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India

17/5/45.

Darling,

I had 3 letters from you yesterday - nice going, honey. I notice you reflect the jittery condition of England whilst waiting for the V Day announcement - I mention that because it was in complete contrast to the atmosphere in this camp. Nobody had the interest to make a special journey to the Rec. Room to hear the radio & I only heard Churchill because I just happened to be there - you see, baby, it makes a difference when the news of a victory makes a material alteration in your life.

In the mess & in our cabin, I'm reckoned to be a lucky man, the number of letters I get. Most of the other wives seem only to write once a week & it does make the lads miserable. When a packet of mail comes in they literally fight to get nearer to the postman & some of the remarks made by the unlucky ones would certainly ear the ears of their

erring spouses. Of course I realize that it's not always so easy for a busy housewife or worker to write as often as we can, but somehow, logic & reason go by the board - fortunately I don't have to worry about it, but I do feel for the other men. Apart from dilatory writers the despatching system could certainly speed things up a bit more, it's very bad. Your last batch had one dated 26/4 with two dated 2/5, so you can see

it's a matter of luck. I've had no newspapers so far & that's another thing I miss a lot, a good old English newspaper. However & notwithstanding, I'm getting my mail satisfactorily & that makes me very happy.

I notice also that you've haven't mentioned Edger so far, so I guess you're still acting under instructions of the family - you're all very sweet to me. I think I should tell you in

strict confidence, that Manche wrote me about him whilst the security ban was still on - she said she didn't know about it, in her second letter, & she was anxious to square things & at the same time, relieve my anxiety. I didn't say anything about it before, (& I certainly won't mention it to the other members), because, at the time it seemed pointless to do so, but if you know honey, I just can't keep anything from you - even with a little secret like that do - thought of having it to myself kept - nagging at me & I just had to let it out.

In my last letter I mentioned carpets, & now, regarding same, I'd like to make a definite statement on which you can, if necessary, act. I've been down to the Carpet rug & carpet store in Bombay & this is the gear. I may send any size of carpet by post (22lbs & under), or ship & the only paper work necessary is the filling in of a Customs Declaration Form. The firm

inform me that, as a rule, no duty is payable, but if, for some reason I'm unable to fetchon, the Customs do decide to charge, the payment will be very, very small - nothing at all to worry about. Whilst I was in the shop I examined quite a number of carpets & as far as I can judge, the quality is excellent. The price is not quite as cheap as I first thought but it's certainly cheaper than England. A small rug about 4ft by 2 1/2" costs £1 to £2 & I was shown a top quality carpet 10ft by 9ft at about £20. On top of any price the forwarding charges are 15/- by post (22/11s) & £3 by ship (any size). This then, is what I'm going to do. Next pay-day I shall go along & pick out 3 small rugs which will just go in the ~~next~~ post parcel - they'll give you an idea of what rugs made out here are like - I'll try & pick out suitable ~~and~~ colours. They'll take 8 weeks to reach you. In the meantime I'll

await a letter from you telling me what we want in the way of large carpets - I think even at £22 a carpet of that size is better than what we could get in England.

By the way sweetie-pie I've had the second £2. - many thanks.

I really am managing to keep remarkably fit in spite of India. I've still got these spots on my legs & I'm trying an intensive treatment of T.M.P. internally as well as externally. I suppose that that treatment will also serve as a preventive against any germs that might come my way. We've all gotten germ-conscious, having been told so many times of what'll happen to us if we don't take precautions & now I'm beginning to believe that I shall be very unlucky if I get stomachic ache. When I come home you'll be proper choiced at the way I shall examine everything, boil the water, & spray you with Dettol before I kiss you - eh?

