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Beatrice Grimshaw: Pride and Prejudice in Papua*

EUGÉNIE AND HUGH LARACY

OF ALL THE WRITERS CONNECTED WITH THE PACIFIC ISLANDS PROBABLY THE most prolific has been Beatrice Ethel Grimshaw, who lived from 1870 to 1953. Initially a journalist, she began her Pacific career as a propagandist for commercial and settler interests but later, after becoming a settler herself, concentrated on fiction writing. She was the author of nearly four dozen books. Most of them were escapist out-door romances with an exotic, titillatingly dangerous, Pacific setting. As a supplier of the popular market for easily digested entertainment, as an author whose characters tend to be stereotyped 'goodies' and 'baddies' and whose mechanically contrived plots invariably move to a 'happy ending', she is, admittedly, not a great literary figure. Yet neither is she to be dismissed with a damning phrase, as James A. Michener presumed to do in describing her as the 'Queen of gush'.¹ For she does succeed in entertaining. The denouements are never entirely predictable, the variations on the basic elements of her stories are often ingenious and the prose is periodically enlivened by a tongue-in-cheek wryness of observation, often at the expense of her compatriots (for instance, 'when an Irishman is vulgar, be sure he's an Ulsterman').² *The Times* obituarist gave her no more than justice when he remarked that her 'long sequence of novels and short stories . . . achieved high competence'.³

The more enduring significance of Beatrice Grimshaw's writing, however, is in its being a historical source. For it reflects with unequalled volume and consistency some of the basic values, assumptions, aspirations and fantasies of the European settler community in Papua, to which she belonged from 1907 to 1934. She was their Kipling (a writer to whose work she regularly alludes). She was the laureate of what has been described as:

a dusty, lower middle class, Australian version of the British Raj. It lacked the grace and magnificence of the Empire at its zenith. Its security derived less

* We are pleased to acknowledge the assistance of Susan Gardner, University of Papua New Guinea, and of Peter Grimshaw and Hank Nelson, Australian National University, who helped us locate material and commented on earlier drafts of this article. The University of Auckland and the Australian National University helped finance the research.

¹ James A. Michener, *Return to Paradise* (London 1952), 5.

² Beatrice Grimshaw, *When the Red Gods Call* (London 1911), 5.

³ *The Times*, 1 Aug. 1953.

from a sense of pride in its technological superiority and splendour than from a mean and pedantic insistence on the importance of innate racial differences.⁴

Approaching imaginative writing as a historical source can be a precarious activity. But the dangers are minimized in the case of Beatrice by the clarity with which she shows the characters she approves of, by the supplementing of her fiction with a considerable body of non-fiction, by the well-established place she enjoyed in settler society, and by the recorded views of many of her fellows.⁵ These factors all attest to a profound assurance of European racial superiority, a characteristic theme throughout her work.

PARADOXICALLY for one who wrote so extensively, Beatrice Grimshaw remains a very private person. Her writings contain little personal information. An autobiography reported in 1935 as having been written was never published and very few of her personal papers appear to have survived.⁶ She was born on 3 February 1870 at Cloona, County Antrim, in the north of Ireland. Her father, Nicholas, was a linen merchant, whose great-grandfather had, about 1760, moved from Lancashire to Belfast. There he set up the first cotton mill in Ireland. Her mother was the daughter of one Ramsay Newson of Cork. Beatrice was the fifth child in a family of eight, four boys and four girls. The family were members of the Church of Ireland.⁷

Her early life Beatrice recalled as happy, being spent with a loving family in a pleasant home in the country where horse riding was the chief amusement. Later the family moved to Belfast, to 19 College Gardens, opposite Queen's University.⁸ She had left it long before her father died in 1906 but it is likely that it was affectionately in her mind when she wrote to an Australian correspondent in 1912:

I was very glad to hear that you are well and that your home affairs are happy. You don't know how different life looks when the home breaks up and you warm yourself henceforth by other folk's fires. Of course yours never may; there may always be some of your people left in the old place. I hope there will be.⁹

Never 'a girl to sew a fine seam', Beatrice appears to have been allowed to

⁴ Edward P. Wolfers, *Race Relations and Colonial Rule in Papua New Guinea* (Sydney 1975), 45.

⁵ See e.g. the views discussed in Hank Nelson, 'Papua—with the right sort of woman', *New Guinea*, III (1969), 39-56, also published as 'European attitudes in Papua, 1906-1914' in *The History of Melanesia* (Canberra 1969), 593-623; and Don Dickson, 'Murray's education policy', *New Guinea*, IV (1970), 15-40.

⁶ *Pacific Islands Monthly* (hereinafter *PIM*), July 1935, p. 4.

⁷ Birth Certificate by courtesy of Mr P. Grimshaw, and copy of family tree by courtesy of Dr H. Nelson, Canberra, Australian National University; Ian Budge and Cornelius O'Leary, *Belfast: Approach to Crisis. A Study of Belfast Politics 1613-1970* (London 1973), 17.

⁸ Matthew Hoehn (ed.), *Catholic Authors* (St Mary's Abbey 1948), 294.

⁹ Beatrice Grimshaw to Margaret Windeyer, 20 July 1912, Sydney, Mitchell Library, Ag 66.

grow up without too much parental constraint. Her formal education was broad and expensive, though desultory. She was first taught by private tutors and governesses. Later she attended a school kept by a certain Mlle Retailaud (whose name she used later in a novel) at Caen, Normandy. During 1887 she attended Bedford College, University of London, where her main subjects were Latin, Greek, mathematics, physics and chemistry. During the 1890-91 academic year she attended Queen's College, Belfast. She never took a degree. For some time she even appears to have tried nursing.¹⁰

Beatrice's parents' hope was that she would become a lecturer in classics at a women's college, though they might even have been content for her simply to take her place in society. But she felt the need for a career. For Beatrice was the very model of the liberated 'New Woman' of the 1890s. Indeed, she applied the term to herself. She had enjoyed the new opportunities for female higher education; she also rode the newly fashionable bicycle, which became an important sign and symbol of liberation by enabling respectable young ladies to assert their individuality and escape from the traditional restraints represented by chaperones; and, ultimately, she travelled.¹¹ Dorothy Middleton's generalizations in *Victorian Lady Travellers* (all of them middle-class women, and not eccentric aristocrats such as Lady Hester Stanhope) apply in their essentials to Beatrice:

Travel was an individual gesture of the house-bound, man-dominated Victorian woman. Trained from birth to an almost impossible ideal of womanly submission and self-discipline, of obligation to class and devotion to religion, she had need of an emotional as well as of an intellectual outlet. This she found often late in life, in travel, and though her dignity never wavered and she seems to have imposed her severe moral standards on the very rough company in which she often found herself, she was able to enjoy a freedom of action unthinkable at home.¹²

This individual liberation relished by Beatrice was not allied to a concern for the condition of women in general. The New Woman was not necessarily a suffragette, nor, in any explicit way, a precursor of the modern feminist. Beatrice not only held rigidly to conventional moral standards but also readily conceded that 'women are not as clever as men—let the equality brigade shriek if they like—but neither are we as stupid'.¹³

In *Isles of Adventure*, a semi-autobiographical travelogue on New Guinea published in 1930, Beatrice writes that she left 'a perfectly good

¹⁰ Hoehn, op. cit., 294; B. Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands* (London 1907), 219; pers. comms from Sir Arthur Vick, Queen's University, Belfast, 30 Oct. 1974, L. P. Turnbull, Bedford College, London, 7 Nov. 1974, and Gildas Bernard, Archives Départementales du Calvados, 15 Oct. 1975.

