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Bombay.

2.9.45.

Darling,

Well, well! We live in stirring times, don't we? Your W. S. Honey, was a grand uplift for a week-end - about the flat, I mean. However, all things in their right place + I'll start this Sunday epic in the manner first intended before I read yours about 5 mins. ago - you'll gather that I received it 5 mins 5secs ago.

The cheque for fiat has arrived sweet + thank you so much. The Indian branch have sent me two receipts to sign + bits of flannel about disposal instructions + what not. I think I'll throw them into utter confusion when I walk in on Monday + simply ask for the money to be paid over the counter. (How do I get to be there on Monday? - jussa see, baby).

The money arrived just in time to stave off a disaster for we have a holiday on Monday + Tuesday next + I intended to shop in a big way. Look

If funds would have happened we were
then somewhat & I should have had
to be content with looking at the
cheap jack stalls instead of putting
on the Ritz in Whiteaway & Laidlaw.
Now I can have fun.

Er — there were no n.o.s for f2
in ~~the~~ your 51, ducky — is that o.k.?

Yesterday, too, I got a letter from
Vera containing that Danson foot snap.
Don't you look a lovely baby, huh? Got
your hand coiled in mine, in all, &
we weren't even married! I think

that's a very nice pitch & I'm going
to put it out somewhere to give this
dump a touch of the old you-know-what.
Vera tells me Betty Butler's in town! My,
the old gang are getting together. V.
puts in a plea for me not to go
living away in Surrey — she says she'd
miss you a lot — I assume she'd
miss me too — I suppose — I mean — huh?

And now about this 81 of yours.

You're still wondering if our
spirits are "swimming down" in this crap!
Aint you got my 57 yet? heh-heh-heh,

posted on 17-8 - you've written 23/8 -
hope, maybe you aint, so you're still
under the happy impression that V.J.
was a big day in our camp lives. I
think, honey, that you're in for a
shock when you read my letter, hear
from Muriel & Eve that they heard
from ~~their~~ husbands & add it all up.
You'll gather that it's all right for a
few in this war. Still, we've got over
that by now & you're dead right when
you suggest we're making plans
for the next few months. We've got
everything worked out to a nicety
& all we're waiting for is the word "go"
or, as they have it in the Navy, "jack
your bags 'n' amicks 'n' fall in outside
the Regulation Office".

You're right too, when you reckon
that love has turned me upside down
continually. I didn't agree with
Navy flannel, (pity she got to be so much of
a gentleman - there's another word for
"flannel" - so much more expressive, but
very rude), when I first joined & afterwards
when the war was going on, but now

the war's over & we lead us, to all interests
& purposes, just waiting to go home, the
business of doing things by numbers, &
carrying out the pointless & ridiculous
orders & procedures that we so beloved of
the Navy, is getting under my skin. The
given tongue many times just lately &
I fear for my crossed hooks in the future.

We've already heard about the
demolition forecast, but I still say I'll be
on the move by Xmas. Stand to reason -
to get the old country back on her feet
she needs, first & foremost, labour. None
of the grandiose schemes mooted for the
houses, mines & factories will come to
anything at all unless they have the
men to work 'em. All that's obvious -
it's also obvious that the only labour
keen & willing and expert enough to do
the work is in the Services & the
Coast, (especially the Labour Coast, which
is on its testing ground now, & will
stand or fall by its action in these
next few months), realise that as
well as anybody else. Therefore,
demobbing under (Lab's A will, now that

the Japs are finished, proceed as far as possible, & the only difficulty will be transport from the East. There is no difficulty from the office work point of view - the organisation has been set up for a long time & is working smoothly.

Now, about the Markshiff of ours. First, let me say that I think that the offer of going back to Blessington is a damned good one & I like it very much. The road is a quiet one, the house is large & looking ahead a bit - there's room to garage a car. I agree that a whole floor is a ~~big~~ bit ~~big~~ - have you any idea how a floor would be split? Of course you'd know more after you've seen it, but you'd agree with me, honey, that we must have a kitchen, or scullery with cooker & it would be better, say desirable, if it were our own kitchen & not shared with our neighbour. The flats that Mrs. Cole, etc had were ideal & they had their own kitchenette affair so I don't see why we couldn't have a similar arrangement. I've

been thinking of the alternatives if there
was too much of the awkward sharing
business. If I remember correctly the
only other room on the floor was our big
room - if the increase in rent wasn't
terrible I should take the whole floor
- say, the top floor where the extra room
isn't so big. However, darling, as usual
I leave ~~it~~ a lot to you ~~in~~ in your
inherent capacity of Johnny-on-the-spot.
It'll help you to know, (a) I like the
idea of going back to Blessington, (b) I
don't mind which floor you choose,
(c) if the floor is split I'd much prefer
to have our own kitchen, & if there's
any question in that matter I'd be
willing to pay extra for the extra room
(remember, sweet, we might be in a flat
for two or three years, depending on the
housing situation). Of course, all this
is based on my knowledge of Blessington
as it used to be - the new house might
be totally different after its repairs.
If you have to make any snap
decisions, baby, don't hesitate to follow
your own inclinations - we don't differ
in ideas on housing. Regarding rent,

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I've no idea how much they're charging in England now so I won't say anything about amounts - all I know is I want a place of our own more than all the gold in India & if the rent sounds high to you, darling, remember we're in a lousy condition & in any case, we shan't have to pay for a very long period - in fact it's just a makeshift.

You can forget about the Housing Form & its implications. I shall be sending it off long before we can be settled in Blessington, & the particulars on the Form, telling a pitiful tale of being out in the cold, cold snow, will be the touch for the moment. Any possible letter from the Council will go to 88(m) - they needn't know we've got a flat. If we're satisfied with Blessington we'll stay there - if not we'll move - it's as easy as that.

