

65.

Bombay.

4.9.45.

(Madam,

I've got you to be the first thing to do, I think, - to apologise very sincerely for letting my 57 slip out of my hands without modifying the dip somewhat. The damdest part of it all is the fact it happens to arrive when the war's everything has got you reeling & whirling - the psychological moment as it were. What you needed was me of my gayer efforts - sorry sweetheart, I must have been hopping mad when I wrote that.

Concerning you, I bet you're in the clouds now because you've read that the bother about cease-fire was all a misunderstanding - Mr. Churchill's & Mr. Attlee's funeral statement in the house had their calculated effect effect in America who was quick to reply that the whole matter was open to negotiations - & you've heard that the surrender has been signed without any bother - & you've read that allied troops are all over the Jap's home-occupied lands, & that already the P.O.W.s have been contacted. You've realised that newspapers depend upon

Sensational headlines & columns for their sales, & that their "expert" opinions are no more accurate than the Man-in-the-Street's - war commentators have proved that, for I know of no newspaper man who prophesied the Jap downfall yet any serviceman, or blitzed civilian, would have told you that a people who could stand that terrible bombing, fanatics or not, were very good kids indeed. So you've gathered that really it's the people of England who'll make it a grand place to live in because they want it that way - come to think of it so does America & every other Allied country because we're & very good customers & exporters. I reckon you've realized, too, that politicians play their own game & the rules are beyond our understanding - but the politicians have done a little thinking, too, & they know that unless they play the game to win they'll be disbanded in a night & another team will take their place - the will of the people is the only thing that matters in these days - there was never another era like it in history.

The world has learned its lesson, darling - at least the civilized

world - & there'd be no more war. Just  
 now there's a lot of lickerine, going on  
 - you get that after every fight, large or  
 small. The fight has been an exciting  
 one & when it's all over the participants  
and the onlookers are not the same, calm  
 crowd that gathered in the beginning -  
 they chatter & argue like nobody's business  
 but all the time they gradually edge  
 their way from the scene, & soon the  
 noise subsides & the fighting ground  
 is deserted. The world will never regain  
 its old standard because that was the  
 reason for the war, wasn't it? And so  
 we don't want the old standard, we  
 want a new one. We want words  
 shouted from the rostrum & not quietly  
 mouthed in the exclusive meeting rooms  
 & drawing rooms of the capitals. We  
 want free trade, not the old barriers  
 set up to annoy our friends. We want  
 an interchange of ideas between countries  
 - scientific institutes run for the benefit of  
 the world not the destruction - foreign  
 visiting made more easy & cheaply.  
 We want all this & more. But in  
 getting it we're all going to be a little

shaken because of the destruction of so many of our pre-war conventions & ideas of "freedom". Civilization progressed very slowly up to a point from which it seems to suddenly jump ahead & leave everybody gasping - history has many illustrations of this. We are now at the jumping ahead stage, & while we gasp let's remember that there's nothing we can do about it & being intelligent people, we can marvel & thank God for being present in a Renaissance that has no parallel.

I'm glad I'm living & I'm more than glad I'm living with you, my angel, because there is no better partner for me in Creation, & if ever a man needed a partner for the years ahead it's me. Love in a changing world stabilises me. The switchback emotional effect of one national climax after another is smoothed out to a level run, but on a high plane, so that we are not at rabbits but at man & woman with developed brains. You were meant for me, sweet, when somebody decided that the Earth needed a shaking-up.

The last two pages were the result of me reading that you were feeling a bit chocea, baby - I felt I had to give you my views, & if you read em, (its a helluva lot of guff to wade through - ha?), you might be cheered to discover that yer husband still thinks well set that mini-piano & television set - after the war, (that's what it amounts to, dont you think?).

Still, as previously remarked, I think that by now wise back on top line again. I don't want to insult your intelligence, sweetie, but, at the risk of putting me foot right in it, let me warn you against "National" newspapers & cunning politicians - the former are but trash & do no good at all, but the latter might, in their own sweet, endearing little way, be doing the country a bit of good - as I say, when Churchill & Adee kept on each other's shoulders in the House they knew what they were doing.

And that's that.

