

—but the luck that man has. Nearby, several men were working in the fields. One had a car, at least twenty years old. John went off in it to the nearest garage and came back with a molasses syrup tin filled with petrol—I can't get used to calling it "gas". The driver wouldn't take a tip; said it was a pleasure.)

Soon after we'd crossed the border, the traffic got thicker; from then on, it was nightmare. If John had felt half as nervous as I, we'd never have gone on. Everyone stares at the car. People shout "What does G.B. mean?" as they pass. They gather round us at garages, too. Motorists pull up when we stop, to ask where we come from. They're so *friendly*, although sometimes rather casual, and there's no formality.

At a big city called Seattle, we saw our first skyscrapers. John said they were nothing much, and the boys almost shouted him down. It was Sunday morning and the roads were crawling—no, flying!—with traffic. It's all right if you know the road, but when you're looking out for a road sign and the other traffic doesn't give you a moment to breathe, it's terrifying. I've been no use at all. John always sees the direction signs long before I do. He nearly always seems to know the right road, or, if we take the wrong one, seems to smell it and stops to inquire.

We've started teaching the boys the different States we go through, and what's grown there; they enjoy it that way. Washington, apples and trees. Oregon, apples and *trees*. Oh, we crossed over the Columbia River between the two states at Longview Bridge. From a distance it seemed to be a mile high, and the road looked so steep. It's 1½ miles long and 210 feet above the river.

This was on Highway 101, or the Pacific Highway; there were corners by the hundred, and we never knew what was going to be round the one ahead. It might have been a delightful white-painted wooden house, with carriage or wagon wheels for a fence; or a dilapidated old garage; or a wreckers' yard, where they tow all the cars which have been smashed up. The sight of some of them makes me ill. Cars seemed to become concertinas; no one could have lived through such smashes. "Wreckers' yard" is exactly right, but John says it simply means where they break-up the old cars for the spare parts and scrap metal. I think it's because they collect all the accident wrecks.

A delightful thing happened soon after we'd entered the States. A lovely green Cadillac kept just behind or just ahead of us for an hour, until at a red traffic light, the woman jumped out and ran back to us.

"Say, what does G.B. mean?"

"Great Britain," John said.

"Well, you're English! That's wonderful! Won't you stop and have breakfast with us?"

So we did; they were Mr and Mrs Steynen, travelling with a huge collie dog. The boys rode part of the way with them, then I travelled in their car—it's a five-year-old one, it looks brand new and it rides beautifully. We promised to call on them when at San Francisco, but lost their address. I'm really grieved about that.

Some of the towns are very new and have rather an unfinished look. In places, the road has, too. But now and again we pass through a really enchanting small town.

We'd been told that the redwoods were wonderful trees, but you know that awful habit we have of taking anything Americans say with a pinch of salt. But when we reached them, in north California (oranges, peaches, all kinds of citrous fruit!), I was spellbound.

We drove through avenue after avenue of trees which towered two and three hundred feet above our heads. There are different groves, named after different people—we saw one sign with Mrs Roosevelt's name on it. John checked—apparently timber (lumber here) merchants were going to cut down the trees, so different organizations and individuals adopted great groves, making sure they're preserved—something like our National Trust. To think that *anyone* would cut these trees down is enough to make me vicious.

John got hold of a pamphlet, which said:

600 YEARS TO GROW
6 HOURS TO FALL.

There is a great deal of felling, but off the main road, and big forests have been saved.

I couldn't exaggerate these trees. The boys seem awed by them—although one lunch-time, John played cricket with them in a clearing. I doubt if anyone's ever used a cricket bat among the redwoods before.

Richard won't go far away from the car. There are a lot of bears in the forests, we're told; the boys want to *see* one but we've had no luck.

The tallest tree is 364 feet high; if I'd been told it was 500, I wouldn't have been surprised. There's another, still growing, which was burnt in a forest fire 300 years ago, and the bottom 50 feet of it was hollowed out by the burning. Now there's a souvenir shop inside, hundreds of people can get in! We wanted to drive *through* another tree; big cars do; but Humpy's luggage hump made us too high, so we had to walk. The biggest tree among these has a base 72 feet round. I wonder if giving sizes can convey any idea of their hugeness. It's awesome.

I was really sorry when we left the redwoods behind. But if it

isn't one thing, it's another. We stayed at a motor court at a place called Ukiah—I've never seen to many motor courts in my life. There were hundreds, and all full! We were rather late in (seven-ish) and the boys were tired. Then we found a small one, bright and clean, and with double beds—it's funny, I thought double beds would be archaic in America, but not a bit; and I hate twin beds. Right outside was an open-air cinema. We could see the picture on an enormous screen several hundred yards away but couldn't hear anything the actors were saying, and we hadn't time to go in.

Then we reached San Francisco. I've *never* seen a more beautiful city, or so many well-dressed women and beautiful shops and luxury stores. It's the first place I've seen where I really felt I would like to live. The hills are very steep in places, you can stand at the bottom of a street and have to crane your neck to see the houses at the far end. There's a lot of night-life; John went wild, and bought tickets for a "Night Life Tour". Fascinating—but *not* so good as Paris. We got back to the hotel at half-past two, the boys were fast asleep, and the porter assured us he hadn't heard a squeak from them.

On the way out of San Francisco we called at the big training stables where Des MacCormick and Bill Brown are staying. They seem to be settling in and, like us, they're astonished at the friendliness of the people. The boys rode on a real cow-pony.

Soon afterwards, we drove over *twelve miles* of a bridge called the San Mateo. I'd never heard of it; John had never heard of it. The boys didn't believe it.

"It *couldn't* be bigger than Sydney Bridge or the Golden Gate, Mummy."

Well, it was longer, but very close to the surface—two miles of approaches each side, and eight miles actually over the water. It was so straight, too; the road seemed to vanish, as if we were driving towards the open sea. (The bay, says John.)

We've started having a fruit lunch, stopping about half-past five for a good evening meal, and then driving on for an hour or two. Everyone tells us there is plenty of room in the motor courts, provided we're not too late. I must say I like them. They differ very much, but are all built on the same principle—single-story bungalow-type buildings, sometimes joined together, sometimes separate huts, or semi-detached. Most of them are spotless. One pulls the car up outside the front door and signs on; no fuss at all. There's always a shower, wash-basins, usually air coolers (they're essential, it's so warm) and comfortable beds. Sometimes there's a face-flannel, as a gift. They're ideal—or they would be, if we didn't go for the cheapest rooms and often sleep four in the same room, but dollars

are desperately short. The only thing wrong is that few of them have hooks and shelves; just half a dozen hooks and a couple of shelves would make all the difference in most of them.

You get up what time you like, because you've paid in advance, and just drive off. No tipping, nothing to worry about at all.

We had to stay at a hotel just outside Yosemite National Park, which everyone told us we mustn't miss. When we drove into the park (\$2.00 a carload) we were rather disappointed; it was a kind of valley with great mountains all round, but no views; nothing like so impressive as Grand Canyon, John said. Next morning (after Richard had covered his clothes with purple juice while picking blueberries) we went in again; it seemed to grow on us. When we drove up to Glacier Point and looked down on the valley, it was breathtaking. There are some fine waterfalls, but *the* thrill came at night. About an hour after sunset, a huge fire is built on a 3,000-foot-high peak, and pushed over the edge. The "Firefall" drops 900 feet, a great shower of sparks, which, from below, looks like a red waterfall and is so striking against the darkness of the night. John soon learned that in the old days, Indian scouts used to push the blazing tinder over the edge to tell the Indians down in the valley that all was well.

We waited for it, while people came and asked about the car and chatted, and the boys played with other children and with the deer, which are quite tame. It was the boys' latest night—past ten o'clock before they went to bed.

I do hope they remember what they're seeing. Are they old enough? I keep trying to recall what I was doing when I was seven (like Richard) or eight.

We had a lovely, lazy half-day in another part of the Park, pulled up with campers beside a crystal-clear stream, let our legs dangle in the water, while the boys swam and splashed. Then we looked at the sequoia trees, another kind of redwood and just as awe-inspiring. One, Old Grizzly, is 209 feet high, 96 feet round at the base and 3,800 years old!

Until then it had been hot, but not overpowering. Next day we started out for Hollywood. It was another Skukusa and Nullarbor Plain. There was a haze in the sky, mostly caused by sand blown up by the hot wind; little sandstorms blew across the road in front of us. As the day wore on, I felt prostrate. John *wouldn't* stop; he'd booked at a hotel in Hollywood, and said it would be difficult to get anywhere else. He can be as stubborn as a mule. I wished I were in a cottage in Devon. The traffic got worse. Humpy began to stall. And then we reached Hollywood, and the traffic—I've never felt so dreadful. It wasn't a case of "I could scream", I *did* scream. The

boys were finished by the heat, too; listless and moody; only John seemed able to stand it. He just wouldn't be put off, and we went right into the city.

Thank goodness, the hotel was charming, we had plenty of room and a little kitchen, and it was cooler in the evening. By half-past nine, I was out window-shopping. All John did was laugh.

We had a quick look at Los Angeles—it would have been a much longer one, if we hadn't had to cut two days off the stay here. It's a most impressive city. Oh, last night Mr Molson (a film agent John had an introduction to) took us for a drive round Hollywood and Los Angeles, and we visited the Mexican market. Fascinating! (I knew about that word.) Big straw hats and bunches of imitation fruit so beautifully coloured I couldn't resist one, and funny-looking sweets (candies here). We bought two candles from a little cellar-shop where they had candles of all shapes and sizes, perfumes and colours.

Fascinating!

AUGUST 14TH, 1951

(John)

Chicago on time—Arizona Desert—A wonderful country—The sad story of a mirage—Las Vegas, Nevada—Gallup, New Mexico—A Red Indian tribal gathering—A drug-store friend—A Red Indian village—The old wild West—Family life—The city of gangsters—Our own gangster—Burlesque—The secret of equal opportunity—Humpy stalls—"Don't buy a paper"

Chicago; we've caught up on the schedule. All are well, it's not been so hot, and have we enjoyed it!

I described some of the ground when I was here before, so I won't just write a log of the journey or talk of the marvels, although I must not forget to repeat that Grand Canyon is surely the greatest natural wonder in the world. It affected me almost the same way as it did on the last trip; and would probably have seemed even more breathtaking if I hadn't been soured—I lost our precious ciné. I left it on a rock while taking a still of Richard, walked away, rushed back but—no camera. I've reported the loss but I'm not very hopeful. And here, film is plentiful!

In spite of this, I've reached a momentous conclusion.

This is a wonderful country.

I've stopped in a little township in the middle of the Arizona

desert, where everything is dried up, rain almost forgotten; and found plenty of water, no hint that water might one day be short. It isn't so much older, if it's as old, as some of the settled parts of South Africa and Australia. People from the same country settled it; well, most of them were from England. The problem of finding water was as great. They faced up to the problem and tackled it. (Don't misunderstand me; there are still isolated farms—ranches—where there can be water troubles; but very few. At a little ranch-cum-motor court in the heart and heat of the desert, there's a swimming-pool kept for the delight of casual overnight guests, and it's not postage-stamp size, either.) Water isn't a problem where it was once the greatest problem. It's been captured. The Boulder Dam was a conception so great that only men of great foresight could have contemplated it; and, as with so many things, once it was contemplated and the money voted by a Congress which has its quota of little men, they just went ahead and built it, using—among other things—6½ million tons of cement for a dam 700 feet across the river and 660 feet thick at the base.

Driving the long, hot, dry miles over the desert through a red-tinged beauty which soothed and charmed me rather like the high veld in South Africa, I found myself thinking:

"In fifty years, much of the desert will be fertile land."

At the moment, there are places where it seems that fertility is a grotesque joke. One day we drove through the worst, hottest, most arid land which Americans themselves talk of with a curious kind of respect and apprehension. Great ranges of mountains and vast stretches of sandy desert were all around us. There was little traffic. We seemed to be going from nowhere to nowhere over good roads (not perfect and more narrow than I'd somehow expected, but for desert roads, superlative). Scoopy was reciting the States we've been through.