¹¹ Hoehn, loc. cit. Beatrice Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure* (London 1930), 14-16.

¹² D. Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers* (London 1965), 4.

¹³ B. Grimshaw, *In the Strange South Seas* (London [1907]), 152.

home, where the manners and the food are better than she found anywhere else, but where life was infested by the giving and taking of loathsome parties, and nobody was really serious'.¹⁴ Accordingly, when she was 21, and with the reluctant blessing of her parents, she went to Dublin to take up journalism. There, with a vagueness of detail characteristic of her style, she relates that she edited a 'Society Journal' and sub-edited a sporting journal. Her time in Dublin was also marked by several notable assertions of self. In 1894 she became a Catholic. About the same time she set, so she claims, a new women's 24 hour road cycling record. Another achievement was the publication in 1897 of her first novel, a romance about an assertive young woman like herself, and titled *Broken Away*.¹⁵ Then in 1901 she turned from 'pure' to 'applied' journalism, to writing advertising material for tourist and travel firms. In 1902, following a move to London, she became responsible for the organization and control of the Cunard shipping company's literary department, but resigned the following year to travel further afield herself, on assignment for the *Daily Graphic*.¹⁶

She crossed America, touched at Tahiti, and went on to New Zealand. There the Union Steam Ship Company commissioned her to write attractive descriptions for tourists of the places visited by its vessels in the eastern Pacific. Before the end of 1904 she had visited and enthused over the Cook Islands, Tonga, Samoa and Niue. Two articles on this voyage were serialized in 1906 and 1907 in the *Red Funnel*, a literary magazine published by the Union Company.

Also in 1904 she was commissioned to tour and report on New Zealand for the Government Tourist Department. Next, in 1905, she was commissioned by the Fiji government to undertake a horseback journey through the two main islands of Fiji 'to see just what the native and his life were like, and what value the country might be for possible settlers'. The governor, Sir Everard im Thurn, later declared himself pleased with the resulting publicity.¹⁷ From Fiji she travelled to Sydney and thence to the New

¹⁴ Idem, *Isles of Adventure*, 11.

¹⁵ Ibid., 11-36; Hoehn, op. cit., 293; Harold J. Hood (ed.), *The Catholic Who's Who*, 1952 (London n.d.); Freeman's Journal (Sydney), 21 Oct. 1905. Extensive enquiries among authorities in Dublin have failed to yield confirmation of Beatrice's cycling claim. *The Times* obituary supports it, but offers no details and it is probable that it was relying on Beatrice's own statement in *Isles of Adventure*. A thorough examination of the Dublin newspapers of the 1890s would be required to settle the point, and this we have not yet been able to carry out.

¹⁶ Grimshaw to Deakin, 1 Oct. 1908, Canberra, Australian Archives, CRS A1 1919/3935; PIM, Feb. 1947, p. 36; J. E. Nixonwestwood 'Notes', Canberra, National Library of Australia (hereinafter NLA), Nixonwestwood Papers.

¹⁷ Grimshaw to Deakin, 1 Oct. 1908, ibid.; Beatrice Grimshaw, 'A Lady in Far Fiji', *The Wide World Magazine*, XVIII (1906-7), 218. Beatrice had a cousin Edward Grimshaw, who lived in Fiji from 1883 to 1941, but there is no evidence that she was ever aware of him. *Fiji Times and Herald*, 20 Jan. 1941.

Hebrides. Early in 1906 she returned to Europe.¹⁸ Her main achievement over the next 18 months was the completion of three books, all published in 1907. Two, *In the Strange South Seas*, and *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, were expansions of her *Red Funnel* articles, and one, *Vaiti of the Islands*, was a novel.

In 1907 she again set forth: this time for Australia and from there, in November, to Papua. She intended to stay two or three months. Instead, it became her home for the next 27 years. One reason for this was the encouragement she received from Hubert Murray (at that time the Acting Administrator and soon to be Lieutenant-Governor), who accommodated her for the first few weeks at Government House. Irish, Catholic, well-educated, travelled, a 'loner', a noted sportswoman, and an advocate of commercial development for tropical colonies, Beatrice was in many ways a female analogue of Murray, who found her an agreeable guest. He described her to his brother, Gilbert, the famous Greek scholar, as 'an extremely nice woman, and not a bit superior; also she is an Irish Catholic and Fenian and if she was also Australian there would be nothing more to be desired'.¹⁹ Beatrice was, likewise, attracted to Murray although there is no evidence that their relationship was ever closer than that of friendship. Impressed with Murray's work she was to find in Papua ample scope for her ability as a publicist. She was concerned to help him attract settlers, and to defend him against the criticisms of rivals who at the time of her arrival were hoping to prevent his appointment as Lieutenant-Governor.

On 31 January 1908 *The Times* published her report 'that new liberal land laws have been promulgated and the natives are contented. For this state of things credit must be given to Mr Murray's administration.' During 1908 she also took it upon herself to write a series of letters to Alfred Deakin, the Prime Minister of Australia, praising Murray and urging upon Deakin his responsibility towards British settlers in Australia's neighbourhood. In January she wrote to advocate a stronger British presence in the New Hebrides; to assure Deakin of the Papuan's great personal respect for Murray; and to inform him that she had a 'very satisfactory system for spreading information through the press of the world, not necessarily under my own signature'. In March she wrote in praise of Murray: 'he is of the type that I know well at home—the kind that can handle an Indian Presidency, or an African colony with ease'.

On 2 June she urged that Australia take over the Solomon Islands and

¹⁸ B. Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 124, 169, 224; idem, *Isles of Adventure*, 298.

