

74.

Bombay.

22.9.45.

Dear One,

I've just finished off three letters to various folk & I leave them with a sense of duty well done. Isn't it irksome to have to write letters for duty's sake? How much better & more satisfying it is to write because you want to write — that's what I'm doing now. Frankly, darling, I can't put much "meat" into this letter because since I wrote to you last I've gone no place & I've had nothing happen to me worthwhile recording. And yet I must write — so that if the contents herein are scrappy & seemingly purposeless, sweetly, you must excuse me because I can't get the material. Maybe as I go along I shall blossom forth — we'll see.

I've been reading a lot lately all about Cameras & Photography. It's

Such a fascinating subject. I'm going
in for camera work whole-heartedly when
I get back, & I expect you to be
the same because it's a hobby right
up your alley. One sometimes feels
that there's at least a modicum of
artistic talent latent within oneself,
& the tragedy is the lack of a
suitable medium through which to
express oneself. You would enjoy
composing a picture out of light &
shade & seeing it come to life. The
techniques are well within the average
intelligence - it is in the application
thereof that talent comes to the fore.
I've had so little experience of the
camera that I can't say how well
I shall do in that line, but the
sight of a good camera stirs me
strangely & surely ~~that's~~ that's a good
sign? Women have always done
well with the camera - I should
have thought they would have done
better than men, yet there are more
expert men than women. Why is that?

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Success in photography - purely a matter of artistic interpretation of a scene - there is nothing physically difficult in the handling of a camera - & I back a woman's opinion of art against a man's at any time. You must try it, darling, & we'll compete with each other. We both start from scratch & I shall expect you to beat me - if not you'd better have a good excuse.

Here's a fruitful subject for discussion. What about our family, precious - how, when & where? Not much we can say about the "how" part of it, I suppose, our Mamma having done that, but the "when" is an interesting point. I guess it's true to say that Blessington is not the ideal spot to start bringing up baby. I don't think there would be any opposition from the landlord or other tenants, but it doesn't really allow for any expansion of the hbitaway

kenage, & anyway, the stairs will be a handicap. Above all, it's not the surroundings I'll choose for bringing the Ideal Child into the world - it does it fit. Really the "when" & the "where" are interdependent & perhaps you agree, sweetheart, that the best place & time is a house of our own when we get it. But perhaps you don't agree - perhaps you think that Time marches in a downright quicker than you care to think about or when do we get this House, anyway.

Of course I can't say when houses will be available for sale on the open & unrestricted market, but I do say that we shall negotiate for one just as soon as it's possible, even buying on the assumption that a further move to a better house is contemplated at a later date. In other words I'm anxious that we should become settled as soon as possible even at the risk of settling in a place that is not quite our ideal - I think

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we cannot avoid doing that in any case because a house bought in 1947 will be out of date in ten years & we can't wait that long. What do you say, sugar, is Baby to be born in Blessington, or do you think a question like that ought to be decided when circumstances a decision either way can be put into immediate effect?

I believe that we're both of the same mind in this baby matter. We've both had five years of thwarted lives, miseries & partings, & we feel that it would be a good thing for both of us to have a period of ~~un~~unrestricted fun as an outlet for pent-up emotions. Do you believe that sweet? I do - I think it would be an excellent thing to have a year wherein we did as we've always wanted to do - go where we like, do what we like, see what we like, have our moments together without fear of interference

or parting, & settle down in our beds at night knowing that tomorrow is just another day of joy & unrestricted wining & dining. It will be a period of getting back to normal, & afterwards we shall have the necessary mental capacity & physical fortitude to raise children.

That brings me to another point, unconnected with children. You've probably read a lot in the papers lately about the mental state of men returning to Croy St. & maybe you've wondered what I shall be like. The trouble is, I can't remember what I was like 4 years ago so I don't know whether I've changed or not. I think I'm a bit more "nervy" than I used to be, & I'm certainly not as fit as I was - when I get back, dear one, you'll have to be just a little more patient with me than before - most of the damage has been done in India so you won't know how I shape before you see me on the landing stage.

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I'm annoyed that my physical fitness should be impaired by ~~naval~~ incompetency & I shall be eager to the point of fatness to set-back into form again & bridle up where before I would have kept quiet. But that won't really affect us two. They tell me that an English winter is ~~hell~~ hell after an Indian summer, so that I may drive you to distraction with continual nattering about the cold. But I don't think there's anything else, sweet. Can you manage me? Of course, there is one other thing - not so much different as more intense. You'll be very much bothered with a lovesick swain around your neck every minute of the day & it's going to be awfully annoying for you, poor dear. You may laugh & say good-oh, or something, but try to imagine putting a bras'ar with my two arms around you, or a pair of Knicker with me patting 'y' little chuff, or powdering your nose

with me kissing your neck all the time.
After two months of that you're going
to be awfully fed up, but, as I say,
I'm a problem child & you'll just
have to do the best you can.

