

71.

Bombay.

15/9/45

Baby Mine

Thought I'd start another letter to you today, but I don't think I'll be able to finish it tonight - thinking of going down to the cinema. I know I'm a fool for going, the projector's bound to break down, & the sound will be almost soundless, but it'll be a change from doing sweet damn-all.

I read those two C.S.

Opinions you sent me tonight - I mean I read 'em tonight, or did you guess? I wasn't really in a Civil Service mood, if you get me, + I didn't take all the notice in the world but vaguely, through all the guff, I saw words which conveyed to me news of pay increase for T.A.s - that night, & does it affect you? The paragraph about post-graduate fees for higher-grade exams got me thinking - if there was any advantage

I'm the Kidney to have a go alright
as I've often declared, but the other
day a bloke came up & wanted to
know how to do square roots - I
couldn't tell him! That led to more
tests & I found I'd forgotten most
everything in the mathematical including
that bit of Trig. I picked up a few
years ago. However, I'm a brainy
bloke I am, & maybe with the right
teaching or prompting I'd be able to
get up to the standard required - I'd
pass an essay & my History ain't so
bad either, but the rest would take
a year to patch up. Now then: -

(a) Can I, or we, spare a year during
which time for 5 or 6 evenings out of the
week I'd have my nose to the books,
& every a word said save an occasional
mutter? (b) Do we, or I, need to worry
anyway, & in my executive position
secured in which case I'll advance
by sheer weight of personality & won't
need the ability to find the height
of A if this is this & that is that.

3.

Having thrust all larval matters right at the back of my mind, the front is now ready to receive matters pertaining to Civity St. ("Follow the Yellow Arrow - have you seen the placard? (My Gawd!)") Before I wouldn't have worried about things like this, but these times is very different, & these are one or two things about the office that I'd like to be in on. We gotta act crafty, see? At least you have, my sweeter than sweet. I'd like to know who's still around the place & what they're doing. I'd like your opinion on a nice, well-written, letter from me to say, Mr. Goad who was very friendly to me, & his branch is just my cuppa tea. If you get the opportunity, (& I most definitely don't want you to make special efforts, Sweet), what do you think of the idea of sounding the People that matter on my behalf. You see the notion of course, you & I are indulging

in a hot-Wetaway-In-On-The-Rackets
Campaign. There being no time like the
present I'll pen a specimen letter to
Goat & you can vet it, & return it
with or without comment. Well make
it neat but not Goady - heh, heh.

Well, I dood it. We gotta
act crafty see? I want it to ~~get~~
go to Goat because I'd enjoy looking
under him. Wtu carefully the make-up
of my letter. I try to get the Dear old
Pale atmosphere into it - but very subdued,
but very. I slip in a crack or two
that'll bring a smile or two - get him in a
good mood. I slide smoothly round
a few hints about my old cases. Get
the bit about the Acting E.O.? neat,
neat. The last para. brings tears to
my eyes, altho' I admit the latter
part is a bit corny - see what you
think, baby. But it looks as tho'
you're going to be the stooge if that
letter is sent, & I won't send it unless
you say you don't mind being a
stooge.

Look at it thisaway. People

forget easily. I've no guarantee that anybody is watching my interests whilst she away. Alright when I popped up now & again & jogged their memories, but I can't get at 'em now & so I've got to be drastic - a ruthless. I don't know what Road is now, but if he were Prime Minister, & I met him, I'd go right up & start chatting about old times like he was one of the boys. This letter is chicken feed, in my opinion, & only an opening. How my Navy time's nearly up I want to know what I'm going back to - only the proper thing after all, eh? Also, time being short, I want a few arrangements made on my behalf so that a last minute panic, which might result in failure, is averted. So what do you think of the whole set-up, sugar?

'Safternoon I'm stopping in here to Breach Candy to get a little air into my system. I should really, I suppose, for I've developed a wind in the head from the past days'

Sickness - but the weather's hot & dry today so I think I'll chance it.
By the way, today's Sunday.

Well, I've been to Breadland & I've come back fairly refreshed & better fed, but I've had a disappointment. I saw you there, in the crowd, in that turquoise number & try as I would I couldn't contact you. I think you were trying to contact me - at least, you kept looking round & it must have been me, mustn't it? You were diving & swimming with the boys & girls & when you came out you lay on the grass & batted in the sun - you looked so lovely. I was quite near you - funny! why didn't I walk over? I just sat there & watched & maybe that's all I was meant to do this time. I'll do a good turn during the week & then they'll consider letting me walk over - surely.

