Ship "Moreyshire"

July 13th 1886

My dear Mother,

We are now off Sydney so I begin the letter in case we should go in there to send it off but the first opportunity I know you and John must be anxious to hear from us for a letter as well as my self. We are bound to Hobart Town in Van Diemans Land. But the wind enough weather we have had we were obliged to bear up for Sydney we are in sight of land and it is fine weather so the Capt is in two minds whether to go into Sydney or to go to Hobart Town. I hope he will go into Sydney as we have been out of the World three last 5 months I am longing to hear some news of home and Mary

What do you think John that little book you gave me is nearly filled with my diary of course I can't copy it off now but I will give you all the news I can and you shall read my book when I get home. But I am very sorry to say the Moreyshire is on a Sealing voyage and I do not know when she will be home I may be out for three years but it is very uncertain if the Capt can get a cargo for home he will if he can but we don't know where we shall go so the Moreyshire may not take me home soon.

July 30th At Hobartown. We arrived here on Sunday 25th having been 32 days from Norfolk Island a very long passage with very heavy weather. It is not more than 1400 miles altogether. You feel so ill have seen such a succession of such heavy weather. Still we are all right and tight and I am very well.

On the 23rd of February We left Sydney for Norfolk Island with a Botanist and a Gardener to get Plants &c and a Passenger. Had all sorts of weather but not half an hour of fair Wind all the way. Arrived at Norfolk Island on the 11th March Discharged some Bread and Rum &c and left again for Pitcairns Island. Of course we had our usual luck bad winds which obliged us to go around New Zealand some distance out of our way when we turned the corner we had a little fair wind and some very heavy Gales from the West which sent us along stunning. At sunrise on the 23rd of April we sighted Pitcairns Island. It look like a large rock at a distance I held up a barley corn to the horizon and it looked much larger than the Island. When we were within 2 or 3 miles we saw a boat coming off with a man in it. They came alongside and jumped on board, and shook hands with us as if we were old friends. We passed a rope and down and one man hauled the Canoe on board. Next day I was sent ashore in the Whale boat. Pulled by the Islanders there was no difficulty in landing as the surf was not higher than Dalkeith in fine weather. When I landed two or three of us went up to the Town as they call it. About a dozen wooden huts. Had a run up one of the little valleys oh how pretty! It may well be called a Paradise. They are all living together just like one big family. Occasionally some one should be missing. Three or four sort of Plantains and Bananas. Oranges Figs with three branches bending beneath the weight of the fruit and all of the best sort. Pomarine Banyan Figs and a great number of other things which I can't name. All that they eat are yams Sweet Potatoes and Plantains. When they are at work digging the yams they generally kill a pig but they don't care much about animal food, and that is all the work the hard yet to do and that is all they do. Their clothes they get from the Whalers who call there sometimes and also Tea and other civilized comforts in exchange for yams and Potatoes. They make a kind of cloth from the bark of the tree I have several Pieces of it.

When I came back from my walk I went to the house where I was invited to stay they were getting Tea ready. We sat down that is Simon Young David Evans and myself the women waited until we finished. I eat a great tea of cooked Plantains and sweet potatoes very nice. In the evening we went to the singing room to hear them sing they all sing together and very well indeed. But they look as fresh all the Families are dressed in long white nightgowns or something like nightdresses with nothing on their feet and only a wreath of everlasting flowers on their head and they seem so fond of each other in fact they are just like a large religious family where the Mothers and elders are very fond of each other. It is a beautiful moonlight night the girls look like a lot of Ghosts running among the trees.

I had a beautiful bed to sleep on and after breakfast when I left I was loaded with presents two men and myself carried them down there were Cocoa nuts Pine apples oranges &c &c a stream hat and two wreaths to wear, but I must stop here as I shall just up my letter before I get off work. We were employed until the 2nd May taking their luggage on board &c &c when they all came on board and we sailed for Norfolk Island with a fair wind. We had several heavy Gales of head wind and sighted Norfolk Island on the 8th of June, and on the 9th they were all landed safe and well with the addition of one on the passage on the 28th I was sent ashore. When I landed there was about a dozen Females by every one of them. The news soon spread and I was escorted up to the Settlement with a regular regiment of Females.

And accept the same from

You ever affectionate Son

Geo Fergusson

Ship "Moreyshire"

August 20th 1886

Dear Mother

As I will be up for Cape Town I hope you will write to me there. I shall be there about 3 weeks from the time I write this letter. I shall be very anxiously looking at the signal staff every day and every hour watching for the arrival of the Talamanca. At last the arrival having been nearly a week overdue owing to stress of weather. There were several letters for others some dated April but none for me. You can imagine how I was disappointed. I have been looking forward for the letter for the last four months.

We have been advertised in London in the Papers but have been withdrawn again as at Present we do not know where we are going. I may be able to let you know by the next mail. If I shall do so I shall try to leave. I hope the Company will not be broken up before I get home. I am anxious to know how they are getting on. Poor Admiral Kins died suddenly the other day and the Steaddon too another Miss Lethbridge. I believe has sent a message to say she hopes that I will come to see her. I shall go one day. We shall be here 2nd for two months yet I expect before we leave again if I could only get a letter I should be happy again. My old friends here at Sydney say that I am coming both ways but I and looking well. My Pitcairn Beard I can put into my mouth and bight the ends off what do you think of that Mother please write enough John is only two months month. I suppose Neil has retired by this time if he has not he ought to and sit down and enjoy the fruits of his labour.

Ned and Fanny are quite well I hope and in the old house. And my dear Brother I am building a house for him down at Leamington.

And my dear old Mother I hope and trust in God she is happy and well in my dear little home. If I could only get a letter to tell me these things I should be happy but never mind I must wait a little longer.

Please give my love to Kendal people

Mrs Pidwell I suppose by this time &c &c &c &c &c

And accept the same from

You ever affectionate Son

Geo Fergusson

Ship "Moreyshire"

August 20th 1886

P.S. I will write as soon as we know where we are going I think we shall go home.

Old Pitcairns Island is a regular Mariners out in the heart of the world. It is not far at from I suppose.

22nd I heard to day that we were going to Manilla for Sugar. Mr Sadd and know whether it is true or not if it is we shall be away nearly 6 months more on the voyage and come back again shall be lucky at least 3 months if we load for home and it will make up ten months before we have her for home as soon as I get your letter I shall decide. I can't bear to think of being out here 3 or 4 years.

Manilla is a city in the Island of Luzonia one of the Philippine Islands.

Give my love to all my friends as and tell them I write. I will I have not had a day during the voyage.

Yours affectionately

Geo Fergusson

Address my letter to Smith Campbell & Co in Ship Moreyshire of course. I hope you will write up for Cape Town