About ~~your~~ today's shopping expedition. I don't think I did too badly, all things considered, but you may judge for yourself.

after you've read me out. This time we went ashore in the morning - caught a lorry at 10.30 & whipped straight in. There were six of us in the party & we decided that it was a very awkward number to chase around shops together - we thought the best way was to split which we did - four of 'em went one way & Jim & I went the other. It was left to me to book at a cinema for all in the evening & therein was the snag. I tried for "Wonderman" with Danny Rae - no luck. So we trekked across Bombay to the East to find a whacking great square at the box-office. I couldn't very well let the boys down, we had to get in somewhere & it was getting too late to rely on booking elsewhere. So-o-o, ol' Muggins stands in line for ~~an~~ hour & a half! The bloke in front of me grabbed the last of the seats leaving me with boxes only - at Rs 15 & each I felt that there was a shock in store for the boys, & after I bought 'em I was anxious to catch ~~at~~ the mob before they started lashing themselves up to big cats - we kept

personal expenses down to a minimum.  
 When we left the Ford it was 1.15 gas  
 shopping done - a very bad beginning.  
 It was 9 o'clock time too, so back along  
 the trail we goes to Chung's well  
 knowing that they have the best steaks  
 in town. Blow me if, soon after we  
 sat down, the other didn't come in  
 + I was able to knock the silly grin  
 off their faces with the news that,  
 for me in their lives, they were going to  
 sit with the elite. Of course, being  
 a moneyed man, (I'd drawn the cheque  
 before going to the Ford), I was able to  
 ignore paying 5<sup>+</sup>/<sub>6</sub> for a cinema show +  
 I started with prawn salad, waded  
 through steak, chips + peas, to ice cream  
 + coffee. Come to think of it, in spite  
 of everything, the other didn't do so bad  
 either.

After the gorge I waddled out in  
 company with Jim to carry out the  
 programme. We tried a new shop -  
 Evans + Fraser Ltd in Horaby Rd who  
 specialise in household linen etc. It's  
 a high class shop with goods at high  
 class prices, (better + I might say) at

£70!), but, as elsewhere, the single cloth  
lines are fairly reasonable. I had in  
mind some fairly complicated table-  
cloths but after looking at a few of  
the prices I revised my ideas & asked  
to be shown ordinary cloths. No  
difficulty for a tyro like me to gauge  
values but I don't think I was done -  
I bought yards of tablecloth material  
(white, with the usual interwoven tablecloth  
design that you see in England) for  
29 = 13<sup>6</sup>d. No wild stuff & should  
make at least two cloths, maybe  
three. (I've got an eye on a little  
shop selling good tiddly cloths at a  
fair price, but enough unto the nuth).  
At the next computer they offered me a  
pair of ~~white bed sheets~~ white  
bed sheets at R7 12<sup>8</sup>  
the pair - I don't think much of their  
quality, but they'd do for a spare bed  
or something & they're cheap, so I bought  
the pair. Think hai?

Out of there & over to Whiteaway.  
I was looking for a place here, & anything  
else that struck my eye. I went  
up-stairs to the Ladip's Dept. &  
without the slightest embarrassment,



inspected lingerie, suspender belts & all the paraphernalia of my lady's wardrobe. It occurred to me, lady-luck, that I might be able to do something about that black lace set after all - or near it anyway. But I had to watch the cash, (it's difficult to watch it for long - now you see it, now you don't!), & so I came away from that part of the Dept to the sorrow of the really lovely lace shop assistant who had got me to describe you & your size down to the last toe. (She was confounded by my apparent knowledge of the subject & served a big deal - poor girl). The Glove girl was very willing, but her stock was a bit low. They had no pigskin, (in hot times darling, these: no sales for heavy gloves), & the warmest she could offer were made of suede fabric. Well I thought they'd be better than nothing at all so I bought two pairs - one in dark blue & the other in a fawn. I tried to get brown but they had nothing in size 6 - by the way, these size 6's look a bit on the small side but maybe I've got no idea, (very likely), &

maybe they'll stretch. I saw some lovely spots shirts downstairs that I'll snap up before I leave - they're dear tho', Rs 15 + up. I've told you how they parcel up the goods you buy & you call for them as you go out of the shops - just mentioned it because it leads up to a little story.

We came out & walked down Hornby Rd, slowly, looking in every shop. A very busy scene - all shops are open & everybody's out-walking. The sun was shining brilliantly & we were getting very warm and tired. I called in Roba to see how long they'd take over my oysters - I don't, not bad, but I didn't have it - don't know why, except that I don't trust Indian shopkeepers. But of Roba & I was about to walk on when, for no reason at all, I remembered I'd left my glove parcel in Whiteway! We were a mile away from the shops & I was annoyed with myself - we grabbed a ghari & hot-footed it back! At the doorway a little rumpus was going on - a little parsee was arguing with the two stalwart doorknobs. We passed by & went to the packing counter. The rumpus got a bit louder & there was a scuffle.