¹⁹ Idem, *The New New Guinea* (London 1910), 3-5; 'Into Unknown Papua', *The Wide World Magazine*, XXIV (1909-10), 387; 'Australia's Island Asset', *Life* (Sydney), 1909, 360; Francis West (ed.), *Selected Letters of Hubert Murray* (Melbourne 1970), 34.

the New Hebrides from Britain, and also made some revealing comments about missions and her view of their place in the colonial polity. While describing herself as a rough believer in and supporter of missions, she deplored their tendency to usurp the functions of government. She also charged that they did not want countries developed by white settlers. Rather they wished 'to keep out capital, to retain supreme power themselves, to prevent the natives engaging in plantation work, and above all (as a rule) from learning English'. Three weeks later she wrote again, defending Murray.²⁰ When she visited Melbourne later in the year she twice called on Deakin.

One result of thus making herself known was that for £85 and free transport to and within Papua she was commissioned by Deakin to publicize Papua's need for settlers and capital.²¹ On 14 November 1908 Murray wrote to his brother: 'Miss Grimshaw returned today after a short visit to Australia. She is to write pamphlets advertising Papua. I owe much to her.'²² She lost little time on this task. On 5 December she reported to Atlee Hunt, secretary of the Home and Territories Department, that she had completed three leaflets for distribution among the county families of England and that she would do 'about a half a dozen more before concluding the work'. She was as good as her word. She then ensured that copies were sent to the main London clubs, shipping companies and magazines as well as to 800 people listed in *Whittaker's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage and Championship* (*Burke's Landed Gentry* was unobtainable in both Melbourne and Sydney at the time). She hoped to assure 'families . . . who have "younger sons" with capital that there is not a place in the British Empire where a fortune can be made more surely and safely with a small capital' (recommended minimum £2,000).²³ Meanwhile she continued to 'puff' Papua in newspaper articles, and later in books. In 1910 there appeared *The New New Guinea*, an account of her travels in Papua similar in style to her travel books of 1907. Murray paid her £100 from government funds for *The New New Guinea* and probably corrected the proofs himself while on leave in England. Considering, so she wrote in 1909 (and as the academic community was to de-

²⁰ Grimshaw to Deakin, 25 Jan., 21 Mar., 2, 26 June, 2 July, 1 (two letters), 3, 14 Oct. 1908, NLA, Deakin Papers, Box 40, MS 1540/40/499. This correspondence is also discussed in J. A. La Nauze, *Alfred Deakin, a biography* (Melbourne 1964), II, 468.

²¹ Hunt to Grimshaw, 8 Oct. 1908, Canberra, Australian Archives, CRS A1, 1910/3935.

²² West, *op. cit.*, 52.

²³ Grimshaw to Hunt, 5 Dec. 1908, NLA, Atlee Hunt Papers, 52/2179; Hunt to Grimshaw, 10 Oct. 1908; Grimshaw to Campbell, 16 June 1909; memoranda re 'Circulars', CRS A1 1910/3935, Australian Archives; *Daily Mail Overseas Edition*, 4 Sept. 1909.

cide in the 1960s), that 'the market is ripe for New Guinea literature', she also applied herself to fiction.²⁴

Following her initial stay at Government House, Beatrice had several addresses in Port Moresby. First, the 'Top Pub', one of Port Moresby's two. Then a double canoe anchored off shore, against the hull of which, it has been said, crocodiles used to scratch their backs at night; and later a house which she bought on Paga Hill.²⁵ She was generally acknowledged as a celebrity and took a prominent part in the social life of the town. She attended functions at Government House, helped organize 'at homes' in the schoolhouse, attended the Catholic Church regularly and was one of a group of ladies who made vigorous use of the public swimming pool. To gather material for her writing she persistently sought the conversation of schoonermen, planters and goldminers, in addition to visiting the Lakekamu goldfield herself and taking advantage of almost any opportunity to travel. For a while, it seems, she may even have been engaged to a well-known miner, William Little, who died in 1920. At least she wore his ring.²⁶ In 1913 she was invited to visit Dutch Timor to advise on development and in 1915 she left Port Moresby to live on the island of Sariba, near Samarai. From 1917 to 1922—turning to pioneering on her own account—she tried her hand at developing a plantation on the mainland opposite Sariba. Then, in 1922, she sold out and visited Britain, staying several weeks in the Moluccas on the way. On her return Port Moresby again became her home, though she spent considerable time at a cottage which she built overlooking the Rouna Falls, 20 miles inland.²⁷

During the 1920s Beatrice made several notable excursions. In 1923, visiting the Mandated Territory of New Guinea, she accompanied a Divine Word Mission party 200 miles up the Sepik River. And in 1926 Murray took her on an expedition 300 miles up the Fly River to Lake Murray, where, she records, the people stole from him a history of Ireland written in Gaelic. On both trips Beatrice rejoiced to have been the first European woman to have ventured so far inland.²⁸ Late in 1930 she departed, travel-

²⁴ West, op. cit., 40; Grimshaw to Murray, 23 Dec. 1909, Sydney, Mitchell Library, Murray Papers, A3138.

²⁵ Nixonwestwood 'Notes', 4, NLA, Nixonwestwood Papers; *Argus* (Melbourne), 28 Sept. 1912; Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure*, 183-6, 217-8; Ian Stuart, *Port Moresby; Yesterday and Today* (Sydney 1970), 175, 225, 254.

²⁶ Grimshaw to Windeyer, 20 July 1912, Sydney, Mitchell Library, Ag 66; Nixonwestwood 'Notes', 4, NLA, Nixonwestwood Papers; *Papuan Times*, 1 Mar., 8 Nov. 1911; *PIM*, Feb. 1947, p. 36; Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure*, 182-3; B. Malinowski, *A Diary in the Strict Sense of the Term* (New York 1967), 17, 58, 75; *PIM*, July 1932, p. 39.

²⁷ West, op. cit., 73, 88-9; *The Times*, 1 July 1953; *PIM*, Feb. 1947, 36; Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure*, 208-18.

²⁸ Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure*, 37-82, 109-45. This book is largely a reprint of articles published in *The Wide World Magazine* and the *Windsor Magazine* in the 1920s. For details see bibliography.

ling via the Cook Islands and Tahiti, for the United States and Europe, returning in 1932. Then, in 1933, she took over five acres of land previously leased by the film actor Errol Flynn, on the Laloki River, 15 miles from Port Moresby. Here with her brother Ramsay, an ex-marine engineer, she hoped to establish a tobacco farm. But in 1934 the farm was sold and with Ramsay and another brother, Osbourne, who was retiring after 20 years in the Papua Government Service, she left Papua. As on her previous departures from Port Moresby, Murray stated his deep regret at losing a good friend and commented further that 'we had come to look on her as part of the territory'.²⁹ She again visited Fiji, Samoa and Tonga before finally retiring in 1936 to a cottage at Kelso, near Bathurst in New South Wales, where Ramsay was farming.³⁰ Her last novel, *The Missing Blondes*, was published in 1945. Beatrice died at Bathurst on 30 June 1953.³¹

