

36.

Bombay

27.6.45

Darling,

A short one tonight - I think. It's already nine o'clock & it won't be long before I'm dozing off to bye-bye - not much sleep last night on account of it was Jim's birthday & we stayed up late jawing. There was no repetition of Harold's birthday party - we didn't feel up to it - & so it's healthy tiredness that we feel now.

I haven't had any mail since Saturday & I'm hoping it's not another hold-up with the planes. I think it must be so, however, because very few of the lads are getting mail. But I'm not complaining - since I've been out here you've done marvels in the writing line, baby, & it's been the mainstay of my morale. Poor BSB has had no letter from his wife for 3 weeks & it's nearly driving him crazy - when I see cases like that & very similar to that, I realize, as I keep on realizing, what a treasure of a wife I've got. Comparisons with other men's wives are not really fair because I've no idea of their circumstances, but nevertheless, I can't help matching you against the rest. So many of the men seem to take their wife for granted - they've got such a damned supercilious air about them when they talk of their marriage that I would ~~be~~ wince their necks in anger - but I always keep my mouth shut, I cannot remember ever entering into any serious discussion with anybody on "Wives - what they're like & how to treat 'em". I have no patience with, so-called, masculine superiority over the

female & as I can't argue logically & calmly when I'm passionately aroused I just sit back & say 'muffin' - but, boy!, do I think a lot.

On the one occasion when I entered into a general argument on women, I stated as my opinion that if more women were elected to sit in Parliament the country would be better off, I was hounded into mut-silence. I could only conclude, after listening to the subsequent egotistical statements, that there was very little hope for well-adjusted marriages whilst the male member adopted the attitude that he must be right because he was a Man. Even with love as an adhesive help to a union love must also be understanding & companionship, for love is a quality that must depend for its endurance on generous assistance from the latter two - if they fail the two <sup>people</sup> must gradually drift apart, <sup>spiritually</sup> mentally, if not physically. Thus I am despairing & angry when I hear husbands speak disparagingly of their wives & I attribute their remarks to lack of education, lack of good upbringing & lack of the knowledge of living. What their wife's character, etc. is like I don't know, nor do I want or need to know - I only know that a man's marriage is a sacred contract to love & cherish a woman, & he should attempt to carry out that contract in a straightforward, honest & intelligent manner; if he can't then he should keep his mouth shut & try to make the best of a bad bargain.

I mentioned education just now - it's been in my mind for some time past. We lads fresh from England can't help noticing the difference in status between

the "lower classes" in India + those ~~to~~ at home. The difference is all that between a peer at home + his dog, + perhaps it can be stated with truth that the peer's dog is better treated than these coolies are. The trouble is, of course lack of education. They are incapable of realising their worth in the Indian scheme of things because they are unorganised as labour, illiterate, + therefore cannot read the papers, badly <sup>by</sup> underpaid + therefore unable to raise themselves out of ~~the~~ out out by themselves for a thousand or more years. That's the state of affairs that existed in England before the masses were educated sufficiently to open their eyes to the inequality of their lot + since that time they have progressed in status so that today no greater power, for good or evil, exists in the land than the ordinary commoner. But it is obvious that the people are not yet sufficiently educated to appreciate to what heights of citizenship they can go, + what a vastly improved standard of living they can achieve, + that fact leads me up to one of my greatest wishes. Our son and/or daughter, darling, must have the best education that we can afford to give them - our greatest pride in later years will be to sit back + watch our children's minds grow in understanding + capacity for logic + clear thinking - apart from what they'll need in their careers, I don't care what they forget of the three Rs, or of the ~~un~~unwritten theorems, so long as they can distinguish right from wrong, truth from falsehood, + good from bad. I suppose it's too much to say that we'll produce the perfect citizen, sweetheart, but we'll certainly do our best - eh?

I feel in a down-to-earth mood tonight. It's the

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result of having a lot of time for thinking & I always connect our lives with any subject I care to think about. It's nice to think we'll have a little castle of our own to live in, without outside interference, & to go our own way free & happy, but to retain all that we must play our part in the shaping of the modern world. Together we shall be quite a dynamic little force, sweetheart, & begging favours of no one, we shall seek to advance ourselves so that our services count for something, & if we meet with any opposition, or difficulties, we shall be fortified by the knowledge that our consciences are clear, & that physically & mentally we are a match for anyone.

I'm in a conquering mood tonight, darling, & it's a dangerous mood because I know that I can only conquer when you are beside me. At this hour you cannot be beside me, but, luckily, my dreams of conquest lie in the future when you will be there with me. There's nothing for me to do out here, sweet, but plan & wait - & I'm happy enough to do just that in the realisation of all that is due to us. To merely say "I love you" doesn't seem to cover everything, rather should I say that you are within me, you are my soul & spirit, you are me

Les.

In Active Service

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