I'm not exactly the life of the

~~today~~ Party today because of the fact I've got dead. fever again - the symptoms are an intense feeling of choiceness & an enlarged ear from listening to so many bugs & hard-luck stories. I never imagined the days would drag so slowly as they do now. And I definitely do not enjoy reading that the Trade Union Congress have passed a resolution to inform the Govt. that in their opinion men in the Continent & in England should be released firstly & urgently, irrespective of group number & they should not wait for the release of ~~these~~ men in the same group out East who will be delayed because of transport. May I say:-(a) You can't tell naval men out here that there's a shortage of transport - you can tell them that large transports are more favourably inclined to civilian passengers with priority travel tickets, & to well paying freight, than an uncount bunch of service men who only muck up the ship:

(b) For the T.V.C. to state that keeping the Home Services in camp pending the release of Eastern Services won't help the latter is vice logic but takes no account of human nature. Put it the other way - releasing all the H.S. without waiting for the E.S. won't help the latter either, for can you imagine the feelings of a bunch like the 14th, or a matiloe with salt in his blood, when they learn that a progg in England with a number like 60 have been denobbed whilst they are still awaiting in this dump? We all realise that Labour has ~~got~~ to be found, & we all think that the Govt. will soon announce that they've accepted the T.V.C. suggestion - but none of us are going to like it & there'll be a lot of trouble. Only I do hope they won't flog the transport excuse - we think it's so stupid.

I wonder, darling, if you'd be interested, after all this time, in a few more lines about our trip in

the Mauretania - or, as we old Gals call it, the Maury. As you couldn't possibly answer for a fortnight I'll take it that you might be interested if the anecdotes are interesting enough.

You know, I believe, we left from Liverpool. We were a week on the ship in dock - she was fully loaded with all passengers aboard but either the tides were wrong, or the wind was too strong, & we lay there day after day. They wouldn't allow anybody ashore - it was terribly tedious. But one morning they did relent & we stepped off for 1 hour! When we eventually started to move away from the quay there was great excitement & general rejoicing at the welcome activity, & she thought that this was it & the sooner we got there the sooner we'd come back. I didn't feel so good to see the shores slipping away - we would see Blackpool Tower for a long time & the Northern Lady looked at it

as tho it were a shrine. We were escorted at the beginning of the trip by two small destroyers & they certainly did their jobs.

Round the north coast of Ireland & we were out of range of shore defences. Into the Atlantic & land knows what. That's when the ship started to roll - I think I told you about it, honey. It was hellish, & I was astounded to discover a few more tricks that a heaving deck could perform. I felt rough, but those poor warps! And the rest of the services for that matter. All they could do was lay out day after day - below decks after blackout & on the upper in day light. All the mess decks were four decks down, & in the bowls of the ship it needed a very strong stomach to remain there for a minute - yet about 7,000 were battered down from early evening to long after dawn. The Navy contingent behaved itself rather well; we only had a couple of

"incidents" - unfortunately, one of them was performed in front of an R.A.F. Sgt. on guard on 'B' Deck by the main Grand Staircase - he'd bravely held his - er - horses up to that point - there was a mess.

On top of sea-sickness we had the fear of V. Boats. We have several boat drills in the day, & at night, & we were warned that an emergency might arise at any time in these waters. We weren't allowed to undress at night ~~and~~ or even removed our life jackets. About the third day we of the Navy began to wonder - it's only a 3 day trip to Gib. & there was no smell of land - you can always tell when land is near by the birds, & the colour & behaviour of the sea. And then we found out - we were half way to America! - dodging Gerry. Of course the other people knew that once in the Med. the ship would be comparatively safe

& they pestered us for news we didn't tell 'em. The weather continued rough until the 5th day when, in the forenoon, the seas abated & it was ~~clear~~^{evident} we were nearing the shore. As the day lengthened we could make out the coastline & soon it became clear & we changed course to run with it. I was told it was Spain & I was able to answer all the anxious queries from the others.

But we didn't actually sight Gibraltar until the following day & as I reported, I wasn't impressed. But I was relieved - I hadn't enjoyed those 5 days one little bit.

