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Bombay.

Sunday. 15.7.48.

Darling,

There's a half hour spare before dinner so I'll begin this 'n' + get a few lines in of this 'n' that.

Your mail is arriving in very crazy fashion. I had your 53 before I had 52 + if I'd had ~~53~~ 52 when I wrote my last epic I'd have replied differently about such things as parcels. So I'll do a little clearing up. I write, honey, that your pants are falling down, + to prevent that catastrophe, ("your, miss?") I'll send you a few yards of elastic which is in good supply, altho' it's the cord-like stuff - OK? It might not get to you in time to prevent one embarrassing moment but it'll stop a continual downward trend in the future. I'll also include a few more of those little necessities to a Lady's toilet - incidentally, it's nae bother at all to buy 'em - the difficulty is not to buy 'em - one careless flick of an eyelid + they're got you. When I go shopping with you in the U.K. it'll be different - there they don't expect you to buy anything, + I've got such a soft heart that I can't bring myself to be so unpleasant as to interrupt shopkeepers in their reveries. I'm

thinking that it's about time one or two of my parcels arrived, unless the people out here are over-optimistic about delivery times. But, maybe as I write these words, the carpets have arrived & you're now sitting down in the flat looking at 'em, thinking they're not bad but 300% purchase tax is a little too much to pay, & that colour green would probably go better in a Victorian drawing room where it would be entirely covered with objay darts - s'alright, honey, I'm thinking this way on account of the fact I'm hungry & it's dinner time.

Cloth rationing in India only affects cotton materials in an unmade state. I think I could get dress length alkhó silk, real silk, is very hard to obtain. The piece I described to you would, in my opinion, be a little too bigame for you - as a dress, anyway & I'll try for something more to your taste. I think we're allowed to send up to 4 yards of silk or other dutiable material with a D.F. label - is that enough? - or am I being rude

I was very interested to read about the cameras. Keep trying, baby, & if it's Wallace Heaton you're dealing with, don't be afraid to tell them why you want a camera - that firm is too concerned with its reputation

of being a 'friend of the amateur' to chance any swindling, & I really believe they're very helpful. I suppose any large, well-known firm would be the same. I've given up trying in Bombay. I wrote to the Kodak people, complaining at the black market in film, asking for news of cameras, new or second-hand, & pointing out the position of a serviceman stuck out in the wilds & needing film which may only be bought at 9-11.30 in the morning. Kodak replied in a most unsympathetic & unhelpful manner, which strengthened my opinion that the business concerns of Bombay ~~are~~ do not intend to put themselves out in the least to assist an exiled serviceman or woman. I'm more anxious than ever to get a camera, but I shall have to rely on you, darling, or an extraordinary piece of luck this end - by the way, if I do pick up a camera I'll let you know by cable so that I might prevent a double purchase.

I had a letter from Mike today. He's back in Malta after touring the Adriatic he writes very eagerly about that part of the world & I think, apart from action, he enjoyed himself. Now he awaits further orders & expects to be sent further East. He enclosed a map of himself taken aboard & he, too, has lost weight noticeably. He writes of scents & silks bought in Venice & sent home to Peggy

who, so he says, will use them for the purpose of vamping her new publisher whom she expects to contact in the near future. I think I'll write to him at length tomorrow.

I was in a very black mood last night. Got to thinking ^{what} ~~was~~ a ~~stupid~~ ~~wasted~~ waste of time this whole business is, how so intensely I hated this hold-up in my life, & what the dangers were of my mind becoming stagnant for want of stimulants from you & from all else I hold worthwhile in this world. I became quiet & maybe, worse, & my stable companions noticed it so that they commented on my lack of bonhomie & the fact I didn't join in the usual give and take in the cabin. It was my depression which caused me to ponder on the other men & to decide that nice blokes tho' they were, I could never be a constant companion of theirs because they thought so differently to me & they lack the understanding that I find in you and in my real friends at home. When I get in that mood I begin to feel lonely because I know I shall never find such a man as Mike out here, to converse intelligently with me & from whom I can learn so much. Other men are so shallow that they make huge mountains out of tiny molehills, & so

I became impatient with them & then I have to be quiet for fear of starting a first class quarrel. The trouble is not that I am so good & they so bad, but that they are not of my mental world - such as it is - & so that's one more reason why I ache to be back with you, beloved, & with the rest. Of course, having a little sense of balance, I try not to be so "up-stage" all the time, & given time to adjust myself I'll get back to normal acting, & life in Cheetah II will go on as before.