I'm glad you've fixed things up with Mother. But be careful, sweet-

the housing position is ^{so} acute that if the authorities find out that a perfectly good flat is left empty they might take it away from us. I'm assuming, of course, that the regulations empowering a Council to take over empty property are still in force. But, that again, the housing position would enable your mother to let two rooms in a flash so I don't suppose you'll be away from our flat for long.

It's all very exciting, isn't it?

My poor baby - if Fate isn't the cruellest thing - or something. The first time you ask for something to be sent - sugar - I blow me if it ain't the very one thing I can't get. Sugar is rationed in India, ducks, & I can't send you any, altho' the scalling thing is that the ration must be about a cust. a week, judging by the way it's hung around in restaurants & what-not. How about honey? Will that do as a substitute? Get you any amount of that - I've sent a sample in one of the food parcels.

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I've been concentrating on tinned stuff lately to send to you. Got a parcel now ready to go - fruit, salmon & cheese. How dumb you go hoarding this stuff in the hopes that I'll be home next week or sometime - I want you to get stuck into all of it because the whole lot's simply crawling with vitamins. I'll bring enough home with me to last us awhile - together with the parcels that'll be posted before I leave. Trouble is the 5lb limit makes the parcel so damned small - can't get in more than 3 or 4 tins.

Which just about disposes of the rest in your letter, sweets-pie, except that that "soft, warm, personal note" is right as up my alley & what I want is more of it.

Went into Bombay yesterday with Jim. The idea was more to blow the week's odours away than do any serious business - we know the programme by now, lorry-ride, run round the shops, show in the evening,

lorryride. This one didn't differ any. I told you that Monday was to be The Day for shopping in account of the cash situation, but it occurred to me that if I got a few ordinary Knick Knacks on the Saturday run it'd save a lot of bad language on Monday. So I bought writing-pepper, ink, T.C.P., & cigars. I find the cutest little cigar shop in a back double of Hornby Rd - a real tobacconist's shop for smokers & Jim & I lingered in there for a long time.

Later on we wandered Crawford Market wing & having a st of time on our hands we wandered into a district not previously visited. It was the genuine native district of Bombay, & as far as I could see, we were the only white people there. The scene was just as Eastern as any Cagnum scene you've seen - hm - in the screen, & as we strolled along it was obvious that we really needed an extra pair of arms - in one gesture we had to ward off beggars, pickpocket, vendors

+ flies - a pair of eyes in the back of the head would have been useful, too. They obviously didn't like us. A crowd on the pavement would shoulder us into the gutter - numerous ~~people~~ ^{betel} chewing mammals would spit foam & spit of us as we walked passed, (that's a favourite trick, & I'm waiting for one of 'em to miss & hit me - altho, in a crowd like Saturday's I might feel inclined to laugh the whole thing off as a huge joke). The shops in the quarter are the real thing & those in the European quarter are evidently meant to impress us 'po' white trash' as being replicas of Selfridges, for here the shopkeepers lie on carpets or matresses in a shop that is bare of any displayed goods and the customers (?) come in, lie with the shopkeepers, haggle & pass out again. Yet there is evidence of prosperity in the merchants' clothing so they must sell something. The two main commodities sold are cloths & betel nut with the odds & slightly on

the betel nut - filthy stuff! These are back
alleys & yards galore, and if their
eyes don't mean what I think they
mean then I ain't been around - see?

We got out of there with a
white skin - it was time to go to the
cinema. We took a ghari or garry
- I believe I've mentioned them - two to
ten seats jaunting carts drawn by a
worn-out half-starved horse & driven
by a drunken, or doped, or both, native.
Without wishing to give the impression
that we're anything exceptional in
the way of animal-lovers, & believing
ourselves to be ordinary Englishmen
with our inherent hatred of cruelty,
I must tell you that whenever we
patronise a ghari - & they are damned
useful - we yell like mad at the
driver if he uses the whip, & we writ
p-h in more than three.

We were trying a fresh cinema
tonight - the Excelsior - lay back
off Hornby Rd in a fairly good-class
district. The entrance is like a pleasure
garden with soda fountain, chairs
tables à la Parisienne, & piazza. We

were early so we sat down & had a mineral with ice-cream & watched the people come & go. This cinema is used by the Europeans a lot more than the others in town - in fact this was the first time I'd seen more than half a dozen white people together at one time. The Anglo-Indians & girls were packing in force - the weather was kind & they dressed suitably. But, my goodness, aren't they thin!

The film was "Hollywood Cantin", a very nice too - my cuppa tea. A public sahib & his woman sitting next to me had his fingers in his ears all the way from Jimmy Dorsey to the Andrews Sisters & his woman. She don't look so good either. They left about half way through - I don't think they liked it. But these Indians - they go for it - at least the young ones do - you can't tell what the old ones are thinking - you can't say from the fact they sit the picture through - they'd do that if the ceiling fell in.

A good time having been had by all, we camped the lorry home &

So to bed.

Today is a day of rest. After this letter I shall crash for a while, & then tonight I'm going to open a bottle of beer, a tin of cheese, grab a book & recline on the bed for the rest of the time before turning in. I don't think anyone could better that programme.

My letter too, dearest, - "Still going" but, like you, I'll finish on a loving note - wouldn't finish any other way. I keep on talking myself that I couldn't possibly be more in love with you than I am, & yet I keep on discovering that with every day that passes away from you that I'd feeling gets more intense. I'm at the biting-lip & hanging-by-fists-against-doorposts stage - if this pasting goes on for much longer I'd be in a terrible state. But it won't be much longer, baby, & when we do meet again I'll try & make up for all your love-losses in the last 6 months.

Yours
M. Eager.

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