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India.

3/5. - Thursday.

Darling,

Well, my goodness, you are a sweetheart writing two letters in two days, plus a clip of clippings. Only right & proper I should sit down & pen a few words of love & what-have-you alike, as you know very well, it doesn't require a bunch of mail from you to make me write back.

Now! and w-lumme! Aint I lucky. Picked out a carpet all random like, sends it off in a flurry of indecision, makes all sorts of apologies & excuses to cover myself in the event of my angel turning her sweet little nose up at her awkward, poor hubby's taste, and blows me down if she don't write back the next day describing the very carpet. She sends the O.K. as being quite in order. Well I never did - delicate green & fawn, that's what you said was O.K. didn't you sweet? Well delicate green & fawn you've got - Sewie with a Smile. Now I'm going to wait til you've received this parcel before sending or looking at any more, & if they're alright with you then I'll start going through the list you've sent me. I would like to add that your list, comprehensive as it is, may be a little too much for my pocket, baby, & I may send a hurry call for cash - but we'll see. I dunno about curtaining etc. I'll have a look round for that sort of stuff but before I buy I'd have to have a pretty good idea of what you want - colours, designs etc. Anyway, there's plenty of time & we'll do all this gradually & properly with an eye to future moves. You ask if the carpets are plentiful - I think I've answered that - they're

plentiful alright. And you want to know what I think of your ideas - you know the answer to that one, sugar, because I don't believe we clash in a single instance when it comes to colour schemes, & taste generally.

The rain hasn't arrived yet & there's no sign that I can detect of them ever arriving. The sun still beats down all day long & the sun gives up the urge to keep brown - I prefer to keep cool. During the normal day I don't let if I'm out in the sun for more than half an hour - I'll bet any money that any tan you see on me when I get back will be acquired in the boat swing over. Some of the lads are really badly affected by the heat - I don't mean in fitness, altho' lessened in present - in a greater or lesser degree in all of us, but their skins have taken on a horribly blotchy nature & their looks awful. I'm not so bad, my spots are

on my legs only & they're going off now. We've all managed to keep wonderfully free from major complaints & what's due to our being extra cautious - even dysentery, the illness that everybody's supposed to get hasn't reared its ugly head & I see no reason why it ever should. "Waist deep in mud" huh. Well I don't think it'll be as bad as that, but there's nothing we can do about it & so we'll just have to wait & see.

I'm very interested to read about the office. What are the temporary & banned people doing now? If they go in a batch it'll make my chances of getting out early much better. If you see that director - what's his name? - Hall, don't it - ask him what's about nipping around & getting me out of

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this note - he's the lead to do it, so.

Friday
6 sat - yesterday, feeling fendered rather abruptly,
& did very sorry about it. But the trouble was an
argument started in the cabin & it was literally
impossible to write in the tin - in any case it was a
very interesting argument in politics & I had to
finish the letter tonight in the
knowledge that I'm a bad, bad boy but if I
promise not to do it again maybe you'll forgive me.

Today I went into Bombay again. I had
to keep an appointment with the eye specialist at
the British Military Hospital. It was most unsatisfactory
in one way but quite satisfactory in another. The
doctor a Frenchman & a Major in the R.A.M.C., was
very emphatic about my trouble - he says I have
perfect eyesight but that my left eye is a "tired
eye" which means that throughout the past years
my right eye has been doing all the work &
consequently the left eye has become weak with
disuse. He said that if I were a child he could
easily cure it by blacking out my right eye &
forcing the left to work. But, as a man of 33, I
could only do for myself. He would not give me
glasses because he said, I didn't need them as
they would give no assistance whatsoever - indeed,
he proved that by testing the eye with varying
lenses no combination of which made the slightest

difference. So these I am - the opticians at home have been getting money out ~~out~~ of me under false pretences, according to this specialist but I beg leave to doubt his statement that suitable specs wouldn't relieve eye strain. I'm perfectly certain that those I left at home were of great value to me in that direction - but the Services will not issue specs merely for assisting the rank in their recreational periods, they must need them to increase their usefulness to the Service before they get them free - a big-headed lot, eh?

