

Bombay  
19/6

Hello Poding!

This letter is going to be a meaty one unless I decide otherwise as I go along - you know how it is, you think of a juicy point & then as you go to write it down the whole business sounds daft. Anyhow I've had all your back mail, & several from various friends, etc. & there's an awful lot to be answered & discussed. Pardon me while I sort things out in chronological order.

Your social activities for the past weeks, (I write as if I'd received your letters a day after they're posted just as I did at home - just a fact), confirm my opinion that you're all the better for getting out & about, sweet, & I don't mind at all if you're unable to concentrate on mail because of it. You sound more contented & happy & I don't want anything to stand in the way of progress in that direction. Of course I expect your letters, who wouldn't? - but I don't wring my hands in anguish whenever there's a gap of a few days - I was chocca about last week's delay but in that case I knew that the trouble was due to the Post-Office & that's a different matter. Your days & nights out with the boys & girls is a foretaste of the busy days to come - we'll probably have to slow down a little in order to catch up with a bit of family-making & home-life. I'm glad, too, to see that Sat. aft. work is finished at the office - it was a force even in my days.

Edgar & Muriel wrote separate letters to me. The old  
 lad sounds cheerful enough. He seems to be anxious about  
 his position in the Clerical Grade Exam. - you remember I  
 mentioned it some letters ago. He's very emphatic about  
 his Sorter's job - tells me what they can do with it - + I think  
 it's only fair that chaps in his position should have the same  
 chance they had before they joined + gave 5 years of their  
 life to the country. Perhaps you can help him better than  
 I doing. If you get any information will you tell him  
 direct, + I'll write to tell him you'll fish around. He, he -  
 he says he escorted you to the bus + set the neighbours  
~~house~~ tongues wagging thereby - some you look too  
 young + beautiful for attached R.A.F. Officers to be  
 escorting around - he, he. I ain't laughing at the 'young  
 + beautiful' part, baby, you rate that description one hundred  
 per cent, but \_\_\_\_\_ well I ain't laughing at the  
 'young + beautiful' part, anyway. Seems I rashly promised  
 Edgar + Co. that I'd get 'em stuff in India too. Everybody's  
 taking me up on that + I'm commissioned to get Philip  
 a Hornby train set! I'm afraid that I shall have to get  
 awfully business-like with my relations over the money  
 angle - I know none of 'em want things for nothing  
 + I'd willingly wait for the cash if I had it to spare,  
 but I just ain't got it to spare. He wants me to  
 advise him on the election - quite an order because I'm  
 not quite sure in my own mind - however I'm writing  
 a paragraph about that later on.

How about this month's leave-at-home scheme.  
 We've heard a lot of buzz about it in the post

month. ~~The~~ One bugz was that they were definitely starting such a scheme but that we should have to pay £28 as fare. That doesn't sound sense to me - it would mean that the poorer chaps wouldn't get the chance to go home - but of course you can bet that the payment of £28 would be the happiest pay-out of my life under such circumstances. I don't know what the exact position is - you may know that a married R.A.F. chap can fly home after a year's commission for a month's leave but they have to do 3 years out here against out 2. Whether they will release aircraft for the Navy I can't say, but in any case I should have to do a year out here before I get a month's leave, & by that time I will be looking forward to early permanent release. There is another chance that I could come home for leave by ordinary civil airlines, supposing they've started, but, again, it's all in the air - eh?

You seem to be working hard on the Wintaway goods & chattels honey. I guess that radio is a bone in the room - if ever it goes wrong don't forget to take it to Albert - I know he's a bit of an old woman at times but he ~~has~~ know a little about radios & he'll give you the best advice, & judging by the letter Doris writes he'll be only too pleased to help - you've made quite a hit with the Gudgeons on account of you're so sweet & helpful. What do you propose to do with our red carpet? I forget now whether you said it was a good bedroom carpet or the opposite - only if it's going in the

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bedroom of Westway towers I need to look out for a dining room carpet don't I? Aint I a dope.

The Portal, or pre-fab., position looks better. I agree, darling, that a flat will suit our purpose just as well as a pre-fab + if that comes along first then we should grab it. Altho Mr Sanders may say that estates for permanent houses will be ready in 2 years I don't think that the builders will be ready to give of their best in 2 years, nor do I think prices will be stabilised in that time. When we're ready to go forward with our plans for a house for all time we want everything that is modern + best to be available in large quantities + at stable, (stabil?) prices so that the house may be fitted with the best equipment that we can afford. The Jap war must retard progress in that direction somewhat, + surely the effects of the two wars will be felt for at least 2 years. I hope I'm wrong, but I don't want a slap-happy Government to panic people like us into buying a white elephant. Besides, the more capital we get behind us the more we shall be able to borrow. What are your views, sweetheart? Now I do agree that the small equipment of a home can be bought + stored as soon as it becomes available - prices are controlled at a reasonable level, + in any case, the old competitive spirit will soon have its effects on the market just as soon as the firms get going against each other. It must be wise to have a clock that really goes on the mantle shelf.

