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F.F.O.O.E. (1)

21.5.45

Hello baby,
Well, my my, if you ain't the
me - eh? Nipping off with a Yank -
eh? Nice work, honey, jolly good - Oh,
in fact. I like to hear it - it shows
you've got the right angle on things,
& your old man ain't a bit jealous.
I thought to myself on V Night
when in Bombay - I hope I said,
that young Claire is having the
time of her life back there - I was
real glad to read of your party. I
said I wasn't jealous - well that
wasn't strictly true because who wouldn't
be jealous of any man who had
the chance to take you out on the
 spree, especially on V Night. What I
meant was that I ^{know} perfectly well where
the love lies & I'm unceited enough
to know that there ain't a man in
his whole wide world who could take

you away from me. When I read of
your description of London that night
I felt a bit choiced at having
missed seeing it all with you, but
it gladdens my heart to hear of dear
old London coming into its own. It
should be cleared up a bit by the
time I get back & maybe there'd
even be a Portal in two to indicate
progress - actually I don't care if
the inhabitants have taken to cover
tents, I'll still be the happiest man
in the place.

In the past 2 days, Ma
honey, she had 3 letters from you
which rather puts my efforts in the
shade. But I'm sure you'll understand
how it is that everybody seems to
want a letter from me & that'll
account for any gaps, really. You
can assure yourself I'm O.K. in
health, darling, & if you don't get
the mail at regular intervals put
it down to Post Office delays &

other calls on my limited writing
time.

Last night I wrote to Edgar & Muriel - I hope I made the letter sound cheery. I felt quite good because I'd received your long one (No) which gave me a better view on his illness. My sister has this point but I'm afraid that any story of woe they tell is padded written well on the gloomy side - Blanche's first letter gave me very little hope, & even the others stressed the worst aspects. But yours, my beautiful & brainy one, told me everything I wanted to know in the proper manner. I understand why you delayed telling me, wife dear, & as I said before, I think you're all very sweet. Young Eggy has always had high blood pressure, in fact I was surprised when they ~~passed~~ ^{passed} him fit for flying, & I think that his recent trouble arises out of that.

I told him he should have joined
the Navy when he wouldn't have had
the time or opportunity for a nervous
breakdown - we carry nothing on our
backs in the Navy as opposed to these
Raffy Chappies who always seem to
have a couple of liberators slung from
their shoulders. I've even heard them
talk airplanes in a bar - bad show.

"Now that the war is over I
intend to concentrate on getting our
home going". Fatigued words, sweetheart.
I bet you often wondered when or
even whether you'd ever write them.
Don't forget to find out the general
attitude of the landlords to babies. I've
read of awful tales where a service
man's wife has been turned out
of a flat because she's carrying
a child. Not that I'll be a service
man when ours comes along, (hope
not, anyway), but I fear for my
temp when some lady or gent tells
us to clear out an account of baby.
I fear for the lady or gent, too. But

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Dear Landlady, Mr Gifford, sounds a
good bet & I hope that by now - what
Monday - this gives you an inkling
of the market. I don't expect to
get any more flats as cheap as
Blessington - too small anyway - so
don't wonder what my idea of prices
is. I think we can afford to branch
out a bit because our peace-time
home must be the best possible under
the circumstances, & I want an establishment
worthy of a wife who is the best in
the world. One of my letters tells you
of the carpet position but you haven't
said yet, honey, what colour you
want. If I haven't heard from
you by the time I'm ready to buy
I'll go down & select the big one
using my own judgement - I think
you've said you'd like a plain
blue one & maybe I'll get something
in that line. The small carpets
I can choose myself because
they'll go in odd corners & you
can trust me not to be outrageous.
I'll try, too, to get some linen, table-
cloths,

and stuff like that, but I haven't
the least idea what the markets
like & so don't bank on getting
anything. Regarding all other
articles for a home I don't believe
there's any advantage to be gained
by buying out here (~~except~~ except,
perhaps, odd things like ornaments),
because the prices are so high. You
mean we'd do the old place up in
a right dandy fashion even if it's a
third floor back - climbing the stairs
will keep us in trim. I wish that
you say about the Potala! - high-
fantastic schemes, weren't they? The
men'll have something to say about
that when they get back.

Up to letter No. 27 I had
£8 from you, sweet, & I take it
you'll send another £2 making it
a total of £10. Thank you, baby,
& that'll very probably be the lot.
I'll be asking from you unless
something special turns up. The
way we've been going for the
month we've been here, I don't

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spend R 60 a month which'll allow
me to save a bit. Watch that
salary chit for any alterations in
the balance of pay - I'm not so sure
that the C.S. are entitled to take
away our foreign service allowance
& if they do I should query it.