I received a nice pile of papers from
you yesterday, darling. They were all
read very quickly - we're always behind
in the secondary news, that stuff that
is considered too unimportant to crash
the Indian papers, like Norma Dawn
& ^{such} great personalities similarly in the
public's eye. We've just got to the
batch that writes all about atomic
bombs & V.J. Days and all that & it's
nice to have it confirmed that the
war's over. One thing, sweetie, don't
bother about the Kenish - Gos & Jim
both have it sent. They're all very
welcome, anyway, & I wish we could
get them every week. I've had no
letter from you dated later than
the 11th Sept - it's really awful the
way they hang on to it in Karachi.
That's where the P.K. planes land &
is taken on from there by air to

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Bombay. But if, as seems to be usual, the local weather is bad, the mail is left there. But they forget all about the trains which would get it down in a day! I'm told that our bags have been at Karachi for a week & they might be flown down tomorrow! Bah!

Sunday.

Heh heh! Two letters from you today, naturally, the soaked countryside takes on a rose-colored hue. They are G2 & G3. Evidently Karachi woke up & said the mail must go through.

Yes, my pet, I suppose shopping in Bombay would be a change for the better to a gal who's lived in London for the past five years - I notice the service girls are always around buying up. But we lads have the laugh over the girls because we're so much more daring & brave & we go down to dingy places like Crawford Market & inspect the native

part. Actually these localities are as safe
as Piccadilly Circus - safe, perhaps - but
they certainly don't look it! I think I
can find you some suiting material
costing considerably less than £2 a yd.
+ I'll put that on the list in place of
a carpet for next month's shopping -
how about that? You can't have both,
my angel, because Daddy is cutting down
on expenditure, (don't send any out, baby,
that it only depleat my object). Anyway,
it's up to you - we've got a lot of carpets
& you haven't got a lot of suits. Matters
of fact, sugar, your reply will come
too late ~~for~~ to influence me because
pay day is next week end & soon
after that I'll be roving round the
town flinging tea chip notes all over
the place. Yup! Suiting material it is.
If you need it real bad you can
send out 30/- + I'll post it by air
(would 4 yds weigh under 7 1/2 lb?) all
of which goes to show that your old
man is developing into a Shylock -
tik, tik.

Concerning myself, I aint gonna pretend I'm a plaster saint with "Self Sacrifice" written all over me. Nope, honey, it's just that I've got all I really need out here. I shall buy up a few things before I leave for U.K. but it's senseless buying 'em now because the weather or the bugs would get at 'em. Then again I've got to go very warily & buy only British or American goods because the Indians make sizes to fit only Indians & they're notoriously slightly built.

Er - about the utility company, sweet I can't quite see why they should be niggardly with them - surely, as the flat was blitzed they will understand that some, at least, of our possessions would have been damaged or destroyed? If you explained that since that time we have been unable to set up home again, until now, they should appreciate that we need a completely new start. But you know the 'temper' of these people, baby, & I don't, so I

want bank on any generosity being shown.

I hope Doris won't mind paying more than £6 for two carpets because they're likely to cost considerably more. The first cost R55 which is the likely cost of the second - plus R10 postage which is R20 = £9. On top of that there is purchase tax in England! I wrote + told her the cost of the first + explained that the 15/- postage should be split equally + she knows, of course, that there'll be a tax to pay, so there shouldn't be any shocks. I'll try to get a cheaper one next time but with the great influx of troops prices are rising every day. By the way, the her second carpet will be sent direct to Garibaldi St as I shan't buy any for us ~~next~~ month.

So that you may be prepared + not raise an eyebrow at what seems a bargain of bargains, the large carpet will be valued at R90, + we may hope that the custom authorities are not too sceptical.

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I hope my last e-pic will clear up any queries about parcels - we do seem to be in a tangle, don't we sweetheart. "Maybe there are more than me"! - Yes, there are about nine.

Now, about Blexington. Under all your arguments you don't think the taking-in of the large room is a very good idea, do you pet - and I agree with you. Now that you've told me that the large room will be fitted with a grill the biggest objection I had to letting other people have the room is removed - we can have the kitchenette to ourselves. Even tho' it would have been nice to have the floor to ourselves an extra 10/6 a week for a year or two would be much more useful in our pockets, & anyway, we don't really need the additional space for just the two of us. Contented in the knowledge that we can be assured of a reasonable amount of privacy I

day, categorically, no to renting the
large room.

How is the re-building progressing
- have you been around there lately?
Let's see, it's a good month since they
started, & they should be well on the
way to completion by now. My
goodness if I were on my two
month's leave now I should be
fretting with impatience & they'd
have to chuck me off the ^{site} ~~project~~. I'd
even offer my services as a labourer.
Still, I guess there's no real panic at
the moment, altho' out here I shall
feel considerably more settled when I
read that you've moved in. How
about offering that washstand to the
people next door when they move in?
If they say they won't need such a
thing laugh gently in a knowing
manner.