IN her non-fiction writing Beatrice Grimshaw had two clear-cut objectives. The first was to entertain and divert armchair travellers. The second was to promote European enterprise: tourism in Polynesia and settlement in Melanesia. Underlying these, however, is another theme, a racist one. It is that of the distance which, according to an evolutionary theory of human development, allegedly exists and must be maintained between Europeans and Pacific Islanders. Her attitude towards the islanders, ranging from patronizing to disgusted, was one the present age would damn, but which a school of thought fashionable earlier in the century rationalized in terms of what has since become known as 'social Darwinism'.³²

Following the convention established by the 18th century explorer Bougainville, whose romantic description of the Tahitians led to their being widely regarded as 'noble savages', she is indulgent towards the Polynesians.³³ They are amiable children of nature—'jolly, laughing, brown-skinned, handsome men and women', 'straight haired, light-brown in colour, gentle and generous in disposition, ready to welcome strangers and feast them hospitably . . . aristocratic to the backbone'.³⁴ The Tongans she describes as 'a Christianised and partially civilised if a coloured race . . . they are handsome, with intelligent faces, and a dignity of pose and movement

²⁹ West, op. cit., 73, 89, 170. *PIM*, June 1931, 4; May 1932, 33; Feb. 1933, 31; May 1933, 45; Oct. 1933, 33; Aug. 1934, 13. John Hammond Moore, *The Young Errol: Flynn before Hollywood* (Sydney 1975), 77-9.

³⁰ *PIM*, Apr. 1935, 9; July 1935, 4; Oct. 1935, 26; Nov. 1936, 54.

³¹ *The Western Times*, 1, 2 July 1953; *The Times*, 1 Aug. 1953.

³² For a discussion of ideas regarding race see Michael Banton, *Race Relations* (London 1967), 36-54.

³³ For a discussion of the origins of the Polynesian noble savages see W. H. Pearson, 'European intimidation and the myth of Tahiti', *The Journal of Pacific History*, IV (1969), 199-217, and Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850* (Oxford 1969), 24-31.

³⁴ Grimshaw, *In the Strange South Seas*, 91, 190.

that is sometimes unkindly called the Tongan "swagger"'. And the Samoans as 'a singularly beautiful race and most amiable in character'.³⁵ Fijians, on the boundary line between Polynesia and Melanesia, were, however, placed on the border between good and evil. Seeing a Fijian making fire by rubbing two sticks together led Beatrice to comment:

It was my first example of the truth that the Fijian civilization is only varnish deep. Cannibalism has been abandoned, cruelty and torture given up, an ample amount of clothing universally adopted, yet the Fijian of 1905, freed from the white control and example that have moulded all his life would spring back like an unstrung bow to the thoughts and ways of his fathers. This is a truth doubted by no one who knew the inner life of Fiji.³⁶

Westward of Fiji, the undiluted Melanesians were worst of all. Darker skinned than the Polynesians, living on much larger islands but in smaller non-chiefly communities, divided from their neighbours by fear of sorcery and by language differences and, admittedly, less acculturated, Beatrice had little good to say of them although she was to live among them for 27 years. She speaks of

the dark, wicked cannibal groups of the Solomons, Banks [New Guinea] and New Hebrides, where life is more like a nightmare than a dream, murder stalks openly in broad daylight, the people are nearer to monkeys than to human beings in aspect, and music and dancing are little practiced, and in the rudest state possible.³⁷

She developed her views of the New Hebrideans at some length. They were 'ugly creatures with flat, savage features; creatures of appalling ugliness and evil, as for the Malekulans, worst fiends in hell or out of it . . . the wildest imagination of mad-houses could [not] picture'.³⁸ But they were not entirely unimprovable:

In some cases the New Hebridean is found capable of receiving education, filling the post of plantation overseer or learning to be a good house servant: though such instances are rare. The people of Aneityum and Erromanga, being Christianised and civilised as far as is possible to the race, have reached a general level about equal to that of an intelligent English child of seven or eight.³⁹

Such improvement was, however, to their disadvantage rather than advantage: 'to the traveller original savages are a good deal more interesting folk such as the clean, tidy, school-attending, prosaically peaceful people of

³⁵ Ibid., 257, 282.

³⁶ Grimshaw, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 39.

³⁷ Ibid., 14.

³⁸ Ibid., 138, 162, 165.

³⁹ Ibid., 139.

Aneityum'.⁴⁰ The mental processes of all New Hebrideans were, she thought, different in kind from those of Europeans:

The New Hebridean mind is what Lewis Carroll would call 'scroobious and wily'—and no white man can follow its turnings. It is quite capable of planning to kill you, for no conceivable reason, and abandoning the plan, also without a reason, and in a minute. All one can be certain of about a New Hebridean is that there is no certainty in him.⁴¹

Yet, despite the New Hebrideans' lowly status in the scheme of human development, European planters were not entitled to ill-treat their labourers.

Let it be allowed that the New Hebridean is a devil at heart—it does not improve even a devil to underfeed him, abuse him and flog him for the smallest cause, and count his life worth nothing more than the few pounds you have paid the schooner captain for recruiting him.⁴²

Nevertheless, such was the disorder that prevailed among the Islanders that Beatrice wished

most earnestly, that I could see the strong hand of Great Britain or her colonies grasp the bridle of this wretched country, as unfit to be left on its own guidance as any runaway horse, and pull it firmly and determinedly into the road of civilization and law-abiding peace.⁴³

The cries of certain men from Tana, who had worked on plantations in Queensland—'Tana for the Tanese', 'if the white man won't have us in his country we won't have him in ours'—she dismissed as 'unpleasantly significant'.⁴⁴

What was needed to bring real fulfilment and nobility to the Pacific Islands, as Beatrice saw things, was settlers: 'The South Seas hold out hands of peace and plenty, begging for a respectable white population'.
For,

The brown races are dying out with fearful rapidity; at their best they never touched the limitless capacities of the Golden Pacific soil. Its richness has always seemed to the original inhabitants an excellent reason for abstaining from cultivation. When the earth produced of itself everything that was necessary for comfort why trouble to work for it . . . In the promise of the future, grey or golden, they have no shame. Today is theirs but they have no tomorrow.

But for the 'more progressive' white man in the Pacific Islands 'honesty,

⁴⁰ Ibid., 237.

⁴¹ Ibid., 213.

⁴² Ibid., 139.

