



180.

doctors can do nothing for him in hospital and he would be occupying a much needed bed if he were there, so they have sent him out. He is very despondent.

I am told Sheehan, an M.C.S. man whom Helen and I met at a dinner party with the Middlebrooks, is dying of some kidney complaint.

Monday, 30th July, 1945.

Roll-call continues regularly and is taken very seriously nowadays. One man was caught the other day not standing properly to attention as the Japanese passed, so his whole hut was punished by having to turn out half an hour before the stated time for parade, and to stand to attention until after the whole parade was over. This they had to do for three parades. It is no joke standing to attention for half an hour, as I know from experience in the Army during the last war. Then in the women's camp the other day some woman laughed and the Japanese checking the roll-call told them that the inhabitants of the particular hut to which the woman belonged would stand on parade all night. Actually they remained there for an hour, the Japanese showing mercy when the women's commandant pleaded with ~~me~~ *Helen*.

I referred to 50 cases of Red X parcels which had arrived the other day. It now turns out that only 20 cases have arrived in camp so everyone has lost interest. Twenty cases among 4,500 internees is just another story of the loaves and the fishes but with no Christ to make the distribution. Some of the letters were released the day before yesterday and nothing for me, but I hear that 1,200 more are coming out today so am hoping again. I hear too that there are a few from the U.S.A.

Deadly dull life. No aerial activity whatsoever and it looks as if we had been abandoned by man as well as God.

Wednesday, 1st August, 1945.

Washing my clothes is a job I hate. I do it every Monday, so Mondays are my black days. Admitted I do not have to wash much, but what little there is is very tedious. I have, for example, the sports shirt and sarong I sleep in, one pair of white shorts, one dish towel, one small face towel, one or maybe two handkerchiefs, a small pillowcase made out of two handkerchiefs, and about every three or four weeks a special sports shirt I wear to relatives' meetings and my threadbare bath towel. The last mentioned two articles I must not wash too often for fear of wearing them out too quickly. We have, of course, only cold water and the local soap supplied in very small quantities by the Japanese, which does not lather well; I rub the soap well into each article and leave the soapy mess overnight. The following morning I rinse the lot out in two or three pailfuls of clean water and hang up to dry.

Last time I left things soaking in this way I included a new pair of brown artificial silk socks and the next day I found everything dyed a mild shade of salmon pink!

Conversation Piece:

Johnny Raikes: "What about opening a tin of sardines in tomatoes tonight? You, Stringfellow and I have some in the common pool."

Me: "Yes - why not?"

J.R.: "Right. We've got one tin which is slightly blown - it's about time we broached that or it will broach us" (here he produced from a bag a moth-eaten old rusty tin which looked as if it was a leftover



from the last war.)

Me: "Good God! Let's eat it quickly before it bursts."
so tonight we shall feed well, even though tomorrow we suffer!

Thursday, 9th August, 1945.

The recent arrival of mail has all been delivered and only one postcard for me from Bee Lammie. She says she has written many letters but this is the only one which has reached me. There must be thousands of letters for internees in Malaya lying somewhere as we got very few. Many of the recently delivered cards indicate that some ex-Malayan civil servants are either in, or were on their way to, India at the time of writing and that was about November 1944. These people were retired men, which seems to indicate that they are collecting in India to come here when this country is retaken.

Sold a pair of shoes for \$4.00 the other day. They were suede shoes with crepe soles which I had had copied by a Chinese shoemaker in Singapore from my London shoes, and they cost me about \$15 Straits in 1941. I admit I threw in a pair of solid wooden trees - a London product - but these had become an embarrassment to me on account of their weight. We may have to move soon and if so I should certainly have had to discard the trees as the next move will almost certainly be a panic one and we shall have to travel light.

Sheehan has apparently cheated death, as he is much better. The doctors on one occasion had stated that he was unlikely to live overnight. He is a great friend of my friend Fleming of the M.C.S. so Fleming is very relieved. He sat up with Sheehan all of one night in hospital as he was considered to be breathing his last then, and that's over a week ago.

I've been involved in some very interesting transactions on behalf of my friends Katherine de Moubray and Freddy Bloom. They had diamond rings which they thought it might be a good idea to dispose of if they could lend out the money and get good cheques in exchange, so I took the rings and sold them to the Jews, getting \$7,000 for Mrs. de Moubray's and \$12,000 for Freddy's. Then I lent the money out to members of the bank staff at 3 to 1 and handed over bank cheques for £200 and £460 respectively with \$1,900 and \$270 in cash. Katherine's ring was valued by Storch, the Kuala Lumpur jeweller, at \$400 Straits pre-war and Freddy's at about \$1,200 Straits.

