

83.

Bombay.

14.10.45.

My Own,

At last I got some mail -  
102! Don't know what has happened to 100 & 101?  
Halbriet, I must be content - it's a lovely  
letter, & what's the use of getting set up  
when the missing ones will surely come  
in on this morning's post, (hark at the  
man kidding himself! The Fleet-Mail  
Office fall back exhausted after one  
delivery of mail & don't recover for days).

Camerarily speaking I'm in  
disgrace. By sheer carelessness I've spoiled  
a whole precious spool of exposed film  
which had recorded a number of interesting  
views, including some of the workshops.  
The lads were looking forward to these  
snaps & I have to nuke 'em oop. In  
taking out the exposed roll I dropped  
the spool & they were spoiled irrevocably.  
Nothing much was said, but I fear my  
reputation as a photographer who is

Different has suffered - they feel that the difference is not necessarily to their advantage. I'm trying hard to regain lost ground but, in the meantime, rivals have stepped into my shoes, & the "oohs" & "ahs" of the crowd are for cameramen who are quick to see that my star has waned. Life is like that.

You end your letter, sweet, by being glad that I'm visiting Bombay more often - something about being good for the morale, in all that, & so it is, BUT it's not so good in other directions. Here again, I've been guilty of carelessness - not with the hands this time, but with the brain. I've been indulging in a piece of slap-happy thinking which was worse than foolish resulting in decisions that bore as much relation to fact as my left elbow. What's more, I had the temerity to pass on such decisions to you, thus forcing you to admit that you have a 1st-Class Room for a husband - I eat the humble pie & start all over again. (Quite a day for confessions, ain't it?)

3

This little piece of tin about concerns money. Regularly, twice a week, I now go into Bombay & regularly, twice a week, I spend the chips in shops after shops, cafe after cafe, & cinema afterwards. Last Thursday I spent about Rs 5 - yesterday I spent the same - with the best intention in the world I cannot keep the expenditure down - the place is choc-a-bloc with the goods we need at home & I have to buy. I want to get more shirts, ties, shoes, tablecloth, underwear, tinned food, (you'd be shocked if I told you how much this costs), & anything else that will prove useful. In telling you all this, honey, mainly to illustrate to you what I'm up against & to help you realize that in telling you I didn't need a remittance from home I must have been balmy. Will you please send me £10 by banker's draft as soon as you get this letter - that'll tickle me over.

This morning I made up two parcels which will be sent off tomorrow. A D.F. with two shirts, four pairs socks & two vests - & a food parcel with tea, cheese, salmon, sardines & butter. Will you let me know, baby, how much more tea we need to tide us over any probable rationing period - say a year's stock.

The run into Bombay yesterday was uneventful - just a <sup>bit of</sup> shopping here & there & a show in the evening. The sports shirt I bought is of rather unusual texture & unknown quality, but it was cheap - Rs 15 - & I thought it was a good chance.

Break Candy this afternoon - it'll be Jubilee Beach next week. From now on I'll be swimming every Sunday Afternoon.

Now that the time for returning home is drawing near many of the men are sighing, & saying that life out here is pretty good - & they wouldn't mind staying on for a while longer. Listening to these men I wonder what sort of a life they've led in England & what they

expect to go <sup>to</sup> back to. I read an essay  
in one of the Penguin Series "New Writings"  
(very good issues - I recommend 'em) by  
one of those supercilious arty literary  
men who, on joining the Services, give  
vent to a spate of analytical view-points  
of their mess-mates. This bloke described  
a man who had just married, was due  
for foreign service, & criticised his leaving  
of his heart in his sleeve, saying that he  
saw no horizon beyond his wife & his home.  
Well that description fits me perfectly, but  
I can't imagine any man in that position  
wanting to see beyond such an horizon.  
This life out here is the muddy, smelly  
foreshore in front of my horizon, & for  
anyone to ~~wade~~ like the mud & prefer it  
to the clear, lively waters is beyond my  
comprehension - I know men, but I don't  
understand them.

I don't believe I'll be able to speak  
when the time comes for our meeting. What  
~~can~~ one say, on such an occasion? The

"Hallo, darling" type of greeting is so damned inadequate that it's worthless. A nicely prepared speech is forgotten. A hug or kiss is about all I'll be able to manage - the significance of the minute is of such great importance, being a beginning of another Era, that physical contact is the first essential until we're both adjusted to ourselves. The content of words can come later - the fewest declaration of unending love later still. The dinner night can be wonderfully romantic, darling - I have kissed your portrait.

What news of Blessington I wonder. Actualities take such a long time to formulate, & the more important they are the longer they take. One request - in case the bomb has caused a shuffle of house numbers will you confirm the address as soon as possible, sweet, because I intend to send all parcels to Blessington, & letters too when I hear that you've moved in.

So! On rushing off to the pictures, sweetheart - split second decision.

Oceans of Love.  
L

Dr. Arthur S. Swire



MARITIME MAIL

Mrs. Lee Westaway

88 (A) Belle Grove Rd.

Walling

Kent

England

83

Received 22.10.45