

Lobben Island Gaol,
Lobben Island.

21st June, 1967.

Mrs H. J. Marquard,
Windrush,
Drooper Street,
Claremont,
Cape Town.

My dear Nell,

Just to say "thank you"
for the books, your letter and your card.
I have always enjoyed Thurber, perhaps
because he laughs at himself so much.
I once read that at a dinner held to
honour him, he knocked his glass of
wine over twice in succession and then
stood up "to express his indignation at
the untidy habits of the honourable
member whose flimsy excuse is that he
is blind." You never know whether to
laugh or cry on such occasions!

Thanks for the letters from the
parsonage. The author and her husband
are very nice-looking, don't you think?

so? None of that Victorian stiffness, hinted at slightly by Stephaens. The Dutch evoked pleasant memories. I think I'll have to take a course in High Dutch next year. I have always found those Zs irresistible. I'll comment on the contents at a later stage. At the moment I am nearly enjoying the "unrevised" history.

I was amused by your reference to "meisie" and rather sorry to receive your apology for the "mistake".

Now, well, you know as well as I do that you were being very indulgent to pretend to have heard a diphthong in Mercy's pronunciation of her name. What you heard was [mɛsɪ] "messy". The phonemes /ɜ/ of "earth", /æ/ of "mat" and /ɛ/ of "met" all come out as /ɛ/ with the majority of Africans in South Africa. In Central Africa their difficulty is with diphthongs so that /eɪ/ in "cake" comes out as /ɛ/ [kɛk] and "gold" comes out as /gɔld/.

We don't have to apologize to each other for the amendments our people make to English. You'll remember my references to Western "syphilitisation" (civilization). At Heidelberg & it was the accepted thing for fellows from Basuto land (as it then was) to tell the girls.

"I laugh you" for "I love you". And then there is your Afrikaner's difficulty with the aspirates [t] and [p]. These are our "separate development" peculiarities.

You've heard that my wife and children will in future stay with me here when they come a-visitin' - a bit of very welcome privacy and an occasion I look forward to very much.

My mother hasn't written yet, but I expect she'll do so soon.

Benjie is leaving the country, as you've no doubt read. He is tempted to join the staff of some University or other. I've told him there's a greater and fiercer collision of ideas in the U.S.A. than in Britain: but then, there are so much more casualties too.

I enjoyed Leo's introduction to the Parsonage letters, particularly his broad sweep over the Victorian era with Tennison's freedom broadening from precedent to precedent.

You know, I have found very often that when I read a book I ~~often~~ ^{invariably} overlook what almost everybody ^{else} regards as important, and fasten on to some trivial nondescript fact. In Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner", for instance, I was unimpressed by the philosophy and the moral of the story. I picked these lines!

The wild fowl flew

The furrow followed free

We were the first that ever burst

Into that silent sea

and I have carried those lines in my mind for over twenty years. Like Wordsworth:

The music in my heart I love

Long after it was heard no more.

Don't worry: I am all right.

With best wishes.

Yours Sincerely,
Robert.

A2618

Robert Sobukwe Papers

PUBLISHER:

Publisher:- Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand

Location:- Johannesburg

©2010

LEGAL NOTICES:

Copyright Notice: All materials on the Historical Papers website are protected by South African copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, or otherwise published in any format, without the prior written permission of the copyright owner.

Disclaimer and Terms of Use: Provided that you maintain all copyright and other notices contained therein, you may download material (one machine readable copy and one print copy per page) for your personal and/or educational non-commercial use only.

People using these records relating to the archives of Historical Papers, The Library, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, are reminded that such records sometimes contain material which is uncorroborated, inaccurate, distorted or untrue. While these digital records are true facsimiles of paper documents and the information contained herein is obtained from sources believed to be accurate and reliable, Historical Papers, University of the Witwatersrand has not independently verified their content. Consequently, the University is not responsible for any errors or omissions and excludes any and all liability for any errors in or omissions from the information on the website or any related information on third party websites accessible from this website.

DOCUMENT DETAILS:

Document ID:- A2618-Bd2-5

Document Title:- To Mrs Marquard from Robben Island (3 copies, 2 typed)

Author:- Robert Sobukwe

Document Date:- 21 June 1967