May 19, 1927.

Dear Margaret,

I have been having my busiest week. Now that Dr. Hanson has sailed after hunting for 18 months for yellow fever in natives in vain, suspicious cases are being heard from ~~from~~ on right and left. A week ago we heard of an epidemic of a disease with yellow eyes, black vomit, etc. in the native village of Doorpin (IWOPIN) on the ~~inland~~ lagoon east of here. Dr. Hanson was afraid he would miss his ship if he went, and so I pushed off in the early morning in a fine government launch. There is a wonderful system of connecting lagoons extending from Dahomey & Lagos on the west to the Niger delta on the east. The sea has closed the mouths of the rivers and built up a long low ridge or dyke. Behind it lie the lagoons after which Lagos was named. They connect with the sea on both sides of the island of Lagos, but you can sail eastward in the lagoon for a whole day without finding another opening, and after a couple of hours the water becomes fresh and is used for drinking purposes by the natives.

I sailed through this inland lagoon in the "Manatee", the sole passenger in a government launch with a crew of nine, all native. In many places we saw native fishermen with their casting nets in dug out canoes. As we came near we would see the flash of paddles ~~oars~~ in the sun as they made a rush toward the course of the boat as if they were a horde of naked cannibals ~~preparing to~~ bent on intercepting us. As we went by they threw their casting nets, like hammer throwers in a track meet, straight toward the boat. Apparently the boat disturbs the fish so that they are more easily caught.

At Dwofin we found a clerk of the Bale's court who talked English. It was ~~evening~~ late when we arrived and it would soon be dark. We visited first a house where ~~and~~ an old man was convalescent from the disease in the case of a small boy aged about seven. In a back compartment of the mud walled hut was a corpse wrapped in a gay cloth and many layers of sheets. We had them bring it out into the fading light, but it was too far gone to examine. The people wanted to bury it in the house, a la Westminster Abbey, but it had been forbidden. They were keeping it hoping to get a special dispensation by sending a two day's journey to the headquarters of the district. We told them to bury it outside & I think they did.

~~We spent the rest~~ I forgot to mention that a Dr. Price of the government service joined me at a place called Efe, and participated in the investigation. For two days we went through the village, visiting every house, inspecting every room, and interrogating all the natives who had not run into the bush for fear we would take them to hospital or make them pay taxes. The epidemic was apparently over but we obtained records of about sixty of the cases and six deaths. We slept on the boat.

On the way home I went ashore at another village & found they had just had four deaths from a similar illness.

I reached Lagos on Sunday afternoon and saw Dr. Hanson sail on the French line. The next morning I learned of a case somewhat like one of yellow fever at the African Hospital. We took his blood for cultures, and yesterday I did the post mortem examination. It looks like yellow fever to me, and, if it proves to be when the specimens have been examined, it will be the first case found by this Commission in natives in Nigeria since its arrival

When I reached the compound with my specimens I found a wire from Dr. Bauer, whom I had sent to the Gold Coast, asking me to let Mr. Batchelder, the laboratory assistant, go to Accra. Apparently they are having quite an epidemic in natives and scattered cases in Europeans and Syrians. So I am letting him go to-day. That will leave only myself of the scientific staff to cover Nigeria until Dr. Beemokes and Dr. Stokes arrive a week from now.

Doesn't that all sound interesting? Whether it is interesting or not, it keeps me very busy; and if I don't stop now, this day will get a wrong start.

Please leave about $500 in the checking account so that I can draw against it if necessary. I shall not do so for another month and a half, unless for small amounts, but I may need money when I get to Paris. I expect to sail on the French boat leaving June 21, one month from to-morrow. I am glad you have invested the thousand.

With love,

Willy.

P.S. Enclosed is a puzzle for you and the children, entitled "find the southern cross". Keep it for my album.

W.G.S.