



Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation
5th Floor, Hunt Library
Carnegie Mellon University
4909 Frew Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15213-3890
Telephone: 412-268-2434
Email: huntinst@andrew.cmu.edu
Web site: www.huntbotanical.org

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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

26 Aug. 40 -

Dear Miss Curtis,

Your letter was delivered here about 2 months
 after posting: on the other hand nothing has reached
 me from Ireland for nearly 3 months. Such is
 life today. Yesterday I was dining with a
 woman in Alexandria who has 2 young
 children. The little girl returned with an Aunt
 in the winter, but the small boy just started on
 his long stay came in, his mother is uncertain
 whether he may not have been taken to America
 by another relation -

The accretion to my
 letter (wh. you enclosed) must have been incurred
 at some Censor's Office where the discipline was slack.

You are not only ^{well} acquainted with Teomania, as
 a very good brand of Quince jelly reaches my
 fires from the firm of Jones. I am continually
 urging Egyptians to produce (at present for local
 consumption) ham, lamb, & other game, ^{quince} ~~condiments~~
 fruit & vegetables - all of which are excellently prepared
 domestically in better class households, but all in
 vain. They lack initiative & business method. From
 the other hand foreigners take up such enterprises
 they have actually to bring over a certain no. of
 competent experts, for whom entrance visas have
 to be procured. The Egypt. Govt. ^{apparently} ~~apparently~~ ^{do these things}
 sees "why not from Egyptians to do these things?"
 and is unwilling to grant them. Foreign firms
 left to deal with their business in their own way,
 are properly satisfied, w. Govt. and Egyptians
 to their staff, if for no other reason, because the

were paid would be so much lost.
Here at Basy, abt. 40 miles W. of Alexandria,
we are on the road to Italian Libya, most evidently
has been evacuated from the district. Hence the
Bombyls & I remain, & I see a good deal of the
Country at a season new to me and here, as I
checked last June June-Oct. The summer fruits
include mangoes, prickly pears, grapes & excellent
figs - I am trying to get an experiment started
in sun-drying figs, wh. has not been attempted.
One of Egypt's best products is sun-dried dates
- wh. come abt. November - usually I send many
boxes home where they are much appreciated -
the actual cost here is 1^d to 1¹/₂ a pound, so
the only serious change is the freight -

The Italians dispose of large numbers of
troops, mostly from their Tunis & Algeria are out
of it, available for advance in this direction.
However the belt to be passed over is waterless
at this combined with the temperature - probably
30°C by day - may be the reason wh. hinders
on any scale has yet been attempted. Production
of their aircraft has not been as a very great
height, the intention being to bomb the shipping
fleet at Alexandria - All things considered
their air arm seems singularly ineffective,
wh. rather surprises me as their air lines, in
wh. I have travelled, are very efficient. I judge their
boats are not in the east forced on them by
Mussolini wh. possibly supposed we might not
be going on after the French fell out -

However, I suppose a crash is inevitable sooner or later, and this place might also become Battlefield - you have now what many happen in war. So I shall hang on as long as possible and then stand away to some "Healthier" district if or when the occasion arises - not wishing to be interrupted for the duration!

The main interest is at home, where, as I know from my tour, ~~that~~ the spirit is extremely good, esp. since the ~~Swiss~~ ^{Swiss} was reconstructed - But ours is a big task with the coast line of Europe from Norway to Biarritz in French hands.

The cross-channel bombardment is probably just a shop-window effect to try & frighten us - though pretty serious for people living at Dover, Folkestone, etc. But there is no sense

writing about things which have no application by the time this reaches you.

I met a leading Dutchman the other day who told me that still the officials in London try to encourage as they still independent the Germans were threatening to bring them to heel by putting the families of all

Dutch officials into concentration camps; a similar procedure to be employed under analogous circumstances with the French - a swinish trick.

He also knew Verhoeven (who is now chief of all Dutch reclamations). He complained that Verhoeven's chief fault was that he was too enthusiastic as a reclainer of land. I asked for explanations, as after all that was his job - a Holland had to consider future requirements.

27 July 42

Dear Miss Curtis

You letter from Saturday (see dated 2 June 42) reached me
within 2 days, i.e. 2 good days. You allude to other, but the
only previous one for Tasmania dated for Jan 1940, is 1 suppose
(as happens sometimes) the other is here from another source!
I think I can't have read pleasure somewhat of the Tasmanian
Ladies District (2 in Bleekwater) & the other tells me the
"Counties" round about an appropriately named (Littorinae)
Islands (2 bases) has changed magnificently, attracted me since
1822, I was 3 spent in Jersey when I was seven. (Prison)
There was "Little Rosie's" & "The" & "The" & "The" & "The"
Sisters' perhaps, & so to Bleekwater Point, it is fundamentally
an island. I'll go. ago when I was, 20, I spent, in
touch with Tas. I gathered that the uplands were not yet
fully explored, & were in forest, with a few Wrens & Wrens were
wanted here, but to be shot down. Dear Abner

in Patet (on the Saginaw) Mr. Fernald started in the
front of excavations he planted one he called "New
Tasmanian". Both these were killed (at some point)
during the last war, when I saw "New Tas." in 1926.
Surviving Standard forms were certainly 150-170 ft. high

When exported, at once come to me, that Eucalyptus
is the world's source of paper pulp (chemical)
one day told the Frederician who is set about
everywhere by the ~~Swedish~~ ^{Plantations} ~~Swedish~~ who are
exporting into the North (is West of Africa), and
that, as for cere, in Portugal, the yield of Eucalyptus
in paper pulp tons is from 25 to even 100 times that of
Spain in ^{the} same year - i.e. in the same period.

He's tried to inherit the Egyptians in this matter
up to the stage of passing a few 50 Kilometers
of Greek fire under proper firing conditions. If
Portugal can do this, what ^{might} not Egypt do!

But the country is across from line to line of all sorts. A great amount of all. Even the fact that if you fell it, you'd get 25 yrs. # each stump for the next 15 or 20 yrs. like hazels in a copse, & these having reached 50+ ft. in some years, are the best food for the sheep & cattle just the right diameter for deer penicillations. Port-mau here is said to be 60 inches - whereas from the Tasmanian tree - except in the W., where I think 100 in. is reported. Apart from the Tasmanian, is a better one I have always esteemed Tasmanian, Greenland & W. Aust. as possessing a major interest. I suppose you have access to the *Handbook of Tasmanian Flora*? I once sent a copy out - it cost £20.

People have been impressed at hearing of your evacuation of your school. Personally I cordially applaud. The more the more is prepared for adventures the better. I have read a book all China (Dawn in China or such like title, by Jay Homer) that 100,000,000 of the inhabitants had evacuated - mostly on foot - marching 500-1000 miles to the NW where they carved out subtle palaces, thinning out all the rest of it, in the soft Loess. You will find all this confirmed, & don't be too great a hurry to insist into official copies. The private effort in complete hands is the thing. Officials are apt to get in the way & are difficult to remove. To hell with textbooks of history for Austrians! Certificate standards! Just father is an optimist in the 'Bible Journal', & you as to the air, but we all must go to our castles in Spain. I hope the air can give you

a full round of shells - from sufficient for to absolutely hell
- there been up there for 400 years!

I find dunes, a congenial task. These winter by now
many of the dunes are giving trouble, a most inter-
esting experience. Often the water is in excess of the
places, but these provide good transport for a few
I have been ~~travelling~~ ^{travelling} on the bedrock cause
of the trouble here is always the same. Sabotage
i.e. uncontrolled grazing & more exp. habitation with-
ing of scrub & trees by poor people for fuel -
I have even got short of state planting for fuel wh.
will be rational to these poor people (country is poor!)
with severe handling of delinquents. Egyptians say it is
not "profitable", to wh. they mean it is cost more
to raise them than there is reasonable profit from
sales. But I'm not thinking of that, but the
greater losses to him of committed; cultivation,
canals & power stations - machinery, loss of hundreds
of thousands of pounds. But they dislike ~~poor~~ ^{poor}
schemes (wh. are expensive & progressive), preferring to dump
large sums & say "do it".

After five or six years
screw on dust-boards & will send it along. Anyway
it gives you a finer picture than can be found
elsewhere. But in well-watered Tass. you will have
difficulty in recognizing this sort of plague. The
brochure will be rare, as I printed it myself (to avoid
official delays of 6-12 months), after wh. they dropped up
as much of the same as they could lay hands on
(I don't know why!) & in every 400 was the total issue.

We are now on the edge of the Gullfield with all
its clearings & excursions. In peace-time I know it
in detail from frequent camping at different spots -
the air, actually, is alive, sometimes a breeze,

as when at tea time 3 wks ago an enemy bomber
was doing a daylight raid on his own, street one
of our fighters in his tail, order 1000 & last
get away. How close he, he dropped his cargo
at midnight. Let a Personal Settlement killing 17
be. No wound. Personal at pilot of deliberate
intent in this outrage, as school attacks Personal
"C'est la guerre". I expect to find all my emotions
blended in, but they are not. The art of bombing
is not highly scientific in these parts, so we have
very large stores loaded from mines of 2000 + lbs. S.
So far, built thick walls average 50 inches
as their demolition work costs in bombs, one area
legitimate target, we hope for the best.

I should like to have joined your party at
Port Stephens. On the coast further N. are
(or were) plantations of *Eucalyptus* sent out to
Port Castles from Port W. years ago.

I am addressing this to the nearest
who will know how to find you.

Always your sincerely

J.W. Oliver

5 Feb. 1945.

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

Egypt

Your friendly gift - of a part of jam Shley arrived
has been distributed to the satisfaction of drivers;
also the fabric casing was much admired by me.
I shd. have found the patience to put that job
through.

Sometimes I shd. like to hear some
thing about Jas.

Presently you will be more
in the way than Kitheto, if your husband has
good ^{duty} ~~performance~~ there shd. be R.V. units coming in
to refit. Generally they spread themselves all
about in the intervals between operations for
refitting & duty ~~arrangement~~ -

- We have been having lovely rains this winter,
& a month hence shd. have a bumper flora.

Only abt. once in 7 years does our flora justify
its reputation. Here around, excepting, is

as green as England in Apr./May - ^{times} ~~other~~ ~~times~~ and landscape is pure desert.