You'll soon have enough tea to fit you out for the year. Perhaps, when you get the second lot you

could give a  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb to Doris. I can send as much of it as you need & more, but I shan't send parcels to anybody else but you because it'd be a waste of a 'Duty Free' label & I need 'em all for you. I think I can send you Xmas. fruit, (if I'm here then, which God forbid), & all in all I shall have a grand time buying out these Indians for some comforts.

By No. 42 you'd got those three maps of me & the boys. You've noticed the loss in weight, eh? I suppose it does look better to see a curve instead of a convex waist-line. The one of me with canoe celegar was taken at mid-day - maybe you could tell that by the shadow - & round about that time things are pretty hot & glaring. Since the rain came the ground has sprouted forth every conceivable kind of grass & vegetation, & the same view would look more like New Gardens now. I do wear slacks for protection, but also because I think I look like an over-grown Boy Scout in shorts, (the spots have completely gone, by the way - crept silently away in the night). In slacks I look more like the Compleat Colonial whilst in shorts I look like an enthusiastic medist compelled by convention to put some covering on.

Since you wrote 42 & told me about bank balance etc., I've written to you & mentioned conversion of more balance into N.S.C.s. You ask if you should hang on to the £49. I don't think so, baby. By the time you get this another payment into the bank will be due making it over the £61 mark & I don't

anticipate asking for money for purchases for a few months. I'm due for a lot of back pay next pay-day which will allow me to splash out in the grand manner & I shan't need any extra until, say, Sept. & only then if we intend to spend a lot out here on household goods. I get good pay now, sweetly, & I spend practically nothing on myself because there's nothing to buy for myself - out of about R 180 I shall be able to save a good R 100 per month. Another thing, whilst the monsoons are on I'm chary of sending any carpets home because they might get wet in transit to the ship & be ruined by the time they get home. Unless you intend to use the bank balance money, (& on re-reading your letter I'm inclined to think now that you had in mind the possibility of needing money for the flat, in which case, of course, you certainly must hang on to it), I'd advise putting £25 or £50 into H.S.C.B. My monthly chit reads O.K. to me, but as I haven't the faintest idea of income tax allowances & payments I can't check that item - I shall know more later when the Pay Office here have had their say on my note.

I'm glad to read you've sent out my specs honey - thanks a million. My eyes are quite alright really - I mean I don't get headaches or any serious symptoms - & lately we've improved the lighting in the cabin so that the strain is relieved a lot. But the specs will certainly be used when I get 'em because I don't like playing around with eyes. You're right when you write of primitive arrangements.

In these large cabins we are only allowed 2 60W bulbs, & with the mosquito nets slung head high, five of 'em, the light reaching below is very dim. Last week we scrounged, stole & borrowed some gear & a 75W bulb & rigged an extra light in the middle, but if the Capt. or Jimmy comes around & sees it will have it taken away! It's one big fight against officialdom. I'll take it when I come home & you make a fuss of me, but you know what a bad patient I am, don't you sweetly? - remember when I felt sick at Xmas?

The old cystos is a bore & a blessing. It really is a tough timepiece. It's had more bangings & soakings than that. It's continually wet with the sweat of my wrist, & it's jarred all day long - yet it keeps perfect time & gives no trouble at all. As a matter of fact, I'm the ~~the~~ only man in fifty who has a decent watch & who wears it all the time - the result is I have to give the time every five minutes of the day & the night, too, sometimes! I get very fed up with this. Some of the boys have bought watches off the street vendors in Bombay, but, without exception, they've been swindled. These vendors fill a respectable-looking case with all the old junk they can find, & the watch goes just so long as it can be sold - after that it jags in & no amount of repair work will ever get it to go. I've had a letter from Jim. He says that

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Tommy is expected home on the 11th or 12th - was expected I should have said. As you don't mention it in your letter I take it his hand no news.