I learned a few things about liners. If we need to travel on one the only accommodation that is worthwhile is first class. I'm damned if I'd pay good money to sleep in tiny box-cabins deep down in the depths of a monster ship. The money wasn't spently altered for service work & I was able to see all the 3rd Class accommodation - we were installed in

B

the "3rd Class Dining Hall" - it was a damn long walk down there from the promenade deck. Also 3rd Class passengers are excluded from many of the amenities of the ship - swimming-pool, sun-deck, & right forward of the bridge - their own dance-halls, etc, are a very inferior third, & their menu compared to the 1st Class menu is as tho the besepood St. Dining Rooms compared theirs to the Savoy. I know all this because all personnel aboard ~~was~~ had their passages paid for individually by the various ~~services~~ to the Shipping Co. - it was as tho it were a peace time cruise with the accomodation altered to ~~carry~~ carry increased numbers. Thus, officers, Sgt. Mjrs. & C.P.O.s, & women folk were all 1st Class - P.O.s & Sgts. 2nd Class - remainder 3rd. As the ship wouldn't cater for 2nd class passengers we were unlucky & had to be considered 3rd Class. Our only advantage was the priviledge of sleeping on the main decks, where even all the 1st Class accomodation is located, in

a hastily improvised bunk + space that did nobody any credit - but we were ~~fortunate~~ fortunate to have it.

Going down to the mess for supper I find an item of mail news which might concern you sweet. We are told that mail to the U.K. will be delayed in the future because of the need to use planes for carrying P.O.Ws back to England. Fair enough

Just sank a tin of "Barclays Sparkling Beer." Costs about twice as much as Yankee or Canadian Beer & is half as strong - fact. Still, that suits me because I've definitely gone off the wallop since I've been out here, & a shortage back home won't worry me

Had no mail from you, baby, for four days so I guess I'm way behind with the news. Seen Blessington again lately? This month should see the old place in good shape - huh? Should be able to judge what the finished ~~is~~ flat will be

like. I suppose they've put new store
 in 'n everything, eh? — Mrs Watson
 12 Blessington Rd S.E. — a very
 aristocratic-looking address is that.
 By the way — I've written about this
 before — what do you think about
 transferring our bank balance when
 you move in — wait til I get home?
 O.R. maybe wife right.

The mosquitoes are deadly
 tonight + I shall have to get under
 the net else your Adonis will be
 very bumpy-looking in the morning.
 Must tell you I feel perfectly fit again
 dearest. If I get-a spell I've only
 got to concentrate on you, think what
 you mean to me, tell myself that
 my darling isn't going to enjoy
 having a chronic invalid around
 the house, + love does the rest. As
 a doctor, sweetheart, you rate 100%.
 You may use this letter as a testimonial

SIGNED

"A WILLING PATIENT"

Dear Mr. Goad, ~~(at the Hall or Mr. X - should be
your think, please?)~~

As an executive officer in
Can 2 B who left July 1945 to join the Royal
Navy you'll probably remember me. I
don't think I've had the pleasure of
meeting you when you were visiting the office
on leave, which is mainly the reason
for this letter - I ^(India is making way from C.A.W. use) feel strongly the need
for advice regarding my "rehabilitation"
in the Ministry, or Mrs. Wetaway, (you
probably know she's an old-timer in
Can 2.F) ¹, has informed me that you
have now set up a Directorate, (branch?
Section?) ² concerned with the clearing
of the ^{kind of} books & left in Can 2 B. Having
spent so many hours with struggling
against the wiles of Enfield Furniture
^{with} the intricacies of Knacker it would
give me the greatest satisfaction to
~~be given~~ ^{have} the opportunity of helping
with that clearing up, & I would be
most grateful for your opinion on my
chances. It is probably automatic that
I go back to my original type of work
- probably, but is it certain? I must

confers to another angle to my problem & that is confirmation of my acting E.O. & promotion - I believe that matter would settle itself were I back with the assisted factory agreement.

My wife is able to give you any further information you might need, & if, as might well be, you are unable to spare the time to write direct, she would, of course, pass on any message.

Finally, Sir, I would like to ~~stress~~ emphasise that I am asking for no favours - I would wish to be judged by past efforts, & a certain tolerance to be granted whilst I get used to the feel of an office chair again. Also, you will will, perhaps, forgive me if this letter is out of order according to ^{Civil} Service routine - I don't think it is, but, then, after 3 years I've become a very rough & tough sailor, & I've had very little time, or inclination, to think about such matters, & in sending this request to you I'm acting as my common sense dictates.

- ① If he ~~does~~ know delete.
- ② Delete as necessary.

Dr Aelme Sevier

Mrs.



Wilmington

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25.9.45