"Washington, Oregon, California, Ne—Ne—"

"Nevada, just the southern tip, old chap."

"*Nevada*, Arizona—Daddy, look there's water over there."

I looked.

"That's not water, Scoop, that's a mirage."

"What's a mirage, Daddy?" asked Richard.

I went into as much detail as I thought they could grasp, and it isn't the easiest thing to explain. Jean came to the rescue.

"Richard, what fruit grows in Washington?"

"Bananas!"

"Don't talk nonsense."

"Ap—" began Scoopy.

"Scoopy, keep quiet. Richard!"

"Oranges," declared Richard.

"You're a naughty boy. You told me yesterday, and you ought to remember. All right, Scoopy, what fruit grows in Washington?"

"The State of Washington," I said.

"Apples. Daddy, that *is* water."

"Listen, old chap, that's a mirage——"

"Richard, what is a mirage?" demanded Jean.

"It's a picture of something that isn't there!" cried Richard. "Oo, I remembered that, didn't I?"

"*That* water's there," said Scoopy. "I'm sorry, Daddy, but that's not a mirror, that's water."

"You'll see it will still seem to be as far away when we've gone another five miles," I said. "It's *mirage*, not mirror."

We went another five miles.

"If that's not water," Jean said, "I'm drunk."

It was water. I duly apologized to Scoop, who didn't gloat, was content at being right. I ought to have been less cocksure, because his observation powers are remarkable. The water, I learned, was from another great irrigation scheme which is already bringing green growth to the desert sands.

Not far away from us, that day, were the atom-bomb ranges. Another great conception, carried out vigorously, ruthlessly, thoroughly.

An hour or two after my mirage, we drove into Las Vegas, Nevada. On the outskirts was a Frontier Village, rather like a film set, with a village reconstructed as it was in the days of the Indian wars, with some of the old trains which fussed over the desert, covered wagons, wax figures dressed in costume pieces—sheriffs, cowboys, Indian braves, chorus girls. And in Las Vegas was a mass of gambling saloons packed with people, showing the other side, the profligate, spendthrift side of Americans; and, in the side streets, wedding parlours and a promise of brief happiness for the newly divorced who still believe in marriage.

A few days later we reached Gallup and had the luck to find it in the middle of preparations for the annual Tribal Gathering, when Indians from forty-odd tribes would gather and go through their tribal ceremonials and dances. Indians in Western (wild western!) clothes walked, stood and sat about the streets, dark-skinned squaws sat and brooded and stared. Of course, we stayed for the first day or two of the ceremonies and went out to see an Indian village—the Zuni Indian pueblo, where the older folk and some of the younger members of the Zuni tribe live today much as they lived a hundred, two hundred, three hundred years ago; peacefully.

I like this country and the people (with exceptions) so much that it hurts me as much when I read about the way they "dealt" with

the Red Indians as it does when I read what we did to the Maoris in New Zealand, to the Australian aborigines, and to some—not all—of the native African tribes. The white man doesn't come out of the American Indian wars with much credit. Most people here admit it today. Most agree that the Indian was usually a man of honour, and many of the worst excesses of warrior tribes during the Indian wars were due to bitter anger at the white man's betrayal. Of course, some try to whitewash it. Take, for instance, the film *Broken Arrow*, with James Stewart, which I'd seen and enjoyed—always liking Westerns—at home. I've now read the book from which the story was taken. In the film, the Indian heroine was killed by treacherous Indians. In the book, she was shot by treacherous white men. Twenty people or more will see the film for every one who reads the book. That's Hollywood at its worst.

Now, the Indians are getting a squarer deal. Many have been absorbed into the European communities. Some, I'm told, have the best possible education, high school, college and even university, and then go back to their adobe huts and the village tribal life (as Africans desert modern settlements for mud huts and kraals). So this isn't a problem that can be settled by a Congressional law waved like a wand. As far as I can judge, the relationship between white and red, or copper-coloured, is pretty good. At the first night of the ceremonial dancing, when tribes compete against one another for substantial prizes, many of them journeying thousands of miles to do so, a Red Indian chief gave a long, impressive and touching speech, the gist of which was that red man and white now live in peace and contentment with each other. I'd say that both sides are trying hard and that full harmony will really come about one day.

At the moment, one passes little huts, where Navajo rugs hang up, coloured and attractive, and where the Indian lives in squalor; and villages which haven't progressed in hundreds of years; and tribes which were once great and healthy, now broken in health and in spirit. Winning that spirit back is the biggest job confronting the authorities.

With it all, there is the fascination of the old West; cowpunchers with silk shirts of bright red, yellow, blue, every colour; kerchiefs, sun-tanned faces, ten-gallon hats—all on for the ceremonial. Here are the covered wagons, here is the cave where Kit Carson, hero of heroes of the Indian wars, hid from hostile redskins for weeks on end. Here are the passes where the bleached skeletons of men and women and children once lay, those who fell by the way, of thirst or hunger or by Indian arrow, while others went on, manhandling their wagons, burned by the sun, parched, exhausted—striving for the New Jordan, California. And how right they were.

Something of the same spirit is still here. It has different outlets,

but one feels it. I get an impression that much that is best in America is in the West; perhaps the truth is that it shows more clearly because there is not the same ugly veneer of corruption and vice; or the same high pressure.

There's much more family life here than in many places at home. The long summer helps; outdoor sports and picnics or barbecues bring families and groups of families together. They live close to the harshness and the friendliness of nature. They're quiet; and it seems to me that they're friendly for the sake of friendliness. Take the manager of the drug-store where I went to buy a replacement for the lost ciné. I told him what had happened; he told me what he thought of whoever had found the camera and had forgotten to hand it in. He had several expensive cameras in stock, but:

"You can't have many dollars to spend. I've a new one here, the Kodak Brownie 8 mm. I haven't tried it but they say it's good. It's only \$45—less than half the price of a better one. It's guaranteed, too—I should take it."

I took it. He promptly invited me and the family to the great barbecue that night, and the first of the tribal dances. Just like that. Then we found out that we were Rotarians.

It's much the same everywhere. New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri. We left the desert behind, the land was green again but there was no magic.

And then—Chicago.

City of gangsters? City of fine buildings, appalling slums, magnificent main streets, the biggest store in the world, headquarters of Rotary, one building which houses 10,000 different firms, the biggest advertising sign in the world, some of the finest museums—the Museum of Science and Industry has to be seen to be believed.

City of the old-time lewd burlesque—there's one left—strip-teasers, honky-tonks, little crooks, big crooks, ordinary people who laugh when someone mentions gangsters, "they happened way back in history." City of the Lakeside Drive, and I can't believe there's a finer waterfront or lovelier side to any city anywhere; city of millionaires and drug-store clerks, a Windy City and a Friendly City; of the elevated railway which is an anachronism in this modern wonder; city of waiters who will help customers to get the best meal for the least money.

I don't so much *like* it as marvel at it.

Last time I was here it put on a special crime show for me; I followed a murder case with an ace reporter. This time—

Jean and I had left the boys, with full assurances from porters and others at the hotel that they would listen for any sounds, and wandered through the streets. We were just ambling, the lights

were dazzling, the traffic was pretty fast, there was a lot of noise and two men were walking towards us.

We were only a yard or two away when one moved forward swiftly. I felt—I am not exaggerating—the wind of his fist. He smashed it against his companion's chin. I've often been told that "he fell like a log" is a cliché and, anyhow, people don't fall like logs. This man did. I saw him. The back of his head hit the pavement with a "sickening thud", too.

He had hardly fallen when an armed cop sprang from a shop doorway. Another rushed across the road. The assailant was in handcuffs before I could say snap. I grabbed Jean's arm and hustled her away. I looked round; and blood was flowing from the back of the fallen man's head, sluggish, glistening dark red but changing colour as neon lights flashed their kaleidoscopic brilliance.

We went on to a burlesque show. Strip-tease act after strip-tease act presumably entertained the audience, ninety-five per cent men who wore that guilty "don't-tell-my-wife" look. The box office boasted a big sign:

BRING YOUR LADIES
LADIES WELCOME

When we came out, the streets were still thronged, shops were still open, the ordinary folk of Chicago were shopping and window-shopping, and the Stevens, the biggest hotel in the world, looked like a home for millionaires peopled by men whose wage-packets weren't quite large enough to go round.

One thing has impressed us both, in every city we've been to. The huge, palatial hotels and restaurants are open to the man in the street; the taxi-driver will take his wife "only to the best"; there's plenty of money-distinction, class distinction of a kind, but the man in the drug-store, the flash restaurant and the fashionable night-club might just as well be a store-clerk or a bus-driver as a big-money executive or a playboy. It's all mixed up.

Perhaps they've found the secret of equal opportunity. Certainly nothing is barred to anyone—and I am not thinking of the colour problem; I might venture a reflection or two on that later!

"Ah haven't heard a word from dem child'n ob yours," said the porter, when we got back. "Ah done put ma ear against the key-hole two or three times ebery hour. No, sah! I doan want nothing fo' dat, it's a playsure."

First car trouble; Humpy just wouldn't go. A passing motorist diagnosed a vapour lock, and said we just had to let the engine cool, but it soon went wrong again. A small wayside garage did this and

that; no luck. He recommended a garage in Albuquerque in New Mexico, where they specialize in foreign car spares—the only place within hundreds of miles. The garage man gave it a run, said: “Vapour lock, don’t go so fast in this elevation and heat.” He could have sold me a dozen spare parts.

Albuquerque’s a long, straggling city, with the inevitable stream of motels, garages, soda fountains and cafés on the outskirts. We were going to dinner when sirens started going, and about a dozen police cars and ambulances roared past.

“Don’t buy a paper in the morning,” Jean begged. “I don’t want to know anything about that smash.”

We hear of, read of and see accidents and the evidence of accidents day after day. Every day.

AUGUST 18TH, 1951

(Jean)

Aching legs—Las Vegas and silver dollars—Marriage Day and Night—Boulder Dam—Grand Canyon, looking down on mountains and millions of years—The Petrified Forest—Cowboys and Indians—Age 103—The broken bed—101 miles in two hours—“Greyhounds”—Friendly Chicago—85-cent dinners and two dimes

My legs are aching so badly, and I’m sitting on the bed in our Chicago hotel. John’s out with the boys buying fruit for lunch. It’s not a question of what we can buy, it’s just a question of what we can afford; everything’s available.

But I will start from the beginning for once. The days pass so quickly, I never have time to write on the way. We get into the motor courts late, and there’s always a bit of washing and ironing—did I tell you an engineer on the *Alameda* put an American plug on to the iron? There’s a point for it everywhere. The boys usually go outside and have a romp (or a chat with neighbours) while I’m doing the odds and ends and John’s getting the milk, cornflakes, fruit and oddments, and seeing to the car. Then they go to bed and are asleep in a few minutes. I don’t think they’ve had a restless hour on the whole trip.

We started very early from Hollywood, drove through the outskirts of Los Angeles, were given the wrong directions, but eventually got out of the city. It’s *vast*, with three million inhabitants, and it’s said that there’s a car for every three of them. I’m surprised there aren’t more! But the roads were empty early morning. We stopped

at a fruit stall and had some luscious orange juice (rather dear, though) and drove through peach and orange groves for hours.

Then we neared the desert and it began to get really hot. The roads were still nearly empty, long straight stretches on which sixty or seventy miles an hour is almost inevitable. *I've* driven at sixty-five—and been passed by one of the awful "Greyhound" buses, just as if we were standing still; they terrify me.

We were lucky. There was a storm, a few heavy showers which slowed us down, making the road slippery—and it became almost cool; bearable, anyhow.

That night we reached a town called Las Vegas, in Nevada. The boys can't say that properly yet. Nor can I. I wouldn't have believed such a place existed. Nevada is the Reno state—you know, easy divorces. Huge hoardings invite you to Reno every few miles along the road. The gambling saloons! They were incredible. Every kind of slot machine, every kind of card game, roulette, even Bingo, all on a colossal scale. When we'd put the boys down, we walked round with our eyes almost popping out.