Now you quit worrying about yourself, baby. You were pretty near perfect when I left, (I believe you had a broken finger nail, didn't you, sweet?), + any little bit of padding or touching up you may feel bound to carry out will only be gilding the lily. I don't see as how you need to put on any more weight; in any case, now that you've got such a slim husband it would be rather incongruous to grow plump. You stay just as you are, honey-child, + when I get back we'll both start gorging til our little tummies burst + then we can sit back + watch ourselves expand - me anyway, because if I remember aright, + I do, you could knock back a goodly plateful + still remain in the standard size class. If you to keep this wasp-waist of mine I shall have to start P.T. + keep it up for evermore - don't know if I shall like that.

And to be serious with you for a moment, darling, I must say one more word about the business of Edgair's illness. It was an unfortunate & affair from start to finish, but in no way, repeat no way, have you anything to be sorry for, my angel. I understood your motives perfectly + I only elaborated on the matter to relieve a little pressure in my brain. When you write to me sweetheart, I know that what I read is straightforward, honest, sincere + true, + in matters such



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as this I'm content to have you inform me in the manner you think best, for you've never failed me. When you use that wonderful judgment of yours, baby, you can't go wrong. It's a bargain, darling.

Now about this election. I think I've explained that out here the only news + information I've had about the various platform policies is what I've received from you, & whilst you've done your best, sweet, it's been awfully difficult to make up my mind from the main speeches of the leaders of the various parties. As you may have guessed, I'm not a 'party' man - I don't believe in supporting any party just because it's called Labour - if I'm a socialist - or Conservative - if I'm a Tory. Nevertheless the time of the election is very near & I've got to send you my decision in order that you, as my proxy, may vote for me. I've read + re-read the speeches + I've tried to glean some information from various sources & it's obvious that it's going to be a party election. It's also obvious that I don't know what our local candidates have up their sleeves. So that I must record my vote for a party, however much I may dislike that, & here's the way I figure it. (By the way the only considered Labour + Conservative parties - the Liberals, in my opinion, will support the Conservatives in all that party is prepared to do).

The Conservatives are pledged to free trade within + without this country, Empire imperialism, & the safeguarding of all vested interests. The Labourites are pledged to the nationalisation of the main industries + transport systems in this country, controls on the trade + most other things appertaining to the welfare of the general

public. Both parties are bound, by their promises given as a National Government during the past 3 years, to bring in legislation covering National Security, the control of Monopolies or Castles, acquisition of land for re-building, <sup>Education;</sup> various measures concerning employment after the war & the continued control of prices to prevent inflation. Both parties contend that each has the means to an end - the end being the prevention of war & the prosperity of England.

Now in my contention it was necessary to have a general election, but only for the purpose of introducing into Parliament a new strain of members who have the initiative & freshness to put over quickly all the acts covering the improvements which we have been promised. It seems to me that for the next five years all our energies will be needed to give effect to those laws & after that it will be possible to look around & search for final those final touches to secure peace & prosperity for all time. We still have a war which is likely to last at least another year, & we still have a state of emergency. Therefore, in my opinion, it was not necessary or desirable to change the present Government - merely for the sake of destroying unity & replacing it with part of that unity - it would seem likely that the part which was of the Party in the minority would not be able, not willing, to give the same valuable service to the State as it did when <sup>working with</sup> ~~part of~~ the old war-time organisation. Therefore I feel inclined to support the Party which has the <sup>largest</sup> ~~most~~ number of men capable of carrying through this war, the state of emergency & the unsettled state following & I think it must be the Conservative Party. I will vote for them.

In 5 years' time, when another General Election will be due, the country should be ready to decide whether we shall continue with an out-of-date Governmental system or whether we are ripe for an ~~excursion into the social~~ experiment with Socialism, which must surely be our aim. By that time, too, we should have begun to feel the benefits of a much more democratic state than ever the Conservatives meant it to be had they not been forced to do otherwise, & we shall remember that those benefits are the result of strong public opinion & not a benevolent Churchill. We may feel that such controls as have been retained since the war should be extended to cover industry, etc. We just can't foresee that. But at the present time, & for some time to come, I feel that it is better to have a bird in the hand rather than two in the bush & for the reasons above I support the Conservatives.

Let me say at once, honey, that none of the above opinions are intended in any way to influence you in your decision. If you disagree with me I hope you'll write back & say so. But here I'm going to the death & I'd welcome any light from another angle. But at the same time I feel instinctively that I'm right, so slap the old X in accordingly will you please, baby?

Now that's enough for tonight, yet I haven't begun to tell you how much I love you, & miss you, so that'll be the theme of my next.

Your adoring  
 P.S.

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Received  
27/6/18

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