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Bombay.

5-8-45.

Dating,

I guess that by today you'll have finished your holiday + you'll be back at the flat feeling like a million dollars. You're No. 65 from Hastings sounded to me as tho' you were enjoying yourself + it would grand to read about you + the sands + the sea - they go together much more than somewhat. No. 67, (No. 68 has not appeared yet) caught you rushing about hither + thither ironing + mending 'n whatnot - my goodness! What a lot of ironing you girls do - thought you had a basin full at the Cupber's?

When you write of an early re-union you not only touch a chord in my heart, you positively swipe it. The wildest + most ~~of~~ fantastic rumours are sweeping Bombay + surprisingly enough, quite a lot of them are true. One thing that has been cleared up - I will not be regarded as indispensable when my number comes up + I shall be released ~~and~~ with

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my Group - that's a piece of news I've been worrying about for a long time after reading that the Navy intended to retain certain classes beyond their time. The release numbers are positively rushing towards 35 & now my one big fear is that I shan't be able to buy my "rabbits" in Bombay in time before I'm sent home. Xmas, as before, should see me biting my nails in nervous anticipation - nervous, but very phlegmatic - eh?

You say, sweet, that you could write 'mean & mean' about the political situation & how it affected the people. May I hazard a guess as how it affected 'em? - I bet it scared 'em to death - I bet they had no idea that the revolution would be so devastating, & now they're anxiously scanning the papers ~~to~~ hopefully to see that Labour is taking things easy for the moment. How right am I? You're right about the position of the C.S. under the new regime - there'll be Ministers all over the place now & I only hope I'm there in time to dig my heels in.

Today has put me right in the mood
 to talk about cameras. You tell me why
 later on. I think, darling, that the
 marked advert sheet that I sent to
 you in my No. 49, (what a filing system!)
 will give you a good idea of what I
 want - the makes are there, & the data
 against each item is suitable for any
 make - in other words, say, "£4.5,
 Zeiss Tessar lenses shutter speed 1 to 1/250th
 sec, T. & B. E.R.C. (exit-ready case) etc." applies
 equally well to a Kodak or a Voigtlander
 or a Zeiss Ikon etc. The German cameras
 fetch a higher price than English or American
 makes, specifications being equal, because
 Germany's reputation for lenses, (the
 most expensive part in a camera), is such
 that many people believed up to the war
 that no other country could equal
 them. That was very true at one time
 but these days it is not so - nevertheless
 a camera made before the war in Germany
 is likely to be the finest of its kind. Of
 course, another reason for the higher ^{initial} cost
 is the import tax on German cameras.
 So, sweet, not to confuse the issue any

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more than I can help, let me advise you to buy a camera with the specification you like (see advert), & at a fair and reasonable price, (I don't want to pay more than £20 if it can be helped, but Wallace Heaton might put you on to a red-hot bargain in which case I'll go up to £30), & having bought it, let W.H. advise you as to packing abroad. Does that help you, baby? My poor sweet, your old man does give you some awkward tasks to do doesn't he.

Sitting still in a bathing costume, eh? I bet you wouldn't sit still for long if I were around - & I bet you wouldn't be chilly, either. Interesting about the boats. If you do go over one, don't forget what I told you about ~~the~~ going down the aft hatchway into the engine room - if I can't get a glimpse of those clerical legs then I don't see why an ogling bunch of stokers should have their eyes filled. Of course, I forgot, it's all over now, isn't it baby, & you've probably gone 'n done that very thing that causing honest sailors to be very dissatisfied with their wives & girlfriends.

Why couldn't I get jobs like that in England? Still, it was very wonderful on that occasion I came up the Thames with D.O. & found you & Joan waiting at Westminster - the thrill of a lifetime!

I've had quite a busy weekend too. Bombay on Saturday & beach Candy today. My poor feet! Roaming around the bazaars & markets of this joint is these noides to the tooties & Saturday chose to be a scorcher for a change. The sun dried up everything, & everybody, & with it it was a constant toss-up whether to get cracking with the shopping or dodge in for a drink. It worked out about even.

We went again to Crawford Market because Harold wanted to buy dress material this time. On Saturday the parts of the Silk market that we'd found deserted & gloomy a fortnight or so ago were alive with Indian vendor splendour & the Arabian Nights effect was trebled. We had great difficulty in finding the same stall as before & when we did sort it out the stall keeper greeted us like long-lost ones - I don't believe he recognised Geo. & myself but that's

how he greets you anyway. Harold had the same trouble with design as I did, & as I did, wondered all the way home, & all day today, if he'd bought the right stuff, finally decided deciding he hadn't. But what the hell. Jim didn't go in with the intention of buying anything but the cloke offered him a 4 1/2 yd. remnant of a sheeny green stuff, starting at R 60 + coming down to R 35 - Jim thought it was a good deal + bought it. But when we inspected it last night there appeared to be fade marks on it - maybe they'll come out. A big disappointment about Cranford Market for me is that, so far, nobody's crept up + agreed to sell "felthy postcards"!

