

H.H. Pragaswara

Tuesday 18th Dec.

Good afternoon, my little Patsy. Well, I think you'll agree it's a very good afternoon at that. Everything's just fine & dandy. Today we finished, more or less, all the routine necessary prior to embarking & ~~so~~ so I've got a little spare time on my hands which can be usefully used in writing to my ever-loving wife on account of she's No. 1 in my life & should be kept up-to-date with all the news & views concerning her ever-loving hubby on account of he's No. 1 in her life - see?

My goodness, but this place is a beehive of activity. Bikes coming in all the time & great mobs of 'em parking all over Bombay to contact My Office, Rental Clinics, bike shops & other places well known to all motorists wherever they may be for their time-wasting properties. But the officials don't do so bad on the whole & then really are making an effort to get the men back. You can forget any estimates given in newspapers - in this camp alone beaver up to 50 Group are being sent home & all the Old Cheetahs are now here, (the last of 'em came in today), up to 43 Group. So when a politician gets up on his flat feet & drips about repatriation blow him a raspberry & turn to something more edifying.

We shall all embark on the "Rajah" in a big heap & from now on it's every man for himself. We've all got an immense amount of luggage - far in excess of the permitted amount - & we've got to be very careful to see that we disembark with it all intact. By the way, did I tell you that it is likely that we'll drop anchor at Greenock? I remember that part well - we cruised all around the Loch & Clyde in '64 & once pulled in at Greenock Dockyard. Glasgow is the main station for London & I'm not looking forward to that journey one little bit - if I can give you warning you might be able to catch a glimpse of your harassed & happy husband at Euston w/ King's Cross on his way to Pompey, but I ain't so sure that that'll be a good time for meeting - I know these affairs + 'chaos' hardly describes it. We'll see. Maybe we want pull in to Greenock.

Funny thing! they piped for the "Rajah draft" the day we arrived but being green we didn't muster with the rest. Those that did so were detailed off to get ready in 1½ hrs for embarkation on "the City of London" which is Jim's ship! They found room for a few more & chased around to try & get 'em. It wasn't really so tragic that we missed the City because it isn't due in the U.K. til after the Rajah, but I would have liked to have joined Jim who sailed without any of his

oppos with him at all.

The medical is a force we had that yesterday afternoon. This is the examination that was to be as thorough as modern medical science can make it, in order that our men shall go forth with the sure knowledge... you can fill in the rest. Of course, with the medical staff available, it's impossible to give each man a thorough going over, with X-ray & all the guff - yesterday there were 50 men to be examined in about 2 hours, in addition to the normal sick-bay attendees. It's true that the examination is a little better than the usual "drop pants, up shirt" affair, & we strip off entirely, but at 2 was in & out within 2 minutes you can imagine what sort of a do it was. A large form has to be filled in, giving all our service medical history & details of the examination - if every one of the questions is faithfully answered by the doctor then I can only assume it's all guess work. Again, if you hear another politician on the platform declare that the best specialists of the medical profession are at the disposal of the services you can say "Phooey" & go see a Mickey Mouse. For what it's worth, the form says I'm A.I. & I reckon that in my particular case it's true. Incidentally (no pun meant or intended), the dental examination was worse - all they did was count my teeth!

But what a change at the Pay Office. How there is a place, if you like, that really goes all out to please the lads. I mean it - I'm not being funny - it was a real pleasure to deal with the firm. The poor little Wren writer had to make up our accounts from A to Z, on the spot - in a few minutes (she normally had had 3 months to do it, with quarterly settlements), but she was a grand sport, eager to help & accredited us with every farthing we were entitled to. I drew £15. - £7.10 in sterling & ₹100 - the chips were intended for last-minute shopping. We not permitted to take more than £10.10 in sterling, but that's a mere formality. I spent about ₹60 yesterday, & decided that Bombay had had enough of my cash & jugged in. The Naval money-changer came today & I converted ₹30 into sterling, leaving me with about £10 to last the rest of my time in India.

That old man is something of a 'tee'. Last evening I went ashore to buy a 6x3 & ask about the 9x9 at the same time. I got all the guff - traced the carpet to Manchester - & left satisfied that if I were in England I could go straightaway to the place & pick it up. These are the details. The carpet left Bombay on the "City of Hong Kong" about 15.10.45 &

The sloop it docked at Manchester on 20.11.45.
 I saw a letter from Pickfords, who are bee + Muirhead's
 carting agents in England, acknowledging the receipt
 of the cargo. I was told that the carpets would
 take 10/15 days to clear the Customs, when Pickfords
 would be free to deliver. These you are, Honey -
 it would be well into December before the carpets
 was free for delivery, & you may have more
 information than me after considering how the dockers'
 strike would affect the matter - in any case I
 imagine that if it's not already with you to date
 it's surely not far off & you now have enough
 Gen to go to Pickfords & make enquiries if it
 doesn't arrive by the end of Dec. As I had
 gotten most of my information before I bought the 6x3,
 sufficient, anyway, to convince me that the 9x9 was
 quite safe. I forgot my original intention of
 matching this with the one we've already got, &
 looked for anything suitable. Nevertheless, I
 picked another green one, darker green this time
 with a suggestion of a design - hope you like it.

The Goubts in this place is spartan & we're
 compelled to go ashore every night to get something
 to eat. It's a typical Transit camp - as most
 ratings are en passage they haven't time to get up
 an organised drip, & so the food just gets down
 to its lowest standard & stays there. Luckily

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We'll be away tomorrow morning & say goodbye to all that - maybe to find that the grub aboard the trooper is a bloody sight worse - I've got my fingers crossed.

Coo! what exciting times. I'm just slap-happy all the time. Bet you've been stirred by my last half-dozen letters - eh Baby? Yes - No - Yes - No - Noo - YES!!! Bet I sounded pretty chocca in at least one of 'em. What a lot a wife has to put-up with when she's married to an emotional husband - but I did explain, huh? - that it was all on account of me loving you, & when one considers just how much I do love you, it's no wonder I get emotional. All day long I choke & swallow because I think of your sweetness & how much I miss you, & what it means to 'have the chance now to get back into your arms - it means everything.

Unless I find just a better more gash time tomorrow, darling, I think this will definitely be the last from Dedia - but you don't worry 'bout that - eh?

In my darling - - - - -!

Se.

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Written 18/12/45

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