- There is a small experimental garden
near by where they sometimes experiment
with new things - propagate Olives, figs,
Carrots, etc. to encourage the Bedouins. But
actually Egypt officials hate the desert & never
persist with long-term plans, so their efforts
language & meet a lingering death -

For the moment they are experimenting with Russian Dandelions.
In Russia they yield 6% carotene on the
dry weight of the crop. The yield per acre in Russia is only
30 lb. per acre, & they are stated to have 2 million acres

of this crop under cultivation? What a vast labour! According to ² Sq^{rs} informed - these Dandelions are yielding 10-11% camptolene on the dry weight - a testimony to one marvellous soil - wh. anything are immensely fertile when sufficient water is forthcoming. But it is unlikely that they will carry the matter much further. Apart from barley - the Besonians' staple - another - the fig-gardens do well. The strain is an excellent fig (the Sultani), large, succulent, & a tough enough skin to market without damage. These are grown on the more fixed part of one Dunes - wh. are of white oolite limestone. Below, sweet-water from rain-fall accumulates & the figs are in bearing from middle July to end Sept^r. Merchants' Tories pass daily to take the baskets. On Beson, with whom I deal, told me I took this season more than £400 from his narrow strip about 500 yds. long. All the labour is provided by the farmer, so the money taken is mainly net profit. The Sultani fails to sun-dry properly, so I have been finding out about drying strains from Cyprus & Smyrna, but introduced first was, as to prolong their productive seasons. Some strains (but not the Sultani) are rather tricky about "caprification" & this may prove the Besonians at first. The first year we sh^d. need to import a specialist to attend to this job -

Footnote # It reminds me of an incident of 50 years ago, when climbing in the Italian Graia alps (N. of Coire). We were staying at a high-pasture some days during a series of climbs. Below in a stretch of alpine valley was a vast flock of sheep, as large as I have ever seen, with the shepherd (who was a cretin) used to bring us up every evening to a gallon of milk, the result of a full day's milking effort. At the season the sheep had run dry & each could milk no more than a few drops. I will say the labour was well-spent, as the milk was of a richness & flavour - (unparalleled)

3 lately

I have read in the papers a lot of great dust-storms in Australia - The dust clouds are stated to drift as far as N. Zealand. Still that is the case you must see them passing overhead. I shd. much like to know if this is the case, & shd. dust be precipitating on Tasmania it might be possible to collect a small quantity by placing a sheet of paper, so that what falls is not blown away. Enough to cover a 32-bit wd. surface, & I shd. be grateful. Here, in a severe dust-storm, nearly a millimeter thick of dust with fell in a closed room in 6 or 7 hours. This used to happen during the N. African campaigns when the whole desert surface everywhere was churned up by mechanical traction, but since "the Captains & the Kings departed" this inflated dust-storm has been largely dispersed & we are about back to normal again. Formerly the average no. of D.S. was 5 per ann. In 1942 they rose to about 50. The severe ones drifted out over the Mediterranean, & disfigured the paintwork of naval ships as far away as Crete.

My friend Dickson, 10 years ago, was a lecturer at the University of Cairo, now Col. in the Royal Regiment, recently travelled by air to Australia to visit England to USA; across the USA & Pacific to N. Guinea & other islands then across Australia to the N. Territory. He reports that if things continue as he found them he will expect the whole of Australia to become desert in not a very long time. What do you think?

If I may trouble yet further, wd. you send me a copy of an ordinary Tasmanian newspaper - just an ordinary ^{at random} I find a place at a Country's newspaper gives quite a good idea of the country you're in - especially a small town journal! In England this has been much the case, esp. when the paper was written by members of the printer's family - not professional journalists. They excelled on social occasions, like marriages & funerals. Unfortunately, newspapers ^{unlike} ~~unlike~~ have bought the little rags & merge them in weeklies & ^{consequently} ~~consequently~~ help the country so that the essential character & flavor is lost, & a lot of features which were ^{introduced} ~~introduced~~ eg. Nathaniel Gubbins.

You introduced the Solicitor and appointed Director of New when A.W.H. died? Pearshall has now succeeded him at V.C.L. (A good appointment). J.G. now was ago, has been kept in the job she has filled. Has retired 2 yrs. ago by reason of age. So Pearshall will have plenty on his hands. It appears that during the evacuation of V.C.L. after bombing it was decided to remove the equipment of the Brit. Dept. (wh. has not been touched) to a country place. In transit, apparently, a lot of an physicist's appo. eqs. recording instruments & clockwork, were stolen - also other things.

Anything with any sense shd. have anticipated the menace of such a move by irreparable means, & have put the job into proper hands: e.g. Smith might have been recalled from his retirement to take charge. The office was times & skeletons - staff are pretty useless -

Six months ago the keys of my car were stolen on a moonless night & I haven't been able to re-insure them. So I've to walk everywhere. The culprit was a Russian & the matter was eventually traced to him. However, the police official who interviewed him said, "We shall not be taking further action against you if you will give us information about X, Y & Z - being the thefts of greater importance - of course I get no reward. About 2 months following the taking of the keys, a message reached me by a sort of underground channel, "Would Prof. Oliver sell the carcass of his car for £40?" I sent "Go to 15 Stagers. 6 who. like a reversed 9/11 - for £60 - come from the same source. I told them to tell him to go to hell! This man, who occupies a sort of public position is a bad character, & I should have £500 if he offered it. I have little doubt it was he who investigated the

original theft of the types, so that he is
aware later at a cheap rate the car itself
His job is precisely one where a hire with 2-seater
would help him a lot. But its no use at all
chasing these people with any expectation
of getting further done. I don't see more than a
full time job! Moreover the whole country
is leagued together with the same general
objective. Now that most things that can be
stolen in the desert have gone, they are
attending with towns. Entering houses &
Grabbing what they can in a few moments
— often I expect, with a collaborator in the house.
At Victoria the police took from a lobby the
collective evening dress of most of the masters;
in another case ran up stairs & stole all the
lady's frocks for a wardrobe. Or, if nothing better
is showing they are content to take an armful
of washing, drying on a line. One ought to keep
fire-arms & suppress: I don't, as I shd be sure
to shoot the wrong person!

You will be amused at Abdul's "basic English".
He is my friend's nephew — nearly 16 yrs. in my service.
We decided for the first to learn him English & took some
little French. Shd. he leave the premises on a household chore
he will tell me at starting. Thus, "Go keep water, come"
This means he is going to the pipeline with a trolley
& bring me back for the purpose & then to wait & listen.
i.e. "Keep" with Abdul always means fetch & come
= will return home promptly. I had correct Urdu Abdulisms
& cd. write an amusing character sketch, magazine article
on him. He has many admirable & a wonderful sense of
humour (I unconsciously) who has run through —

He is a very good man, but he is a bit of a thief. He is a very good man, but he is a bit of a thief. He is a very good man, but he is a bit of a thief.

7. Incl. eggs -

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis

9th

A little while ago I wrote asking if you get dust from Australia falling in Tasmania, I shd. like a small sample - $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. wt. sufficient.

This can be collected either indoors as it falls on any horizontal surface, or outside, in a more or less sheltered place, using a rough textile to collect - e.g. a Turkey Towel.

I'm not interested especially in the rate of fall, i.e. weight per unit area in unit time - $\sqrt{15}$ whether there is differential precipitation on route that I can after there is contrast of dust surface from the nearest localities right up to my doorstep. With the ocean intervening makes this possible. For comparison I shall get a genuine Australian sample from Prof. Baskin at Sydney, & a N. Zealand sample from H. H. Allan at Palmerston N. It is an intention

gmine to work out the dust-job in Australasia — I am only hoping to use the chance of comparing the several dusts after travelling various distances overseas.

My reason for troubling you with the second letter is that I am uncertain whether the previous one was explicit enough. We need ^{to} synchronize these little collections — that is, need no end of pre-organization.

I realize that dust storms may be out of season for the moment; if so I can wait patiently till they inevitably renew.

— Last week I was cruising with my ~~close~~ ^{close} ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~vicinity~~ ^{vicinity} of cruisers, destroyers, aircraft-carriers & oddments. They are refitting hereabouts for future ops. All most interesting esp. the deck landings of aircraft on the carriers.

Yours very sincerely
F.W. Oliver

5
 Oliver to Burdick
 7-III-1945

P.S. - Did I ever tell you that I have
 remembered the Robert J. B.B.
 Le Tall who went out in the 1880's as
 headmaster of the Indian School?
 He was a great character & sent me
 several letters at the time alt. Tasmania
 wh. middle interest you. If I can discover
 them when I get home I will send them
 along. He had, I remember, to shoot
 down fruiting trees of some of your
 indigenous *Gymnosperms* - *Microcarpha*
Baeriana, perhaps. To reach the
 forests where they grew was, I understand,
 quite an adventure at the time. He
 once sent me a well-remembered crate
 of apples. I am for him I sent out a crate
 of ~~apples~~ ^{fruit} ~~fruit~~ ^{fruit}.
 We were some I wonder, with a class
 excursion to Baerham Beaches
 during that time. We all sat on the
 rim of a depression with a particularly fine
 beach tray on its distant edge. We had a
Sesuvium (12 each) across its width at
 4 ft. from land. The *Sesuvium* was
 from 16 to over 60 ft. But when
 I added up all the guesses & divided by
 the no. of entrants it worked out within
 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of the measured girth, wh. I think
 was of the order of 37 ft. I was reminded
 of the method by seeing in a little propagandist
 pamphlet of Bader's ("Men of the Trees") a
 photograph of the selfsame tree. At home

with the boys, as an ⁶objection for
cycling excursions, we often made for
some famous tree, & then ind. dly
measure it. Trees of such
were rather found to have been
singled out for the honour, &
generally offered hospitality on such
occasions. One when I was
still quite young, did an early
wood-cut of a famous ash tree
- near Godstone & ~~Thing~~ illustrating the
technique of taking true-girths.

One of the lectures published in
"Treasures of British Botany" 1913
was on Robt Brown. by J.B. Hume
- very good indeed. Alas! He died
last year. We were about of an
age, & ~~thus~~ laid down our sceptres
in London together in 1929.

14 June 1945

from Oliver

Egypt

Dear Miss Cartwright

Had we a well known local Communist, I would I expect, your Gazing article on Tarnment & where a prominent feature of the next few months. However, my only hope is illiterate, consequently no potential subscribers. Once only, for a few months, was I actually interested in journalism. The idea was a weekly to be named "The Shore Line" & it was to appeal to all shore-dwellers in [or Coast-line] British territories everywhere. There is no element

in populations more isolated than the shore-dwellers - lines of communication don't actually run that way. The Cromer-Bloxherry-Hamstanton road is exceptional. Politically, shore dwellers are swamped by the inland voters of the parliamentary constituencies of which the shore is a negligible strip. Incidentally, these people, politically naive, were to be grouped in long, narrow coast-line constituencies, at least 2 or 3 miles deep. The big parts are different. They get their own representatives, but their interests are different, in large degree, from those of the non-urban shore-dwellers.

Such a paper I am sure wd. have been widely taken up because their interests all the world over are substantially the same thing, for different angles. One agent wd. have been the local chairman of parish councils, school-teachers, ministers of religion, publicans, doctors & leading fishermen, with here & there a local squire & farmer.

I was just getting on terms with Lord Overthelpe abt. 1910 when he went ill, & died abt. 23 yrs. ago. Himself, I sh. have taken no editorial share, but might have had a cut of watching brief as a member of the board. So that's that.

Your remark - "There is a tremendous amount of erosion" - tree-felling & overgrazing - impressed me. An island abt. the size of Scotland, with a climate comparable to that of the British Isles, & a population not exceeding that of Leicester or Croydon. This shd. not be.

The map of T. in my atlas is abt. $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. across & appears to show a very well-watered country. Perhaps the forestry dept. may be able to issue an air-survey making plain the amount of felling in progress. My only source of informⁿ is Whitehead's Memorandum for 1938, where it is stated that "a company has been formed with options over large areas" i.e. for pulping - if so, the operations of these gent^ls will need watching.

