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Dear everyone,

Today I have been here for a month exactly, and therefore constitute an authority on West Africa. My goodness how slowly time seems to go when you are doing something every minute, and enjoying yourself in double rations! Well yes, that's not the way most people feel, but when I am happy time seems to stretch on and on.

The weeks events have been as usual: work, parties, not enough sleep. We really MUST start refusing invitations on certain days of the week, but right now it's a little difficult because of the recent happy event, and the resultant firm conviction on everyone's part that entertainment is in order as celebration of same. Anita Price and her husband have inaugurated a system of go-home-early-come-what-may, which applies both to parties which they attend and those at which they are hosts. She invited us to dinner for to-morrow, and added "You will be thrown out promptly at ten thirty!" I wish that admirable spirit were more general.

Last Saturday we had a happy group in for dinner, after which we repaired to the club as usual for the dance. A beautiful starry night and good conversation. The military attache, a gay spirit named Major Heller, turned out to be an excellent dancer, and he and I were showing the world how to do a Main Line Roll, a shag, a fancy dip, and other manifestations of terpsichorean art. The next morning was, in the natural course of events, Sunday. Good old Sunday! Mr. Shantz has been away, but Bill and I acted as host and hostess at his shack at Tarqua, with a large assembly of carefree guests. We felt too tired to dash over the mile or so of burning sands to the surf beach, so confined our efforts to the bathing beach, where we had a perfectly lovely time making human pyramids, fighting each other on other people's backs in the water, getting tanned, and staging swimming races. After the usual copious lunch, everyone fell sound asleep, also as usual, and didn't wake up until just time to rush down to the last boat for Lagos. Hereupon Bill and I dressed for dinner and went out to the British Naval Officer's mess, a perfectly ordinary building on dry land which is known as the H.M.S. "Astraea". The floors are called decks, the walls bulkheads, and when one goes out one says that one is going ashore! Ah, the British! We had a fine time and great conversation at dinner, and no one was allowed to smoke until after the

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port had been served. In short, all very traditional. After which we retired to the wardroom, and someone suggested that we be given an exhibition of darts by the local experts. When the exhibition was over, it was then suggested that the Americans in the party should try their skill, or lack of it. Well, let it suffice to say that between me and the American Naval liaison officer, we cleaned up on the experts! Nick Olivier, the aforementioned Naval Liaison Officer, had played before, but I never had, so the company was properly amazed. However, in the final count I came out only third among the twelve players. Still, England was PROUD of me. We certainly did have a fine time that evening, much to our surprise. We had only accepted out of a sense of duty, and had expected to be bored. But it was most hilarious, on the contrary.

Monday night we rested and actually went to bed before eleven thirty. Tuesday the Major (Heller) and I had a dancing lesson to practice up on our shag for the Saturday dance, and then Bill and I had a fine time in the BOAC mess with Dick Poland, the British representative of the Air Ministry here. A nice youth, whose political ideas correspond with ours and who likewise is fond of Jane Austin, which of course recommends him thoroughly as far as I am concerned. The food at the Airways mess is very good indeed. Bill ate there for six weeks when he first arrived and was living in the Koyi Club flats (one of which I lived in for the first two days I was here, with Sybil).

Yesterday after work I took my courage in my hands and hopped on the office bicycle for a short joy ride. Since it's a man's bike, I had to wear shorts, much to the amazement of the people in town. I had a fine ride all the way down to the European Hospital and back via the Marina (sea front). I wish you had a map so you could see where all the places are that I mention. I feel so silly telling you about them when you haven't the faintest notion where they are.

We had a group in for dinner last night. Our duty invitation to the new Naval Officer, Lt. Barry, who has just arrived from the U.S., our farewell invitation to one of the best people around here, "Colonel" Mafee. The Colonel is from Kentucky. He left Kentucky a good thirty years ago, and has been everywhere since, but never, never, never has one inflection of his pure Mountain accent varied for a moment since then. When all around him lesser characters started saying bawth and actually old fellow, the Cuhnnel remained pure Kentucky. He is a joy to listen to. He is also gallant as all get out with the Ladies, and has the invigorating quality of one of his native Mint Juleps. He is in perpetual danger of running off and marrying lady Baptist Missionaries, who send him home-made cakes and other tokens of esteem at least once a week. He passed through Abeokuta on the train last month, and at the station to welcome him during his short stay was a delegation of Southern Baptist ladies loaded down with what he calls "cawtin' cakes", pickled watermelon, home made jellies, etc.

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I think it was last Saturday afternoon that William and I went out to the goldsmith's, Mr. Hooper. William being sweet and amenable as can be, has consented to purchase and wear a wedding ring which I hope will keep the hussies away whenever we get some place where there are any hussies to be kept at their distance. Mr. Hooper is a native of the Gold Coast, and is the best and most prosperous goldsmith around here. He has an enormous big compound with a modern European style house complete with little side-houses for his various wives and their families. In side the compound are his work shops replete with apprentices. Mr. Hooper regularly runs an ad in the daily press to the effect that he ~~XXXXXXXX~~ conducts an Academy of Goldsmithery to which ambitious Nigerian youths are invited to come in order to learn and improve. He explains likewise that he is a Gold Coaster and might at any time return to his native heath and leave Nigeria to its fate as regards instruction in gold work. The whole thing finishes up with the following words in big type:

"I SHALL PASS THROUGH HERE BUT ONCE"

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I am getting to be a fine feathered code clerk, because since the first two or three days I arrived I have been doing all the secret coding and decoding that poor William had to slave over all these months. I rather enjoy one of the systems, which is nice considering what a lot of it I have to do!

Well, chikacdees, that's about the extent of it. I am still eagerly awaiting a letter from someone in my family. Even if you had waited a month before writing to me, and even if it had taken such a letter a month to get here, it should have been here two or three weeks ago. Hrrrump!

Lovingly,

LPK