Money-changers sat at desks filled with rows and rows of heavy silver dollars (*I've* two as souvenirs), everyone was gambling, bells were ringing, men calling out, there was the three-card trick, poker, faro, and so *hot* all the time. People looked ready to drop, faces glistened with sweat; many looked so fierce.

We went through half a dozen saloons, and didn't bet a cent. I don't think it occurred to us. John was as goggle-eyed as I. We went to a little soda fountain, where a friendly woman served us, heard our voices, and said:

"Why, you're English. *I'm* going to live in England."

She's engaged to a sailor from a country village in Dorset. What on earth will she do? No lights—oh, the lights, the neon signs, so bright and dazzling; there must be hundreds of thousands of electric bulbs, flashing on and off; and great stretches of coloured neon—the whole town seems ablaze. Imagine sleepy Dorset after that.

There's one sign above a gambling saloon called "The Golden Nugget" with a huge figure of a man wearing a Stetson hat, moving his hand up and down and pointing to the saloon. He *winks*.

Next morning, we had a look round and imagine my thoughts when I saw a little wooden house with a huge sign up, saying:

MARRIAGE DAY AND NIGHT
EVERYTHING ARRANGED
GET HITCHED HERE.

There were dozens, all more or less the same. I couldn't tear my eyes away from them, and the boys got impatient.

"I don't see anything to look at here," said Scoopy.

"What is the name of this place?" asked Richard. "Never something."

"Nevada."

"I can say Arizona easy," said Richard.

"Darling," said John to me, "say Las Vegas."

I still hardly believe that Las Vegas does exist in the middle of that desert.

We passed through Boulder City next day, and it's hard to believe that exists, too. Imagine a little village, with green lawns, lovely bushes and trees, looking as if it's been raining every other day, where they hardly ever get any rain. It's a model village. The dam itself is quite new, and so *big*. Everything seems big here. We saw a film (free) showing how the dam was built. It's fantastic. It supplies water to places hundreds—or is it thousands?—of miles away.

The roads across the desert were still straight and fast, although rather narrow for passing; those damned "Greyhounds". Here and there the roads curve in and out of ranges of hills. There are beautiful rock formations all over the desert, and the red colouring is—well, it's perhaps the loveliest sight I've ever seen. Most of the towns are dusty and have an unfinished look, but what can you expect in the heart of the desert? Many of the houses are delightful to look at, and the kitchens—!

John maintains that the Grand Canyon is still *the* greatest natural wonder he's ever seen. I'm not quite sure—the redwoods fascinated me more. But the Grand Canyon is different. You look down on mountain ranges. The colours in the rocks, worn over millions of years by the river, by wind and erosion generally, are beautiful, and they seem to change hour by hour. Shadows caused by clouds floating across the sun seem to make the peaks move. It's so silent, too. Through powerful glasses at different points along the rim—that's what they call the edge of the canyon—you can see the Colorado River rushing along, a mile deep; with the naked eye, it just seems like a muddy ribbon.

I was nervous whenever the boys went near the edge; the Canyon is a little frightening, but not to everyone, of course. To the boys it was just somewhere to throw stones—until we stopped them. There's a little gem of a story about a boy at the Canyon. He was there with his father, who felt rather like John does; awed. It is hard to look at it for long, it seems to draw you. But about this boy. His father led him up to it, was overpowered by the scene, and didn't notice what his son was doing. At last he turned away, and said:

"Well, Henry, what do you think of it?"

"Gee, Pop, it's just wonderful!"

"It sure is, Henry. What do you think is the most wonderful thing about it?"

"I guess that's hard to say, Pop. Gee, maybe it isn't. To think I can stand here and spit a *mile*."

As a matter of fact, I'm not sure the boys were so indifferent. They've often talked of it since; I think it must affect everyone. Of course, they wanted to go into the Canyon on the mules.

There are several Indian curio shops, with Indian leather, silver and bead-work; oh, how I sigh for dollars.

I'd never heard of Gallup, in New Mexico. It was just a town on a map that John said we ought to reach one day. We nearly didn't; he made a sixteen-mile detour over a dusty dirt road to see a meteorite crater, and then wouldn't go in—the fee came to over \$4.00 for all of us, and he said it was a racket! What a man! I rather agreed with him, but now both of us wish we'd paid up; we may never get a chance again.

John's being really mean for the first time, but I think it's partly because he wants to squeeze a few dollars for me when I get to the big cities.

Before we reached Gallup, we went to the Petrified Forest—trees there are millions of years old, and have been turned to stone by the action of the chemicals in the earth—rather like coal. We've brought a few pieces of the "wood" away; the colours are magnificent. *All* the colouring here is rich and varied. I think that impresses me as much as anything. We had a quick look at the Painted Desert, where the sand is rather like a huge, sprawling rainbow. Everywhere are curio and souvenir shops, with Indian work, carvings, silverware; it's hard to decide what to buy on the little ration we allow ourselves.

Then came Gallup. I was *so* disappointed. It's a dusty town, not very big, and it seemed so hot and unfinished. It wasn't long before the boys started to perk up, though.

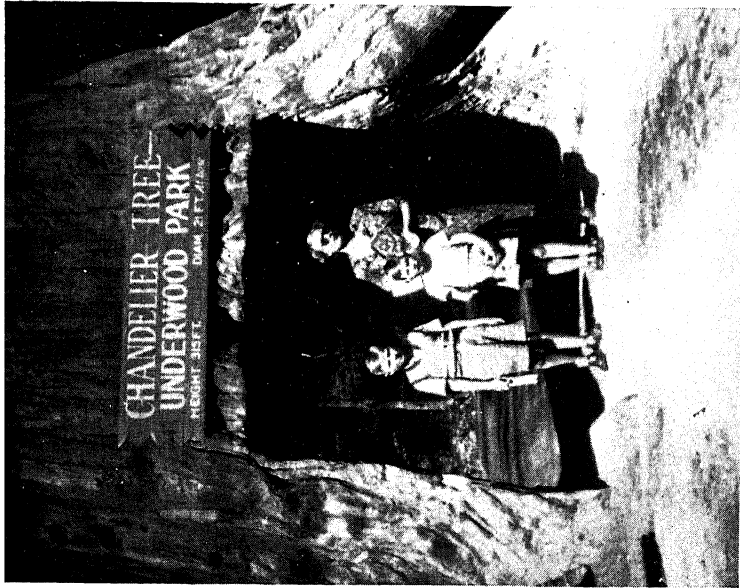
"Look, Mummy, Indians!"

"Cowboys!" gasped Scoopy.

There *were* cowboys and Indians walking along the sidewalk; suddenly, the town became interesting. We started to look for somewhere to stay, and it wasn't easy; there was a big tribal gathering here, starting next day, and most places were booked up. That only happened to us once before. John found a place, and promptly decided to stay to see some of the ceremonial dancing.

Gallup's delightful!

Meeting people always makes a difference. Ira Cato and his wife, her sister and *her* husband, just set themselves out to make us welcome. They've several children, between them, wonderful for the boys. We had a picnic supper out in a canyon—we'd wanted to



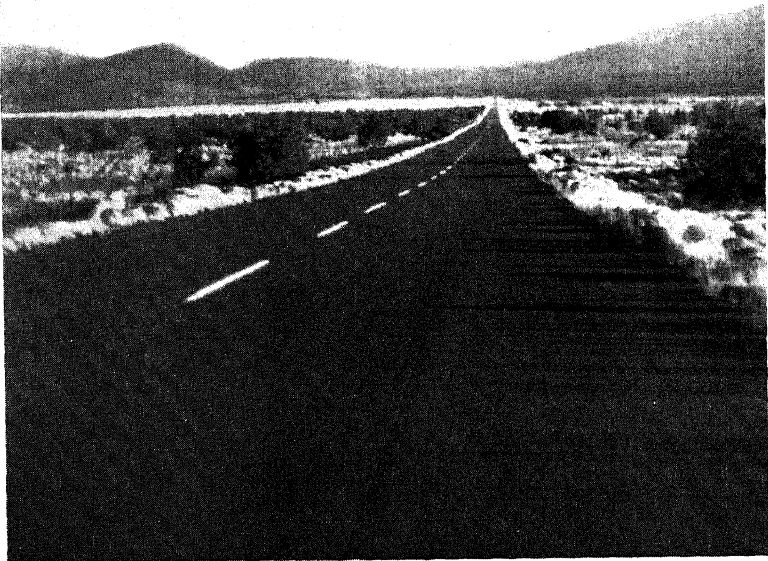
Among the Redwoods, California.



At Las Vegas, Nevada.



A fallen tree in the Petrified Forest, Arizona.



Evening on an Arizona Highway.

go into a canyon as well as look down into one—cooking weenies or frankfurters over an open fire we built ourselves. The food they took! The Coca-Cola they drank! and the fun the boys had, climbing through the dusty cave where a famous Indian scout once hid for weeks. The canyon is really a valley between rocks, and the road leading to it is just a dust track; not dirt, dust; well, sand. The rocks were on either side of us, with a few stunted trees and some scrub. The rock formation and the colouring are beautiful beyond words.

On the second night, Ira and the others took us to the first of the ceremonies—we had to take the boys. First there were great blazing log fires; smoke and flames drifted up and sparks flew everywhere. We were in a stadium grandstand; the Indians were down in the arena. Then the Indians paraded, dressed in their coloured feathers and goatskin and blankets, and in all the glory of their war-paint. Next there were the dances; representatives from each tribe gave a performance, and the vigour and precision with which they danced and sang absolutely enthralled me.

Next day there was a full-dress parade through the streets; I hope to goodness our new ciné works.

We visited an Indian village; so primitive, and so strange to find in America. The Indians bake their bread in little mud ovens that look rather like beehives. We went into the mud-and-wood homes of some of them, and an old Indian woman, aged 103—yes, that's definite—sold us a tiny pottery ashtray, with Indian markings, which she'd made herself. Still working at 103, although she could hardly move. One old soul, who couldn't move and was almost blind, was said to be several years older.

The Indian silverwork and a semi-precious blue stone they use a great deal, is skilfully done; we watched their great patience while at work. Bangles, anklets, brooches, earrings, rings, necklaces, belts are all remarkably cheap although Ira says that prices have gone up a lot lately.

I was furious one day; coming into Gallup, I'd bought a little Navajo mat, for \$1.95. In the Gallup shops the same mats were \$1.00. John says that the poor soul who sold it to us needs the bonus. Isn't it funny how feeling cheated of a few shillings is anger-making?

You hear a lot about the bad manners and behaviour of American children, don't you? Well, the Cato and Stuart children couldn't be more nicely mannered; and the way they've welcomed the boys is really surprising; they're so kind. *Kind*. That's the key to the fact that nearly everyone, even the gruff, rude, rough and uncultured, is likeable.

On our last night in Gallup we were to leave the motor court early to see another ceremony which would end too late for the

boys; and the people in charge cheerfully promised to keep an eye on them. I bathed them and got them ready, and then said:

"If you promise to be good, boys, you can stay up and play for half an hour, after we've gone."

"Oo, we will!" cried Richard.

"Promise?"

"Promise," said Scoopy.

"And no shouting or screaming or racing about," I said. "I'll find out if you break your promise, remember."

"We wouldn't, Mummy!"

I hated leaving them awake; John said I was soft, and they would have a fine old time. But at the stadium, I kept thinking of them—one in one double bed, one in the other; we put them to bed separately and shift one when we're ready for bed.

When we got back the motel was still standing, and the owners gave a good report; all quiet. In we went. At once I saw something was wrong; Richard was very close to the wall, and the other side of his bed was on the floor! Scoopy slept soundly on the second bed, but Richard woke up, and whispered:

"Have you seen the note, Mummy?"

"Note? What note, darling?"

"Here it is," John said.

It was the first note either of them had ever written for me. I couldn't keep the tears back. It read:

Dear Mummy, we sat on the bed bounced on the bed and it broke sorry, Scoopy.

"Is it all right?" asked Richard sleepily.

He must have wondered why on earth I squeezed him so hard.

We enjoyed Gallup tremendously; the place, the Indians, the dances, the people—especially the Catos and the Stuarts—and the motel.