I think that your various "legislative bodies" are very small - 18 in the "Council" & 30 in the "Assembly" - this ^{opposite} ~~is~~ the Government very great powers of abuse. I know nothing of Tasmania, but a New Zealand Rst told me how things were arranged in his country. Where the constitutions are relatively few it is easy to pick out the "doublets", & in advance of an election appoint a ~~few~~ sufficient no. of officials, or plausible jobs in such districts, so to ensure the party in power being returned on the next occasion. A relatively few constitutions rigged in this way appears to suffice.

All these free treats you tell me about need financing, & one presumes this underlies the options to the pulp^{ing} Co. In an island with poor road comm^{un}it^{ies} one supposes logs will be floated 10th five months - i.e. if the rivers are capable of floating down the timber-rafts. If this is so it means that felling will occur mostly in the river valleys, which as they are denuded will become liable to erosion - more & more - i.e. an insidious form of suicide.

Oliver to Curtis 14.VII.1945

The "bush-mill" at Adventure Bay is presumably
a euphemism for saw-mill!

The Wotho Fagus Cunninghamii is lovely timber.
V. Threlles in his "Select extra-tropical Plants" (under Fagus)
is eloquent as to its virtues. I envy your father the combina-
tion of talents he is able to focus on the same front. He
reminds me of the father of my old friend Sydney Chapman,
a mathematical professor at the Imp. College of Sciences, who
thinks this way (in Sydney) has been chairman of the War Office
scientific advisory Com^{ee} - the (the father), quite as old man,
keeps the establishment, at Wimbledon, furnished with
every conceivable garden product, besides having a variety
of ~~other~~ side lines. I take off my hat.

What I wonder is the actual standard rate of income tax
in Tasmania? With me everything is based on England
so that available income to spend is abt. 2/5 what one
once fondly hoped it might have been! I don't recall
capital, as many do people do, as that makes a bit
more on my income for the cost of living is kept
with the tax has mounted x 3; I don't know whether
to pay on the house, & no rates as the district
does nothing - absolutely nothing - for residents. So I rule
along mostly living on fruit. Oranges ran out a month
ago, but I still have grape-fruit - ever since December.
Last month & then till (mid-end) Sept. com and local figs,
th. are magnificent, grown on the isolated dunes by the
shore. Locally they cost very little, 2^d a pound, I don't see
Blex men but they sell at 3 times + that. It's the
"Sultani" strain & a lucrative exploited for the more
far-sighted Belouiss. One man told me he cleared last
season over 2/400 fr. his patch - a small strip on
the sheltered side of the dunes, perhaps 500 yds. long. A
useful feature is that their skins are tough enough for
travelling without deterioration. There are Pomaraneetes.

6 Dec. 25

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis

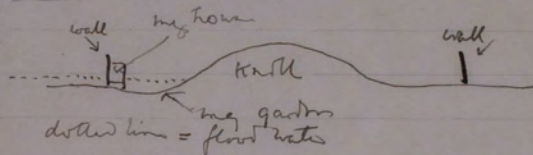
Air mail to Australia from Egypt
appears to be a 1-way affair,
so this will reach only after the N.Y.!

Many thanks for sendings, which are
instructive.

Winter, such as it is,
is starting here - & heavy rains.

This village is built on a little knoll
my home being on the border. 5 miles
away was a cloud burst 4 days ago
with a great rush of soil-water (run-off)
ab. flooded the ground all about
up to perhaps 3 ft. On 3 occasions

in 10 years this has happened, but
never quite touched my own hill (on left)



This time it was more than a foot up
the wall & covered the garden at 2 sq.

holes, laid with the ground, & then it remained, knee deep for 2 days. till it cd. penetrate, as the water could get away till the land outside fell. This was so terrible for the Loma itself - wh. is raised 4 ft above ground level - but it made traffic difficult, so the I was practically a prisoner. The most troublesome feature was the immense quantity of dust the flood swept up - turned like pea soup. This remained like a layer of glue 3 ins. thick after dark, & was taken a month to do out! Nature's revenge for dabbling in such matters -

He left on 1st Dec. after liberation of Singapore & making his way to Sydney to confer with his opps. no. of the British Pacific R. & on the way back was held up 4 days at Perth (W.A.) awaiting his aircraft back. He found the place & its people & brought me a nice bunch. After, at the Club, met people who

early in the war were stationed
 here & Bourc, & used to come in
 here for occasional refreshments. I
 think they were rather amused,
 & the reason the water got in was
 because it came at night & un-
 announced — otherwise we sh.
 have blocked the aforementioned hills.
 { Geoff is now en route England
 with calls at Melk & G.B.
 He expects to be home 8-10 Dec.

You may perhaps recognize
 the plants enclosed of 15 yrs ago!
 wishing you all the best

for (Mrs. Stirling)
 J.W. Stirling

G. was astonished to find the shops at
 Perth fully provided with goods
 — so different from the bareness of England
 the last time I saw of stuff for the Xmas-
 trees

Dear Miss Curtis,

I am grateful for your sundry sendings & hope they may have been acknowledged by this time. Apparently a letter went from here 7 Dec. wh. probably covered £15. to me about the New Year. Your "Mercury" sendings give me the Darmerian milieu as envisaged journalistically - so no more of them, please. Journalism is today-tuesday: then remote & beautiful places are left to the droops of the professors - mere reporters of the commonplace, who neglect their best & most opportunities. Just imagine how different it wd. be were writers with one tenth the ability of, e.g. R. L. Stevenson attached to the staff. The Mercury is run probably by ex-globes, & yet who wd. gather it divorce from what is (or once was)

Is not our island? Its just the same here - the Egyptian aspect. It reflects mainly the oppressions of the monarch, the tyrannies of the local patriarchs, the spicier effluvia of the caracole (i.e. police work), the comings & goings of which are the means discontents of the native population: with just a background of imported matter (fr. Fleet St.)

- Nat. Gabbings or Hygate -

Your bunch of prints fr. the E. coast - trestles & translines
or Fin-washing: is there any measure of the annual area of
forest so devastated? This mining is probably soon under Govt^{mt}
licences - or have the owners of ground also mineral rights?

Shale from place in left where the sand (underlain in
ages past) yields 15% (by weight) of magnetic oxide of iron.

— you need only drag a magnet to fill a sack —
but I don't disclose these discoveries — not even to scientists
who will only pass it on. the picture of

what presumably is Russell, I should have recognized. You appear in some photos of Schelst marches (1930) but the features are hidden in the shadow of a coal-suttle hat, so I can't compare them. May you have mellowed into something which should remain for any duration - hide it or not? When you go on a "tram" do you just walk along the tracks ^{runway} or are there "tubs" on wheels? Is the way one is taken through the tunnels & galleries of the salt mines at Hallen, W. Salzburg - a thrilling adventure. Deep in the mountains is a chamber - the "trunkum" - where are shown boots & clothing of Roman workmen, etc., who built the lives in rock-falls; the tools then in use, & so on. The temperature is constant - hasn't moved a degree since the invention of thermometry. There is a visitors' book where you sign. The climate is ^{neat} ~~perfect~~ when the little trolley (wh. takes 8 - in time, fore & aft) descends from one level to another, at an angle of 45° , when your life depends on the driver & the functioning of the brakes. The driving force is gravity, & a cable to pull emergency from the mountains at a much lower level than you enter. The gear probably is just as it was 2000 years ago.

— Somewhere I must have a few long letters fr. B.B. I still written from H.H. in the late 1800s or early 90s. If when I get some, other st. have survived the blights & evacuations, they shall be sent out - or copies - later when I sent me a crate of apples or rather APPLES - something quite different from what you describe. But perhaps the high-grade qualities go into the export trade. I am curious of your fruit (Gornbenits, currents etc) for wh. we get no substitutes here. If peaches, wh. you mentions, we get good crops on Limpschelt (wall plants), but I got them big by removing more than half after flowering. One famous year

I sent a small box of them to Gert - at Ryeham & whole Island or wherever he eats - then at dreamlike hour

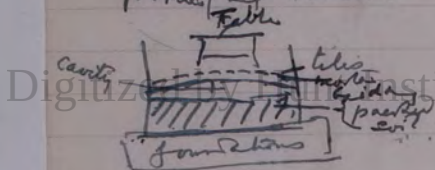
3 1/2 inches, & I saw mighty good of them. The bunches at 500 ft. & it was ~~about~~ a question in my mind whether they wd. ripen, as I grew "cathies", to be sure. Some neighbours at 650-700 ft. couldn't ripen these within the span of summer & produced just hard balls, which merely rotted if pulled - I want to give "peach" trees to get them eaten at the peak - I rather agree with you about Transjores. If there is to be a stoneless variety it wd. be better - messy things: perhaps there is?

The paw-paw is one of our very best fruits but only available privately for 2 or 3 qtrs. in Blanchard.

A friend with a well-found garden buys me generously. Her pawpaws average 18 in. long & sh. has a tree now carrying 70 fruits. The trouble with the p.p. is that the sexes are on different trees, not readily distinguishable till ^{almost in bearing} ~~the fruit is mature~~. Consequently if you are growing for the market or for a bit of local trade you may find half your plants ^{subject to overage} of males - which means waste of land ~~and~~ ^{the} ~~circumstances~~ encourages the Eg's cultivator - who, naturally, has plenty of other, fool-proof, outlets for his enterprise -

All the same I think it might be worth while to run a considerable cultural experiment to determine whether after all it might not be possible to distinguish the sexes at a very early stage. You will recall the cases of stocks where ~~selection is possible~~ ^{selection is possible} at the seed-pan stage to discriminate between ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~vegetative~~ ^{vegetative} characters as far as to ensure planting out only the doubles - in which open children, from their very sensitive periods of observation, are found useful (advanced practice) - [cf. Dr Vries, Plant Breeding, Bryan Paul, 1907 - a commentary on the experiments of Nilsson & Burbank]. Do you know Willard Hall's ed. of Burbank's autobiography in the "Thinker's Library", No. 76 (Watts & Co, London, 1929) published originally at 1/6? I am sure you have read it. Burbank's honesty which has defrocked his "stock" all the same in spite of some lapses, is a great merit not to be summarily dismissed.

Here the outstanding event of the winter has been the
 severe floods of 29 Dec. 45, which exceeded anything in
 local memory. I have known fr. cloud-bursts on
 adjacent ^{plateaus & hillsides} in a very wet period, leading to excessive
 run-off into the plains, with extensive temporary
 lakes submerging all but the highest shore trees -
 Bear & Buck stands on a low rocky mound &
 only its fringe was involved - but some neighboring
 houses stand on this fringe - of 3 previous floods
 in 10 years, none has touched the ramparts, but
 this one stood in my garden to a depth of 4
 to 4½ ft. for 36-48 hrs. It kept up the
 first steps a flood the ground floor, which was
 principally result a "ballooning" of the reflecting floor



It's a big room where 20 can
 be assembled for a meal.
 Some time has to be spent before
 anything can be done towards re-

conditioning: The place had to dry out, materials
 salvaged assembled - In the garden over, where
 inundated the existing water left ½ inch of fine
 intensely sticky silt. We removed abt. 12-14 tons
 of this stuff from the garden. Now the tiles (1200)
 have been removed & scraped clean, ready to relay,
 the material below removed to a depth of 1 ft. & re-
 placed by stones, covered with fine soil & beaten down.
 Cement is now being mixed & a relaying shed.
 be complete by tomorrow night. The same I
~~not~~ escape light with negligible cracks in un-
 important places. About 110 sh. costs the job. Some
 of the neighbors here much worse trouble - meaning
 cracks & leaning trees - one of them estimated the damage
 at £100. I was lucky in being able to get 7 sacks

of cement - wh. is controlled - All these mixtures wh. are the foundation of building, have just the same importance as mixtures in cooking! If you can make good penicillin soups & bread you are on the highway to be a butcher! Contractors tend to starve mixings of the more costly ingredients & get away with it, as the civil results only mature later on. However, we'd no contractor in this case.