So Bedford's gone, eh. Well
I'm sorry to see the old boy leave
but somebody's got to shift to make
way for me. I intend to make that

place buzz, when I get back, who's
will be the one to buzz, if they dip
 me to C.O. - that'll be me on the chin
 for the old ego. I don't know about
 leaving contracts because I feel that
 Blank's sections are due for a reversion
 back to the old status wherein contracts
 were TH= people on Govt. work. In any
 case the transfer would be very difficult
 - but I shall certainly see Black.

As a matter of fact I had intended
 to ask you his full title & address in
 my previous "officer" letter - I'd like
 to write a friendly note a propos of
 nothing. I don't know whether I made
 myself clear in my 71, sweet, but in
 order to plan my actions after I get
 back to V.H. & before I'm due to return
 to the office I'd like to know the
 "atmosphere" regarding me in Com. 2.

You sweetly mention "my Grand work
 in contracts" but is that your opinion,
 destiny, or is it the general opinion.

You see I want to be able to play on any reputation I might have gained way back. You learned in the Navy the art of pressing your own case to your own advantage, & it's important to know whether the people that matter are prejudiced for or against you. I know quite well that once I'm established in a position I'll give them no cause for regret at having put me there - I might not be a very knowledgeable sort of a fellow at other things, but there's one subject that I do know everything about & that's me.

There was a time, in the Navy, when I dreaded the thought of going back to the office, but now I believe I can make it interesting enough. She had a good chance to weigh pros & cons & it appears to me that better jobs than the C.S. are not going to be too easy to find. For our purpose & plans for the future we need a steady, reasonably good income, & that's what I'm getting now, with prospects of more to come.

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It's very nice & comforting to have love and money. We'd manage on £3 a week & still our love would keep us happy - but - it's much better as it is with £7 a week, don't you think, honey? Yes, I'd be a fool to give up the C.S. & go wild-catching after some sort of job that appeals to me more. That's why, having decided that I'm to stay put, I'm now searching ~~ways~~ means for advancement - the C.S. is going to be the means to a glorious end.

I was working out our finances the other day & I didn't do too badly either - I got it up to £500 by the time I'd left the Navy. Here's how.

	- £25.5.0	- Gratuity
	- 31.17.0	- Credit @ 6% per day.
	- 50.0.0	- Prize Money
100	- 110.0.0	- Bank Balance
	- 25.0.0	- Income Tax Credits
30	- 35.0.0	- War damage claim
	- 40.12.0	- 2 months leave pay.
180	170.0.0	- Savings Certificates
	<hr/>	
	£491.17.0	

Items 1 & 2 are simple arithmetic & are factual, but ~~the~~ item 3 is problematical -

the amount may be more or less, altho' judged by last war precedents it certainly ~~must~~ ^{shouldn't} be less. The bank balance amount presupposes about £50 already standing & a steady, untouched £10 per month for 6 months, (assuming I'm dissolved in March). The Income Tax credit should surely be more than £25? Especially now that the Ministry appear to be tackling that debt of £40. But we would tell me better. The war damage claim, shouldn't be far out. I'm afraid the 2 month's leave money is a bit of a cheat - we've got to live on something, (incidentally, imagine getting £5.1.6 a week for doing nothing - think bad pay is it? Includes £1.5.0 a week victualling money). Of course the S.C. money is, again, factual. But there's not much of the fairy tale about any of the items & with care a good few should be left to us to start the day right. Any complaints?

I don't think you've mentioned it lately, money, but I assume you'll

be getting the furniture on the hire purchase system? It worked out very smoothly with the other lot we had. I believe the bank can do all this weekly &/or monthly payment business for us if you prefer it. Of course, there isn't a great deal of trouble in sending a cheque to a couple of creditors once a month, but when we really get down to buying houses & what-not I think it would be safer to let the bank pay out. Especially in mortgage when a non-payment can lose us the lot.

I'm more than glad to read you won't be lonely in the flat while I'm away the days waiting for me, darling. It's so easy for me in this place to make suggestions, & ask for this or that to be done, but I'm not the kiddy who's got to bear the brunt. You're carrying the lot, dearest, which is just another reason why I ache to be with you

Sharing the burden. Three more months
and then - - - - ! It's barely
conceivable that I shall then be able
to be with you for ever more. I can't
realise it now because nothing has
changed since I first came out here -
only when I really concentrate hard
can I see the Demobbing Road before
me. But as the days draw nearer
the end of the year I shall become
more & more excited. One day in
a month or so's time a notice will
go up in which they actually name
Group 35 as going out by a
certain date - that'll be the day for
me to go home for then I shall
have something tangible to work on,
& the realisation will make me happy
& mad at times. It's all on account
of you, darling - the Demob Plan would
be thrown in the river for all I cared
if I didn't have you to love & cherish.
I might even like India - but now
no place do I love except the ground
you walk on, Mercubula.

Indeed, it's you I love.

fr

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