Next day, believe it or not, I drove 101 miles in two hours exactly. I did. Goodness knows what speed John drove at, because we covered 400 miles in less than nine hours, including three stops. The roads were wider and very straight; I enjoyed it thoroughly, except the hour while we were chased by a "Greyhound". We kept passing it when it was stopped, and then it would come just behind us, all I could see in the mirror. It always overtook us when I was driving. The fourth time it passed, the driver grinned down and waved.

Then we had more desert country; the boys learned New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma—Texas had *some* green, Oklahoma a lot—and Missouri, then Kansas. We travelled over part of the district where they had the terrible flood last year; there weren't many signs of it, although we were told that the damage and loss of life and property

were frightful. Then—believe it or not—we reached Chicago exactly on the day John had planned before we left home. From here on, we needn't do more than 160 miles a day. I bet we will!

Chicago's a friendly city, somehow. I've spent hours and hours in Marshall Fields, the big store which makes many of ours look like village shops. It's mammoth. The variety is really embarrassing, and it doesn't make shopping easy.

John *has* been keeping that tight hold on the dollars so that I could have a mild spending spree. I've hunted Chicago for one or two low-priced dresses, and I've a lovely pair of brown shoes; I had to have those, my legs and feet have been so bad in the heat.

I've enjoyed every minute of Chicago, except the walking. In fact, we go about a lot after dark, when it's cooler. Some shops, even dress shops, are open until midnight; the city seems as busy at half-past twelve at night as it does at noon.

Such unexpected things happen here. We were in a cafeteria for instance, having 85-cent dinners—we've learned that you can live cheaply and often get as much for one dollar as for three, if you choose your place—when two elderly men spoke to the boys. Within ten minutes they'd been invited to a day's outing with some local organization, but couldn't go as it was the day we were to leave. So the two strangers gave the boys a dime (10c.) each.

Next day John found a garage where the men went to a great deal of trouble to do everything the car needed, and when we went to collect, the owner put a dollar bill into Scoopy's hand; and a special car-cleaning mop into John's.

I went into a drug-store about one o'clock in the morning, to buy two toys we know the boys will love for their birthdays, which are due in a week or two.

I needed some nail-varnish, but they only had expensive brands.

"Haven't you any of that ten-cent stuff?" I asked.

"I'm sorry, we just haven't."

"I really don't want the expensive bottles," I said. "I have plenty packed away."

"What do you want—just a patch?"

"That's all."

"Come behind the counter and patch up out of this bottle," the assistant said. "Have it on the next customer!"

I suppose it's all so fresh and strange that I can't help being enthusiastic about it. There are things I don't like—the speed, and the careless way so many people dress, especially the young. I've been disappointed in the fashions everywhere but in San Francisco; the women have everything to choose from and so few of them seem to choose well. Everything they wear is good and often very nice, but they don't

match things or contrast colours well. You'd see that, in a few days. They don't seem to *care* what they look like. Teenage girls and pretty women go about in jeans—dungarees—faded and patched, down-at-heel shoes, or an old skirt, as often as not. It's a very free-and-easy life.

I thought I'd be a bit overwhelmed by Chicago, but no. I'm still rather nervous of New York, though. Imagine—New York's only three and a half weeks away!

SEPTEMBER 3RD, 1951

(John)

Differences between the U.S. and Canada—Canada, security and the future—The fine Queen Elizabeth Highway—Ottawa and Quebec—Nerves on the road—Canada, the best of two worlds?

Problem: how to describe, never mind explain, the change which comes when crossing the border from the States into Canada. Answer: it can't be explained; many of the differences are too subtle. Still, I can try.

There's the difference in voice; it's still "American" in the sense that we understand it, but not the same. Perhaps Canadians don't move their lips so much, and I think they speak more quietly; certainly they don't throw the voice so far.

Are Canadians quieter? I think so. More stolid? I don't think so. More solid? More obviously solid, perhaps, in so far as that means sound or reliable; not necessarily more so. Less showy? Well, they dress in quieter colours. I'd say they're neater; Jean says they've more dress sense. More like us? I'd prefer to put it that they have more customs, more habits and perhaps more traits in common with us. To accept that, of course, you have to accept at first that Americans are not at all like us. They're not, as you know; certainly not in temperament.

I've just used the words "Canadian" and "American". If you talk to a more than average earnest Canadian, or one in an earnest mood, he will complain bitterly about giving the citizen of the U.S.A. sole right to being called American; Canadians are also Americans. So there is a pride in being American as well as in being Canadian. (Europe could do with the same spirit.) There's a great deal of largely good-humoured criticism of the U.S.A. and some resentment at political and economic actions by the U.S.A., yet I always have a feeling that this is largely a family squabble.

Family?

On the whole, the Canadians I met this time were fairly familiar with America, could name most of the American—U.S.!—States, pin-pointing them on a map with some accuracy; they were tolerant of American foibles, good-humoured, rather amused by the higher emotional level across the border.

On the whole, the Americans I met knew practically nothing about Canada. Some were surprised that there were French people "up there". A man in Michigan, not a hundred miles from the Canadian border, asked me:

"Why don't you make the Canadians help you people in England more?"

"They help a lot because they want to," I said. "We can't make them."

"Why not? You rule them, don't you?"

I tried to explain but doubt if I convinced this garage- and store-keeper or his twenty-five-year-old son that Canada is self-governing, and not ruled from London, England.

Both sides are conscious and proud of the fact that they share over three thousand miles of frontier which is probably the most open frontier in the world, one which is never guarded—customs officers apart.

I was told by a university don in Toronto that today, Canadian text-books for schools are predominantly influenced by the U.S., not by Great Britain as they were forty, even thirty, years ago. I know that the English version of a mystery novel may sell fifty copies in Canada against 300 or 400 copies of an average American mystery. Yet if I had to summarize the feeling of Canadians generally, I would say that they have tremendous if quietly expressed confidence in themselves and their future.

I think they've cause to be. It's a happy country. The trend of recent Exchequer problems, for instance, is to find how best to give taxation relief, not how best to raise more taxes. Raw materials are being discovered, month in, month out, which make it potentially almost as wealthy as the U.S., yet only the fringe of Canada's great hinterland has yet been prospected for minerals. The complaint I heard from most Canadians was that most of the capital for the development of new finds comes from the U.S.A. In saving our dollars today we have lost the chance of having many more to come tomorrow. The ways of British Governments are often hard to follow; perhaps we would have invested more in recent years had we not seen so much of our overseas investments going down the drain after waves of nationalism. It gave us, I think, an over-cautious if not a timid slant.

The greatest Canadian problem, over the years, has been the sharp political differences between the French, who are mostly in the

Quebec Province, and the British. If I'm any judge, they are overcoming this even if they haven't quite beaten it yet. Both groups seem to be working very smoothly together, and the French suspicion of British intentions seem to have been allayed.

A tribute, then, to a Government which knows what is wanted and finds ways of getting it.

I get an impression, from talking and reading, that the Canadians think and plan a long way ahead and that most of their planning is sound. Their economy has never been stronger and looks as if it will get stronger still. Great natural resources are the key. I've found shortages—never on any great scale—but it seems to me that no shortage is due to avoidable circumstances.

I've heard it said that the English, but not the Scots, are regarded with some suspicion and are less well-liked. I don't know whether it's true; nothing that has happened to me personally suggests that it is.

If I had to settle in one of the countries I've visited this time, and if security and prospects for the two boys were the decisive factor, I'd choose Canada without a moment's hesitation. There are difficulties for new settlers, housing being one, but they don't obtrude so much as they do elsewhere. It seems to me easier for a man from home to settle and to get used to differences here, provided he doesn't move to a predominantly French part, where among other things language will make difficulties.

There is seasonal unemployment, largely due to the severe and, in places, long winters; but there are limitless opportunities outside the big cities. If there's a danger to Canada's future, it is that of congregating too many people in the cities; in concentrating on the industrial to the disadvantage of the agricultural. It certainly hasn't reached the danger point yet and from all the pronouncements of the Government departments concerned, it seems that they are fully aware of the danger and aren't going to let it happen.

In Vancouver, I heard complaints that British Columbia is "forgotten" too often by the Government which is lodged in Ottawa, three thousand miles away; but I also heard that recently the Government seems to be taking more notice of B.C., realizing its great potential and helping to develop it.

I wasn't in Canada long enough to do more than take a quick look, but what I saw I liked, even if I didn't see so much that is immediately attractive as in the U.S.A. That's no general rule. I'd give the Queen Elizabeth Highway, which we travelled from Niagara to Toronto, full marks for being the best road I've yet travelled on; it's much more clearly marked for the unfamiliar motorist than many U.S.A. highways, and it's easier to get off; finding one's way is comparatively simple.

If there's a marked change when going from the U.S. to Canada, there's as great a contrast between Ontario, largely a British province, and Quebec, with a kind of half-way stage in the Ottawa district. If I liked the Queen Elizabeth Highway best, I disliked the road from Montreal to Quebec most. It's narrow in places, often winding, some of the villages are very narrow indeed, the road surface is frequently unreliable—and oh, the driving!

Once or twice when in South Africa I felt a bit scared at the wheel, usually because of bad surface and long drops down the mountainside. In and around Montreal and Quebec I felt scared most of the time. Not a day passed when we didn't see a nasty accident happen, or see the evidence of a recent one. I was really relieved at the end of each day's run. Although the accident rate may be as high in the U.S.A. I was never nervous there. Generally I felt that if I took normal precautions, I'd be all right; I didn't feel that in Quebec Province.

Perhaps the one thing that's developed most in eastern Canada recently is tobacco-growing. It's becoming quite extensive, and as everywhere in the world, tobacco spells prosperity.

All the time I've been here, I've had a feeling akin to: "God's in his heaven, all's right with Canada." Not smug; something built on a steady and increasing confidence. Here's a country that hasn't bitten off more than it can chew. Here, strikes are few and far between, turn-round at the docks is swift, poverty is almost non-existent, there's opportunity for anyone who will work. Work is a matter of pride to most—which doesn't stop a great and expanding interest in practically all sports. Both English and American games have their adherents; I wonder if I'm wrong in thinking that they've the best of both worlds.

Yet, curiously, Canada doesn't thrill—or excite me—in the way of the U.S.A. It simply satisfies. There's no sense of remoteness, as there is in Australasia and, to a less degree, in South Africa. Yes, I like it.

SEPTEMBER 4TH, 1951

(Jean)

Boys have birthdays—"687 Dead in Three Days"—Many holidays—More English cars—Niagara's might—Government buildings, Ottawa—The Toronto Exhibition—A Festival occasion—Two languages again—Lovely Quebec, rain and a green hat—The Chateau Frontenac and an outdoor cinema

The boys have had their birthdays, and loved the train sets we bought them in Chicago. Richard's seventh, on August 28th, was in Ottawa, and Scoopy's eighth, the 31st, was in Quebec. They argued about which city was best! John will have his in New York, if we ever get to New York. The driving is frightening, sometimes. Imagine what I thought when John bought a paper one morning, and the whole of the front page was taken up with this:

687 DEAD
IN
THREE DAYS

"Not in Canada;" I gasped.

"Mostly in the States," John said, "but plenty here. Practically all on the roads, too." It was Labour Week-End—rather like our August Bank Holiday. The bank holidays they have here and in America—everywhere we've been, in fact. Each country has at least twice as many as we do at home.

Funnily enough, I felt relieved when we first reached Canada. We'd travelled slowly across Michigan from Chicago (with two hours in Indiana), stayed at a lovely motor court near Detroit, hunted for the big Ambassador Bridge which would take us into Canada (it cost 45c. when we did find it), and once we were across, the roads seemed empty. It was such a relief after the crowded roads round Chicago and Detroit. The Customs were friendly; John pointed out the Union Jack and the boys cheered.

Many things soon proved to be different. There are a lot of "cabins", not motor courts, and we stayed in one that was pretty rough. The boys played with two or three other children there as if they'd been friends all their lives. The way they take everything as it comes always surprises me.