This troublesome visited? is mainly due to the recent reformation, anti-social practices of the adjacent dist. gds. officials canalizing in various directions, with strategic bands to bring maximal amts. of run-off to the gdn. & so save themselves trouble in pumping for irrigation. Each fresh flow makes it easier for the next. However we are strong enough to stop down that practice, part

of what works well to be dismantled in a spill-way constructed to lead off waters above a certain safe ~~low~~ depth. The amt. of soil carried down is out at from 50 to 65 tons per acre - the soil

of course representing the residues of the gorged "dust-reservoir" deriving from the surface-disturbance of the active campaigning period. So you see I've been in at the death, oddly enough my sword

on the 6/1/50 of dust storms appeared in the Geogr. Journal, of Sy-ong. 25, issued just about the date of this flood!

Inevitably the flood temporarily upset the balance of nature - so many animals, including beetles, ants

& other insects, live in the ground & had to cut & run - all kinds also fed habitually on the ground, also evacuated (residents)

the factor that mattered being the study slime wh. they w. be unable to clean off their feet. Notable the

clow of sparrows wh. I fed on my veranda with trout & crumbs. The bird series, on being fed. I thought them to cheat on the slime, I threw stuff down. They are of course unable to pick it up on the wing. [love for P.S.]

on the other hand I don't get the beginning of doing both more completely. I don't know if the present, go down.

5 July 46

from Oliver

Dear Miss Twiss,

Egypt

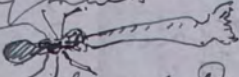
Like you I once learnt Great. m. sing, I think under
Mr. Picher's tuition at B.P. - employing proper
West. Technique, not Balkanized. But the 3rd day
my lungs were registered for A.S.P.'s Position
only as flesh in the pan, & was adopted as a practice.

Here, we draw Sophies fr. Alexandria (as a good local
beetle - a Great w. Czech - disappeared in the war.
For me one long leaf [redacted] suffices,

but in summer time it is difficult to avoid the
~~ravages~~ of *Penicillium* by the 5th day - like
whites stored dry in a tin, or in the ice-chest -

Thanks for beautiful photos. The only hostile
criticisms relate to placing the chest & cannot combine
across a corner. The only exceptions sanctified by
tradition are little Jack Hornes (only justified by the
easy rhyme) & the naughty boy who expiates his sins
by confinement within its precincts.

3 little trees or as some wd. say "inherent shrubs"
have established & spread in my garden patch without
any invitation of mine, viz. *Cestrum Parqui*, *Caesalpinia*
Gilliesii & a *Cassia* we call "eremophila", for 'worth' of
an authorized name. These few, following the flood &
silt, they wd. 'fallow', become dominant &
Apert fr. their attractiveness that is interesting is
that not one of the trio is ever visited (i.e. has
been seen to be visited) - save a note by some
legitimate insect, & yet they are all heavy
seeders. On the other hand *Oxalis corniculata*
is smothered in beds, & yet never sets seed
here, nor I am told does it in S. Africa -
Incidentally, *O. corniculata* perhaps aware of this deficiency

- or contraindicate perhaps - multiplies by bulks unimagined,
 a menace to tidy gardeners - of the trio the
Caesalpinia (Kind of Parrot) is amazingly beautiful
 with its erect conical yellow racemes fringed by
 long, exserted scarlet stamens - esp. when seen
 by transparency as the sun approaches the horizon.
 Harvester ants wh. have a H.Q. beyond my
 garden wall come at nights in their thousands
 to collect (1) the full tubular corolla of *Cestrum*
 wh. carry much honey of ^{unn}usual sweetness at the
 base.  Very interesting they work

struggling along with their huge hump-backs, esp. in
 a line - (2) they also take the capsaules - or if
 pile up seeds near the nest they are quickly removed.
 The most curious at present are the
 calyces of *Stetia macrophylla*, wh. they carry intact
 to the nest, with seed attached - a thin away later

the calyx on the kitchen misdeeds. Also on
 occasion large-eyed workers ("soldiers") take home
 the coiled spiny pods of *Medicago*, fr
 wh. later the seeds are extracted with
 split sections of the pods ejected fr. the nest.

If ants in procession carrying their loot w. be projected
 on the screen, more or less magnified to the size of
 human beings, it shd. prove a huge draw. But
 there are technical difficulties to be overcome - esp. the elim-
 ination of their shadows, wh. are far more conspicuous
 than the ants themselves (our Harvester, here work
 nights only); conceivably the show might be given
 as a "shadow pantomime". What was Karl Capel's
 "Insect Play" - I never saw it
 time -

Your father is a mighty craftsman in wood. ~~He is~~ Encl. is a print of the dresses in my refectory; wh. was made in this village; we have a carpenter who does good work when he chooses. The design I took from an old illustration ("William Morris") fr. wh. I made a scale drawing to work from substituting drawers & a cupboard as underworks (wh. was empty space in the original). The wood is beech (which it might have been quercus photographs!). You will note that the top part of drawers - benches is not in alignment - but I found sanctions for this in other pieces of merit. I think the most important thing in a dress is to get the width & height in a proper relation, so far as it shows. This can only be judged by eye - to arrive at wh. I first put up a sort of dummy in scotch - for drawers, I am all for wooden benches, & little brass handle or plates round a keyhole. I have an otherwise excellent sideboard turned out years ago by the same ~~old~~ ^{old} craftsman school but it is largely ruined by these metal accessories. The total charge for the ~~sideboard~~ dresses (incl. cost of timbers) was just about £7.2. - Calicut maker was cheap enough 10 yrs. ago: I have a genuine chipmunk chair copied by an Italian ^{in brief} to make a set of 8. including the leather seats, they worked out at 19/6 per chair. On comparing the actual workmen - ship - that of 12 Italian was far superior to that of (I suppose) English country carpenter who worked from chippendale's patterns.

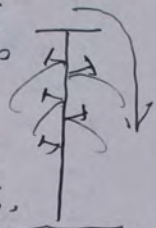
Encl. are a few seeds, & I will add *Caesalpinia Gilliesii* next time - but quite ripe yet. Meanwhile carry on with the *Lagunaria* - it is a huge job, I will explain next time. I mean "it must be" coals to Newcastle - as it derives from Norfolk & Home Islands - YD. Most truly J.W. Oliver

17 July 46.

Dear Miss Curtis,

Enclosed is the third seed, omitted from the previous sending, viz. Caesalpinia Gilliesii (as I suppose) yellow-flowered racemes with long exserted scarlet stamens. It should grow in pretty full sunshine with a green background for its proper display.

Also a few seeds of Helianthus annuus strain "Golden Pigeon". The type flowers as in fig. - terminal capitulum first - then others centrifugally. The seeds are taken fr. a ^{unique} specimen that produced the term! cap. only - no laterals, not even buds.



This seed from the first a deliberate act, i.e. the plant will grow up as enormous primary capⁿ & refused entry fr. any attempt at after-disposition of the plant. When atomic bombs get properly placed "out of bounds" perhaps people will turn to these plant hormones, auxinones & what not, & we may get control of what Wells crudely dreamt of in his "Foot of the Gods". I send the sample so you can grow it & see if it comes "true". The capⁿ was stored in here & a whole lot of many flowers were pollinated from the same head.

I had from E. S. Clayton, Soil Conservⁿ Service (Sydney, N.S.W.) an article on "Soil Erosion". Australia has been too long seceding on this matter & has its ^{numerous} ~~stake~~ up. The point is, if things are allowed to continue ^{unchecked} the continent will be unable to feed & carry a population adequate to defend it from its potential enemies. Japan, from this crisis-angle unstable, is so carefully cultivated

most, with far, standfirst in the world's
control of soil.

Apart from W. Europe & a few favored spots,
all the continents seem involved in this
"Degrading" & to a great extent a vast ^{world-wide} service of
reclamation must arise wherein botany, agric.,
forestry, soil treatment & engineering must have
a principal share. The engineering will include
both the civil branch that deals with ^{large} ~~large~~
sources of water (bundling, canals, irrigation) &
the mechanical side wh. handles pumps & devices
for shifting rocks & soil. This s.d. deals with
a fine preparation for the propagation of the best gene-
ration, & of propagandized agriculture, s.d., interest
can the more or less inert & stupid mass of the
populations & leave to distract them from preying
on one another. The original "Creation" of the world
must have been child's play compared with what
confronts it today. Indeed the world looks
like somebody else's bad joke.

I thought Chaston's seemed quite good up to a
point, but I think it unwise to over-frighten
people. A strain of optimism is necessary.

"SAVE AUSTRALIA - You're just in Time."

Too much attention is given to "saving human life" - all
the new drugs, &c. only prolong the agony.
In a world fast night there s.d. be little employment
for "doctors" as we know them today - they're "the cart
before the horse"! Yours sincerely

J.W. Sholto

17 Dec. 1966

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis

With all the material world between us there's little sense in aiming at a target, like Christmas - movable, you see the antipodes & a mid-summer Christmas is unexcusable -

So I posted a bk. at random, addressed to the Family (though primarily of intent to your father; sk. he surely possesses a copy) let him feel perfectly free to pass it on to some fellow craftsman. When your mother has once more returned to the normal sphere (which I ardently hope shall have happened ere this season arrives), or your father can resume his hobby at the bench & conserve his shoe-leather, he may find this little book suggestive. Why not a gate-leg table? It wd. combine utility & beauty. Here in this house I have two: one, a "genuine antique", (17th cent?) picked up in Winchester 50 years ago; the other I took over from Prof. Newberry when he left Giff 14 years ago. It was made by a student at the "School of Arts & Crafts" 30 or 40 years ago (and)

+ technically admirable - nearly 6ft long & 1 1/2' broad.

Or, sk. he incline to a dresses - how splendid it would look in your orthopaedic Cunningham. You wd. notice in the little photo of mine here that, contrary to tradition, I insisted on the drawer handles being turned, wooden knobs in preference to brass drop-handles - wh. artistically are incongruous - at least in the scheme of keeping them bright. As to locks & the ornamental brass plates commonly used - there are another - both artistically & economically. A dress is for constant domestic use & there is no point whatever in locking the drawers. It is an anti-burglar gadget - it is really silly: I wd. not be likely to remove the drawers, but only attraction contents like plate, table mats & so on. I locked the wd. new burst open the drawers

2

I beguile you the ^(at night) ransomed remains! Here
nothing is enclosed except the grille wh. marks the
entry. This country perhaps holds the record for
pilferage, but in 12 years not the value of 1 million (=
has been stolen fr. the Louvre. The matter (1 farthing)
of the car-seizure in an open garage was isolated
& different - probably I told you all about that?

