

80.

Bombay.

7.10.45.

Morning Patrol,

And a very lovely morning it is, too. We've just had Divisive - the usual parade of women with their ducky little white shorts, shoes & stockings, relieved by the amusing spectacles of the Jimmy falling over a dog & spoiling his ducky little white shorts. The Captain was late & we, standing in the broiling sun, were hot. But I'm used to davy wavy after 3 years - I only hope they don't expect me to like it. I'm feeling fairly contented & it might well be that I'll be able to write quite a long, chatty letter today.

Well, what do you think of the deads plan? "31 out by Xmas, 45 out by June" - it is engraved on my heart. Any advance, I wonder? But I think I've already discussed it in my last effort. Will you see

me home or on the sea? I think  
the time has come to Face the Facts,  
& keep a stout heart, & not to count  
our chickens before they're hatched.

Let us F. the F. The figures announced  
will not allow me to leave in Dec.  
unless the policy of keeping us out here  
until our numbers up is radically  
changed. But I don't think I shall  
be any later than Jan. Which doesn't  
sound so bad - the big snag is the  
disappointment of missing out first  
Xmas of the war. So, basing my  
arguments on the first <sup>official</sup> estimate,  
I say that at the end of the next  
12 weeks I shall be on top line  
for my draft back to U.K. - that is  
a firm estimate & pending further official  
statements, I shall <sup>not</sup> speak of being  
home any sooner. Doesn't sound so  
long, does it sweet? Pity about Xmas  
tho'.

Yesterday, with my borrowed camera,  
I went ashore, all alone, to roam round  
& shoot scenes of interest in & about  
Bombay. The temperature was about 100°

in the shade & we had to walk about instead of the usual gharry & taxi I anticipated a very sticky day. And so it was.

The interest taken by the locals in a Man with a Camera is embarrassing & inconvenient. One has to be careful that the camera doesn't point in the direction of a Purdah woman, a woman secluded from the vulgar gaze of the public, or even an ordinary Hindu wife whose husband is quick to take offence. To take a snap of the Bombay police these days, you must first convince him that your camera isn't a Tommy gun, & the resultant argument in two languages is a rally call for everybody to join in. Taking an ordinary shot of a distant building, involving no religious or conventional ethics, means battling with a native camera enthusiast who will butt in or advise on the best way to take it. The best way, in most cases, is to quietly open & set the camera, wait for a moment

When no one else is looking, hurriedly  
sight your shot, click & run.

The papers have reported that all  
is restful & peaceful in the riot area & so  
I went there to look for some native  
scenes. I walked to the heart of the  
district to a busy crossroads where the  
locals like to lean on the railing built  
to prevent pedestrians from running into  
the road - very much on the English  
style. I leant on a vacant rail &  
waited for something to come along.

The police & the military might have  
quarantined the Hindus & the Muslims, but  
remnants of that old feeling still remain  
& an altercation started on a bus that  
had stopped near me. Of course the  
bystanders congregated & it threatened  
to develop into a first-class fight -  
I was ready (a) to snap the scene, &  
(b) run. Being the only white man  
on the scene I had already occasioned  
some attention but nobody had said  
or done anything about it until I  
raised the camera to take a snap.  
Somebody in the crowd saw me &  
raised a yell. The fight was still

Spring on on the platform of the bus, but the rear of the crowd cut loose to close in on me. I pressed the shutter lever to take a beauty - I could see the people moving towards me in the viewfinder & the light was just right. That done it was obvious to me that a retreat was called for & I retreated. I didn't have to go far because a taxi caught me up & I jumped in to be wafted away from a nasty situation. Good job it happened on the opposite side of the road, it gave me breathing space. But I suppose I shouldn't have been there - anyway retribution is mine for I discovered in the taxi that I'd taken two exposures on one film! What I said shocked even the taxi driver.

From that episode I went to Malibar Hill - a famous landmark & equally famous for the Hanging Gardens on top. I've told you about them. I wanted to get some views of the specimens

of topiary (?)<sup>art</sup> that are really excellent. I felt the Complete Photographer as I crouched on my haunches to get a group against the sky, or stood on seats to get the Grand View. It was a pity I had so few films left - I could have stayed there for hours.