There are many more British cars here; the boys keep on shouting out:

“Look, an Austin! Look, a Morris. Oo, a Hillman Minx. Mummy! Daddy! *There’s a Humber Super Snipel!*”

Our second night in Canada was a red-letter day. One of the things we didn’t see in America were “Creasey” books. There were a few of John’s under pen-names but it wasn’t quite the same. John went into a little Canadian shop, and came out with two Toffs under his arm.

Many of the things in the shops seem cheaper, but they’re not so well displayed and the towns and villages aren’t lit up anything like so brightly. It’s nice, though.

We were lucky at Niagara, finding a motel within a few minutes’ walk of the Falls.

I’d been all keyed up about the Falls, and wondered what I’d think of them compared with Victoria. I needn’t have worried. They aren’t so wide and they aren’t so deep, but the water that thunders over them—I just stood and held my breath. So did the boys. They say that 114 million gallons of water drop over the Canadian Falls every minute, and to stand and watch it is the strangest experience.

There are two Falls, really—the American and the Canadian. The Canadian are bigger and more impressive in some ways although the others are beautiful. The contrast with Victoria Falls is remarkable. Everything there was in its natural state, whereas everything here has been commercialized. We didn’t go to the American side, but in Canada, it’s done beautifully. Fine parks and gardens, lovely lawns, wide promenades and, near the Falls, only one or two buildings including a really fine restaurant.

We couldn’t have seen more than fifty people at Victoria Falls; it wouldn’t surprise me if we saw fifty thousand at Niagara! We went to see the Falls at night, when searchlights with different colours play on them; and the *cars!* The crowds! And the beauty—it almost hurt. We let the boys stay up, of course, and all they wanted to do was look.

To think that men are fools enough to go over those Falls in barrels. One did, only the week-end before we got there. We went to see the rapids which tear through the gorge nearby; to think of a barrel going down there, never mind the Falls themselves, is—well, it’s crazy. I don’t know whether it’s true, but we were told a story of a New Zealander who went over in a barrel, lived through it, returned to Australia, slipped on a banana skin and broke his neck.

Before we reached Niagara we spent a few hours in a town called Brantford, where John wanted to see the Rotary people who sent a lot of parcels to Bournemouth during the war. All the buildings were old; all the shop-fronts seemed new. I’ve never seen anything quite like that.

I suppose it was inevitable that after Niagara, so much should seem tame. Well, quiet. It isn't exciting here, but there's something pleasant. The Government buildings at Ottawa are very fine, with their copper roofs, some turned green, some of the newer ones looking like gold in the sun. The weather was perfect for the first few days. We met the charming Gilchrist family (Rotary again; John says they put on a typical English roast-beef dinner for the luncheon, made it a Festival of Britain day, and apologized because they couldn't get the Brussels sprouts!). The Gilchrists and their daughter made the boys welcome—like families all over the world—and John spent a lot of time talking politics and economics; as usual.

We reached Montreal—but I've forgotten Toronto!

It's a big city, with a lot of large, rather heavy buildings; and one street—University Avenue—must be the widest in the world. It's so spacious and impressive; and yet quiet. The big Toronto Exhibition was on, the boys had fun on the Children's Fairground (they cater for children extremely well in America and Canada), and we had rooms in a quiet street, found for us by Rotary people. We'd a frig, too; and a gas-ring.

Then Montreal, and our luck seemed to change. The rain teemed down. We got lost. We couldn't find a motor court near the city and some five or six miles out were very expensive. Eventually we found the darkest, most dismal rooms I've ever been in; I hated the place, and John and I sat and glared at each other most of the evening.

The weather cleared next morning, and we went on to Quebec. We soon had plenty to think about. Cars cut in, roared past us madly, swung round corners on two wheels, and we kept seeing wrecked cars at the side of the road. Two or three rain-storms almost blinded us, once we had to stop. The weather cleared again at a place called Three Rivers—Trois-Rivières, we're back in a two-language country—and we had supper at a café where none of the waitresses could speak a word of English. Of course, John aired his French.

"Daddy," said Scoopy, when the girl had gone, "why didn't she understand French, either?"

All along the road were little stalls, with rugs and souvenirs for sale; the wool rugs looked beautiful. John wouldn't stop to take a picture; I think he was too anxious to get the car into a garage or parking place.

The approach to Quebec was very graceful, we found a hotel in the centre of the town—a smallish room for the four of us, though, there's so little accommodation. We managed all right. Then we wandered round the narrow, hilly streets; every other shop sold souvenirs. I bought some tiny figures and a mat. Everything was

so French; most of the shop-people spoke English, but it was heavily accented. I didn't dream any part of Canada would seem so foreign.

Next morning, it was raining in torrents. I'd seen a lovely little green hat, just right for my suit, in a window; I dashed across and bought it, but wouldn't bring it away, because of the rain. That night John collected it and went on to look for some cakes, and came back with the hat in a paper bag which was sodden. Oh, that rain! John took the boys out, because there's no Thomas Cook's here and he'd had letters addressed to the firm, in Quebec. (I think that's the first time his plans have gone wrong.) He inquired at the Post Office, because Mummy's sent the boys some birthday books. No luck there, but when we got back to Montreal, they caught up with us—the Quebec Post Office had sent them on.

We put on our raincoats and went to the Château Frontenac, which is the most magnificent hotel I've ever seen. The walk gave us some idea of the beauty of the little city. I was so fed up. Next morning it was bright and sunny, we had two hours to spare and John stretched it to three. We went round taking photographs. It's so quaint; so picturesque. The coloured roofs and buildings, the old-fashioned Continental architecture, the horse-drawn carts (*careches*, John says) were all painted bright colours. Guides kept offering to take us round. John kept taking the same wrong turning; we've not had to change gear so much anywhere, the city's simply built on hills. It's a little piece of France, set down in Canada.

We couldn't find a pleasant-looking motor court that day, either, and went on and on—I knew there would be a lot of high-pressure driving. We did find a nice spot, eventually, only thirty miles from Montreal. But it was too late for the boys to have more than a few minutes' play.

Thank goodness, luck changed in Montreal. We met the Crouchers, a young couple really determined to show us round. The weather was better. John went to see the Fiction Editor of a Montreal paper, and the first thing he knew, the editor was asking him to take me and the boys to spend Sunday with him. We did; and there were three boys and one girl, all much older than ours, but the patience they had with Scoop and Richard, who were suddenly in heaven! I wonder how much of that kind of spontaneous hospitality there is at home?

We saw a night-club or two; went round Montreal in a big, open, gilded tram, the cheapest form of sightseeing I've ever come across—except walking. Yes, we enjoyed those three days in Montreal.

Just before we left, we got our first "ticket"; John had parked in the wrong place. The boys were horrified. I quite thought John was

going to look for the nearest cop, and pay the \$5.00 fine because he couldn't turn up at the court as the "ticket" ordered. But he didn't; we kept the ticket as a souvenir, and left Canada an hour or two afterwards.

We've been into one of the open-air cinemas—in Canada, but just the same as those we saw all over America. We simply drove in, paid at the box office without getting out of the car, drove to the huge space in front of the screen which looks twice as large as an indoor one, and parked by a post which had a kind of ear-piece attached. We hung this on the window, and could hear the dialogue, rather like a radio, and watch the big screen. It was fun; much better than being indoors in hot weather, too. So nice for young love, too.

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 1951

(John)

New York State and New England—Old battlefields—The Old Mohawk Trail—The best road signs in the world—Utica

We're only a few miles out of New York; in less than an hour's drive and I'll be crossing the George Washington Bridge again. Last time I walked.

We crossed into New York State (which is larger than England) south of Montreal, and meandered through part of New England—no time for New Hampshire, Vermont and Maine, which is a pity—but we've had a reasonable look at New York State, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, as well as a glance at a slice of New Jersey.

The operative word above is "meandered". Apart, perhaps, from Boston, everything, everyone and everywhere gives a leisurely impression; remote from the America of hustle and bustle so popularly conceived at home. There is much beauty. If there are lovelier hills than the Adirondacks, more beautiful lake country, more attractive little towns, I've yet to see them. It was odd to drive and walk through Concord, not far from Boston, and realize that the American War of Independence started there, when farmers more or less literally took up the cudgels. I've never seen a lovelier small town.

There seems to be time for everything; no one really hurries. We've avoided most of the big main roads, which may explain the difference. Many of the restaurants and cafés have a more "English" appearance. Dark wood, old oak, English dishes on the *menu*. More tea is drunk and it's made better than in the West or Mid-West.

There's much less variety among the people; so many come from British stock and most take some pride in it. I've met Americans who are more English than the English—even though they live within a stone's throw of the first battlefields of the war that divided us. There is less open curiosity; few take any notice of the unfamiliar car. Our accent is not markedly different from that of many of the people who live up here.

In some ways it's more English than Canada—much more English than Australia and South Africa. We feel among friends, too.

It's odd to be driving along the Old Mohawk Trail, through green and wooded land, to find roads so much like those in England, and hedges, almost unknown in the other places we've been. And in a country where, generally, road signs are poor and road manners not particularly good (oh, there are always the exceptions, and we've had a remarkable number of instances of friendliness to a strange motorist who obviously didn't know his way) it was refreshing to drive through Massachusetts, where the road markings and the direction signs are better than any I've seen anywhere in the world. You can't get lost in Mass.; but just across the border, in New York State, you can get lost without the slightest effort. I know; we did.

Here, then, is a quiet, thoughtful, beautiful part of America where I feel that I could live in comfort (given enough dollars) and happily, with much in common with the general outlook and way of life of most of the people. Boston is pretty big, the traffic is overwhelming, yet it's less American than many other places in spite of tall buildings, the drug-stores, the ice-cream parlours, the soda fountains, the shops open late at night, the lights and the window-dressing, which is skilful everywhere. The pedestrians walk across the road as carelessly as they do at home, seeing traffic lights as a motorist's responsibility only. A taxi-driver cursed a man he nearly knocked down, and treated me to a diatribe against the Third Party insurance laws; apparently this is the only State where they're compulsory. The cabby blames pedestrian recklessness on to it!

In Utica (New York) we were walking along the street and looking about us, and twice people stopped, smiled, said they could tell we were strangers and could they help us? Refreshing is the word.

I was in Utica once before, talking to the Rotary Club, which sent masses of parcels to Bournemouth's poor during the war. I have never, anywhere in the world, known such spontaneous hospitality; never known a club where those principles of Rotary, scoffed at by many outside it, partly observed by the majority of Rotarians, are put into practice so quickly, freely and cheerfully. I know no one who lives Christianity and Rotary more simply, quietly and effectively than Fred Schwender, the German-born President of the Club.

You should have been at the luncheon when I gave my piece of chatter.

The boys were invited, as Jean was carried off to lunch with the ladies—known as Rotary Annes. The boys sat at the top table, and were greatly impressed. It's the custom to present a small knife and key-chain to the visitor from another club furthest from his home. I won. I'd also been primed that there would be an interruption, and a speaker-secretary jumped up.

"Rotarian John, do you remember where your bedroom is in Bournemouth?"

"Why, yes."

"And where the boys' bedroom is?"

"Yes."

The boys perked up.

"Is yours on the east or west?"

"The west."

"So the boys are in the east room?"

"They are."

"Then *they* live further away than you, they should have a knife each, too."

Two small boys were speechless as they were presented with a Scout's knife apiece, a magnificent one with many blades; and a Hopalong Cassidy scarf and tie-ring. That wasn't all; they were carried off to look at a factory where fishing-rods are made, and came back, almost too full for words, with a fishing-rod apiece; rod *and* line, reel and all the gadgets. Real ones, not pieces of wood with string tied on the end and a bent pin for hooks.

How can one fail to like, to delight in, people who behave like that? How far is it general? Much, much further than one would think, I'm sure.

It's going to be quite a contrast when we get to New York. Or is it?

SEPTEMBER 13TH, 1951

(Jean)

*Lovely, leafy towns—Concord and Louisa M. Alcott—Boston
—130 different beds—Cape Cod and American kitchens—New
Jersey—Getting ready for New York*

We've passed the end of the great suspension bridge which will take us into New York tomorrow. Why *have* I such a queer feeling about New York? As if it will overpower me?