Goodness, gracious! - this bloomin
demobbing business. Honestly, interested
as I am in the subject, I'm getting
awful fed up with the arguments,
even quarrels, over the matter. Right
at this moment there's a terrific
discussion going on in the cabin
between George, Jim & Bob & they've
made the most fantastic bets on
when we'll all be home - written 'em
up on the wall, too. Mr. Sevin made
things worse with the report of his
recent speech - he didn't satisfy
any of us. Reports have been flying
about that the under 30 groups
were going out very shortly, but
Mr. Sevin evidently doesn't think so.
I still think well of my chances in
~~spite~~ spite of what they all say.

For the last hour Jim, Geo. &
I have had a lovely time thinking
of all the pubs in Plumstead & Wadswich
- George has written down all the
names we can think of - he's run
out of paper. It's made me very

homesick + very thirsty. We've been
discussing the qualities of the various
brands of beer to be had in the
district, & to talk about that sort
of thing is dangerous. We've talked
of unlimited pints of Charrington's ales
at last, we've thought of one pint
per week - that train of thought can
lead only to strong words. We've
moved on from P. & W. & roamed the
Kentish countryside calling in at every
pub between Dartford & Rochester - we
really haven't found time to extend
our tour tonight, but tomorrow night
I think we'll go in the direction
of Maidstone - that's my hunting ground.
But we need a car - this walking's
very tiring.

What's the car situation like in
England now, baby? Are they
getting any cheaper, or have the
proprietors got their dirty mitts in the
market. I read that the basic
ration of petrol is back again &
so I imagine the private cars will

be back on the road again - watch out for the traffic, sweetie, it's been a long time since the cars were rolling & you might have lost your road sense. Maybe you can give a few tips about the disposal of Army cars - I should think they'd be coming on the market soon. But that I can do anything in this 'bloomin' country, but I'd like to know the position.

I read in your letter about housing & you mention the bombed houses that are to be rigged as flats & apartments. I think it's a good idea to grab one if you get the chance, honey, so don't you hesitate. You know that I think very much on the same lines ~~as~~ as you regarding flats, so you needn't be afraid of any criticism from me. In any case, we're in no position to be choosy because there's about a million couples like us looking for the same thing, & many of them

I
will have the jump on us through
earlier denotting. By the time you've
picked out a good 'un I should
have managed to get a few carpets
home to you which'd be a help - eh?
I know I've got carpets in the train,
darling, but I am anxious to do
something

TOMORROW.

I've been sitting around today
thinking of this & that & I've come to
the general conclusion that I'm a
very lucky man. Take my wife, for
instance, who among the other wives
not only remembers the wedding anniversary
but also remembers the date of our
first real meeting & what was said
at that meeting. And I've got to think -
ing, am I such an awful person
because I can't remember dates &
such-like? - altho' I do remember
what was said at the first meeting,
because that effort cost me a lot in

rescue. What I'm getting at is, I'm a very lucky man if you see what ~~the~~ I mean, and after all that I don't suppose you do know what I mean because I'm damned if I do, altho' I know I'm a very lucky man.

I've been doing quite a lot of research work into this camera business but I've been unsuccessful, so far, in getting a suitable model. I've had two snaps taken of me in a group, the best I could do, & next pay day as we five are going into town to have a studio portrait taken. In the meantime I'm trying to keep my cash together in case one of my contacts comes along with an offer, & by now I'm ready to take a much more modest affair than I originally wanted. Let me know if Kodak start normal trading, will you, Sweetheart - I read in the papers that Leica's place in Germany - one of the best lenses factories in the world - has been captured intact

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+ that might mean that new cameras will be available in a short while. I've seen the Kodak place in Bombay but - I can't get to it because it closes too early - in any case cameras will probably be later arriving out here. That story about cameras being still shipped out here from U.S.A. is a lot of boloney. But I'll set one if I have to comb all India - you'll see.