I'd got a taxi to the top of the Hill but it was impossible to get one back. I had to walk miles into town before I grabbed one. I was late - I had only an hour to get a meal + be in time for the cinema. Gordons was the chosen restaurant - it's an expensive place, & the Gang aren't so fond of it for that reason, but by myself I like to go when the food is good & the surrounding conducive to good digestion. It was a rush from there to the Excelsior.

I saw "To Have & Have Not" - I'm damned if I can see the aptitude of the title. Did you see the film, honey? Humph. Bogart & his sullen manner. Not bad - "Casablanca" style. Today I am fair wore out & I'll

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not be going to Beach Candy. I'd much rather laze in the sun in the camp. Now that Home Sweet Home is nearer I've decided to go in for sun-bathing in a regular way & each day I have an hour on the camp bed in the road.

I've always disliked that white patch round the middle & I'm trying to get rid of it but it's a devil of a job. This sun hasn't made any impression at all after a week's intensive cooking, altho' you'd probably see the difference, baby. The rest of the body has reacted suitably & I hope to be a real brown-boy when you leap the last 6 ft. into my arms.

Much later: - Hint I a contrary guy - I went to Beach Candy after all. Very nice - got burnt up a bit - it was very, very, very hot. The pool was crowded - more women this time - dunno why.

At dinner time today came 98. So you like my snaps, eh. I

told you years ago you were getting  
a man in first class condition. Do  
you really think so then, sweet?  
Love's supposed to make you thin, I  
believe, on account of your appetite goes  
or is that when one or the other doesn't  
reciprocate - if so, it can't be love in  
my case because we both recip. very  
enthusiastically, don't we darling?  
Don't quite understand why my snap  
isn't suitable for showing the girls -  
should have thought it was just the  
job. Can't remember now, but wasn't it  
"quite nice"? Heh, heh.

Regarding parcel No. 4, it seems  
that everybody's July parcels haven't  
arrived yet & I expect that they've  
gone round the Cape as they sometimes  
do. My secretary says you can keep  
yer hair on, she wouldn't sit on my  
knees for a pension - she's a nice girl,  
she is.

You are a darling, both wife.  
From what I remember of my clothes  
they're in a very dilapidated condition  
as far as pockets & buttons are concerned.



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Which reminds me - have we enough cupboard room for a well-run flat? Or are we going to ditch one of our blitzed pieces & replace it with a utility model? I suppose coupons are the trouble - I can see us haunting Fudberg, Chessman, etc for the second half of our holiday. I am reminded, too, of all the gear still lying at Garibaldi St. - books, records, etc. I'm afraid Dad's going to get a shock when I move that lot out - we're going to get a shock, too, when we try to find a place to put 'em.

Can't think why you should object to scrubbing my back. After all it's not a revolting back - I don't think - and if, as well it might, it was the area of back that worried you you can rest assured now that that has been reduced to normal proportions & you won't get half so tired. After all, I'm cozy about scrubbing your back - I know the increase isn't so great, but

I usually make up for that by doing the rest of the body for nothing. Ah, what memories those bathing episodes conjure up! I can see you now, (if you're at all shy or embarrassed by this theme I advise you to skip a page or two), all shiny & wet, squatting in the bath with me. You hand me the soap & I lather your neck & arms & back & front - sliding over those breasts gave me the most wonderful feeling. Your nude body is a beautiful sight, ~~both~~ ~~Babsy~~, not because I think your contours are any more perfect than a model by Roye - maybe they're not, but your lines are so satisfying, & your movements graceful & vital - one misses so much of a woman when she's clothed - what I advocate walking around naked all the time. I give you warning that when I get well set up in the photography game - with all equipment, & a darkroom of my own, I shall look to you for a model in figure studies & if I can't capture some of that form & personality in an exhibition study I shall give

up the game in disgust.

