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Bombay.

16. 11. 45.

Darling,

Fancy having to rely on such an unromantic medium as paper for one's love-life. Ah me! But there it is - day after day I look anxiously at the postman for mail & day after day he just shakes his head. However today he nodded, for a change, & bang on the nose came 116 & 117, plus a couple of Daily Mail, (those babies just disappear into thin air). They bring me right up to date with news & views & give me the right attitude to go to supper tonight & digest my gouts in peace & contentment.

£2 P.O. (2nd) received O.K. Honey. According to your 115 the ~~2nd~~ 1st P.O. I received therein was for beer-drinking purposes so I assume you're about to send a 3rd £2 P.O. Is that so? or did you regret that fine, careless gesture & in the following letter to tell me that what you really meant was I would take a couple of 55b out of the £2 for a wet? Ah, heh!

You seem to be getting set up about early drinking way before you've read my 96. How'd know what you're going to feel like when you read that one! Further buzzes in the camp say that a signal has been sent requesting groups up to 35 to be in Dragazga by next week end!!! That's only a buzz, & I must stress that

there may be not a grain of truth in it, but I mentioned it to give you an idea of the speed of things these days, & also because I think that that's also to it. Of course even if it were true, the C.O. of this camp could quite easily say that 'he couldn't let us go at the moment as so many have already gone, & are on leave - but he's not likely to do that. At the moment I'm not inclined to believe that I shall be away from here before the end of the month - that ain't bad tho', is it? Apart from all this, the news now is that it is fairly definite that the majority of the men in this camp will go back to U.K. when the R.I.M. take ~~over~~ over. Of course, it won't affect me because it'll be the middle of Jan. before that takes place & if I'm not away long before then I shall be annoyed - but it just goes to show that the whole affair is wrapping up as fast as it can & you can bet that everybody's happy.

I ain't making any decision about what place we're going away to when I get back, Sweet, because right at the moment the only thing I can concentrate on is getting back. But I think with you that Bournemouth does bring out the nostalgia in me, & I understand that the Royal Bath is its old self once again. When we go, Babey, it'll definitely be more than a week - probably two & if the cash holds out, maybe three. I've got a lot of whiling with the Wifey to catch up on & the best conditions for that sort of pasture are

well away from friends & relations, however well-meaning they might be. Besides, I'm perfectly certain you'll need a holiday by then, Precious, & it'll set us both up. Better brush up the ol' Soup 'n Fish - I dunno about size & fit, it'll probably mean a struggle, but I'll wear it & damn the consequential.

Most decidedly, darling, have the large room as the dining, etc. room. I have a violent dislike of small rooms - a throwback from Larkbaldit where a table & two chairs filled the room - & I loved that old large room of ours because of the cash space in which to move without disturbing anybody else or any of the furniture. I remember the kitchenette now - it was small, wasn't it sweet. But it'll do us for th' now & I'll be able to put up shelves all the way round to hold all our cooking ware. You'll need a large cupboard for the goods I'm attempting to bring home - and there's ~~be~~ a few parcels coming to you when you're in Blessington to add to the feast. (By the way, don't forget to notify the Post Office of your change of address when you move, & ask them to re-direct mail & parcels - it'll save you a lot of time & trouble & prevent delays). On Monday I shall send a sewed parcel of soap & Persil, & I'll bring a packet with me. Yesterday I sent another food parcel. Got your list up-to-date?

Evidently the carpet hasn't arrived, but the three months isn't up yet so I'm not worried. I believe too that the dockers have only just gone back to work

So I'm not worried yet. When it arrives have a good look at the pile to see of the condition of it - when I bought it it was quite clean but the canvas is not dust-proof & all this hanging about might have dirtied it. With the felt our room should have a most luxurious feeling to the feet.

I just can't imagine what group photo it was you saw that showed me up in a gaunt light - I don't remember having such a snap taken. You can be assured, sweet, that any gaunt look in me is quite definitely the fault of the photographer - my weight is on the up grade & I ain't so sure that when I arrive back I shan't be back ~~to~~ to the normal 158! Still, you'll have had the Jubilee shot by now & you'll agree that I'm a chubby kid. Look to my heart for the lovey-dovey effect, darling - the sun might cause me to squint but nothing alters that ~~the~~ old feeling way down.

I haven't been ashore today, (Sat.), partly because of the cash situation & partly because I have so many chores to do. The Bhobbi has let us all down & we have to do all washing ourselves. Again, as Geo. is leaving on Tues. the coolies in our shop, following the usual custom, came into our cabin & hung flower garlands around our ~~necks~~ necks, presented us with bouquets, & lathered

us all up to fruit & drinks. I took a couple of snaps so you'll see just what we looked like! One had to be deadly serious on these occasions for fear of offending the Indians & they make a great ceremony of it. The amazing part is their willingness to spend their last few annas on the flowers, etc in order to demonstrate their friendliness - it's a big thrill for them. Throughout our sojourn in this place the coolies have been treated remarkably well by the Naval chaps, much better than by their fellow Indians, & they really appreciate it. It indicates to me that the general trend of thought which allows the coolie class only an animal status is based on a desire to deliberately grind them to the ground & keep them there, for their emotions & feelings are of one same standard as any race in the world.