⁴³ Ibid., 220.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 229.

sobriety and industry repay their possessor as almost nowhere else in the world'.⁴⁵ An example of a desirable settler was

Mr. X- . . . a young Oxonian, not twenty four years of age, who had been through most of the Boer War, and found himself unable to settle down to an office job at home afterwards. Accordingly he bought a plantation on Efate . . . this adventurous young Englishman remains alone among his men, managing the plantation without help . . . these are things that mere school boys of the British race can do when you take them from their Grandmothers and Aunts at home, and turn them loose in the wilderness to shift for themselves.⁴⁶

Another admirable example was that of a family on a well-established plantation who lead a life in full accord with metropolitan standards of gentility.⁴⁷ Indeed to Beatrice they owed it to their race to do so. She makes her own conviction of racial superiority clear in describing her reaction to the volcanic activity of Mt Yasur on Tana. She had been looking into the crater:

[and then] I found myself running down the side of the cone, hand-in-hand with two extremely frightened niggers . . . It was not courage, for I had none left, that stopped me half a dozen yards below the crater lip. White people must not be frightened before blacks. So I went back and sat on the edge again . . . and looked down once more.⁴⁸

Given the corollary of such notions of racial superiority, the importance of maintaining white racial purity, it is logical that Beatrice should have deplored inter-racial marriage (even between Europeans and Polynesians), unlike one Englishwoman she writes of who 'sinned against her race'—and was punished with misery and an early death for her folly. In the idyllic island of Rarotonga, so she wrote, 'there are no social distinctions, save that between white and brown'.⁴⁹ Such was the proper state of things, in contrast to the situation of the Dutch East Indies, where, she was later to observe, miscegnation was bringing 'nearer to Holland the fate that befell Portugal and Spain when they forgot the Pride of race'.⁵⁰

The same attitudes, together with a more urgent promotional purpose, are also found in Beatrice's work on New Guinea. In *The New New Guinea*, 1910, she wrote of 'the Port Moresby native' and the locality he inhabited as being of scant interest and that '[it is] the new plantation life that is the real attraction in Papua today'. Indeed, between '1907 and 1909 it changed

⁴⁵ Grimshaw, *In the Strange South Seas*, 56-7.

⁴⁶ Idem, *From Fiji to the Cannibal Islands*, 149.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 145.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 233.

⁴⁹ Idem, *In the Strange South Seas*, 91, 244.

⁵⁰ Idem, 'East Beyond the East', *The Wide World Magazine*, LII (1923-24), 30.

from being a useless tract of land, where the natives were more than half out of hand . . . to a peaceful, habitable and flourishing colony'.

The reality of this transformation she presumed to demonstrate by citing statistics: in 1906 28,999 acres of land were in European hands, by March 1909 this had risen to 319,853.⁵¹ Such was progress, and if the Papuans were to have any share in the glorious future to which it pointed it would be through working as plantation labourers or 'house-boys': 'All Pacific History seems to show that the conquered, tamed, civilised, and idle Oceanian inevitably dies out. All Malaysia seems to prove that the working savage lives.'⁵² But work was not totally reforming. By the 1920s increased contracts between Papuans and Europeans had given rise to what Beatrice calls the 'Black Peril'—the alleged sexual desire of dark men for white women. She admits that sexual assault was rare; after all very few white women would 'insult' their race in 'the deepest possible manner' by directly encouraging the advances of their servants. But since 'brown men [were] violent and unrestrained of feeling, like all savages' their lusts could easily be aroused through carelessness in dress and demeanour. The answer was simply for European women to be more careful, and to keep a revolver in the bedroom.⁵³

Opinions such as these were firmly entrenched among the settler caste in Papua. This is shown by the pressure that in 1926, following several assaults (not all of them unambiguously sexual) on European females, led Murray to issue the White Women's Protection Ordinance. This blatantly discriminatory regulation allowed the death penalty to be imposed on anyone convicted of rape or attempted rape of 'any European woman or girl'.⁵⁴

Sustaining Beatrice's distrust of the New Guinean's sexuality was a firm belief in their diabolically supported capacity for evil. In her view the Devil, working through sorcerers, had assisted the people of the then German New Guinea in 1904 to organize a plot, covering the whole of the territory, for getting rid of the Europeans. This opinion is a construction based on two quite separate and unrelated incidents—one an unsuccessful plot of dispossessed villagers to attack the European settlers at Madang, and the other a massacre of Catholic missionaries on New Britain. For Beatrice, as for the Australian settlers of Rabaul after their employees struck for

⁵¹ Idem, *The New New Guinea*, 33, 53.

⁵² Idem, 'The Progress of Papua', *Australia Today*, 1 Nov. 1911, 141.

⁵³ Idem, *Isles of Adventure*, 28-9.

⁵⁴ Amirah Inglis, *'Not a White Woman Safe': Sexual Anxiety and Politics in Port Moresby, 1920-1934* (Canberra 1974).

higher wages in 1929, the instinctive response to any form of Melanesian aggression or self-assertion was one of hysterical opposition.⁵⁵

THE themes and values that characterize Beatrice's non-fictional writing also occur in her fiction, which is particularly concerned with glamourizing the settler class to which she belonged. Consistently, she builds her stories around the same basic plot structure—hero meets heroine, they survive dangers from cannibals or some other species of miscreant, they discover some impediment to marriage, as well as great riches, but in the final chapter the impediment is disposed of and they settle down to a blissful and prosperous future. Virtue always triumphs, and marriage provides the happy ending. Autobiographical echoes abound.

Beatrice's second novel *Vaiti of the Islands* covers the same geographical range as her first two travel books, also published in 1907. In it Polynesia provides a more gentle setting than Melanesia, where most of her novels are set. The conflict of colour is less pronounced. Indeed, the heroine, Vaiti, is of mixed blood. Like any Grimshaw heroine she is beautiful, well-born, resourceful and brave, in addition to being an accomplished sailor and a good shot. Her mother was a Cook Islands princess, her father a disgraced English nobleman. As a result she was 'doubly dowered . . . with the instinct of rule', as well as with the half-caste's taste for extravagant clothes (she buys one very expensive and quite unsuitable gown from 'Madam Retailaud's Emporium in San Francisco'). After several adventures escaping from a villainous and ultimately degraded Irishman named Donahue ('a white man cannot live native without going downhill fast'), an affair with an English naval officer named Tempest, and after terrorizing a party of foolish, over-genteel, thrill-seeking tourists in the New Hebrides, she ends up in the 'Liali Group' (Tonga). There she marries the king, Napoleon Timothy Te Paea III.⁵⁶

In 1920 Beatrice published a sequel, *Queen Vaiti*. It begins with Vaiti, her husband having died, fleeing from the Lialians who think she has killed him. She again meets Tempest, who had resigned from the navy after an incident in which he had neglected his duty for the sake of some amorous escapade, and marries him. For Tempest the marriage is both a conquest and a defeat. He unashamedly tells his new wife 'I've ruined my life, as far

⁵⁵ Grimshaw, *Isles of Adventure*, 80-81. For the Madang plot see Peter Lawrence, *Road Belong Cargo. A study of the cargo movement in the southern Madang district, New Guinea* (Manchester 1964), 68-9. For the New Britain massacre see Emilio D'Angelo, *I Dieci di Baining* (Bari 1968). For the Rabaul strike see Ian Willis, 'Rabaul's 1929 Strike', *New Guinea*, V (1970), 6-24, and Bill Gammage, 'The Rabaul Strike, 1929', *Journal of Pacific History*, X: 3-4 (1975), 3-29.

