

[Hand written]

Read by J. & M. [John & Muriel] Feb 25<sup>th</sup> Sent to Peter.

Please send on to Mrs Wansey

P.R.W. [Paul]

Aunts

Also to Mrs Pettinger The Spinney, Queens Road, Cheltenham

[Mrs Pettinger was Muriel's mother]

[Typed]

P.O. Box No 104.

Freetown.

Sierra Leone.

January 2nd. 1941.

Dear Everyone,

I have been in Freetown a week and one day. It is a captivating little place, and not so little, neither. Its white stone houses with their rusty tin roofs lie thickly clustered around the squat tower of the old Cathedral: they wander here and there on to little promontories that jut out into the bay, and they creep inland up the sides of the hills, like a flock of doves settling in the fields at harvest-time. Like harvest-time too is the warm, dry heat of these tropic winter months. Overhead, the sun's rays beat fiercely down, but from the desert north comes gently blowing the dry, cool Harmatan. So Nature softens the harshness that herself decrees.

I have breakfast and tea at the C.M.S. Bookshop, with Mr Fred Ward: for lunch and dinner we go across the road to the City Hotel, where the fare is plain, but wholesome, and ample to boot. And yesterday the Bishop arrived, and he and Mrs. Horstead are staying for the present at the Bookshop too. They have their own African boys to do for them. They have been idle for some time, but in a day or two, "when the Bishop has finished swearing them in", as Mr Ward has happily expressed it, the Bish and Mrs. H will be having their meals at the Bookshop, and perhaps I with them.

Mrs. Horstead keeps poultry. She had one particular goose: it was marked down for a very special dinner the Bishop was giving, but it flew away the night before, and has not been heard of since. Which just shows, doesn't it?

There is a Week of Prayer on just now, a Universal one. Yesterday morning there was a prayer-meeting at 7 o'clock, in the Cathedral School-room. The Methodist Superintendent, a Mr. Dymond, conducted it. We sang a hymn, and then Mr. Dymond asked for a prayer of Thanksgiving for our Christian Privileges. It was a case of who got in the first word, but I am told the prayer would have been almost the same, whoever it was who voiced it, so that was all right. As far as I can remember it went something like this:

Earnest Christian: Praise O praise our God and King .....

All: Hymns of adoration sing!  
Fower Hiss mussies still enjure  
Ever faithful, ever shorwer!

E.C. O God, we do thank Thee for bringing us to the beginning of this neeuw yeearr!

All: "Ay-men!" "A-a-hh!" "Praise the Lord!"

E.C. Yes! we thank Thee!

All: "We thank Thee!"

E.C. We thank Thee!

All: "Thank Thee!"

E.C. We thank Thee for bringing us to a New Day...

All: "A new Day!"

E.C. Of a New Month...

All: "A New Month!"

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E.C. Of a New Yeah...

All: "New Yeah!" "A-a-hh!"

E.C. Nineteen Hundred and Fowerty-wun!

All: "Yess!" "Aymen!" "Nineteen Hundred and Fowerty-wun!" "New Year! Praise the Lord!"

E.C. Outside de Grabe...

All: Yess! Outside the Grave!

E.C. "Not inside it!"

All: "Not Inside"

E.C. In Time...

All: "Aymen!" "A-ahh!"

E.C. Not in Eternity!

All: "No! Not in Eternity! Praise the Lord!!"

E.C. Some of our brothers and sisters have Passed Over into the Street of Eternity....

All: "Yess! they have!"

E.C. But we thank Thee that we are still in the Land of the Living...

All: "Praise the Lord!" "Aymen! Praise the Lord!"

E.C. And we know there is no repentance in de Grabe...

All: "No Repentance!"

E.C. No Forgiveness after Death....

All: "No! no Forgiveness!"

E.C. Be not deceived!

All: "A-a-hh no!"

E.C. God iss not mocked!

All: "Not mocked!"

E.C. For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap!

All: "A-a-hh!" "Shall reap!" "Yess!"

E.C. But we are in Time...

All: "Aymen! Praise the Lord!!"

E.C. In Nineteen Hundred and Fowerty-wun!

All: "Fowerty-Wun!" "A-a-hh yess! Fowerty-WUN!!"

E.C. A-a-hh.... we pray Thee that it may be to us for Good and not for Evil!

All: "Not Evil!!"

E.C. For Better, and NOT for Worse!!

All: "Not Worse! no!! not Worse!"

E.C. Aymen!

All: "Aymen! aymen!!" (All pause for breath.)

Well, as I always say, in these days, when we see the ungodly flourishing, in the psalmist's words, like a great bean-tree, it is a holy comfort to observe the godly doing the same.

I have got a Learner's Licence to drive a car. You see, English licences do not count, and in any case, it is almost eight years since I was last at the wheel. I am hoping to be at my own wheel before long, but anything on fower wheels in Freetown just now is exorbitantly expensive, even when obtainable. However, I have been given the option of purchasing one of the famous, or shall we say notorious, "Strength Through Joy!" carlets for which I suppose some unfortunate Fritz has been paying instalments these many years. It is a nice little fower-seater, and if it owns me as master I shall feel that I have spoilt the Egyptians to good effect. Petrol is a prohibitive price, and I understand that few persons besides [Page 3] Chaplains can afford to buy it.

.... Well, I have passed my test, and purchased my car. 'Tis a fine low-bodied creature, noiseless-as a serpent I and swifter than a young hart upon the mountains of Bether. Give me a full tank, and a clear road gently curving this way and that, and I will make my Opel

Sing through the air like a hawk to its prey, scarce bound to Mother Earth. A-a-hh, yess! It shore am a mighty fine feelin' O!

Young Africans .are called "picaninnies", or "pikins" for short. But attractive though they may be one-one, in the mass they shore am a tote at o' worry for de pore motoh-cah dribah. I do not know which are the more numerous on de roads, they or the hens that swarm from every kitchen-door; when I pass along, I keep saying to myself, "Mind de pikins, but not de chikins".

Truly, the lot has fallen unto me in fair ground, and I have a goodly heritage, but in terms of filthy lucre it does not quite compare with the chaplaincy of Mombasa, with the princely sum of £410 p.a. attached, which was offered to me before C.M.S. asked me to come here. However though I only receive a C.M.S. salary here, I am fortunately not under C.M.S., and I shall find Bishop Horstead a very much more sympathetic master. He has a large measure of sanctified common-sense, a commodity I did not meet with in the Society.

Freetown is a Sectarian's Paradise; among other blessings, we have chapels of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, whose work in heathen parts is confined to Sierra Leone. This is a conversation overheard between two natives some whiles since:

Zealous Convert, to stranger: Well, an' you go God-palaver?

Stranger: Yess! Sah! shore I do!

Z.C. Dat soh? Den you b'long what sex?

Stranger: Me b'long what sex? Me no b'long no sex! Me b'long Countess Hunting Tom's Collection!

And now it is time to get ready to go out to lunch, with the Bishop and Mrs. Horstead, so I will close.

Love to all  
from  
Joseph.

[Hand written]

Return finally to:

Mrs Wansey, 28B Trafalgar Rd, Birkdale, Nr Southport