Having dripped my little piece, & writing quite impersonally now, it's amazing how passionately fly up & down under these conditions. Since we came here we've made friends with quite a few Indians - chiefs & P.O.s mainly - & so far we've jollied along with 'em very well. I've mentioned two - Singh & Anand. I've also explained how disgusted I, & the rest of the English, have been with the conditions of the coolies & how no Indian seems to want to help himself, the lower classes, or the country in general. Up to last week we've tactfully refrained from discussing political & social matters because we couldn't honestly agree with the chiefs, but last week, for some reason, all of us were in a very

ugly mood - maybe it was a particularly bad dinner or maybe it was the weather, anyway, nobody would start an argument for fear of an unpleasant situation. But in the workshops Singh Anand chose to chide us on one or two subjects, (Anand, especially, is a typical Indian Anglophile), & it was enough to fire us. We told them just how much we thought of India & the Indians & their ways of living & their dishonesty & their lax methods & their antiquated businesses & a whole lot of other things. There was almost a fight & the two Indians stalked away & haven't been friendly since. It was silly, really, because everything was said in a rage, & spat out without thought or reason - normally I would never have joined in such an argument, but I mention it to illustrate how temper can flare up due, I am certain, to being on this commission under unfamiliar conditions. You can get used to these conditions but only at the expense of your normal demeanor & emotions.

If, in the future, anybody tells me, again, that ~~the~~ civilisation was born in this part of the world I shall ask him what he means by "civilisation". The Western manner of living has no resemblance to the East,

Whatever, either mentally or physically, because
 the climate & topography must build an
 entirely different race of people suited to
 those conditions. I cannot reconcile the
 Eastern philosophy with the heart-breaking
 scenes I see every day - I cannot believe
 in kind, good gods when so much cruelty
 & inhumanity is practised daily - I look
 askance at the riches of the princes & remember
 the R1 a day wage of the coolie. Civilization,
 to my mind, means living in a well-ordered
 community where everybody has the trained
 brain to ~~find~~ carve himself a place in the
 general structure, & where the highest are
 no more important than the lowest - that,
 & a lot more all adding up to security
 from want, peace & a high standard of
 living. Oh yes, I know that the West
 hasn't shown up in a good light lately,
 but we are advancing in thought &
 practise to a higher spiritual level, but the
 majority of Eastern people have to fight
 for their lives all their life, & against more
 numerous & deadly opponents, & millions
 lose the battle yearly. I believe in the
 Western democracies as saviours of the
 world's oppressed classes merely by their
 example - I believe that there'll come a
 time when even the Indian coolie, (I say

"even" with feeling), will ask what he is on Earth for, & when that happens India might get somewhere.

Do you mind being the butt for my outpourings, darling? You know I could not write to anybody else in this manner, & you know I enjoy letting off steam - it's a fine safety-valve, in fact I feel better already.

All this has been written between dinner & tea - 4.0 pm - & in addition, she devised out a white suit, a pair of pyjamas, a blouse, three pairs of white socks, a handkerchief & a wrist-watch strap - not bad, eh? White gear is a nuisance in this weather - it's only decent-looking for about an hour after donning - when the mud splashes get at it you've had it. On an average I wash two pair of trousers, two shirts & a pair of shorts per week & as it takes at least three days to dry, the organisation & system needed to guarantee a set of whites for a particular occasion is terrific. We are, by no means, *pubka* schiks, but it is felt only right & English to change out of the day's working gear into something fresh & clean in the evening - boosts the morale, as it were. She entirely gave up sending stuff to the

Phobic (washerman), became besides bashing the life out of the cloth his system of hooking stuff is such that it takes a good hour of arguing + searching before one's gear can be found. Another little trick he's got is to dab marking ink on the place where it will be most noticeable when worn! I prefer to do my own.