Shd. you further embark on a dressed the important
problem of dimensions in relation to the proposed site
is all-important: i.e. height & length, position of shelves,
with the panels, to avoid too much tendency to pigeon-
holing: also, here & there & in woodwork, vertical ribs
not to be produced right down to the "deck", but end
bracket-like; also extreme austerity of ornamentation;
nothing appliqué - of course my little experiment
is far from perfect - a first effort. Your enquiries
to the Carpenter's reaction: there was some, except the
fact that the blue-print whereon
all dimensions were given in centimetres, the figures
being duplicated in Arabic [27 = IV]. I inspected
it in the shop & finally when finished the cost-
(in three days) was trifling, betw. 5 or 7 £. inclusive -

Also I had a set of chipendale chairs (copied from
an authentic specimen I brought out fr. home - of good
vintage) done by an Italian craftsman in Alexandria -
in beech, at a charge of 19/6 each, including leather
covers for the seats. And his carpenter was, definitely,
superior to that of the English 18th century country
carpenter. But for price this was far in excess of
of a set of 6 chipp. chairs (2 with arms) done for me
by a famous Cambridge craftsman, by name Peake, in
1883. These were in mahogany & the 6 cost £2.2 -

Peck, as I remember, used to drink a good deal, & if he saw his way to prompt cash he didn't worry about prices. He was so competent at his job that he could secure all he wanted at their almost right, the charges. 25 yrs. later a man who was an expert in old furniture happened to remark on one of these chairs with arms (how well mellowed) - I said, "are you sure it's a genuine period-piece?" - "Oh, yes", he gave me 3 reasons! I hadn't the nerve to enlighten him. He had already said, - "that chair wd. certainly fetch £25 at auction?"

When I was living in Jersey at the age of $7\frac{1}{2}$ - 9 with my paternal Grandparents I used to dig in the garden - digging for gold - there might have been a gold-mine in Australia. On reflection, I began to think how I shd. manage to pull up a cable & lay a "pipe-line" by which to post letters direct to some distant Cousin who had settled there - thus evading postage stamps. But then I got puzzled. Even if I did - how far w'd. the letters go? I must have had vague ideas abt. gravitation. I understood that people in Australia, who ourselves walked with their feet on the ground - so gravitation must peter out somewhere & begin again in space. I concluded there wd. be a jam somewhere - presumably at the centre of the earth, & the enterprise was abandoned. This probably was rationalization after the event when I'd wearied of the job. Newton's problem about the apple was child's play to mine! Immediately, I think the revival of planetaria an excellent notion - must give children a clearer idea of the lay-out. I was brought up on oranges & a candle. There was a total eclipse at the last full-moon - hence these reflections.

Like yours, my father was bus-shy. I doubt if he ever travelled in a bus, as we know buses. As a boy doubtless he travelled in stage coaches (he was born in 1830), & when he visited France, wh. he did on many occasions, he wd. take to the "diligence" like a native. As a child he took me about quite a lot. What impressed me was how different he was in the absence of me smokes. He would "eat hearty" - no fussing & returning of chunks of pudding to the dish! and in other ways. These things I noticed, but abstained from remarking on. When I married, from the first I did rather outrageous things as my wife shd. accept them from the outset, & was fuss or worry. And thus we established from the first mutual latitude or toleration, & never were guilty of play-acting betw. ourselves - thus laying the foundations for a happy life.

Very interesting what you describe about sheep-penning, etc. & the technique adopted. In Wales, near Aberystwyth, I recall one or two little streams wh. descend from head-takes. The banks & adjacencies of these are absolutely sterile of vegetation; the soil crumbles & is liable to erosion. Sometimes of the sort, I fancy, on Helvellyn - an early memory.

Was Kirschens glance included among R. L. sent? That shd. give results quite soon. The leguminosae wait fruit for years, but it has nothing in common with the squinting cucumbers!

Always yours sincerely,

J. W. Child

14 July 1947

from Oliver

Dear Mrs Curtis,

furniture book

I was glad to find that furniture OK.
reached; it seemed rather speculative just to
attach a stamp & send it to the local Station.
Master - In country farms, etc. in Tas. there
must be a lot of domestic furniture of sorts
- made by amateur carpenters - for memory -
as such things are too bulky for emigrants
to export. Anyway, I have watched hundreds
of emigrants for S. America climbing aboard
at, e.g. Cheboygan - but they never brought furniture
- only bedding, kitchen utensils, babies & musi-
cal instruments - perhaps babies are only just
another sort of musical instrument!

It is difficult to know just what is brewing in
England. Doubtless, foreigners will be let remain on
terms; e.g. that all their property shall be
transferred to this country. The purpose of this wd.
be obviously to tax it when they wd. be
to taking it out of the country again. But if one
don't stand for that, & would quit. I can sell only
died quit & sold one's house on the terms
of my freehold (12 years ago) I can sell only
to a name approved by the Government. At the
time I asked the then Governor, what this signified?

Desert - wh. means of course it? Government? At the
time I asked the then Governor, what this signified?
He said, it's just a formality & so on. On the other hand
I am free to bequeath it to anybody, but of course to

w. be useless to any member of the family -
~~But~~ I cd. sell it tomorrow - a slow sale
but probably the cash w. be immensely from the
country. Moreover, even if one cd. take it to
England, you might say this is capital, therefore
not liable to taxation. But the money wh.
paid for the loan was earned in Egypt &
w. have deducted from it, say, $5\frac{1}{2}\%$ is the L.
which at the same time (say in 1934) British
Income Tax was $4\frac{1}{6}\%$ in the L. So as an investor, man,
even if the money ch. be transferred, it w. be up to me
to pay the Brit. Treasury more than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the £1000
I might get for the loan. This is just
the sort of fiddle that accents about happy-go-lucky
people like me! At the ~~least~~ ^{best} then, I think
of money wh. is to remain invested in Egypt
& all I w. get w. be the interest thereon.

Meanwhile as things are nationalized at
home - railways, gas, & later probab. water,
I get my £1000 & returned with the offer to
re-issue me at $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ instead of the 4, 5, 7,
or occasionally, 9% wh. they have been paying.
My grandfather was careful always to invest in
monopolies - after 14 years paying 0, 1, 2
or 0% till it reached the maximum. Sacrifices
were made wh. made no appeal to the blood-
thirsty scoundrels now in power! Well - this
may illustrate the problems one has to cope with!
And if one quits Egypt - where to go? I don't
think I sh. cd. be all to run Bellard's Barn
except at a loss - though it is easy to let, furnished.

3¹⁰ to sell it - ^{to Curtis 14-VII-7947} There are
lots of offers. One has offered it cost £3700 after
building its stockings, the garden. It wd. cost sell
for double today. The sister, at Salisbury,
has just sold her ~~her~~ too large house, wh. cost
perhaps £1700 25 yrs. ago, for £3700, & have
bought at New (once more!) the best of a
convenient house, with 30 years to run, for £2500
or thereabouts -

Is a puzzle where to turn -
Tasmania is too remote; W. Australia has
its floral attractions, but is also remote.
There are possibilities in S. Africa - fls,
intus. & deserts here & there. But the people
- Africans, British, Blacks, & some Indian
Fmils. - unstable equilibriums - when Smuts goes,
England with her over-population seems doomed
as it cannot import food to live. Too much
- dogs, horses, & all stockings, & gambling & so forth -
I hear from Ridley lately, that a senior detective
Baker (act. 92) - He lives in Cumberland Road, Kent,
& reports that every house in that road has been
burned, & some more than once. On the bright

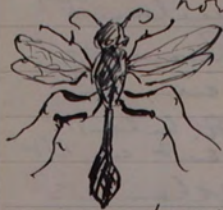
side; my upper garden is full of melons & so will
on desert dust if watered copiously. One pulls them
just when an abscess large as a walnut - & then in a day or
two, in the dark, they turn yellow - just like gold.

Encl. is a small sample of soil from round the
roots of *Caesalpinia gilliesii* - it might provide the
insects. [Will send this next time, a thing
in. beech - Gae. etc. - are a bit dried up at the moment.]
This has for first time in my experience here. There
has been no rain, no barley, no grazing - & all stored
acquired to the Delta - only flowers in wetland garden -
A few toughs remain some here. "No flowers, by right"
- so to speak - All most interesting from home & hear,
"Hurry up, quickly, or you'll be too late for the flowers!"

4 Oliver to Curtis 14-VII-1947

Indian wasps - I want to call them

hornets - (Sphex wasps)



cutting my stuff & build
their nests on the molding
of my fire place.

They bring dust & water

into with enormous diligence,
working & sleeping in short turns
spirals (perhaps like to spill their honey)
out to look, as before, & return

fair for a while.



← 1st day



← 2nd day



← 3rd day



← 4th day



← 5th day



- so many chambers,

so many insects for food
& 1 egg to each chamber

← 1st day [base of nest segment]

← 2nd day; 3rd day fill up with sawdust

insects, lay 1 egg & close hole.

& start on the next story

For weeks sometimes they enter me
during my work while I have my bath.
spiral down a joint skin crawling
the surface. I take no notice of them,
nor they of me.

Reciprocal human's elephant 1/2 R

a minute - Technically, as masons,
they are at least up to human standards.
I can't see their work to any till tomorrow.

These are in
generally placed in concealment
the hidden pts. of bunkers, etc.
I find them building even in
cave tombs 20 - 30 ft. below
ground level. but soft or not
"social" - the string of chambers
is a one-man, or rather one-two-man
show. The insect-population of
the desert is vast, & all doing
the same things differently. But
I give them speeches full marks
for technique & not wanting labels.
Occasionally they are at a loss to
recognize the place - rooms & boud.
places are so much alike.
But they put go on talking with
gentle staccato till they recognize the
place. Very low, they lead a sort
aimless about - like tracks - cap-
decks, heads do at night.
But mentally is quite different;
they succeed in numbers. Much of this
aimless wandering is carried with a sense
it is commensurate with the balance of
cabinet of the rest. However they are almost 66.

20 Sept. 47

Dear Miss Curtis,

Here I am once more for
a 3 mos. visit - more or less. I
reached home 10 days, & it took a
full week to make things once more
ship-shape after 8 years of tenancy.
As to furniture, there had been a
"General Post" & hardly a single piece
(including all chairs) remained in its
accustomed place. As to china -
crockery we worked out all breaks
- fillings 3 "sanitary dust-bins" to be
thrown away! Also tenants' children
had left their mark - Teasing out the
heads of clouds, & so forth.
Hundreds of things we had immured
ourselves & I can meet any em-
ergency - only the effect is rather
hazy, & indistinct. After, & in the
was a tenant. But the wind-up, as
to blunt from a "head miss", I heard
all pictures, and down into the attic.
I found abt. 20 with glasses crashed.