⁵⁶ B. Grimshaw, *Vaiti of the Islands* (London 1907), 14, 212, 278, 284.

as anything decent goes', while the author explains that 'his marriage with a half caste . . . was the final cutting of the last link that bound him to all he had known, desired or cared for'.⁵⁷ Still, they both remained worthy characters in their own way—he brave and she an aristocratic Polynesian—so Beatrice contrived an honourable demise for them. In the finale the sudden eruption of an underwater volcano destroys their schooner. But the lovers go down with it, embracing on the poop deck as it sinks.

No such countenancing of a breach of the code of white supremacy occurs in Beatrice's Melanesian novels. There the heroes are less ambiguous and the author's identification with her heroines is more complete. They are all white, nearly all of mature years, and tend to be New Women. They represent her ideals. Eve Landon in *The Coral Queen* is, we are told, the prettiest girl in Papua, but is also a competent businesswoman. She 'represented the twentieth century and the future'. Aged 26, 'she was the incarnation of youth in the twentieth century'. She demonstrated this, among other ways, by disrupting a strange cult, the Altiora Settlement, in an imaginary island group called the New Cumberlands. The Altiora Settlement was a community of Europeans who believed that human development had reached its highest point in polite society in England in the 1870s, and who dedicated themselves to maintaining the manners and fashions of that decade. In the last chapter Eve marries Ronald, who in Chapter One had been forced by economic necessity and family duty to marry someone else. However, his wife had since died and he was able to return—with a title and a fortune—to his first love.⁵⁸

Another typical heroine is the beautiful Isola in *Red Bob of the Bismarks*. An able sailor and a skilled pump operator for pearl divers, she is a worthy companion for 'Red Bob' Gore, M.A., LL.D., F.R.G.S., F.R.S., an internationally famed traveller and adventurer. A more roundly drawn heroine is Stephanie, the daughter of the Governor of Papua in *When the Red Gods Call*. She was like 'a blade of steel in a silken scabbard'. Dismayed shortly after her marriage to the planter Hugh Lynch to learn of her husband's earlier marriage to a Papuan girl (who had since died) she returned indignantly to England. After some years, recognizing the marriage bond as indissoluble, she goes back to Papua to rejoin the man whom she 'had loved and married—whom God had given to me', and who had long since repented of his folly.⁵⁹ Like Isola, and like Deirdre Rose in *Conn of the Coral Seas*, she rejoiced that in Melanesia there was no Mrs Grundy to object to white women travelling about unchaperoned. 'Besides', comments the author,

⁵⁷ Idem, *Queen Vaiti* (Sydney 1920), 73, 121.

⁵⁸ Idem, *The Coral Queen* (Sydney 1919), 14, 136, 140, 149, 219.

⁵⁹ Idem, *When the Red Gods Call*, 182, 331.

'there are many things that a woman of thirty can do without a remark that would be impossible for a young girl'.⁶⁰ Thus, were it not that she had been shipwrecked it is unlikely that the Honourable Alexandrina Meredith, aged 19, maid of honour to the Queen of England, would have entered the pages of *The Terrible Island*. However, the sophisticated Martha Lyle aged about 30, of *My Lady Far-Away*—she 'the last flower of civilization', 'fragile but with nerves of whip cord and steel', 'a thousand ages had gone into the making of her' (a phrase which echoes a line of Kipling)—was in Papua with as much right as Beatrice herself.⁶¹ And similarly, Deirdre Rose, who was born in the north of Ireland, went to university in Dublin, and came to the Pacific at the age of 28. In order to obtain her inheritance she had, while in Dublin, entered into a marriage of convenience with a man who shortly afterwards was committed to a mental asylum. Since neither divorce nor adultery were solutions for a Grimshaw heroine she was condemned to living alone. Thus she wandered the world, until, learning that her husband had been released, 'gone native' among the cannibals of the 'New Cumberlands' and there died, she was free to marry Stephen Conn. Death was also required in *The Wreck of the Redwing*, to free the beautiful Susan Pascoe from her brutal husband, Herod, and enable her to marry the brave, considerate Albert Polson, M.A. It was almost the same for Stacy Holliday in *The Sands of Oro*. She had 'delicate shell-white skin' and 'the prettiest foot in Oceania' but 'like the average decent woman [she] knew only of one way out of her marriage' to the despicable Charlie—he must die. It was eventually revealed, however, that Charlie Holliday had previously gone through a form of marriage with a native woman. This conveniently invalidated the marriage to Stacy, thereby leaving her free to marry Mark Plummer, who had recently struck gold.⁶²

Like her heroines, Beatrice's heroes also were conspicuously high-minded. To steal a kiss would be to besmirch a lady's honour, and that they would not do. Physically and in their ability to master the difficulties of the frontier they were, likewise, paragons of manhood. They were strong, taciturn, of better than average social and educational background and usually well into their 30s. One such was Mark Plummer in *The Sands of Oro*. He was 'like most Australians an entirely masculine man'. He was known as the surest gold prospector in Papua and as the bravest man there. When Stacy asked him what he had done when cannibals ate some of his mates on the Yodda

⁶⁰ Ibid., 311, 321; idem, *Red Bob of the Bismarks* (London 1915), 223; idem, *Conn of the Coral Seas* (London and New York 1922), 108.

⁶¹ Idem, *My Lady Far-Away* (London 1929), 55, 184, 270. In 'Et Dona Ferentes', 1896, Kipling described the polite and well-bred British as 'the heir of all the ages'.

⁶² Grimshaw, *The Sands of Oro*, 81, 111, 149, 225.

gold-field he did not answer but his eyes 'suddenly narrowed and turned hard as flint. Out of them looked, in that instant the tameless spirit of the wilderness; the lightning flash of stark masculinity that dazzles a woman's soul and makes it cower away.'⁶³

The Wreck of the Redwing has two heroes: an elder one, Albert Polson, who eventually wins the villain's widow, and younger one, Paul Bowen, a master mariner at 25, who wins her stepdaughter, an heiress. In one of the high points of the story Paul, fearless and unarmed, bluffs his way through a horde of cannibals to rescue Polson. It was a brilliant manoeuvre emulated, Beatrice tells us, with scant regard to historical fact, years later by 'Papua's famous Governor Murray' near the village of Goaribari when he was investigating the killing of the missionary James Chalmers.⁶⁴

Also to be admired is Percival Flower of *The Terrible Island*. A big man, aged 37, he had completed a medical course before becoming a surveyor. Then on the death of his wife he came to Papua where he discovered an island of phosphate rock, and won the Honourable Alexandrina. Another typical hero is Stephen Conn. Descended from Irish royalty, university educated, and the discoverer of a cache of pearls, he is eventually appointed Administrator of the 'New Cumberlands'—to which he proposed to bring the kind of development that Beatrice had in 1908 urged Deakin to provide for the New Hebrides.

