

109.

Bombay.

Cl. 12.45.

Sunday in Cheetah, Jastina

It's always a very dull day. For one thing the incentives to move about - work, summons to offices, shoe-leave - are missing, & altho' we may go ashore if we want to the fact that the day is Sunday brings out all the feelings of the traditional day of rest & we much prefer to remain in camp. The Indians, of course, regard Sunday as just another day & they work, sell, & play as usual. Today is another Sunday, yet it's a very significant Sunday to me for it might be the last one I shall spend in Cheetah. I hear you prick up your ears at the word "night" & hear you say to yourself, "well my goodness me, what's all this "night" business, when the devil is he going". As I haven't given you much news in the past few days, Honey, I'll try & give you a report on the situation as it leaves me at present.

I think it is now certain that we shall not repeat not leave on the 12th. Why we didn't get that boat is beyond me & I suspect dirty work at the crossroads. However, the next ship sails on the 20th & I have every reason to believe that we'll make that - nothing official, you understand but nevertheless fairly authentic. The bright

spot in this grim business is the fact that the ship on the 20th will get to O.K. about the same time as that sailing on the 12th, for the latter is going round the Cape & will take a week longer. With that in mind we can say cheerfully that it really doesn't matter about missing the 12th &, anyway, it would ~~have~~ have been a monotonous sea-trip. Naturally one's degree of cheerfulness depends entirely on how optimistic one feels about going on the 20th - I repeat, Honey, that I have every reason to believe that I shall make that ship, & I base my belief on numerous snippets of information & logical arguments, far too complicated & numerous to spell out here, but quite a solid foundation for optimism nevertheless. To plumb the depths of defeatism & ask what happens if I miss the 20th is, I think, asking too much of both our emotions, & if you're a trusting little dandy you'll not look beyond the 20th. All of us up to 39 are standing by here, with all unnecessary gear permanently packed &, for all practical purposes, we've stopped working for the Navy. Next week will drag on & on until, about a day before we're due to go, the Drafting Office will tell us that our time has come. No official intimation will come before then - what torment to inflict on men!

I won't know what your reactions, to these delaying tactics will be until I get home, & perhaps, from the selfish point of view, it's just as well for to read how disappointed you felt at even a day's delay would make me feel a damn sight chocca than before. Maybe it would have been better if I just wrote about the birds & the bees, & waited until I was on board the transport before I sprung the news - maybe, but I don't think so. For one thing it would have been physically impossible for me to bear the slightest breath of home-coming from you, & now the time is almost, but not quite, here it's imperative to my well-being that I write & tell you everything. I've kept nothing back, Baby, you know ~~every bit about~~ the situation as well as I do & I think that's how you want it too - eh? After all, even at the worst, it's still a matter of days only - the next batch of Naval ratings to go aboard any trooper in Bombay will include us - the next after the 12th ^(which is now full) will sail on the 20th with 2,000 Naval ratings aboard (vide official announcements). - it doesn't take much working out. 'Fraid I've missed Xmas, darling, ~~and~~ the New Year, but if you care to climb to the top of Shooter's Hill you'll see an offshoot of the same water that's carrying

me back to you. Just rest-easy for a while
 + the days won't seem too long - but if you feel as
 I do they'll seem long enough.

To get back to mundane matters. I'll
 most-certainly do my best to get the blue bed-
 spread, Per, but I fear the cash will be too tight
 to allow me to buy too much before I go. I want
 to get that by I only before anything else + that'll
 only leave me with about R 30 plus I week's
 pay in English coinage - I must, I course,
 have some spare for the voyage back. But
 y'never can tell - maybe yes, maybe no. I'm
 sending off another 50 cigars tomorrow, addressed
 to No. 12, (it did feel queer writing that address),
 + that'll be positively the last one - unless I pop
 into a grocery + get them to mail one to us.

I guess you'd installed in No. 12 now. I
 wonder how you feel at being an independant
 young miss, or missus, now. Has it all come up
 to expectations, Honey, + have you got my
 slippers warming by the fire? Tell me when we
 get together - tell me that, + how much you love
 me, + if you're a good girl, I'll tell you how
 much I love you - it'll take some time - 60 persons.

X
 Per.

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