Being wasey we went to look & saw the most amazing sight, but typical of the Indian attitude to their own kind. The two big guys had got the little guy on the ground & they were pounding hell out of him. Miraculously the little guy got up & hit back. He was soon down again, & the biggest guy starts jumping on his head & neck! Jim & I had been standing by not knowing what to do - we didn't know what it was all about & it does it pay to poke one's nose into an Indian's business - but jumping on his head! - that was too much. We started forward to intervene when some staff rushed up & dragged the big ones from the little one, & the biggest row of all started. In no time at all the public had congregated in the doorway & front hall & the majority seemed to take the little fellow's part - we did too. The street was blocked as the crowd gathered, literally by the hundred, & the English manager - a pompous individual, completely out of his element - was in an awful flat spin. As the only

Swine men in the scene the crowd seemed to cotton on to us as being more likely to give the white portion a fair version in favour of the little guy & so we would have done, but it was getting embarrassing & it was time to go. With the most fantastic gabble <sup>origin</sup> in our ears we forced our way through the mob & left it behind us. I wonder what it was all about.

Again we walked the length of Hornby Rd, down passed the Regal, to the bank of the majestic Taj Mahal Hotel where the Ashoka Palace is situated. Yes - we were after carpets - how did you guess? First of all I enquired about the big one bought recently. I've heard lately about difficulties with freight - transport to England is, of course, frightfully scarce & the shipping agents in Bombay were being a bit awkward, so that some carpet firms wouldn't guarantee to be able to send heavy loads by ship. The Palace had had that difficulty but their firm was large enough to make arrangements elsewhere. The whole

assured me my carpet would be despatched today. Then I got down to the business of buying a couple more. One for Doris, one for us. Doris's is a 6 x 3, mainly green with a fawn border & a design of bolts in the corners. Ours is just a plain brown kerith rug about  $4' \frac{1}{2} \times 2' 6''$ . They will go by post, so there'll be no trouble with this batch. Doris's cost R55 = £4.2.0. Maybe the next will be cheaper, it won't be any deaver. I'm sending the parcel to H.A. which makes me a rug of the first water - I should have sent it to Doris, & Albert would have brought you the brown one. Still, tell Doris when it arrives & I'm sure Albert will collect it - it'll be damned heavy for you to lug around.

And that little bit of business finished my shopping for the day. We staggered to the Shandy Tavern, colorful name for just another Naval Canteen, drank an iced lemonade & crashed in the chair for  $\frac{1}{2}$  hr. Out of there, round to the Coffee Club for a small dish of

egg & chips, out of there & round to the  
Eros.

The picture was "The Affairs of Susan"  
& it is the best film I've seen out here - a  
really fine sophisticated comedy, the type  
I enjoy. Have you seen it? If you  
have you must have enjoyed it, too,  
for it was so intelligently acted. But  
I don't like sitting in a box; I like to  
enjoy a film with others - a box is too  
exclusive.

Out of the Eros over the road for a  
nut sundae - down the road to the lorry  
& see again, away back to camp.

A few words pertaining to parcels  
present & future. I have three ready  
to go but I can't send them all at  
once - the order of despatching will be  
(1) D.F. parcel containing sheets, gloves,  
cigars & to make up the weight, a tin of  
tongue - (2) Food parcel with cheese, salmon  
& fruit - (3) Gift parcel with tablecloth  
material only - damned heavy stuff. With  
the rail at it is you'll probably get  
the lot together. I'm hoping there'll be  
nothing to pay on No (3) but it'll be very  
little in any case. As for the future, baby,

I'll continue to send stuff whenever I can. Near the end of this month I'll send you two food parcels to you + Doris, + one to the Old man - they'll contain sultanas, dates, almonds, peel & anything else I can buy &/or include up to the 5 lb. It gladdens my heart to read you're not unduly inconvenienced by the food position presently, but, nevertheless, I don't think it can be too good & I'll carry on the Bundle for Britain Campaign.

Blessington make-ups had been on my mind ever since you wrote to me about it. I'm as excited as a child with a Xmas stocking. Can I take it that it's all fixed up, sugar? Just fancy, not the journey from Levensham to town to worry about a bag of train to boot. I liked that road because it was so quiet - I do hope it hasn't changed. How's our radio bearing up? Is it good enough to stand a few more months wear & tear until we can get a nice new one? With all these crooks we'll just have to get a vacuum cleaner - I read that Hoovers

are already back in the market - at pre-war prices - wish I was still at the office - I'd have gotten me free! As soon as I can after coming home I must set a good insurance company's man down to start an all-in policy. And by the way, baby what are your views on an endowment policy - can you see any advantages over a normal saving policy as we doing now? - maybe the life insurance part of it is advisable.

That's all for tonight, my angel. Sometime in the week - if we don't get any violently controversial subjects to discuss - I'm going to devote a whole letter to getting down to my periodic review on US. There's been so much else to talk about just lately that I haven't been able to devote any amount of space to that wonderful topic 'LOVE' - take too much for granted, dear's my trouble.

Still think I'll be in my way by mail - read the Express of Aug 24th + see which way the wind's blowing. And when I get home there'll be no more wind - just perfect calm + peace + love.

See



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Received  
13.9.45