

Magistrate's Court Bamenda
13th June 1962

Dear Alan and Kit,

I don't know if any of my bulletins have been forwarded to you yet, but in case they have not, I've asked my mother to send copies soon. I've been here since November, the private tutor to the young son of the magistrate, and now I am startled to find that, in about six weeks, my duties will be over and I will be free to start on my journey home. Loath to avail myself for a second time of Elder's and Fyffe's, I have decided to risk adventuring myself up to Kano, where I've heard there is a wonderful Old City with ziggurat buildings and patterned walls of mud; thence across by lorry to Khartoum on the pilgrim road; up the Nile – (on a dhow, if possible) – to Cairo; and Alexandria; Crete; the Cyclades, and Venice, etc. It sounds most exciting, and I look forward to it a lot, but I have sleepless hours at night, envisaging breakdowns far from oases, theft, and even pan-Islamic atrocities. I have an address in Kano, and one also in Cairo, but Khartoum remains a blank, and so does Alexandria. I wonder if any of your friends would be willing to offer me perhaps a bed for the night, and a bath, ion my way through? It would save a lot of trouble, and expense besides, as my budget does certainly not rise to Shepheard's, and every time I look at the map, my heart quails at the number of inches per hundred miles. The most difficult stretch will obviously be that between Kano and Khartoum; and until I get to the former I cannot ascertain how my journey will take me. There are pilgrim buses, but I rather think that the holy month will have passed by the time I will have reached there, and I am not even sure that, as a Gentile, I will be welcomed on the Hajj. It would be awful if I were disgraced, my hands cut off, or my tongue slit, or whatever they do to lonely Christians. Luckily the person to whom I've been directed in Kano is a kindly person (the manager of a small hotel), and has travelled himself to Mecca by the same route on two previous occasions.

It will be sad to leave this country without any reprieve or hope of return. The beauty of these grasslands, mountains and waterfalls is more splendid than anything I have ever seen in Europe. The actual spatial revelation was unforgettable, and Europe will always seem like a cluttered and cultivated garden from now onwards. But it has taken a divorce from music, and all the rat-race of London, to make me realize how much I missed it. Europe, for all its supermarkets, is still the most noble continent, and I am lucky to have had a glimpse of wider and more innocent lands before they too are swallowed up in crises and disquiet.

With love to you both –

JEREMY