Everything in the New England States we've been through was different from what I expected. Lovely country, friendly but quiet people—even the Customs officials were different. We haven't had a moment's bother with Customs anywhere here.

In Utica, where we were guests of the Club, John had a chat with a high-school boy who works at week-ends and in the evenings at a restaurant. How proud the lad was of his school and of America; and the common sense he showed was remarkable in a boy who couldn't have been more than fifteen.

We bought the boys some shoes at \$6.00 a pair. As usual, Richard was easy to fit but we had to try nearly every shop for Scoopy's. He's so massive.

The weather's been good. Some of the towns are beautiful, with the big lawns, leafy trees which make it so cool—although it must make some of the houses rather dark. The loveliest was Concord—and we looked at the house where Louisa M. Alcott wrote *Little Women* and *Good Wives*.

In Boston, Scoopy had one of his awkward moods, and spilt a whole plateful of dinner over *new* long pants. I was furious, and wouldn't let him have any sweet—but relented before we got back. We took them into a little snack-bar for blueberry pie. It's one of the nicest, although I've never heard of blueberries at home. They're as bad as blackberries for making a purple mess of the boys' faces and hands.

There are no meat pies here; always fruit, rather too sweet for my liking usually, and always big slices. I said in an earlier letter that everything was big, didn't I?

I have the strangest feeling, because the trip is nearly over. It's almost a year since we left home, when the days seemed to stretch ahead for ever, but we'll be settled in New York for over three months, then home. No more travelling—except trips. No more getting up early in the morning to go on, on, on, not knowing where we'll be that night. The voyage back across the Atlantic looks so short, we seem so close to home. I think I'm sorry. I've loved the trip, most of the time. It's going to be difficult to settle down anywhere. Do you know, except at Durban, we've never been in the same place for more than about fourteen days and seldom as long as that. We've slept in over 130 different beds—from the most luxurious to the hardest. Very few beds in America are hard; they believe in comfort.

We looked at some new houses, in Cape Cod—a lovely holiday centre with some of the most charming houses. The prices were pretty high. Most of the houses were one-story, and made of wood—"frame" houses, John says. They must be delightful to live in,

and I don't think I'll ever be happy about an English kitchen again. These have refrigerators, washing machines, washing-up machines, ample storage room and the most ingenious gadgets. There's a little machine fitted to the outlet in the sink; you leave all refuse in the sink, switch on the machine, and it chops the rubbish into tiny pieces and washes it all away. Of course, there's practically no domestic help, that's even more difficult than at home (not so difficult as in Australia and New Zealand though), but housework is made as easy as it can be.

Last night we stayed at a motor court outside a city called New Haven. There was a big pool in front, with a rowing-boat, and the two boys out in the middle of it, rowing madly, put my heart into my mouth. It made me realize how much they've grown since we left, too; the things they can do that they couldn't. And, I hope, the things they know that they didn't!

That place was on a main road. Traffic swished past, day and night, but it doesn't worry me now, and I *sleep*. Just down the road—not in the town, we were miles out—is a big furniture store, and we spent an hour looking round; the hours were nine to nine. Furniture is quite expensive by our standards, and everyone complains about how dear things are getting, but it's so well made and attractive; one feels the quality of it.

Now we're at another very big, brick-built motor court in New Jersey. We could step into the car and be in New York within an hour. I think John would like to, but I want to go in daylight and *not* at rush hour, and get to our hotel as soon as we can. I think New York will scare me. Am I making too much fuss, as John says?

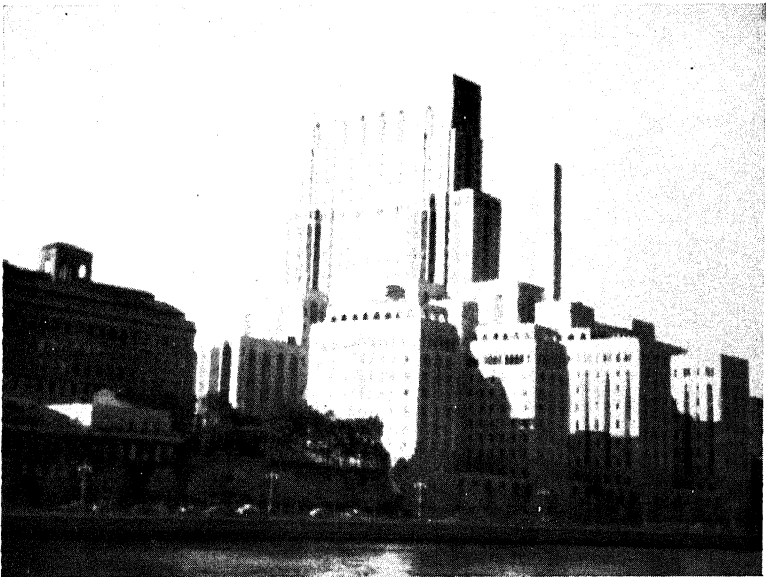
I suppose it's partly reaction because we aren't going on any more. I feel as if we've been away for a lifetime. It's amazing, isn't it, how we've adapted ourselves to so many changes—especially the boys. They're out with some other children at the moment, racing around with guns and cowboy hats, playing cowboys and indians. Richard will come in, almost spotless, and Scoopy will look as if he's been down a coal-mine.

Nothing's gone wrong, and we'll be in New York the day John planned. We've had practically no sickness, no real alarms, we've made friends all over the world. I can even look back on 10 Nairn Road and not be sorry we sold it.

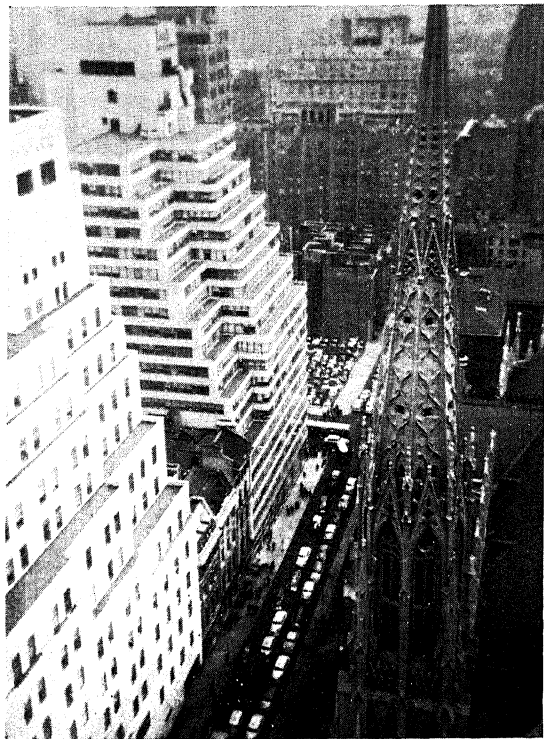
Now I have to press a frock and varnish my nails and get ready for New York. After bathing the boys, that is!



Eagle Men—Gallup, New Mexico.



Cornell Medical Centre, New York.



New York street scene from a 27th Floor. Spire of St. Patrick's Cathedral in foreground.

Atlas in bronze—Rockefeller Centre New York.



OCTOBER 31ST, 1951

(Jean)

Fantastic New York—Getting about by bus—Times Square—Hudson River Parkway—The George Washington Bridge—A helpful waiter and friendly motorists—Skyscrapers—New York from the Empire State Building—Long Island—A bump—The Statue of Liberty—Traffic—The subway—The magnificent skyline—The boys at school—My favourite store—Varying prices—Our apartment—Shopping at 2 a.m.—Going to church—Fashions—American children—Rockefeller Centre—Aching legs again—The butcher's cigar—A cable from home.

Oh, it's fantastic, impossible, unreal and wonderful! I crept into the Hotel Belleclaire feeling like a mouse, and then gradually began to *love* New York. I thought I was going to be overwhelmed and lost, but although it *is* overwhelming, I can find my way about by bus—it has to be by bus, although John says that the huge brightly coloured taxis are very cheap. I wander in and out of the vast departmental stores and the tiny one-man shops, and believe it or not, I bought a hat last night at *a quarter to twelve*.

Times Square seems to be as busy and bustling at midnight as it does at noon; not *quite* so crowded, perhaps, but just as dazzling. The lights everywhere are so brilliant that it seems like indoors out-of-doors. They are on day and night, at the hundreds of cinemas and the thousands of shops, and huge advertisement signs must have millions of differently coloured bulbs flashing on and off. There's one with a man smoking Camel cigarettes and puffing out smoke all the time. We can get a meal in Times Square (and in many other places) at any hour of the twenty-four. At a place called "Ham 'n Eggs" they bang a frying-pan in front of you, with the eggs and ham still sizzling. At about eight o'clock in the evening, theatre time, Times Square is just *solid* with people. You can hardly move.

The first day didn't scare me as much as I expected. You know how carefully I'd planned to sneak into the hotel and get everything unpacked and then venture out rather cautiously. I ought to have known it was a waste of time talking to John. We drove in over the George Washington Bridge, a huge suspension bridge with about ten traffic lanes. Then John pretended to get lost, and we found ourselves on the Hudson River Parkway. This is a wide road with a few turn-offs which runs down Manhattan alongside the Hudson River (which is beautiful). There are two roads and the traffic is

all one way on each, there's a speed limit but oh, how the cars swoosh by.

We just had to go on.

"Good Lord," John said, after about twenty minutes, "we're right at the southern tip of the island. We might as well have some breakfast and a look round among the skyscrapers."

John couldn't find a parking place but spotted a restaurant and sent me off with the boys for breakfast while he looked for somewhere to park the car. I was *alone* in New York. A friendly little waiter speaking very broken English couldn't have been more helpful. John arrived after half an hour. He had been in a queue (they call it a line here) with about six motorists in front of him, and they insisted that the visitor from England should have the first space. Who said New Yorkers were too busy to be friendly?

The skyscrapers! For the first few days my neck positively hurt through looking up. They're vast. But there aren't *so* many of them and you can see the sky, although most of the buildings are much higher than those in London. Imagine us on top of the Empire State Building, hundreds (1,400) of feet up, gapping down at the sea of lights of all colours, huge cars which look like Dinky toys in streets which seem so narrow; most of them really are much narrower than I expected. There are a few dark patches, the East and the Hudson Rivers and Central Park, but everywhere else below it is just a blaze of coloured lights.

It's a wonderful spot to see New York from for the first time—it gives you a kind of plan you never forget. The two rivers show the outline of Manhattan Island, and the bridges—there seem to be dozens—show up as lines of bright lights stretching across to Long Island on one side and New Jersey on the other. The little river dividing Manhattan from the New York State mainland is so small you don't see the bridge clearly from the Empire State Building. You don't see the tunnels, either; there are several huge ones, miles long, and I'm nervous every time we drive through one. You just have to keep to your lane, and the noise makes everything appear to be going faster than it really does.

The bridge we used most, to go out to Baldwin on Long Island (to the Brooks, who have a charming little frame house), is Queensborough. The first time we went over it there wasn't too much traffic and the journey of twenty-three miles took us an hour. The next time it was appalling; we took over two hours. Usually, it takes about an hour and a half. Traffic crawls bumper to bumper much of the time. It's an old bridge, and has two levels, one road on top of the other. Coming off the other day, we bumped into a car—but not much damage was done.

In spite of all the magnificent bridges and tunnels, and the ferries which run to Staten Island and pass the Statue of Liberty (it's so green, I was quite disappointed) and give a wonderful view of the skyline, the bottlenecks are dreadful at rush hours. Traffic crawls. If it weren't for the traffic lights at every street corner, and I mean *every*, there would be chaos. The lights slow traffic down so much, of course, and although it moves in fits and starts because of the lights, it's almost impossible to hurry; once you get to know it, the subway or underground is much quicker. It's noisy, dirty and nothing like so good as our Underground, but thank goodness New York hasn't got *everything* better than London.

Going east to west by road across Manhattan is much more tedious than going north and south. You see, the *avenues* run north and south, they're much wider (several of them are one-way) and the traffic lights are set so that cars can have a clear run for a number of blocks. The *streets* go east to west, and every time you reach an avenue you stop for the lights. I suppose this is why New York itself isn't so fast as I expected, and I'm not so lost.