Whilst there I had another look round the town & also popped into various photographic to get films & to get the spot I left at Kodak's last time. The results are enclosed herewith.

No. 1 is your old man (as if you didn't know), in what they call a "characteristic pose", complete with sun-specs, cane bush jacket & butt end of a cigar.

If you look carefully you'll appreciate my recent heart cry concerning missing blouse buttons - there isn't a single one on that jacket. The bungalow & further back is the commandant's & in the background part of the hills surrounding the rear of the camp.

No. 2 is an experiment in relative sun & shade positions & is therefore a little dark, but you'll notice the handsome gent in the foreground whilst behind him is the side of our cabin with the beginning of the front porch on the right.

(I don't think writing on each side is very successful as you, honey?)

A point about No. 2 which you may or may not have noticed - depending upon whether you're a lady or not - is the appearance of the slacks which look as tho' they're due to fall to the ground any minute. I mention that as an illustration of the inward trend of my body - when the slacks were bought, a month previous, they were so tight I could hardly do them up - now look at 'em! No. 3 is quite a good group of the 5 of us. On this occasion I managed to dissuade them from dressing themselves up + so you can get a general idea of how we go about during the working day. Shades of Pompey barracks! Of the officers from that concentration camp could only see the way the lads dress for work around here - they would be shocked. I think you've had enough of my face for the time being, baby, don't you? - the next batch I send will be views of general interest unmarred by browned + browned-off faces. Then later on I'll give you some more impressions of how they're treating me out here so's you'll know what to expect when I step off the gang planks at Liverpool. (By the way, that's the part I left from - did you know?) Oh, you might get me more - I think I told you we are all going into town tomorrow to get our portraits taken in a studio - that depends on how good I

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think the photographer is - I ain't so sure that these
Indians take a very good photo.

The rest of the time today was taken up in
wandering around the shops again. I browsed for an
hour in the large bookshop in Hornby Rd + with a pretty
good idea of India's - or Bombay's - taste in literature.
They seem to enjoy political + sexual books to a very
marked degree - I don't mean that they enjoy porno-
graphical books, but it appears to me that India has
become very sex-conscious & is evidently determined
to know every angle. Birth control is a new creed
in India, & hygienic mothercraft is only just being
appreciated by the masses - there are a few birth-
control clinics in the town + every time I pass them
they're full of people. Politics take up the major part
of any Indian's conversational time, & there is a large
list of titles of books dealing with every aspect of the
great Indian problem, besides many dealing with other
countries' systems. Third on the list of popularity is
art - Indian art. I inspected some wonderful books
of Indian painting + sculpture, & there are many books
on the subject of ancient Indian buildings. Fiction
is a very bad last - before the woman story books
the Bombayite prefers all sorts of technical literature
including medical engineering & useful arts. I saw
nothing on sports, but books on Yoga, the ancient Indian
method of exercising the mind + body, seem to sell
well. but, strangely enough, I ~~couldn't~~ couldn't
find one edition of Omar Khayyam! I asked the

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Salesman & he told me that a leather binding was expected in next week - I think I'll look out for that.

I came out of the bookshop with the glare of the 3 o'clock sun to blind me, & groped my way through hordes of people to the Sir Always Ezra Canteen. I intended the programme to be as before - crashing stations til 4 when the postman's truck would pick me up. But the canteen had a little surprise - a lady's trio to play light music for us - sitting in the open shaded doorway with the coolst of breezes, the music sounded very pleasant & it was a real wrench to come away.

In my next letter I'll include a few shop-bought maps of Bombay that might interest you, sweet. I can't include them herein because they might make the letter too heavy.

The blobs want to turn in & so I'll have to jay in for the night - I don't want to but I need to turn in for I feel very tired. Anyway it's very nice to go to sleep because I always dream of you - always, honestly - it's just that I've got you on my mind & nothing takes you out - the old sub-conscious knows damn well what's good for me & treats me right accordingly. It's all very simple - I love you,

& that's that.

R.

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