I've just returned from the camp cinema - I left half way through. Double feature tonight! The snag was that altho the first ("Fighting Lady") was good, very good, the second ("Govt. Girl" with Olivia De Havilland) was bad, very bad. I couldn't stand it.

The night is balmy. For the past few nights the weather has been stormy - we've even had rain! Very unusual, so I'm told. The days were terrifically sultry, a state that is worse by far than a sunny day at 110° in the shade - absolutely no air, one was damp and sweaty all day, & all night too. These

Changes don't last long, & I hope that tomorrow we can have our usual run to John in comfort.

I'd like to talk some more about disembarking, would not you, Baby? Have I told you the disembarking procedure? We've pieced it together from the letters sent to us by the boys already home & out. From the quay-side, ~~most~~ most probably Southampton, a lorry takes us across town to the station, thence to Pompey & R.M.B. Within 2 hours we should be back again on the station with warrant for 14 days' leave - it seems that the old newspaper gag about being a civilian after 24 hours from the time you stepped ashore doesn't apply to the Navy, & I'd be very much surprised if it applied to the Army or R.A.F. We shall have to await the collection of our Service papers which might take two or three weeks. If I'm to sail with the 325 my disembarking might easily take longer than that, which is O.K. by me because I get that much more leave. It seems fairly certain that I can give you the name of the ship & the date it is due to leave Bombay - that much I can send by letter, & in addition I shall send an E.F.M., (Forces' Cable) which says quite simply not to write any more, coming home, love - or words to that effect. If you know the name of the ship you should be able to get news of its time of arrival either from the shipping agents or the Admiralty - but you can work it out for yourself roughly: - if it's

one of the big packets - Orion, Mauritania, any of the Castle Boats, Aquitania, etc, the journey takes about 15 days. For a slower boat such as a ~~conv~~ converted merchant steamer, aircraft carrier or smaller R.H. Wagon, etc., add on 3-5 days. Usually the big ones do it non-stop & the smaller craft stop once or twice for refueling. From reports received it doesn't look as though it's any use meeting the ship, Honey, because in some cases the personnel are kept aboard, maybe, all that day & ~~and~~ disembark in the early morning so that they may get through customs, be away & out of R.H.B. by early afternoon in time to get home the same day. In any case tales tell that the Quay-side scene is far from orderly or leisurely. Knowing the Navy, (we do, don't we Sweet?), they might pull any trick, clear or otherwise, so I think that in order to ensure a definite meeting we'd better wait until I'm actually on my way out of R.H.B. on leave. Of course, Angel, you'll know. In England just as soon as I can organise speedy communication, & a little mental arithmetic should give you a good idea of the day & part of the day I shall be winging my way London-wards - it is certain, (& I give the Navy credit here), that there is the least possible delay in getting foreign Service men home on leave, it's just a question of being in R.H.B. in time to get warrants, etc made out.

'What-a difference a day makes', says the old

Song, & when you come to think of it, what a difference  
 a day does make. The atmosphere in this camp  
 since the latest D. news came through is positively  
 slap-happy, & I along with it, are positively slap-happy  
 too. The officers, bowing to the inevitable, have  
 decided that it useless, nay pointless, to worry too  
 much about passet routine & the scene is more that  
 of a holiday camp than of a Naval establishment.  
 The only blokes with any worries on their backs are  
 those going on draft Tuesday - they just haven't  
 the slightest idea where to stow all their gear & one  
 has to be very careful not to commit oneself to using  
 one's own space to carry gear home for somebody  
 else. Of course, & naturally, there are compensating  
 measures. The Indian caterers, seeing the red light,  
 have decided to cash in as far as they can whilst  
 the caskin's good, & the quality & quantity of food  
 has fallen with a great big bang. Does it matter  
 a deal because twice a week we go ashore for big  
 cats & every night the Naafi work overtime feeding  
 starving materlots. The other snag is that as the base  
 draws peacefully towards its end various amenities  
 fold up with it & the canteen is nearly denuded of  
 stock - but who cares?

I act as tho the Big Event were just  
 around the corner - well it is, really, but taint so  
 close as I like to make out. "England, Home, &  
 Beauty" is on my banner. flown all day & every day



All thoughts & actions are directly connected to that end. Even at work & slave - yes, positively slave - in order to clear up & ensure no tag-ends left to enable a over-zealous C.O. to say "you can't go, you haven't finished your job". The 'beauty' part is an incentive to some mighty classy thinking. I got on to a queer train of thought t'other night. All through this Indian campaign you, as my love & my life, have been nearer to me than my shirt - I was more of a Claire with the wearing of a lez than anything else - it was you inside me that guided me through the day. But now I feel as tho we had separated temporarily to enable me to clear up this end, & you to get all ready your end - preparing for the Come-together that is to ~~that~~ give us our physical oneness.

Mind you, I was damned reluctant to let you go, but under these happy conditions - or happier conditions - & knowing that you had a lot to do I thought, well, you could nip off for a spell, & maybe, if the next crucial period was too much for me you could come back & join me in the boat. Then, just before we landed, off you would go again & be there at the appointed spot waiting for me.

That's what I thought, as I was telling you, but it didn't last very long - it was a funny twist tho', - I guess you'll think: "Hah! what the poor sap trying to do - he knows, he's a lost soul without me". And aint that the truth, darling. It sure is.

Lez.

On Active Service

~~MARITIME~~

POST

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Kent

England.

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