

111.

Bombay.

14. 11. 45.

(Tues)

Don't look now, Dearest, but in the following lines you might detect a note of cheerfulness or classical fun, missing from previous epistles, & noteworthy on that account. By the time you read this you might have heard from Muriel that he's had a cable to inform us that Jim is on his way home, & you might, very naturally, have wondered what's about your old man then. Have no fear, Baby for the news has reached this beleaguered Garrison that we go into Braganza to await shipment on Monday or Tuesday next! Jim, the lucky stiff - altho' it should be admitted that he's 32 group & next to go - had a draft chit at 13.00 hours today to be on his way by 14.00 hrs. He sails, I believe, on Sunday. Actually, when my part of the news came through this morning he was on the list along with all of us, but something happened & away he was swept ahead of us. With the experience of the past weeks or so firmly embedded in my dazzled brain I refuse to conjecture any further than near-Tues & I will not attempt to forecast the date of

Sailing - there'll be time enough for that when we get into Braganza & I learn the truth. Halbiel, I will say that it won't be long now & my moment of pessimism has passed, blown away by a gust of cheery news & general bonhomie from the Regulating Office. This information is solid stuff, sweet, & should be regarded as the real gen. - you may actually ~~expect~~ say that I'm on my way home from the beginning of next week, altho' I must carefully point out that when I get to Braganza I must take my place in line with the rest for a ship - to counteract that delay the previous information I gave you about there being no shipping in the last half of Dec. is not strictly true as far as the Navy is concerned. I shan't be in barracks for long, Darling.

My remarks about cables & telegrams still stand. I don't think a cable is necessary because a letter giving more detailed information is nearly as quick - in any case, sending a cable as E.F.M. is quite a business for us; indeed Jim was unable to find the time or opportunity to ~~send~~ send his & I shall be doing it for him. It might be the same for me & I shan't have an oppo to rely on to send mine. There'll be ~~no~~

Question of relieving your suspense, Pet, (if I thought a cable ~~to~~ would help in any way, make you happier for an hour, I'd send it willy-nilly), for you'll be informed well ahead of the sailing date - I'm bound to get to know it - & when I actually said any message to you, sent on the day, will only confirm what you already will know. To give you an indication, & to save a few heart-beats, ~~the~~ ^{my} last letter from Bombay will have a big X on the back - when you see that you'll know that I'm already half way home.

Cool about it all, aint I? Takes more than a V.K. draft to upset my equilibrium - calm & collected could describe my notions today. Of course I felt stunned, maybe that had something to do with it - you don't go haywire when a brick on the head knocks you flat. And when Jim got his even the realisation that we were in the middle of ~~poor~~ momentous happenings didn't make me move an eyelid, & when they picked me up off the deck & bathed my brow with water I just grinned carelessly - cynics will aver that I laughed hysterically. But anybody who can't distinguish between a grin & a hysterical laugh is better don't you think? - eh?

Am!

You, my Angel, will go out & buy yourself a lunch at the Buttery on the strength of this - the Buttery because there a lady may drink ^{to} the health & speedy return of her her-loving man without raising eyebrows & comments. The bill you may present to me, but I warn ya, I aint gonna pay for a general booze up with all ya pals invited - Ive seen some of those female friends of yours drink, & the tales Ive read about you lately dont indicate no Sahara. If I may guide you further, just set-up about six martinis & take them up one at a time, (not one in each hand, darling, what will the gentleman on your left think - my goodness! he's already thought & is positively beering - when he sidles up with a Purposeful look on his greasy face just raise one daintly foot & kick him in the - alright, alright, so you know), where were we - Oh yes, raise them one at a time & think of a beautiful thought for each one - something ~~of~~ in the lines of - "Gee, how I love that Adonis, & he's handsome too" - or - (if the beery gent-dont take the kick as a broad hint) - "Wont it be too, too, beautiful to have that brawny man back again to protect me from the attentions of other men" - if you add, "or will it?", to that you'd better stop

drinking any more before the raised dainty foot to the
 leery sent becomes an invitation to drink ~~of~~ out of
 your slipper.

I've been thinking lately, (on ~~top~~ giggling, for
 goodness sake), that what with atomic energy & other
 signs of a general turnabout in this complicated business
 of living you gals, with men attached, living over these
 nights in the midst of the turnabout, might have
 some mighty original ideas on how you're going to
 fit in with it all when the Boys Come Home. Out
 here in India, we don't get no buzzes or news about
 what's going on over there, so we don't know the half
 of it, but as I tell ya, I've been thinking + I got
 to wondering ~~at~~ a bit. Supposing you gals have
 said to yourselves - that the male specimen has had it
 all his own way for a long, long time, ever since the
 jolly ol' Neolithic specimen dragged his women in by their
 golden tresses, right through eras of Chastity belts, Joan
 of Arcs, Mary Queen of Scots + Victorian morals, + you
 decided that a joke's a joke but it's about time - et, et.
 Now, when I get to England am I going to find
 that as a Fine Old English Gentleman I've had my
 day, - that when I give my hard-earned train seat
 up to a lady it's not as ~~the~~ a courteous gesture but as
 the result of a about-round the ear by a glamorous
 Amazon who is indignant to discover a male who
 doesn't know the rules yet? - Is my beer to be

Somebody got me in a pub by a dainty little thing whose husband, so it eventually turns out, doesn't understand her? Coming right down to it, am I to be met at the station by my lovely, delectable wife, who, after the first long kiss, whisks away my bags & shepherds me to a waiting taxi after enquiring if I'd like to visit the Gentlemen's Room to - at she whimsically puts it - powder my nose? In other words, has the emancipation of ~~you~~ women progressed to such a stage that I may reasonably look for startling changes in the scene as I now know it? Of course, Honey, you won't be able to warn me in time, & whilst I might be worrying myself needlessly, & might still be kicked in the shins, whilst seated, by standing women, I think I'd be wise to prepare myself to be treated to the spectacle of hangdog men & triumphant women when I land in England. You know me, Sweetie, I'm an easy-going guy & if that's the way the little darling want it then it's O.K. with me, but, easy-going tho' I may be, there's one thing I will revolt at - I ain't gonna wear a nightie in bed, not if you stop me beer-money I won't - so there!

I should stop right here because I've got a little visiting to do - making a round of the cabins & hearing all the latest, including daise. You remember me telling you about the first five kabobs

being told they were on draft, before I + the rest ~~were~~ was told - + the rest of the guff about those five needing reliefs of higher group members? Well those five blokes are being kept back & their reliefs are being sent to U.12. with us!!! One of those retained is 35 Group + his relief is 45 Group & there's no difference at all between them in grade or experience. Man o' man, are those 5 blokes dripping! - one of 'em got drunk tonight on bubble & we've had to restrain him from going down to fill in the officers. Just shows you how the system works, & what we've got to contend with in this camp - might easily have been me left behind - coz!

Keep warm, my Sweet One - I hear it's cold in England now - & air the other half of the bed. Sleep alternate halves so that the scent of you will be all over. Get out the awning, & lay the red carpet to the front gate. Renovate your rigging & oil your zippers. Dawn is breaking

Aint love grand?

Les.

An Active Service

MARITIME

POST OFFICE
WEDNESDAY
A I L

Mrs.

12 Messington Rd

Lee

S.E. London.

England.

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