However, I am well provided with
substitute pictures, as we belong to
an artistic family! Gifts prevent
hysteria has no terrors for us
dear dolls, as the porcelain &
the Egyptian & the present
tongues are unlikely to be torn

into the desert. However, my
"restricted permit" covers an
adequate future period - On the
other hand there is the possibility
that our government may place a
ban on drafts being sent from
my English bank to my
a/c at the Egypt^{ian} ditto. If so,
I sh. probably receive a 6 mos.
"compassionate" permit to go out,
set my things in order, & sell
the house - Even then probably
Egypt wd. forbid the proceeds being
removed fr. the country, & I sh.
have to invest them in Eg^{ptian} securi-
ties - wh. definitely I'm not keen
to do. However, we shall see.
✓ The excuse for this letter is that
I have unearthed a small bunch
of letters from L. Tall, dating back
more than 50 years. They are
less interesting than I supposed; but
here they are & not wanted again.

Digitized by Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation

along & comes from the
H. H. S.
I have had great fun from their recent
letters discovering my grandchild
who has most appeared since last
I was in the country - They are
quite good samples.

29 Jan. 48

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

~~Expt~~

After some interval "I take up my pen once more!" In other words I am back here after 5 months ± excursion to England. Of 6 grandchildren I had seen only 2 as babies, so I risked becoming legendary. A Kennedy of Ballinacorney was online considerably, so I found myself well known in residence by the 2nd week of August past. Direct passages, Alexandria-England, are relatively rare, but I had the luck to discover a new Swedish freighter - the *Alida Gokkorn* - making the trip. The Silverman to London arose from his intention to touch at Candia (Candia) to load up 2000 tons of grapes for Covent Garden market. The town itself (Candia) is a poor place, though its population may rival that of Stockholm. Its spacious harbor remains just as the war left it, with many dangerous wrecks still in situ. Consequently to reach your moorings at Gray's side is a perilous adventure, taking hours, & moving at about the rate of the minute-hand of a clock! In 3 days this cargo was loaded, & we headed for London. I, & 2 other passengers, dined with the Capt. & chief engineer, so the 1st meals were a revelation, as I have never visited Sweden. Thus, the midday dinner. A table carrying perhaps 30 dishes of hors d'oeuvres: for 1/2 an hour one flits from dish to dish - till everything has been consumed. This is a mere preface to the actual meal - a hot roast joint with beef & pork of vegetables, potatoes, cheese & dessert, the whole washed down with excellent red wine. Sweeties, as I saw them, were great big men, & living near the Arctic Circle, regard such banquets as the minimum necessary for existence. My baggage was swelled out with quantities of contraband for Stockholm & to my families at home. 25 lbs. of saags, & the like; shoes

2
The ship's parcel the grandchild - The mother
had sent me parcels of all her feet: also, lastings
of bags & leather goods for the Grovers - up S. At Rother-
hithe a customs-man climbed over the side and
made a faithful declaration of what he had. "Let's see
these leather goods", & he marched off to his temporary
office with an armful. On returning, he flung them
down on my cabin table, with the remark - "Please
forget about it, Sir, forget about it." - I must have
been the grateful recipient of shoes that had touched
his heart! Anyway, I got everything as free as air.
We tied up at 7 am., in the Pool, right under London
Bridge, opposite Fishmongers Hall. After breakfast
Geoff arrived in his car: I had told him in advance
only the ship's name, & being himself a sailor-man
he had discerned all about her, and where she
would tie up. We drove out to his home at Hester-
more - It was a Sunday morning, with cloud bells
on, as we passed through the Surrey village. ---
Later I heard fr. V.C. that T.G.'s car was found & removed,
near his home at Hamstead (Lancs) for an operation, to the
County branch of St. Thomas' Hospital - stated to be at Godalming.
So off I went early one morning to Godalming, but this hope
was at Hydestich, 6 or 7 miles away. People said "went there &
was passing near the stile go back an hour." But those were
been with the news, so I started off to track it. On the road,
enquiring the way (I had no map), a passer-by said "it's a
terrible long way & you'll never arrive." Of course I persisted
& reached the hospital in the late forenoon. I found that "T.G." had
been evacuated 3 days earlier & was returned to his home.
However, they gave me a friendly tea, & as it was too late to
dig him out, I chartered a car & reached Geoff's in time for
dinner. Next day (Sunday) I got motorcar only to D.G.'s
& found him facial. Cool, pursuing, hobbling about with a stick.
Cheer & optimistic; he carried on the right road to recovery
- but I've heard nothing since & must accept his record
in relating this incident is that well - Godalming to the Hospital -

3 Oliver to Curtis 27-1-1908

was for me history. The summer's sombre mantle, but given
place to the most wonderful autumnal colour pageant I
had ever beheld. This broad obvious country in my Hampshire
country, but the settings of the earlier road I followed from
Gosolming, traversing high country, with its haps & downs,
presented an ever-changing colour picture such as I could
never have imagined. The whole landscape was aflame, & the
still-green lush valleys, running up to my course with vistas
distance, gave a picture which was known level terrain on
Hampshire chalk cannot present - although the ingredients were
the same. Especially at this moment the Great trees were
in their glory, though all the others were contributing to the
chromatic Kaleidoscope. To me, after years in Egypt where
there is no autumn, as we northerners understand it, this display
is unforgettable.

After I visited Phil who has recently (& unexpectedly) acquired
a little property (Helsale me) near Saxmundham in Suffolk.
Some 200 yds. fr. the residence is the mill, dismantled but
not obliterated. The whole extending perhaps to 12 acres. The
idea is to do a bit of farming - later when he retires from the
service: a few pigs & a cow at two ---- His wife, coming here,
enjoys it, & for the children - who were living in tents at the
time - it was paradise.

This part with a week's pause
of Shalbury Point - It was Shalbury beautiful as I ever saw it
& it was pleasant to visit myself not entirely forgotten, in
spite of my long absence & relinquishment of directions -
I have a picture by Jeff - one, a nocturne of the interior of the
O.D. with lighted lamps on the table - from the end where
stands the ladder to the "Dove-Kennel"; the other, a topographical
picture in the bright A.M. from the other end, wh. displays a
fitting & ultimate object perfectly made the same as I knew it
- even an ancient parchment with a few modelly papers of 1910
vintage!

At Shalbury I was delighted to find all services,
public & private, punctual, efficient & cheerful. If this is a
sample of the country as a whole, England should make it.
Also, fraternizing between classes much more general.

At home, I received my former (or best) gardener, now
 dismissed, with direct wages to ^{be paid} ~~be paid~~ before I left.
 The interior of the house had suffered much dilapidation
 at the hands of a succession of tenants. I had an estimate
 for reconditioning (£120), but the B. of Trade wd. not
 sanction more than £10 worth of repairs in 6 months.
 That means it wd. take 6 years for their completion so
 the matter had to be postponed. ^{Probably I was}
 joined by a cook-housekeeper from an establishment
 in Knightsbridge called "Useful Agents" at £3.3.0
 a week "all round". A widow with no encumbrances -
 I found her very highly strong, somewhat untidy & -
 no cook. On the other hand clean, tidy & ed. being some
 one into the class I distrust. One day I happened
 to use the word "damned" in a familiar context.
 She burst forth with - "Is that what a gentleman like
 you should, &c." I said - "If it's a pulpiti you want, I'm
 afraid you must look elsewhere" - so there was no more of that.
 Professionally - In ordinary life she was a school-
 teacher, at Gosport, I understood & was using the vacation
 to make a little more. When stationed at the fleet ar-
 mory H.A. home (I'm) sons appeared but sent Patience
 as a young girl to this same school as daughter
 part-time attendance. Mentioning this, she replied "How,
 that would be the junior school". So after a month
 she passed on to the school job & I said her no more.
 But I was still going 3 months. At the outbreak I had in-
 sold for the rest of its existence. When a lot of
 still an electric lamp & its accessories. When I
 can do on it & have given it is on its job. Within a week
 two I ed. even entertained 2 or 3 people for the weekend, &
 without serious scandal. That the use of electric
 cookers & could be helpful in that department, but they
 do so the washing up - ch. in common to all types of cooking.
 which I fancy may have upset the woman from the start. What
 when she acquired four daughters, in law whether she shd. meal with me
 the former, during her marriage she was painted a picture of me
 as an awful old woman. I had a bit perhaps, but the circumstances
 she is better off in the "old" days. I think electric cooking there is cheap
 a threat to cut of current by 8 to 9 am. cap. in old spots. - to I don't
 think there was a cut.

I have been thinking of writing a book about my life, but I have been so busy that I have not had time to do so. I have been so busy that I have not had time to do so.

193.

5- Oliver to Curtis 29-X-1948

Here's a little extra bit but
 that may amount to -
 In the present trouble in Palestine
 the Egyptian Govt wants to help the
 Arabs, but is unlikely to contribute
 actual troops. So distributions of
 rations [sugar is still rationed] are
 ordered to collect 2 piastres
^{on} from every ~~one~~ ^{receiving} one of
 sugar distributed. The monthly
 sugar ration is $1\frac{1}{2}$ other for head.
 price 12 piastres. Govt. 3 pt. w. his
 added as a "tax" to help Palestine
 Arabs. Abdul attends to all this
 & buys my sugar in the village with
 his own. Anticipating the
 sugar men took the new enhanced
 price, for both our sugars, but

2
H.W.H. said "no" - my master is
not an Egyptian & takes no
sides in the Palestine affair:
if you want return this ex-
action I shall report you to
the Maronite Lieut. in the chief
magnitude } - & he returned
the 3rd. exacted, - so that a
precedent!

Of course we (outside) have
residents support many village
funds voluntarily, but its quite a
different matter to contribute to
an alleged feeding fund in a
matter in which we are definitely
neutral. I don't know what other
British are doing in the matter.

26 July, 1948 ~

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

Egypt

According to my records I wrote you last quite 12 mos. ago, so its up to me to keep the correspondence alive! In your last there was mention of an imported professor of botany about to arrive. However that may be, I fancy overseas settlements, etc. are just a bit too prone to appoint outsiders instead of taking what lies on their doorstep: thus V.J. Chapman to Honolulu, N.Z. 2 years ago -

- Lately I turned up among a lot of miscellaneas in. bluish the encl. letter & "galleus" from one Maurice Weston, dating back more than 50 years, fr. your island. I remembered nothing whatever of this contact - the address, for all I know, may be that of the local lunatic asylum. Appap only he had got hold of a copy of my 2nd of Kermel! It may amuse you before consigning to the waste-paper-basket.

- I had 5 months in England, last year (Aug-Dec) Christmas eve. I lived getting back here on mainly in my ho. at Limpsfield & was delighted with both the country & the bearing of the local people. It happened also to be a wonderful autumn for colour I left her no autumn colour! The house was a bit grimy after to a more years letting. So I got a local builder to make an estimate for redecorating. This was £125, but the

Gov^t office involved wd. Grant no license to proceed - beyond \$10 - wh. was of course useless. However with the New Zeal they relented, but by that time (owing to rise in wages) the charges had mounted to \$150. Thankfully apart from that all was ready for the next tenants, who appeared well satisfied & say it's the only clean house they have seen for ages. Also - I got my garden back - he has been doing extensive food production for the war office - & this makes a great difference.