Now to discuss a matter which was very near & dear to your heart - before I left England - namely the matter of you coming out here. I've finished making enquiries at all the authoritative sources of information & this is the result. Sadly speaking, darling, it goes against the advice of every body, & certainly against my own inclinations, for us to consider getting you over here at the present time & under war conditions. Firstly, as our camp is 15 miles out of Bombay

it would be very difficult for me to get out every morning - Bombay is the only possible place to live, in this district - ~~to~~ to live near the camp is unthinkable. Accommodation in town is very scarce & very expensive - the only suitable flats for white women are in the rich quarter. The climate at this time is most unhealthy & will worsen during the next three months - it's true that for three months at the end of the year it's bearable, but for the rest of the year you would be in a constant sweat bath. (If you ask at this point honey, ~~about~~ ^{about} how the women already out here - tickle it I'll say that the very rich have all the amenities to combat the inconveniences, whilst the not-so-rich & the service girls look damned hot & uncomfortable (have complexions like a rotted orange). The advisory people pointed out the above & more to persuade me that a temporary residence for a service man's wife out here is

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undesirable in every way - in addition, knowing something of your baby, I'd say that you would be horror-struck at some of the conditions ~~with~~ which you would be in very close contact, (I was, & I'm not so sensitive as you), & you'd be most unhappy. You'd be on your own all day, (the whites are most unsociable), & as Bombay is just another city its interest would soon wear off, & we couldn't get away for a holiday for perhaps, nine months. So, sweetly, I'm sorry - you'll know how sorry I am - but to get you over would be a bad mistake under the present circumstances - what might be arranged when the time to return is another matter. & - Obviously I can't say any more about that now.

How am I not a party man thinking up all those things to keep us apart? I'm not really - or I wrote that paragraph I could have wept

with bitterness at the thought of the distance between us with no immediate hope of lessening it. It isn't very often that I dwell on this sort of thing, because it isn't very conducive towards happy thoughts + when I have to write at length about it - woe!!!

Tonight we've had our beer issue (1 pint) + a bottle of it is before me now. Naturally, + once again, the talk turns to pubs at home but this time we aren't so thirsty (the sp. Harold's beer issue too). We've roared at the joke concerning the sailor abroad who had a letter from his favourite barmaid in which she mentioned that his pink elephant wished to be remembered to him, + we've spun other yarns suitable to the occasion. We shall turn in slap-happy on a couple of pints + think we've no end of dogs - on a couple of pints!

This letter's very itty-bitty isn't it, sugar? You're bound to get one

of these now & again an account of
me feeling ity-bity at times. After
all you wouldn't want me to delay
sending you mail just because I
couldn't concentrate on a well
thought out & composed chronicle - eh?
Actually I could go on all winter
writing diaries - I have managed to
pages already - but I've an awful
feeling that I'd bore you, in spite of
what you've sweetheart-enough to
say about it. I know I'm wasting
paper because I could utilise space
in talking about love in all that
& in this letter I've only touched on
the fringe of the subject - I matter
of fact I'll finish up trying to get
deeper.

A few nights ago we had a
discussion on whether or not wives &
husbands necessarily had to quarrel
during their married life - quarrel,
mind you, not argue or discuss. I
said that I did not think that
it was not possible to go through

life without a quarrel + if the couple
loved + understood each other, & if
their love was based on an affinity
between them, then any difference of
opinion could easily be settled
amicably. None of the other blokes agreed
& quoted examples to try & convince
me otherwise, but in the finish they
were beaten & would only end up
with the comment that we were a
"very unusual pair". How true was
their comment. We are unusual,
darling, because I've met & talked
with dozens & dozens of married men
who all tell of some little or big -
flaw in their love-life that, if applied
to us, would completely change our
partnership. I don't care if we are
considered complacent - I still say
that ours is the perfect love, & it
will always be perfect. No wonder
I waited until I was 30 before
I mated - God had something
pretty super special lined up for me.
As I said - I'm a very lucky man.

See?

fs.

1914

received
24.5.14

Mrs. Helen Jones

Mrs. Mrs. W. J. Jones

85 (A) Belle Quay Rd

Wellington

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