And so we come to me & what's
a-going on in India. There aint
very much a-going on as far as I'm
concerned. I haven't been into
Bombay since I might, except for a
Beach Candy swim last Sunday.
& the main thing that stops me
is the bloomin' stink on the way
to town - how the hell it's grim. One of
the choicest spots is the Sim Cause-
way which goes across a mud
flat about 6 miles on the way to
town & even the natives hold their
nose. I see this is the end of the
dry season, when all is dried out
& rotten, & until the monsoons come
the smell will get worse. I get
naused of disease & so I keep
away from those places. Another

spot that gives me the willie is
the washing & bathing pond that
the villages of Thana use. The
water (?) is just scum & weeds yet
the locals revel in it - no wonder
we've warned to keep away from
'em. Once you've passed these
beauty spots & get on the main
road into Bombay it's quite alright
just like going down the Old Kent
Rd. Bombay roads are really
marvellous affairs - divided by a
wide grass verge with four rows
of one-way traffic each side. It's
widely very modern because the
buildings on either side are new
& clean-looking & in the native
quarter no building looks new or
clean for very long.

Oh! I tell a lie. I did go
into Bombay last Sunday Saturday
week. I went with Jim & we
enquired about carpets. In the
evening we went to the Regal
& saw Charles Haughton in "The
Suspect". It's necessary to book
early in the day for pictures - for 2/6

We got the best seat in the house. We saw the 6.30 performance (the last one is at 9.30), + the balcony was packed with very pubka looking white - evening jackets + gowns - + swathing looking Indians (I don't know whether they were in evening dress or not - to my ~~surpr~~ surprise their stepping out costume is just the same as their ordinary dress, only cleaner). Having walked around Bombay all day our white rick was looking very bedraggled + dirty. + was in contrast to the rest of the company - however, we saved our faces ~~but~~ each pulling out a cigar - the only ones in the house. The exquisite smelling ladies were a little shocked + out-smelt but I don't think we really cared.

That Saturday was a public holiday on account of some belated peace celebrations which included a procession of the service through the town. It meant a make + mend.

for us & chat's why we went to town.
As was to be expected the Indians
took the whole thing very calmly
& the only excited people I saw were
two drunken merchant seamen who
were trying to out-fight a batch of
military police - silly boys. The
funniest part of the whole affair
was that the Navy hadn't intended
for us to have the day off at all -
somebody misread the signal - &
the holiday was all the more enjoyable
for being illegal.

Do you know where big
diamonds come from? Bet you think
they come from a mine - eh? Well
they don't - they come from snakes
who can't live without diamonds.
In the jungle at night they come
out for food, spew up their diamond,
leave it on the ground & by its
light search around for gubs.
When you want a diamond all
you have to do is to note a snake's
feeding ground, climb a nearby tree

& when the snake lays his stone
 you drop cow dung on it thereby
 hiding it from the snake who is
 so mad that he dashes off to die
 because his got no light to find
 his goals with - see? That's why
 all diamonds are poisonous - if you
 scratch yourself with one you die
 of snake poisoning. The Koh-i-Noor
 diamond that was split & fitted into
 the royal crown came from a snake
 (since I've heard the tale she
 wondered if the Indians didn't
 give it to Queen Victoria hoping
 she'd cut herself on it). Do you
 believe all this? It was told to me
 in deadly seriousness by Singh who
 would have been very offended if
 I'd laughed at him. Do you
 wonder that the all at sixes &
 severe with India & the Indians?

Indian journalism must be the
 worst in the world. Its standard
 is of the very lowest for if it were
 not for people like Lenter correspond
 out

Who give real news the papers would only consist of rumours, opinions & subversive propaganda. The 'Times of India' - the best of the bunch - is the only newspaper that does not blame the English for every conceivable black deed under the sun - the poor old Englishman can do nothing right. I'm so fed up with reading the trash that's printed by Indian journalists that I've given up reading their papers, & the only news I get these days comes from an occasional listen to the radio. I'm sure that England has no idea of the intense anti-British feeling out here due to the average Indian's desire for home-rule - altho' I'm equally sure that as soon as home-rule is agreed the 'anti' feeling will take a complete turn in the other direction owing to India's keen desire to be on good terms with any country who can help their trade & industry. Money is their god. In my opinion the trouble

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can be attributed to an Indian's
incapacity for balanced thinking
when they come into contact with
the Western world - it doesn't need
a super intelligence to see that after
reading their newspapers. It's such
a pity because individually they
can be such nice chaps - Amand for
instance, is a pleasure to talk to,
until he gets on the subject of home
rule & then he goes haywire. Ah me.
How I long for a sip - morning, down-
to-earth, thought-provoking leading
article by a British newspaper man
who knows his stuff. It's true sweetly,
until you've been out about your
sense of values is not in a proper
perspective - you just don't realise
how good good things can be.

Seeing as 'ow its 10-0 I
think I'd better start to close down
Once I've wound up my letter
writing capacity it's a job to ease
to slow - I think my writing must
suffer - dasso, baby? I know I see
had the idea all along that she

quality of my prose was suffering,
owing to such conditions but since
you're sweet enough to praise me
I suppose I pass. You know I won't
be guilty of a back-handed compliment
if I say that your letter gives me
all the happiness I've got out here -
apart from my ticket I look forward
to nothing else. You write what I
want you to write, & if I get so
low in spirit that I needed it, I
could look for assurance of your love
for me & find it in every line.
If I'm not subtle enough to write
between the lines, darling, then let
me state boldly & categorically that

I love you

PS

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Received
20.3.45

Mr. Arthur Swire

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Maline,

Kent,

England.



MARITIME
MAIL