The greatest outrage committed by a former tenant was to fell ~~an~~ a "Bramley seedling" apple tree in full bearing, just because he wanted to raise a few more cabbages. That tree, in a good year, wd. carry 1000 sizeable apples. A lesser outrage was due to another tenant (who later emigrated to the U.S.A. & became inaccessible) who fearing bombs might scatter pictures & endanger his (or her) life, shipped the lot & heaved them into the attic, anyhow. I found abt. 25% with broken glasses.

A cook has been secured from "Universal Nuts", in advance. She was a school-marm by profession; she was highly strong, could's cook at all, & always complained if left alone. Otherwise, she has the merit of being tidy & clean. After 6 wks. she rejoined her school, & I took no more risks & just did for myself - thanks to ~~the~~ Blaney Point training. I have a comfortable double

store, & when used to it, cd. cook quickly & comfortably without wasting too much current. There was a standing threat that current, w. to cut fr. 8 to 10 a.m., so I always had breakfast ready before 8. However, no cut came in my time. My sons now live at Haslemere & Kelsch (to Saxmundham), respectively. At Kelsch Phil has a matter of 12 acres, with a cow ("Mira"), pigs, & chickens of his. His wife, Audrey, has become an expert milker & sells in the local, who is on the Bd. of Admiralty, has been appointed President of the R.N. College, Greenwich, as from 1st Oct. This I expect means that, for the period, the whole family will migrate to B. & that a temporary tenant for the house at Haslemere will have to be found. His 3 sons are all at school, the eldest now at Rugby. Early in the spring my sister sold their house at 1st Wood & bought one at Haslemere with 30 yds. of unexpired lease. Winifred celebrated the occasion by tumbling over in the snow posting a letter, breaking the l. femur bone just below the socket. It was a long illness, but she is about again & was able to pay a visit in the country in July. Prof Weiss also at some time broke an arm falling off the raised canopy at the entrance of his house. I was there in the autumn & thought it an absolute death-trap. Lots of oldish people I see know broke themselves up in this sort of way. There's nothing really in old age except that one has to be careful to restrain one's

Yardful around, & if possible make it a
 habit without verging on ^{recent} paleontologicalism -
 You w. hear of our ^{recent} botanical losses -
 J. J. Blackman last year, & now Potter & Bower;
 also Nancy Thompson, at St. Andrews, still in
 harness at 88 - At U.C. & most other places
 professors are evacuated at the age of 65.

Live a lot of little things in London here: on
 desert ants etc. I think of sending to the U.S.A., as
 England isn't particularly interested, whilst the U.S.A.
 has a few deserts - Also a little study of

Psyche - a small moth - The larvae of which
 builds around itself a sort of 4-sided, pyramidal
 "log hut" -



It feeds on *Atriplex Halimifolia*, & al-
 ternating, *Petasma Ractan*, but in
 captivity will take other things - even
 Ephemera - The head of the larva is
 but level with the broad base of its
 house in length adds a stick to its case. The head of
 the larva is beautifully marked - exactly like the h.d. of a
 butterfly in miniature, whilst the post-oral somite is
 decorated with white lines just like Chinese ideographs -
 When several are being fed on a single branch in a
 glass of water they are apt to interfere with each other
 leading to most amusing battles (*Drusus* & *Drusula*).
 Tactics are complicated, as the larvae are vulnerable
 only at the unprotected head-end (i.e. at the base of the
 pyramid), but they can extend 3 pairs of very sharp
 hook-shaped claws & show how to use them. Although
 lateral progression is limited to 1 mm. per second, they
 can travel great distances (1 mm. per sec. = 12 ft. per hour).
 They sometimes stray & have to be captured again, as they are
 now too common in the field. Apart from ants, bees & wasps,

Not too much to know abt. insects. The insect world is estimated at 10 mil. species, & entomologists are far from comprehensive.

12 Sept. 48

Dear Miss Curtis, (Egypt)

Recently I posted you a Commission volume to the former furniture book, & hope it may reach by Xmas. It may appeal also to your tastes. Perhaps to with taste on a side-board or dresser - it has the magnificent in histopagnis - like the fragment you saw ^{in this box} ~~in this box~~. There is a plate with 2 designs: ~~the~~ 3rd one with 2 side-cupboards above (period Queen Anne?), I modified, for whitit purposes, by introducing drawers (as in the adjacent fig.) - except that I had round, turned, knob handles instead of brass - Prior to putting the job in the carpenter's hands, I ripped up a dummy in place of laths, so as to get the proportions appropriate to the position of the drawers in the section. Beech was the timber used, with wood staining. Total charge (i.e. in 1935) was £7. - it was the miserable double today. Personally, I detest brass handles & lock-plates on this type of furniture, & believe it to be an error in taste. Doubtless metal-works distanced early that furniture was a good outlet for their craft & established some species of mutual trust with the cabinet makers.

I have on the side-board, without
upset works - only drawers - wh.
I got from Prof. Overbury when he left
Ct. It has been made at the Eng.
school of Arts & Crafts some 30 yrs. ago
(melodrama) & is definitely a good piece
- but spoilt by brass work (as above)
on all the drawers. Now the brass
rectified later, owing to the many screw holes.

A mad idea prevails throughout Gt. Brit
- perhaps in other countries - that every
door & every door must have a lock,
& each lock a different key. Still
any burglar will enter, such parties are
widespread. Also, when the house is
re-decorated all keys are collected &
hidden somewhere, high ledge, etc. & it
is told you must go to find them out
again. This is foolishness is O.K. for trade.
When I built Belle's Room - wh. has
the effectation of being in the "cottage" manner
- we had latches throughout (apart from
outside doors): & with latches (if privacy
is desired, there is always a wedge in the
latch).

By this species of forethought
the price of a medium-sized house can
be reduced by quite £50 - Also in
choosing latches, I found that art-

P.S.

Recently, I went through
some hundreds of letters received
over 50 years for W.H. Scott.
The reading of them in 2 suc-
cessive evenings makes a
marvellous impression, not to
mention so many matters of
first rate botanical (& personal)
importance - now clean gone out
of memory - on which I
had a booklet by extracts, comparable
to Crichton-Browne's "What the
Doctor Thought", & "The Doctor Remem-
bers". But that's not the

point that stressed.

Under date 23 July, 1901, Scott
wrote - "I am afraid the Larmerian
wood must be left for some one
else. I cannot afford to buy
specimens at such a high price."
* Evidently B.B. Le Tell

or the correspondent in Tarmen
must have given me the option of
acquiring a collection of Larmerian
ch. I had passed on to Scott (he
being an anatomist) thinking he
might incline to acquire it.

Now, I wonder, is that collection
now!

* Scott in 1901 from Larmerian in Tarmen
for 8 years & others who he means by this
"provision"

Does *Posidonia australis* grow in
 New South Wales - it is abundant in W. & S.
 Australia? Uprooted by storms of floods,
 + macerates, till only the base - stubs
 remain. These fibres, by wave action, then
 interlock into a continuous fabric forming
 balls, also the size of tennis balls, wh.
 drift ashore. Here we have *P. oceanica*,
 wh. is found around the Mediterranean, &
 then drift ashore by thousands, perhaps
 millions. From the tide-line they are
 blown onshore & get buried in the dunes.
 If wind & currents form, you get
 at any rate get a few from S. Australia.
 Still, you sometimes receive much drift
 it might be of interest to make periodic
 collections at certain points - say once
 a month. Drift is largely seasonal.
 - even at Madeline Point we noticed
 that. The above ~~about the~~ pile spools
 of *Posidonia*, ^{known the woven balls of} ~~from specimens~~ have a
 finer & softer texture than on S.
 I imagine it is abundant in industry
 & the based on their fibre balls
 (2 paper) but it is always difficult
 to persuade men factious to take
 up a new staple. I don't they always
 gamble, they stick fast to the known
 raw materials. I wish you could
 leave you out to touch left & stay here
 for a while - either coming or going -
 whichever comes best with
 planning season, wh. is March-April.
 I would like some time ahead of May
 not be any longer here - or even dead!
 Always your sincere
 H. Oliver

for P.S. see
 back of p. 2

11 Oct. 48

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

Egypt

Your letter on Boomer's health reached here since last I wrote. It is clear of you to attack a projected botanico-ecological survey to an important historical event - the destruction of your antipodal paradise. Today nobody is interested in Botany, & the Botany; but your strategy will provoke controversy, & may be, the botanical evidence will be decisive. I was amused at your citation of "Some remarks on Blue Pine Point". I didn't recall its existence - though I suppose in the early days one committed many indiscretions - odd enough my first notice of dust here, unconscious repeats the same title - "Some remarks on Zeeand dust" - 20 years later.

The world being how it is today, you are fortunate in having no aboriginal population to make further trouble & unstable equilibrium - and should you be admitting emigrants, let them be hand picked - because of communist infiltration; 'tis bad is more British even than "hot" -

Here perfect peace reigns in a beautiful cloudless summer now

merging into an even more beautiful
antenna. From 1 Oct. a few clouds
appeared, with presence of clear pro-
viding screen for the display of
sundered clouds.

Some 60 years ago I had a
girl friend, Ruth Spencer-Watson, of
a well known Sydney family of that
name. Somewhere she had her way to
Tasmania & married — I must have
discussed her married name, which may still
be known in Tasmania. She lived
a few years of married life out there,
but died young, so far as I recollect.
My sister may have more accurate
information.

My younger son is now Commanding
off the U.S.A. & W. Indies in the South
of York. He has taken over the
Presidency of the R.N. Club, Greenhill,
for 2 yrs. 2 years ago he acted
in a similar position at Lee-on-Solent
(which is the HQ. for training the Fleet Air
arm) & learned the art of entertaining
on a large scale. At Greenhill, just
after his appointment, he had a visit
from The Commonwealth Prime Minister
& was in England — so if a Tasmanian
high-up was among the group

He might tell you all about it
on his return.

This sh^d. reach you
approaching Christmas, & ~~it~~
may carry my son with
the family - Thud, in the absence
of snow & robins, perhaps you
don't make much of Christmas
down under - Yours sincerely

J. W. Oliver

1 Feb. 29

Biology for
Australia
Students

Dear Mrs Curtis

Your book arrived the other day ^{quite} quite an event,
really. I mention the consistent illustration throughout
by native plants. It was I think my father who circa
1860 brought out his "Elementary Lessons in Botany"
followed this up a few years later by an Indian Ed.
in which Indian plants were substituted throughout
wherever the text remained much as in the original.
Later came an Indian botanist to Kew, or meeting
my father, said - "congratulate me on your book; odd thing
but I shd. not have heard of your visit to India."
My father then explained that with the Rev. Hooker
at his disposal there was no need for globe-trotting;
all the data were conveniently accumulated in the Kew cases.
The point was that my father's central position had enabled
him always to utilize an exquisite the plants with
disposal in India or accessible to students in any part of
the continent. Then 2 vols. complete for 50 or 60 years,
& together sold over 70,000 copies. - as I discovered when
handling the file of annual returns from the publisher -
Your book is very bright, & one may stress the excellence of
the illustrations; typography also. I like your choice of
Ariconia (p. 269) to illustrate *Pentstemon* - a stroke of genius!
"Good time need's no bush" - but I suppose the publisher
was thinking of its circulation in the large, adjacent continent
when he secured the "foreword".