With a show in the offing there isn't much time to dilly-dally & we made for Horaby Rd potato farm. We visited the Eagle Cigar Co. +, under the spell of a near-payday + the salubrious of the Austrian sent I bought 50 of his very best - "House of Peers", no less. They will be sent along home so take very good care of 'em, won't you, honey. The

next stop was the East-Western Stores, & in there we walked with grim determination. All five of us were out for the purpose of grabbing whatever India had to offer, whatever the Powers would allow us, in the way of grub for our women & children. It breaks our hearts to see shelves upon shelves of piled to the limit with everything, & the counters groaning with the weight of the surplus, & then to read of, (a), "England's Ration to be Cut" & (b), "Famine in Bengal". No comment.

I bought peaches, honey, butter, cooked meat, tea, jelly crystals, ~~peel~~ mixed peel & desiccated coconut - the first four in tins & the peel in a glass jar. I had my Kodak with me & everything just fitted in - but only just. As you may know we're limited to 5 lbs for each parcel & so she had to make up two separate parcels, & even then she had to put aside the coconut & the peel for another time. Whilst I'm on the subject I'd better tell you that I shall send Doris a food parcel in time for Xmas - she told her that. I'll also send you one at the same time, & I hope they'll help to buck things up a bit - if I'm

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there then you won't need jewels to build things up.

So we decided to have a change from Chung Hwa - so we decided to pop round to Gordon's which is a step up in the social scale, if you know what I mean. It's also a step up in the price scale, but pay-day's all that doncha know. It's the sort of place a very posh sergeant, or an ordinary sub-lt., would take his rather snooty girl-friend, if you get what I mean - you wouldn't see an Admiral with his wife in there - it's a sort of in-between. The waiters wear clean whites, + there's a menu to every table instead of every three tables. We ordered steak, eggs, chips + tomato, + the waiter brings the steaks + eggs on a platter from which you help yourself - it's that kind of a place. I had a lovely prawn cocktail before, + a machine peach melba after. When the bill came we had a comic time sorting out each other's wack + the pile of one rupee note + small change grew to an alarming size - I don't think that annoyed the waiter so much as the fact that

after a very complicated counting business he found only six annas over for a tip - but we walked out nonchalantly with cigars in our mouths, & the doorman bowed as we left.

The Eros is just around the corner, & altho' it was a half an hour before the show we went along to sit in the sumptuous foyer to watch a good cross section of middle & upper-class Bombay life go floating by into the cinema. "Floating by" is a very good description of the orthodox Indian women with their long ~~long~~ ^{long} ~~around-length~~ ^{length} saris. - they do slide in the most graceful manner. The un-orthodox, the Parsees & the Christian dress, of course, in thin summer dresses, no stockings, & invariably white shoes of various designs - they wear nothing underneath, except, maybe, a thin slip, (how do I know? - well, honey, it's a trick of the light, or something). It's definitely a women's parade, & they all love to pose in the hall whilst waiting for the menfolk who scowl when they come up & find admiring glances being thrown at their girl. The servicemen

love to just sit + watch - they don't care all they don't make remarks out loud, they don't pester, they're perfectly well behaved + I think that's why the girls love to just stand there + let the boys watch.

We saw "The Sign of the Cross". It certainly ages well - it's a bit fiddled up with sound + a few re-made scenes, but it's essentially the same as the original. That Claudette!!! I wonder, now she's grown a little more staid, that she allows these earlier films to be shown - especially this one - she certainly out-bathed all the subsequent bathing scenes ^{in the cinema}. The Indians loved the arena shots - there's a lot of the un-civilised native still in 'em.

Back to camp + bed.

Today I went to ~~Branch~~ Candy because the fine weather held. It was glorious. That's why I was in the wood to talk about cameras. I could have shot a dozen scenes that you would have loved + I liked to have the model ^{owned by a} ~~for~~ nearby bloke - I suppose you would have bought it in the U.K. for about - £150! Being

out of the hot sun for so long, & having
so much of it today, I feel a little red,
but it doesn't touch me half so much
as it would a raw recruit to the East
(shows you how long I think I've been out
here!).

Time passes tonight, & I haven't got in
all I really wanted to get in. But I guess
I can include it in my next - it's the old,
old story of love, & the new, new story of us,
& how ~~they~~ the two stories fit in with each
other. It's all about man's way with
women, & my way with you. It's an
"Everyman's Guide" to happiness - at least
that's what it could be, but the dolls just
won't learn. I suppose I'm far too ready
to believe that everybody could have a
wonderful love like ours if they only did
& thought as we do - but maybe there's
something more to it than that, eh sweet?

Goodnight, my dearest - my very own,

Kerry

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