A less consistent, and as such atypical, hero is George Scott, the Irish goldminer in *Guinea Gold*. Having deserted his wife Janie, he bigamously married an Australian divorcee in Papua. Soon afterwards she died in childbirth; women in Grimshaw's novels rarely make mistakes but when they do there is no second chance. But George struck gold. He then returned to his true wife with his new-born son, his respectability attested by his repentance and his great wealth, and guaranteed by his wife's unwavering sense of propriety, as described at the close of the book:

The Scotts have a beautiful country house, not very far from Balmoral on the Lismore Road. There are leather chairs in the dining-room, and velvet chairs in the drawing-room, and there are conservatories, and a motor garage, and a stable, with one or two good saddle horses. Scott has a small yacht with a motor and uses it in the summer-time. Janie has carriages and furs, and more than one solid silver tea-set. They agree excellently well. Scott is growing a little stout, and thinks of standing for Parliament one of these days.

Janie is a just and kindly stepmother. The toys of her little girls are never better than Rupert's, and she always remembers to kiss him every night and

⁶³ Ibid., 82, 149, 284.

⁶⁴ Idem, *The Wreck of the Redwing* (London 1937), 154-5. For a description of Murray's visit to Goaribari, on which Beatrice accompanied him, see Grimshaw, *The New New Guinea*, 222-38.

to call him dear. Sometimes, when she sees his father holding him nursed in his arms of an evening, looking at the honey-brown eyes and scarlet lips of the child as a man may look at the picture of something loved and lost, she goes away to her own room and sorts linen determinedly, with a hard-set lip. She does not believe in crying. Sometimes, too, when Scott takes one of his rare fits of restlessness and disappears for a week at a time, flying down the channel in his yacht—southward, always towards the sun—she feels a strange fear creep about her heart. But she does not believe in worrying: there are the children, and there is duty.⁶⁵

The most complex of Beatrice's heroes is Hugh Lynch of *When the Red Gods Call*, a title derived from Kipling's poem 'The Feet of the Young Men'.⁶⁶ Lynch was educated at Harrow and Sandhurst and was said to be the strongest man in the Western Pacific, but he was not beyond indiscretion. Having taken up land in Papua and believing that it would be wrong to ask 'any white woman to share' the rugged life of breaking in a plantation he committed 'the unforgiveable sin of folly' by marrying a native woman. He was, however, after much suffering and remorse to find redemption, as a result of Stephanie's recognition of her wifely duty, but he was not undeserving of her. For his first marriage had been due to an error of judgement rather than a repudiation of basic values. He had entered into it with high, if misguided, motives and had, moreover, refused to go native in any way other than that, for he knew it was not true that 'a white man cannot lose his race'.⁶⁷ The same salutary truth was also known to Paul Corbet, 'Red Bob's' companion. In Malaysia, on their way to New Guinea, the scent of nutmeg had suggested to him 'the clinging poisonous peace that wraps itself about the whiteman in the East beyond the East . . . [that had made] eyes of English grey . . . empty-happy, as no white man's eyes should ever be', though, for his own part, he knew that whatever his faults he 'was not one of the kind that "goes black"'.⁶⁸

Beatrice's villains, on the other hand, characteristically, show no such regard for their heritage. Indeed their villainy—be it greed, or murder, lying or infidelity—tends to lead them to the degradation of accepting native standards of behaviour, from which there is no escape. Thus it was in *Sands of Oro* with Charlie Holliday, a scion of an old but inbred family. So it was with Herod Pascoe who brought a licensed native minister from Thursday Island in the Torres Strait to officiate at his intended marriage to the heiress Laurie. 'Nobody', comments Beatrice, 'had ever heard of one of

⁶⁵ Idem, *Guinea Gold* (London and New York 1912), 341-2.

⁶⁶ 'For the Red Gods call me out and I must go!' That is, the deities that inhabit strange and distant places are summoning adventurous young men to come and prove themselves.

⁶⁷ Grimshaw, *When the Red Gods Call*, 8-11, 24, 31.

⁶⁸ Idem, *Red Bob of the Bismarks*, 45.

them marrying a white couple, no doubt because racial feeling ran strong in the North, and such an outrage had never been contemplated'.⁶⁹

Behind such sentiments is the belief that Europeans represented several thousand years of progressive evolution from the Stone Age. This was seen as a disgusting stage of existence, one at which the Melanesians still found themselves and to which Europeans could easily fall if they were not careful. In *The Wreck of the Redwing*, Polson, the hero-narrator—Beatrice commonly writes in the first person—discusses the Papuans:

It's the gap between these Stone Age creatures and ourselves—the certainty that we are dealing with something almost as pre-historic as the mastodon, as little comprehensible as a crocodile—that makes the horror. No Parisian Apache committing deeds of violence, no ship-wrecked sailor driven to loathsome crimes against his fellow by the goad of hunger, horrifies us like the cannibal savages of New Guinea. We understand those other; bad as they are, they belong to our own age, they are moulded of the same stuff as you and I.⁷⁰

When the natives attack in *My Lady Far-Away*, the author comments: 'It was as if past centuries far back in the world's history, had suddenly arisen and spewed forth the slime and scum of their darkest eras—creatures who lived in caves, saw the great mastodon, and fought with sabre tooth tigers, hardly more fierce than they'.⁷¹ An ambiguous mingling of fear, hostility and contempt is contained in these comments, and in the attitudes that follow from them. For example, when they were not feared Melanesians counted for nothing, as the following comments suggest: 'A 60 ton schooner is a small place for two lovers to exchange confidences unless they have it to themselves—save for "coloured boys" who do not count as human beings';⁷² and again: 'To be alone with the woman you love (for surely a couple of Papuan cook boys count as nothing) on an exquisite, remote coral island . . . should be Paradise'.⁷³

Nevertheless, it always remained important for whites to maintain their individual and collective self-esteem. Thus, Hugh Royden, in *My Lady Far-Away*, distressed at learning of Martha's marriage to his rival soon composed himself: 'It was not meant that the inferior races should witness the humiliation of their superior'.⁷⁴ Deirdre Rose felt the same way when Stephen Conn's house was broken into: 'the solidarity of the race felt by all Europeans who live among dark people, forbade her to go away and leave the

⁶⁹ Idem, *The Wreck of the Redwing*, 99.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 140-1.