I've often seen the skyline on the pictures but the real thing—oh, it's magnificent. From the ferry it looks as if it's a huge picture post-card; the most remarkable thing is that it's real and doesn't look it. There are two main groups of skyscrapers, one at the southern (Wall Street) tip of the island and the other in mid-town. You get used to talking of Up-town, Down-town and Mid-town, and to being directed "three blocks south and two blocks east". At first it's confusing but once I had it in my head, it was simple. I go by subway, sometimes, and risk getting off at the wrong station. The *express* trains on the subway really are fast—ten minutes will often do for a journey that would take forty by bus and thirty by taxi.

The boys are at school!

We hadn't been here twenty-four hours before John went to see Dr Mantell, the headmaster (principal) of P.S. Man. 87—which means Public School, Manhattan, 87. It's a big corner building and looks dark and dreary but it's surprisingly bright inside; there are over a thousand pupils.

Dr Mantell fully agreed that it was time the boys had some real schooling and mixed with other children, gladly said he would take them until Christmas, and they went off that very afternoon. Scoopy quickly made friends with a little Chinese boy, Richard soon found a girl who tickled his fancy, and they're both amazed by some pupils (Costa Ricans, John says) who speak only Spanish. Both boys are obviously thoroughly happy, and the teachers are most considerate. There was a Parent-Teachers' Association meeting the other evening. John said we ought to go, and I expected a few dozen parents.

Hundreds turned up—they are amazingly keen on parents and teachers getting together.

The other children have accepted ours without question. Off ours go in their blue jeans and carrying lunch-boxes, and we don't see them from a quarter to nine until half-past three. At first we took them and fetched them back; now we trust them to watch the traffic lights. There's usually a policeman on duty, always older school-boys with whistles, and it's only two blocks away from the hotel.

It leaves me much freer to help John and then sneak off into New York—Mid-town. I usually go to 34th Street where several of the departmental stores are, including Macy's and Gimbels—my favourite of them all. Down I go to the budget floors (bargain basements), and are there bargains! You should see the scramble when a range of goods is marked down to a ridiculously low figure, just to get them cleared.

Prices for the same things vary amazingly. I've seen the identical cotton dress marked at \$24.00 in one shop and \$12.00 in another. I *won't* pay much for anything, because I know that all but the most exclusive models will come down. Once you get used to the sizes and departments, shopping is so easy because everything is available. Do you know that for weeks before Christmas, the big stores will open from nine in the morning until nine at night? The staff will work on shifts.

The most impressive thing to me, especially after Australia and New Zealand, although goodness knows shop hours are short enough at home, is the fact that you can get anything you need almost any time. I've bought milk at 3 a.m. from a delicatessen which sells practically everything eatable. A cake shop next to our hotel never closes before eleven o'clock. Many of the big shops close at six most nights, though. The super-markets are just *super*. I go round, choose everything I want, and stagger back to the hotel carrying it all in huge paper bags.

Yes, we've a kitchen; well, a stove and a sink and a frig. I was frying some *steak* the other day when the boys came home, Scoopy flourishing a card for Special Merit. So I sat down to find out what it was about. He'd found a purse *crammed* with dollars after a bazaar at school, and handed it to his teacher.

How I hugged him!

People here seem to *like* work. Of course, everything is made easy for those who work odd hours—shopping, for instance. The cinemas (movies) are open until very late, some of them all night, as well as many restaurants. There are thousands of restaurants and cafés, from the really expensive to the absurdly cheap. Most are very clean, especially the huge cafeterias and the automats, where you

look through small, thick glass windows at what's inside, and if you like it, put money in a slot and out it comes. I don't like these automats; the thing you want never seems to be there. Food everywhere varies greatly and most Americans seem to rely a lot on sauces and tithbits like gherkins and slices of onion to bring out the flavour; but some dishes are delicious and you can get *anything*. Practically every popular restaurant is open for breakfast, and is crowded out between half-past eight and nine.

John says that life isn't anything like so fast here as it's reputed to be, but I'm not sure he's right. You can certainly live twenty-four hours out of twenty-four. But right in the heart of New York it's possible to live quietly and steadily, without rushing about; you don't *have* to do that. The most modern dustcarts (garbage trucks) collect the rubbish, but little old street-cleaners with brooms and tiny handcarts sweep the roads and pavements, looking so out of date.

There's a street for hats; a whole street given over to wedding dresses and accessories; and drug-stores, which are rather like glorified Woolworths with a corner for the chemist, at every corner.

Every time we go to Baldwin, usually at a week-end when the boys have tremendous fun with Nigel Brook—who was born in Bournemouth but is completely American now—Gail, Lisbeth and Butch, we feel that once we're off the road life is as quiet as in a London suburb. Out at Scarsdale (less than an hour by train from the fantastic, *marvellous* Grand Central Station which is spotlessly clean), where the Hunts—English friends—live, it's almost like an English village. But a garage is always open, and usually a delicatessen. If you run out of milk, bacon, butter, you just pop out and get it—late at night or on Sunday, it makes no difference. But *many* more people seem to go to church. We went with the Hunts to a tiny little wooden church which was crammed full. The Roman Catholic Church at Baldwin holds services in relays, so many want to go. I prefer it to our Sundays—or Sundays anywhere else we've been.

An editor friend of John's, Hans Santesson (Mystery Book Club), has been wonderfully good, and taken us round everywhere. I don't think anyone can know New York better. Night-clubs, clip-joints (they're a *kind* of night-club), restaurants, people, Greenwich Village (which is like parts of London in some ways) or Harlem, the huge negro district of New York, are all familiar to him. He's introduced us to so many people, coloured and white, who are fascinating. I shall *never* forget an evening at a church banquet in Harlem; or many of Han's friends.

It's so cosmopolitan—I didn't really know what that meant until I came here. On the bus I often hear three or four different languages, in the shops and in the streets there's a great deal of broken

English, some so broken it's difficult to understand. You meet it everywhere. Hans has taken us round the German section, the Italian, Danish, Swedish, French, Spanish—every nationality is here, and usually national groups live in the same quarter. You can get French cooking, German specialities, Danish delicacies, Greek dishes—Hans took us to a tiny little café where we had mutton broiled on sticks at two o'clock in the morning, and four Greeks played lilting dance music. We were the only customers.

It just isn't right to say that the people aren't friendly, although people living out of New York do say so. True, when they are rude they're ruder than at home, but we've met friendliness nearly everywhere—in the shops, drug-stores, buses, restaurants, subways, taxis—yes, *everywhere*.

These buses! There's only one double-decker route in New York, and the single deckers are much longer than ours. They're heated inside. I often step out of the hotel where it's cosily warm (we don't keep the apartment too hot) into an icy wind on the street, and then into a bus and get warmed through in a few seconds. It's the same in practically all the shops.

The shop windows are marvellous. The fashions, and—but it's strange about the fashions. There are places, such as parts of Madison and Fifth Avenues, where most of the women are beautifully dressed, but although there's so much choice of clothes I don't think many make the best of themselves. As in other towns and cities, New York women seem to fall for a hat, say, without worrying whether it matches or tones with their suit; then select shoes and handbags in the same haphazard way. I think that's why I didn't feel particularly provincial; I'd expected the height of fashion everywhere. There could be, too, women can dress really nicely on very little. So can the men. John bought a \$45 ready-to-wear suit, had it altered free of charge, looks really nice in it—and had a \$10 rebate to spend on shirts. There is much more careless dressing, and on the whole the men are much smarter than the women. I've never known men fuss so much about matching colours. The children are dressed much more colourfully, especially the boys, who would look strange at home.

There are nylons, nylons everywhere, of course, and just near us (Broadway and 77th Street is between mid-town and up-town) mink coats seem as common as nylon. The most ordinary-looking women drip mink. Furs are much cheaper than at home, but every time I say that John starts to talk about Customs.

I had some *crazy* ideas before I arrived. All New York children are *not* shockingly behaved; nor are they anywhere in the U.S. Some would shame many at home. We went to see "Doc" Wolf (he was billeted on my Mother during the war) and his wife and four

girls in Glenridge, New Jersey. No children could behave more nicely; it's true of other families, too.

Some things are expensive—milk, for instance—but many things are very cheap. I don't think living is all that more expensive than in England, although perhaps that's because I'm getting used to handling dollars.

I know one thing—I'm not going to like coming home one little bit. If you could see a Woolworth's or a super-market you'd understand why. There's everything. It's fascinating. I do wish you—but it's no use keeping on wishing if you could come, is it?¹

I'd first take you to the Rockefeller Centre, a kind of city within a city, with the RKO building of over seventy stories, a wonderful open-air ice-rink (isn't ice-skating graceful?), avenues of shops underground, restaurants of course, and so clean. Then I'd take you on the Staten Island ferry, not only to see the skyline, but to see whole trains being ferried from one of the five boroughs to another. Next, I think, Grand Central Station, the Empire State Building, of course, Radio City Music Hall—oh you should see the *vast* auditorium, and the "leg-show", with girls lined up right across the huge stage. It isn't at *all* vulgar; and all the artistes are brilliant. Then Central Park, where horse-drawn carriages trot round, passed by the taxis and cars; the lakes in the Park are so pretty and from the Park the mid-town skyline at night is like a gigantic fairyland. We'd have to go over the Triborough Bridge, which connects *three* boroughs, Manhattan, Queens (on Long Island) and the Bronx, I *think*, on New York State.

If only my legs didn't ache so.

It's rather funny. John's desperately in need of a new pair of shoes and we went to T. O. Dey's in Fifth Avenue. The salesman promptly looked at *me* and began to say how wonderful the glove-mould shoe was, how it would help my legs. I've never met a salesman like him. John was "sold", and ordered a pair for me and not himself! He says anything's worth trying. I feel it's rather like clutching at a straw, but—

There's a great deal of building going on everywhere, and except in the very heart of Manhattan and some of the Avenues, there are many much poorer-looking buildings than I'd expected; dirty and tumbledown, cheap and yet still fascinating. The Avenue of the Americas, which sounds so imposing, is positively tawdry; Fifth Avenue is superb. Many buildings are spotlessly clean, and they wrap nearly all food, but the streets are littered and often very dirty. You can never be sure what you're going to see next—the butcher, for instance, with a huge cigar in his mouth while cutting up my meat!

¹ This, of course, is exactly as written to a friend in England.

John's booked our passage for January 4th. He's so wildly busy I see very little of him.

Your cable's just arrived, I'm so excited I can't think straight. The boys just don't believe that Auntie B. is actually coming to New York. John's planned a few days for a trip to Washington while you're here. It's wonderful!

JANUARY 2ND, 1952

(John)

Spellbound—"All that's dynamic in America"—Types—Parking troubles—Politics, crime, corruption and smear campaigns—Anti-British sentiment again—Mr Bevan and the U.S.A.—A People to People movement—America's verve and vitality—Tariffs and trade—A lot to teach us—Washington

We're sailing on Friday, and I am still spellbound. People and places affect me in the same way. Joe Morse, who publishes a big encyclopædia and has worked out a devastating system of selling it in fantastic numbers, seems to me typical of all that's dynamic in America. He's terrific—it's the only word. So are many others. Yet how they vary: Joe, on the one hand; quiet, energetic Hans Santesson, with his great diversity of interests, on another. Oliver Swan, my New York agent, who is quiet, "English", loyal to his authors beyond words—the contrasts continue to fascinate me.

In fact it's so easy to enthuse that I deliberately look for the unfavourable side. The habits of motorists when parking, for instance. In some streets cars can (or do) park all night and all day. I go round until I see a space, and squeeze in. Next morning—for I can't afford a garage at \$35 a month—I get an attack of nerves. Twice others have parked in front and smashed Humpy's side (parking) lights. Once, part of my bumper was ripped away. Parking isn't a problem here; it's a major catastrophe; double parking is becoming a habit, and heavy fines have just been brought in to try to cope. It's a gamble whether you can get your car out or not. If you can't, you send to a garage and they move the obstructing cars somehow.

Politics, shall we say? They're difficult for us to grasp at first but I'm not sure they're so crazy as we often think. There's a lot of plain common sense in the way they run elections, and the man the people want usually gets in.