A week or so ago some of us suddenly realized that no provision was made for Sunday church. It's typical of the rut we've gotten into that we hadn't noticed a discrepancy in the Navy Naval Routine that in England would have been outstanding. We ask if facilities could be arranged - we were told yes. During the past weeks we've come to notice a little room in one of the rec. cabins marked "Chapel", containing a half-dozen chairs, a couple of tables + a few books. A piece of purple cloth was draped over a table to represent an altar. It was in this "Chapel" that a pastor was to conduct a service this morning for the first time - a voluntary affair. As the room will hold no more than a dozen men comfortably, + as the rain was so terrific that we could hardly hear ourselves speak for the tattoo on the roof, I didn't brave the five minute walk down

the road. I think the Naval Chaplains are a little advice as far as we are concerned, but I make no further comment.

Away to tea.

And after tea, shower, shave, powder, (very embarrassing I look with talcum powder all over me - got to be, must dry the little nooks + crannies of the body), + a change from top to toe. I've got lots of little chores to do - cleaning white (?) shoes, going round my leather possessions wiping mildew off, tidy up around the joint, etc. - I'll do them later - I'll finish off this letter first. The last little bit in your SD made me smile - pin-up girls! You'd be most surprised to see just how well you do stand up to comparison with the glamourites published in mags + whatnot. I know my little cup-cake is it just icing on top + bread beneath the rich all the way through. These Bodies that adorn some walls are nice to look at - who would deny that? - but they're just paper dolls, nothing more, + without some lovely memory to associate with a picture it gets you nowhere. In any case, if I & a number of you were to be included in a hiliport it would be just as big an eye-ful as any other model - from an artistic point of view glamour is just a matter of ~~the~~ pose, lights + make-up

+ from my point of view it's o.k. whichever way I look at it, if it's your nude we're talking about. So you see, baby, we have nothing to fear, + I haven't the slightest intention of putting artificial stimulants in the wall when I have the real thing to look at - not that I have a nude of you, angel, but I got an imagination, ain't I? It seems to me that a candid camera would have been a godsend in England just before I came away, + I think that when I get back I'll do a little snapping of you to store away for a rainy day - you might, at some time, want to go away on a holiday for hens, + with my own private little album I won't be so lonely.

I wonder if you've ever wondered about the female situation out here or how it concerns us boys? Have you ever thought about it, honey? I mean lonely men, far from home, in all that - same with girls, lonely, far from home — !! Did you ever get the impression that the temptations, traps, + snares for love-starved men were there in profusion, + that, maybe, your ever-loving husband had been tempted? % you have, sweetly, you can forget it right away. I won't trouble to talk about myself - you know ol' true blue Sam here, he's so blinded with love for Caise that Lana Turner

looks like a prize gargoyle to him - but believe it or not I know for a fact that out of 80 men in the draft there's only one man who has troubled to get himself a girl - friend the rest, single or married, have been amazingly free from female entanglements & I'm quite sure that they haven't the slightest intention of getting rid of that freedom. Moreover, in spite of the usual incitements, none of them, so far as I know, have ever visited a "red light establishment". It's hard to explain this celibacy - it's partly fear of disease, partly the inconvenience of the camp being out of town, partly the expense of giving a girl a really good time in Bombay, & a whole lot of other reasons which explain some of the reluctance - but as jolly Jack has never before been daunted by the aforesaid difficulties prevalent in other countries I'm at a loss to account for this unusual situation. Maybe they see Army & ahead & they don't want to blot their copybooks so near the end. It gives me great pleasure to write, as before, that there's only one reason I don't seek the company of other women - I love you madly, hopelessly, & incurably, & no one can replace you, darling, for there is no one like you.

Adoringly,
 P

Mrs. Claire Lewis

Mrs. her 2nd husband

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POST OFFICE

MARITIME MAIL

(143)

received.
8.1.75