It must be rather jolly to have *Proteaceae* in your list of flowers -
to the Silver tree (*Leucadendron argenteum*) planted and where?
Years ago a S. African correspondent sent me some fruits of
this tree. On ripening the pericarp comes away from its base,
slips up the style, & is arrested by an expanded stigma,
& we appear to serve as a species of parachute
that might be useful in dispersal. What I ask is



whether this parachute has any biological significance
either by means of catching the wind to detach the fruit from
the infructescence, for later to help suspend it aloft
other promote lateral transport - & fruit & seed ripening
is accompanied by such a rush of food to the infructescence
that the conditions ~~are~~ favorable not only to the actual seed-
maturation, but so plentiful is the provision that the plant
seems to be stimulated to form structures of all sorts (hairs, wings,
hooks, etc.) many of which are obviously functional in dispersal.
100 years ago, [cf. Ann. of Bot. Jan. 1909, p. 104] I brooded out
this idea in relation to the ~~fruit~~ facility with which so many
plants produce summits or "encasements" (arils, etc.) to their
orbs or other propagula. I fancy the cogwheeling process
of this suggestion of "new formations", - the current idea being
that everything was a transformation of some pre-existing organ -
these old memories recall an ~~other~~ episode relating to
Penicillium. I was taking round a gelatinous culture of P.
+ demonstrating it to a class. The culture was becoming clouded
through bacterial contamination, but ^{immediately} the submerged hyphae
it was clear. This I stressed as a sign of bacterial action
of these hyphae. One student remarked, "and what are you
going to do about it, Sir?" I replied, "You're a medical
student, are you? - it's up to you!" That must have been
prior to World War I.

I've decided to clear out of this village this coming summer
& resettle at home - so perhaps I may see you when you
visit England in 1960. It's just 20 yrs. since I came to Egypt
- time runs along. I was home for 5 months in 1947, &
rationing has no terrors for me. One of my sons (Phil) bought a
small farm in Suffolk (near Saxmundham) & his wife has become
an ardent farmer. They keep a cow & two other stock,
so I can rely on her as a source of extra butter & bacon.
This winter has brought lots of rain & there should be a glorious
flora by the spring. Anything over 200 mm. of rain secures
a ~~delicious~~ flora & knee-deep for hundreds of miles along the coast
belt. So. Yours & affectionately, J.W. Threlk

Plants are sent to experiment of
the nature of capitalization

18 May, 49 ~

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,

eggh

I was almost in the act of writing to you when your a-t dated 9 May fetched up in Egypt on the 16th - and here I have been since that evening did I live in Cairo. Monday your letter came postmarked 10 May i.e. 6 days in transit. Similarly, I exchanged air-letters with Billy Roman recently [Edmonton in the wilds of Canada] his answer came within 12 days of my letter being posted.

The moral of all this is that long-distance air-transport of letters is much better organized than short-distance, as A-L's Egypt-England + England-Egypt are like 5, or generally 6, days to reach the 1-way destination - formerly by surface this was 12 or more. Some times, today a surface letter takes 14 to 18 days - maybe censorship is partly responsible. Ep^l Curlew, I know, loathe the job, though the priests earn an income: so there may be motive behind their delays!

But to return to the matter I was to write about. Back in 1923 I had decided that Spartine Dorendin ought to have proper tryout as an agent in silencing prior to reclaiming land from the sea (poldering). I found the Ministry of Agriculture at home quite useless for the purpose of any large-scale experiment in England: so got in touch with the Dutch, who have a better understanding of such matters -

So I invited Lotey to come over & have a look-see. He, of course, was a leading hybridist, & I featured that point in relation to *Spartina* is a non-segregating hybrid - later explained as a polyploid by Stucklin - when I parted with Lotey I remembered - "Is it possible this plant might be useful to your country in holding silt on ground to be reclaimed?" I asked. He replied, "The same idea has entered my mind." So I realized that the seed had fallen in good ground. A few months later he revisited our *Spartina* marshes with Verhoeven, then expert polyploid for Zealand - now C. in C. for reclamations at the Hague. Lotey & Verhoeven, with Dutch partners, took home with them 50 sets of *Spartina* & planted them in a line across the Sloe - trust you there are pleased with *Spartina's* behavior that they imported tens, even hundreds of thousands, of sets from Bob Catridge & planted them and are now seen on your visit to Haddese later on. I had kept in touch by visits in 1928, 30, 33 & 38 & was always that *Spartina* in was imminent. Ideas came the best, & now Holland is one more right side up. A few days ago I heard from Verhoeven (Lotey died in 1932 or 33) reporting that last month (April) he had started banding in a *Spartina* patch of circa 2 sq. miles & hoped to complete it by the winter. Incidentally, I mentioned your name & enquired your whereabouts!

A very important point I mentioned is that they had carefully investigated these silt collected by *Spartina*, & find them to be equal to, or even better than, the best reclaimed soils in Holland - that is high praise - Of course all credit goes

to Vethoven for his last & courage in putting
the job through. He took a big risk with his
large scale experiment. Naturally, at all
stages I refrained from pressing the matter, as of
course the Dutch with their centuries of reformation-
experience, must quite reasonably react outside inter-
ference. As I shall probably be settled in
England this autumn, I shall try to get ^{next year} to view
the new policy: as you, probably, will be in the
you may care to come along also? Of course it
means a fresh campaign in politics - employing
spartan & the agent - possibly my old dream
may ultimately be fulfilled - viz. reformation all along
the NE coast of Holland so that the water in
islands from Texel to Borkum (off the Ems) may
ultimately be joined up to the mainland - The water
there cannot be very deep, as there is a dyke or
dam at the point of Ameland to Hattum, a
high trail W. of the latter & see on the N. coast of
Dierland.

Yes, I knew the Spence Watson family well 60 or 70
years ago. Ruth has charming other calls, I think at
there was much regretted by her friends. Ruth
Sister - Evelyn - married Weiss; others I remember
are dead. The Spence Watson house at Letchworth
was famous social centre in those bygone days.

This season's flowering in *Marcelia* was
different from any I have known. Good rains
early other deficiency in Jan to Feb. The effect was
that the perianth, with the felt on the ground, did not
withstand - largely because they were far from competi-
tion by the annuals, which were disappointed of their rains.
Usually these latter carpet the ground continuously for
hundreds of miles; but this year they had no effect on the
landscape - being represented mainly by separate
specimens - lucky to flower & produce a few seeds - (over

My home address with the car, used
- Ballant's Barn, Limpsfield Common,
Surrey. I am hoping to get across
by August - but of course Egypt is Egypt
& there are many hurdles to cross.
I shall take away little or no furniture, but books,
pictures & rugs, with tea & coffee service, including
glass-ware. I shall break nothing, so this
additional sh. will cover the colossal bulwarks
of light hearted, but heavy fingered, tourists of these
last 20 years! Luckily, after I left on my autumn
visit, at the end of 1947 I had the house "redecorated" though
not, as there should be, in much of repairs to attend to.
Even in that matter I got a rough deal - for the autumn
of 1947 I had an estimate for my garden for £120 - but
the Ministry involved in grants & license. After that
two or 3 years they relented - but by that time wages
had risen with the British-trade, & I had to pay £150
for the same job of work!

Yours Truly J. H. Stiles

Sept. 24. 49 —

from Oliver

Dear Miss Curtis,
Herewith formal notice
of imminent change of address.
The fact keeps me here is
the final settlement of the dis-
posal of this house. For 8 mths.
they dithered over negotiations
(i.e. to take it over as a secret
treasure store, attached to the fac. of
Science at Univ. of Alexandria). It is
now in the hands of the Treasury
— although I have assurances galore
I hardly expect a settlement before
Christmas — but habitually I am
expected home by end October —
therefore, I have to hang on — as a
return to Egypt at a later date
to wind things up in a lot of the chaotic
these days of shattered finances. More-
over the removal of capital is com-
plicated. Only an established resident
of recognized status (which I am)
can export capital — other only on
the occasion of final departure. Against
the Government of Egypt you will
appreciate what all this means!

Probably I told you that Salisbury
is on a 4 mos. visit to
Australia; know you will
know all about that.

And now I come to the heaviest
blow that has befallen the Oliver
family in the 3 centuries of which
we have knowledge. It may, for
all I know, have found its way into
the press - or even passed into the "air"
- private grief is no bar to publicity
by journalists hungry for a "story" -
Based in 1907 (Sept.) following the Eury
visit of that year I joined the family
at Sheringham. On a push-bike I
explored the neighbourhood & reaching
Moston (all ferns introduced at the time)
turned down the lane to the grey pine
cliff. I found an old man in a boat.
It was high water of neap tides, &
hailing him asked if he could sail
me "over there" - i.e. to the Point -
how long into the tide R/L?
Yes, he said, 2 1/2 or 3 hrs. This
allowed me to explore the "pelvic
marsh" up to "the Bend" & rejoin
the boat after a stroll along the dunes.

His efforts for a decision, in 1910 I got an agreement with the head of the Manor to do what he called "marine horticulture" - when he died - i.e. Lord Calthorpe - took mastery of the manor i.e. B.P. came on the market. Then with the help & generosity of the late Charles Rothschild, to secure the property - which eventually we decided to hand over to the Nat. Trust. With the rest you are familiar.

In process of time, when B.P. was not in occupation by our student parties, my family - with some others became an established routine with my sons & their families - subject, of course, to the interruptions of the late war. This year, as usual, the 2 families started in towards the end of July. Then on 21st Aug. came the sad news about a Patience (Gf's daughter, aet. 12½) somewhat was drowned. I say "somewhat" because Gf's first letter, recounting the circumstances, went astray & never reached me - this second letter dealt with the subsequent matters - the funeral & the universal sympathy & kindness shown towards them ~~by~~ on all hands. Can now

I am unaware whether a boat
captured or a treacherous current
drew Patience into deep waters.

With the run-off of the tide it
was intended to recover the boat.

Bar. had expected to lodge some-
where on that vast waste of sand
below the Point Wells - Now
it happened that Herbert Blount,
(whom you well remember as a boy
belonging to Clay Mill, who some-
times stayed at the "Bishop's Palace")
was in the neighborhood - There is
now a telephone, & Teddy Baker
got in touch, so Blount came out
in his "knoth" & located the boat -
which was then retrieved before the
tide rose again. However it was
unblemished - but a scratch.

To this tragedy must be added
the sudden death last Jan. of

Jonathan (act. 9), Fred's younger son
& a universal favorite - His father
has here only the eldest son, Francis,
a schoolboy of 15. Fred as a sailor
is insured to sudden disaster, whilst
Barbara is a woman of strong character
- pure gold - & even this cumulative
tragedy with rest breaks her.

The spot was $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of that
wreck of Philip Harmon's, wh. can well
be remembered as conspicuous object on the
far side of the channel.

5

to Curtis 4-18-1949

Such is the richest story -
Both children have the brightest
prospects, & Patience was an
absolute darling -

Perhaps I may be seeing
you next year when you
visit England. I am so
J. W. Childs