Americans, whether they know it or not, present the gravest danger to Americans. Partly because advertising has become both high-pressured and strident, most people think they have to be sensational to hit the headlines. Perhaps they have. Whether they are simply political opponents of the Administration, genuine do-gooders or dispassionate men who have good reason to want a hearing, too many leaders in various fields use shock tactics. Take the one-time President Hoover, with his periodic attacks on the corruption of highly placed officials; or Edgar J. Hoover of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, who said that serious crime occurs every eighteen seconds, day and night, 365 days a year.

While we've been here one front-page-a-day-for-a-week story has been about graft and corruption in the New York Police Force. Many policemen were sacked. A few weeks later, quietly and without fuss (except the loudspeaker van just outside our window!), the electors of New York put in a man to clean up. Senator Kefauver did quite a cleaning-up job, too. My point—that corruption is continually on the defensive.

On crime I was so taken aback by Edgar J. Hoover's figures that I did a little research. When broken down, they show that there are 4,320 crimes a day in the U.S.A. This is shared among over 3,000-odd counties and metropolitan boroughs; an average of $1\frac{1}{3}$ crimes a day to a county; that's hardly a deadly menace.

Look at it another way. There are 1,576,800 crimes committed each year, on Hoover's figures; assuming that each criminal commits two a year (in fact it is many more), then 800,000 American citizens, or one out of every 190, commit crimes. But wait; *what* crimes? In the only statistics I could find (for 1949), drunkenness accounted for 180,000 cases; vagrancy (begging!!) for 60,000; assault, burglary and petty larceny 60,000 each; prostitution, gambling and even parking offences were included to make the year's tally of crime.

Perhaps this makes it easier to understand why we've lived a quiet, comfortable life, free from all fear of lurking criminals. Mind you, crime—serious crime—is more rife than at home; but it's too frequently and too stridently exaggerated.

Politics here is a profession, and many men owe their jobs to political pull; it's accepted that many officials are politically appointed. That, we could say, is a cause of the trouble. Is it? The professionals know their job, study it and become expert. Ours are nearly all amateurs, full of enthusiasm and often very little else.

American politics *work* in America; isn't that the test?

Truman's administration had a bad time because of these graft and corruption accusations, and some of them were undoubtedly true. Having seen some of the pernicious and nauseating drivels

written by columnists in the New York papers about Britain (the worst, by far the worst, is a writer in the *New York Journal American*) I can't help wondering how much of the corruption talk was just a smear campaign to get the Democrats out.

A factor that sometimes alarms me is the anti-British slant of many of the newspapers; perhaps it would be more true to say of some articles in these newspapers. What causes it? As far as I can judge, it's mainly political. One or two of our daily and weekly newspapers seem to me quite irresponsible, although their comments are mild compared with the Press here. Whenever I start worrying about the newspaper influence, though, I remember how once Truman won when the vast majority of the Press was against him. When are newspaper owners and editors going to realize that the man in the street seems to have some God-given sense about what to believe and what to laugh at?

Still, it's galling to read some of the articles. Great Britain comes in for most of the slating. The fact that we're the second most powerful nation in the free world, taxed beyond American conception so as to rearm, is completely ignored. France, Italy, any old country gets a kind of paternal blessing from most of the Press, but John Bull—oh, lor'!

The curious thing is that responsible newspapers which are *not* anti-British—are pro-British if anything—show the same slant in many of their articles. I would say that it is impossible for any American to read right through the news pages of any paper without finding at least one nasty crack against us. It might be about Churchill (whose personal popularity is tremendous but shouldn't be confused with political sympathy), something like this one from the *N.Y. Journal American*:

"When Winsome Churchill arrives, it will not be for the purpose of comparing appendicitis scars. Winnie hocked everything the last time. This time he wants to sell the pawn-ticket.

"At the worst Winsome is selling us a third world war. At the best he has come over for more American cigars.

"We'll fill one of those orders. And throw in a pocket lighter."

Or it might be the delightful little cartoon in the *New York Times*, with a picture of Churchill beneath the heading: *Letter to Santa Claus*. "Winnie" is shown writing a letter, which begins: "*Dear Uncle Sam, I want...*"

Or from the same newspaper this concluding paragraph of an article:

"It would make another American hand-out a good deal more palatable to the British people if Mr Churchill could couple it with evidence that Britain had successfully insisted on her rights

and made Americans treat her as an equal, not a minor partner."

There's an awful lot in that last phrase. I think the unhappy truth is that the American Press and many of the American people see us as a minor partner. The magnitude of our contributions to world peace, to the recovery of Europe, the maintenance of law and order in many parts of the world, the size of our Army, Navy and Air Force, the brilliance of our scientists and the miracles which the back-room boys keep performing, are all ignored. No American, unless he reads the more exclusive periodicals, could possibly guess what we're doing. His newspapers, his radio and his television don't tell him—unless it's what Mr Bevan said last night. I often find a lot of sense and sentiment in Bevan's outpourings, but on America, as on some other subjects, the man is ill-informed and dangerous enough to be deadly. It isn't wholly his fault; he often gets quoted out of context, but he should prepare for that in advance. Obviously he hasn't any idea what America is like, and he does us infinite harm. I *can't* believe he means to.

Here's a thing we ought to do plenty about—putting ourselves over to the American people. There is so much goodwill here that I'm sure it could be done with comparatively little expenditure. But oh, no. We *cut* our information services. Now if Churchill were to get behind an effort to put Great Britain over, we would really have something. (I had the nerve to write to several M.P.s and suggest how he could make a start. He didn't make one!) The one disturbing thing to me is the worsening understanding between the peoples of our two countries. The critics with their strident voices are heard too often on each side. I see it as a crisis of the first order being dealt with as if it couldn't matter less. That's the kind of blind spot that makes me despair of our politicians. They assume American goodwill too easily, take it for granted, impose on it, kick it around, and look up with pained surprise when someone shows that it wasn't what it used to be.

How I long to see understanding between peoples (Governments would follow) regarded as a major importance, given, say, the same dynamic drive as we put into V for Victory during the war. It's as important. The American people are being fed all the time on anti-British sentiment. Bevan is often quoted as a Voice of Britain. If you believe half the newspapers over here, Britain is the war-monger, luring America into a Third World War. God forbid that we should enter American home politics; but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to tell the American people the truth.

The miracle is that so few of them seem to be fooled; but enough might be to bring isolationism back one day.

There's just as much arrant nonsense talked in Great Britain

about America and the Americans, of course—or there would be, if we had enough newsprint. Picture me as a fanatical believer in a People to People movement across the Atlantic. As a matter of fact, you can now picture me as an unrelenting advocate of a Union of the English-speaking world. Before the trip started, I'd a feeling that the British Commonwealth was strong enough to stand on its own (whether it should or not was by the way). I no longer think so. The force of circumstances is continually pushing Australia and New Zealand into the U.S. sphere of influence militarily (air and sea and, up to a point, land as well) and economically; sentiment and tradition cannot stop that trend. Whether it is popular or not, the United States is the big brother of English-speaking nations, with financial and economic interests and influence not only in India and other non-English-speaking parts of the Commonwealth but also in Europe and all empires which stem from Europe.

Anything and everything Great Britain and the Commonwealth can do could be done better in co-operation with the United States. In fact, there is a form of union today; if we could regularize it, so to speak, then I think a future in which the Western democratic way of life predominates is conceivable for East and West. If we try to regain our economic independence we shall, I feel sure, overtax our strength, as well as make U.S. industry for ever a fierce rival—and for ever lose to it.

How's an English-speaking union to be achieved? Well, better understanding between English-speaking peoples would make a good start; without it, the thing would never be more than a dream.

I wish we at home could capture the tremendous verve of so many Americans; some of their vitality. We win on discipline, mind you, they need much more of that here. It's the old story—each side has a lot to learn about and from the other; and if we had some form of political framework covering us both, the learning would come easier.

Take the selling business, for instance. There is a good demand for certain kinds of English goods, but I sought unavailingly for any evidence that we try to make any specially for the U.S. market or try to sell our products outside the big centres. There seems to be very little in the way of organized attempts to capture the U.S. market. Had a British manufacturer made a small car suitable for the Australian market it would have sold in millions in the U.S., for instance. Our big companies are smugly satisfied with sales of thousands. Except in the East, around New York, I've never *seen* an English car.

Individual British companies send over their salesmen who work under many difficulties, but as for any out-and-out attack on the

U.S. market such as the Germans, the Italians and the Japanese are making—it doesn't seem to exist.

One reason is undoubtedly the U.S. tariff system, which operates against the other countries too. Another is surely the habit we've formed of selling to "our" markets, which in the past were fairly easy; it's a difficult habit to break. Still, we have lost or are losing to the U.S. many established markets; once the pound is freed, and one day it will have to be, we shall lose more. Now India, Pakistan and other Commonwealth countries are challenging us in markets where we were once supreme. We can't sell so much but have to buy more. We can never again, I think, be independent *and* prosperous. But as a partner in an economic union with all English-speaking countries, we could bring great knowledge to bear on the problems of the industrially backward nations and find the answer to world prosperity—the *only* answer to Communism.

One factor which would have to be taken into account is the great national consciousness over here—the pride of Americans, sometimes falling rather loud on English ears, in America. New, first-generation, second-generation citizens—in fact all citizens of the United States—are touched with it and deeply *grateful* for being Americans. They have tremendous confidence in themselves and in their country. So have I! Twenty-five years ago they were strongly isolationist. When one sits back and sees how far *and how fast* the United States has moved towards a form of internationalism, and when one begins to count the unprecedented and almost inconceivable generosity she has shown to other nations, anything short of faith in America is not only ungrateful, it's idiotic. It gives me faith to believe she would enter a union.

I've always found the people much calmer than my newspapers told me to expect; this "war hysteria" is much more a Press attitude than a people's. Many people here agree about that, including some English who've been here for a long time. Frank and Patricia Hunt, for instance, as English as anyone can be, have settled very happily, find warm friendliness everywhere and normal life, much as at home.

Washington and the Administration seem to feel the pulse of the people much more accurately than anyone else does—another indication, I think, that there's a lot of good in their political methods. A reflection—a Democrat might easily scrape by on votes from Republicans; Senators and Congressmen don't have to vote for their own party. Imagine a True Blue Tory or a loyal Labour man going against his party whip and voting for the other side. It's time we stopped thinking that we have the only possible ideal form of government, and stopped scoffing at America's. She has a lot to teach us.

Perhaps it's fitting to finish with a word or so about Washington.

We had a few days there, and the magnificence of the city had a sobering effect on us all. The beauty of the white buildings, the memorials and monuments to past Presidents, the spaciousness, the *calmness*, is something to remember. With everyone we met there was a sense of common ownership in all that's best in the United States as well as in all that's worst. Here, at the gateway to the South, the Administration has been fighting for negro rights—not fast enough for some, yet not so slowly as it might appear. Here, belatedly, the decision was made to enter the first two world wars.

Here, if anywhere in the world, the true weapons of peace will be forged.

JANUARY 4TH, 1952

(Jean)

The miracle shoes—The last packing—American accents—Thirty-four trunks and cases

Just a scratchy airmail which I'll post before we get on board the *Parthia*. The packing's done *for the last time*. It's wonderful, my legs just haven't ached; those shoes have worked miracles for me. The boys don't know whether to be pleased or sorry we're going; nor do I. Humpy has gone aboard—what a friend the car's been. We've only had that one moment of trouble, in Arizona. Or was it New Mexico? Never mind.

We're all fighting fit, the boys rush in and cry: "Hi, Pop!" or "Hi, Mum!" and Richard has an American accent I'm sure will startle Bournemouth. Scoopy's isn't so marked. John's signed a contract, although at one time it didn't look as if he'd have much luck in America, and sold several serials, so even this part of the trip has nearly paid for itself already. We've had a wild rush of goodbyes, and we're waiting for a taxi to come and collect us, our thirty-four cases, trunks and parcels. John's tying something up with string, and—

There's the telephone . . .

It's the taxi. I must fly.

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