I & it love or sensuality that is popping up now. I think it's a lot of the former & a fair amount of the latter all mixed up. But my sensual feelings are entirely confined to you, which might be a surprising thing for a mere man were it not that this mere man is married to a rather exceptional woman, & when he feels sensual he quite naturally thinks of his ever-loving wife & Betty Grable is ~~not~~ still just another cover girl. Similarly, when he is in her presence, he wants her so much, & bodily contact is so thrilling, that there is no mental energy left to dwell on anything else. "If there is no passion in love then there damned well ought to be" said Arnold Bennett on one occasion, & he's dead right, for goodness only knows I love you, & goodness only knows I love you passionately. So I make no apologies to anyone for thinking &

I know that I need not apologise  
to you, sweet, because you feel  
to you, sweet; because you feel  
the same way as I do; your  
sensuality is just as intense, & your  
passion just as strong as mine.

Repression was rife in both of  
us a few years ago - before & after I  
met you, I'm sure of that. But  
now I can write of the joy of  
holding your breasts in my hands,  
of the gentle caress of your body, of  
the bliss of lying with you in bed, &  
of other marvellous things. And we  
can tell ourselves that this awakening  
of the senses, this rediscovery of the  
wonders of man's mating with woman,  
& the thought that the gift of love  
is more precious than all the gold  
in the world, all these things strip  
our minds, ~~as well as our bodies~~, of  
hypocrisy, canons, & uncleanness. Thus  
I can write to you as I could  
write to no other woman without  
bringing myself to the level of an  
animal,

When I write of these things it is as tho' I were beside you in bed, whispering in your ear, & pressing you to me with my arms. These are intimate words, making a mockery of pretence, & telling you that in the loneliness of Indian nights I think of scenes like soaping your back, watching you undress, looking appreciatively at a silken clad leg as you pull up your stocking - & so on. How I wish I could be in on those scenes now!!!

Your clothed state is just as capable of bringing out the "beast" in me because, my darling, you are a very snappy dresser & your figure helps a lot. I wouldn't dream of wondering what was underneath if I saw you in that fur jacket with all the trimmings - I should consider it an insult to you to disregard such a lovely effort in the sartorial art. I suppose the feeling

is just as sensual as when I see you with nothing but a bath towel. What a wonderful wife you turned out to be.

Would I be damn presumptuous if I told you that you've improved as a glamorous girl - from the male point of view - in the last few years. After all, you wouldn't like to think your status in the Oomph stakes had remained static, would you honey? You see, you've gotten a couple of or so inches in height, which makes a difference, & I like to think & believe that love & contentment has brought a dimple here & there. Also I'm quite certain that the result of living with a man gives a girl an air of sophistication - at least she now knows All. You have mixed more in varied company, sweet, & it all helps to finish off the stature of a woman. When I say Glamorous Girl I don't mean that you look better in a swim suit now than you did a few years ago, I mean that you <sup>now</sup> make more male - & female, the cats! -

heads turn to the square mile, than you did, say, five years ago, & 'that's' not because you're more lovely, or better dressed, but that you now have a bit more of that indefinable something.

My gawsh! I am stepping where angels fear to tread, ain't I?

What would I do without you. What kind of a life could I lead if you were not mine. What was I going to do, where was I taking myself, up to the time I met you.

What an aimless existence it might have been - yet is there any need to talk of another kind of life? Is it so that throughout the previous years events were inexorably leading up to our meeting, guided by an all-seeing Hand? We don't know, do we, sweetheart - as a mental ~~practice~~ <sup>exercise</sup> I sometimes try to imagine what would have happened to me if you hadn't captured my heart - it's

amusing, & harmless because the danger  
is well passed. I believe, rather  
blindly perhaps, that there is a Fate  
- how else could perfect love come about,  
not only in our case but in thousands  
of others - it's too much to put down  
to coincidence.

I was all set to continue this  
Appreciation indefinitely, but the  
watch hands are never still & it's  
time for bed, sweet. You'll be  
able to picture my little corner now,  
won't you, pet? Pity I couldn't get  
the desk in - it would have shown  
your photo looking down at me -  
I give you a glance just before the  
lights go out - it's all I can give  
your portrait, darling, but it's a  
millionth part of what I shall give  
you in the flesh. And talking  
about flesh, I -----  
Oh, dear I must stop.

Goodnight, Precious.

bes, Deperandum



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