⁷¹ Idem, *My Lady Far-Away*, 307.

⁷² Idem, *The Wreck of the Redwing*, 174.

⁷³ Idem, *Sands of Oro*, 148.

⁷⁴ Idem, *My Lady Far-Away*, 248.

natives destroying a white man's property'.⁷⁵ So, too, did Hugh Lynch when his Melanesian escort wished to attack the villainous Sanderson: 'I had no intention in the world of letting loose this pack of black hounds on a man who was at least outwardly white like myself'.⁷⁶ To break ranks was to betray the race. This was especially so with regard to sex, as is implied in the description of Stacy Holliday's response to learning of her husband's affair:

[Shocked she did not answer]. She was not looking at him, as he stood there, but at the figures in her memory of the group of native girls who a few minutes before she had seen walking past the house . . . brown creatures, with great puffball heads, bare bodies hung over with grass skirts, prehensile monkey toes which clasped the ground.⁷⁷

The reasons for Stacy's disgust are, appropriately, spelled out most clearly by Simon, 'the white savage', the hero who of all Beatrice's characters lived closest to the Papuans. Raised by Papuans until he was 16, then educated in Sydney and at Oxford before fighting in World War I, he eventually returned to the simple island life of his youth. Even so, he refused to take a native wife:

I respect my race . . . I will have no son or daughter a hundred thousand years behind myself . . . White Australian to the roots of my soul, I would not give my name nor the mothering and care of my children to a woman with one dark drop in her veins.⁷⁸

Besides, children who were born of such a union could be relied on to be cowardly, like the half-castes in *My Lady Far-Away*, or dissolute. Hence it was that Susan Pascoe should for a while be concerned about the swarthinness of her mysterious stepdaughter. The girl was eventually discovered to be a Brazilian, which explained it satisfactorily, but in any case by the time she was 16

It did not need the clear almond of white at the base of each finger-nail, the high silver-coloured voice, the delicate laughter of Laurie to tell us all that she was as white as we were. Her character told us. Laurie was not especially interested in boys. That is where the dark drop talks.⁷⁹

White was not only best, but virtuous.

THE racial views expressed in Beatrice Grimshaw's writing have interesting implications. Racial pride was needed to ensure purity of race, which

⁷⁵ Idem, *Conn of the Coral Seas*, 112.

⁷⁶ Idem, *When the Red Gods Call*, 99.

⁷⁷ Idem, *Sands of Oro*, 50-1.

⁷⁸ Idem, *White Savage Simon* (Sydney 1919), 23, 196.

⁷⁹ Idem, *The Wreck of the Redwing*, 50.

should in turn ensure continued racial progress. Even conceding ability to improve to the Papuans it was, therefore, scarcely possible that they should ever catch up with the Europeans. They could never win. For, presumably, the Europeans themselves would keep on improving. But even allowing that continued European progress was not in the nature of things, Beatrice's assumptions were in tune with the belief that in her time the Europeans had reached the highest stage of their development. Whatever conclusion one cared to draw it was, for the race proud settlers of Papua, a consoling one. Indeed it may be regarded as one of their main consolations. For none of them made much money. Despite Beatrice's propaganda the natural resources of the country proved to be limited while the aftermath of World War I led to a diversion of Australian settlers and capital to the richer territory of former German New Guinea, captured by the Australians in 1914.⁸⁰ In Papua there was an audience that not only could enjoy her books, but had a need for them. With the passing of that audience and of the much larger one elsewhere that thrilled to tales of the colonial frontier, she has slipped into obscurity. Papua New Guineans now write novels themselves. Yet Beatrice's voice is not entirely still. It may be heard, by all races, in the bell inscribed with her name which she gave to the Catholic Church in Port Moresby in 1924, and which now hangs in the cathedral there.⁸¹

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE WRITINGS OF BEATRICE GRIMSHAW

Much of Beatrice Grimshaw's writing was first published in serial form in magazines. In this bibliography, especially in regard to her fiction, we have attempted to record its first publication in book form. Much of her work appeared in several editions, but so far as it has been possible to ascertain them, only the first editions are listed here.

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⁸⁰ P. Biskup (*et al.*), *A Short History of New Guinea* (Sydney 1970), 77-8.

⁸¹ Frank Flynn, *St Mary's War Memorial Cathedral, Port Moresby* (Port Moresby 1969), 2.

Note: while this article was in press the following complementary article appeared: Susan Gardner, 'For love and money: early writings of Beatrice Grimshaw, colonial Papua's woman of letters', *New Literature Review*, 1977 (Canberra), 10-36.

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A PAPUAN STORE

THROUGH Spence's store the romance of the goldfield flowed; tough, stringy men, with felt hats low down on their brows, and earth-coloured clothing—men whose eyes were the iron eyes of the old prospector, and whose mouths were closed because they had seen so much more than a man may tell—hung over the counters, through endless Papuan forenoons and afternoons, slowly buying goods; slowly, with words counted like coins, discussing routes, carriers, north-west and south-east seasons.

'Boys', with mop heads and bare, sweating bodies, worked in the sheds behind the store, bringing out cases of tinned goods, opening, counting, packing for the field. In the background a couple of white clerks—very white indeed, for the low iron roof of Spence's stewed the spirit and the health out of a man—sat humped over ledgers that contained strange entries. Spence had his own system of book-keeping and his own special signs. A blue line marked against an account meant that the debtor was, like a ship, so long overdue as to be considered a loss. A black cross meant an account wiped out by death, proved and known. There were several blue-lined accounts; five or six with a black cross marked over the blue; two only that displayed a red circle boldly drawn over blue chalk and black ink alike, proclaiming the unexpected settlement of a bad debt by a bad debtor, who had turned out to be alive after all. This was romance, but Spence did not know it. Nor did he know that the bags and pickle-bottles in his locked safe contained romance by the pennyweight and the pound. He thought they were full of gold.

Out from Spence's went the Argosies of the Laka goldfield sailing in launches, in cutters, in double-ender whaleboats, in schooners with dirty sails, away from the coral rock jetty, upon the 'long, long trail' to the field. Back into Spence's came strange shadows of men, yellow and fever-thin with their trousers pockets full of little moleskin parcels, shouting for double bottles of champagne. Away from Spence's sometimes went stretchers, carried roughly by the black mop-headed boys, up to the hot tin hospital building on the hill. And again, from the coral jetty opposite Spence's, sometimes, in Spence's hired launch, sailed people out of the tin hospital, lying very quiet under a black cloth from Spence's store, to a place on the far side of a little still, palmy islet, from which no one ever came back to pay his bills.

—From Beatrice Grimshaw, 'Behind the Ranges', in E. C. Parnwell (ed.),
Stories of the South Seas (London 1928), 392-3.