Apropos of the above, Stringfellow, Travers and I were sitting out yarning last night and I said to George Travers "You will have to make up to Lucy after all this is over by taking her out to Aspreys and buying her a diamond ring costing at least £500". He said "What for? To keep her quiet?" (a reference to his past affaires de coeur, some of which, I think, are still smouldering) and Stringfellow replied "No - so that she'll have something useful to take into interment next time!"

One of our large bombers flew over very low the other day and, I rather imagine, caught the Japanese napping. The clouds were low hanging and it just appeared for a few moments out of them and then up into them again and away. It was so low that McLennan who saw it in that short time called out to someone in the hut to come and see the large Jap four engined flying boat, then there was a crack of anti-aircraft fire closely followed by the puff of black smoke some few hundred yards behind the plane. I saw it for a moment as it appeared faintly a few seconds later at another point.



182.

Monday, 13th August, 1945.

There are rumours flying around, as there generally are in here, but these might have some substance as they are founded on remarks by Japanese. One sentry is reputed to have told a tunneller that the war is over, and another has definitely said to a youth who understands Japanese that it won't be long now, or the Japanese equivalent. Kobayashi is said to have told someone that Russia is now at war with Japan. As a result of all this there is an undercurrent of excitement running through the camp; and on the strength of the rumours I speculate on the date of my reunion with Helen. My God! Can it really be true that release is within sight at long last? When I allow my mind to wander on to such thoughts at night I just can't get to sleep. Last night was a case in point - I just couldn't sleep; I was wide awake with my thoughts buzzing around sixteen to the dozen.

The commissariat is experimenting with garden snails as a protein addition to our diet. The general standard of health is falling so low and people are dying from comparatively simple ailments because they have no resistance, that this recent idea has hit the authorities who propose to set up a sort of snail farm and get the kitchens to produce snail dishes for those who are disposed to try them. It no doubt is a good idea but it is one which repels me somewhat.

Artie Aston has been admitted to hospital again. I don't know if he is any worse than he was when last I saw him, but it is pretty certain that he can't be any better or they wouldn't let him occupy a much needed bed in hospital.

Couldn't go over to the relatives' meeting yesterday as I had one of my attacks of hay fever and felt like the devil, running at the nose and eyes and sneezing my head off all the time. This morning I am all right again. I have been pretty free of these attacks for quite a time so I hope this is not the forerunner of a long spell of the darned things.

Another man has escaped, a Jew from the hut next door. He went two nights ago and hasn't yet been recaptured, and we are now waiting to see what punishment the Japanese are going to hand out to us. They said when the last two men went (who, incidentally, have not yet been taken) that if there were any further escapes the punishment would fall upon the whole area involved - our area in this instance - probably in a cut to half rations for a period, and possibly a complete deprivation of rations for perhaps two or three days. So what's going to happen? Maybe they will do nothing if the general situation is such as rumour would have it.

Thursday, 16th August, 1945.

The relatives of the Jew who has escaped are to bear the punishment for the crime, all except the wife and child. There are eight of them involved - mother, father, brothers and sisters - and they will go on half rations for one week. Next time the whole camp will suffer.

Strong rumour of peace in the air. I wonder if there is anything in it?

Hay fever has gone but some cough continues, although I must say in spite of it all I feel wonderfully well. I hope and pray that I shan't have to lie up in bed for months after I get out of here; there is so much that I am looking forward to doing with my wife, so much lost time to make up. Surely I deserve a break after three and a half years of this?



183.

Friday, 17th August, 1945.

There is high excitement in camp on the even stronger rumours of peace. Now they say that British troops will arrive in Singapore on the 20th and the civil administration, headed by Stanley Jones, on the 26th. Even the most sceptical are beginning to be almost convinced that there must be some fire with all this smoke. If the bubble of optimism should burst there will be a bad reaction, particularly amongst the sick in hospital, some of whom are in a very bad way. Of the latter, I hear that poor Artie Aston is making no progress at all but rather the reverse, as the paralysis is now creeping up one of his arms.

There is a story circulating to the effect that one of the early escapers has been taken, has been badly beaten up, and is now in the hands of the Military Police. How anyone can know all this beats me, but there is the story and I publish it for what it is worth.

Saturday, 18th August, 1945.

I doubt if there is anyone in camp today who is not satisfied that the end has at last come - unless it is the two Sutherland brothers! The gang of heavy workers who have been tunnelling in camp have been told to pack up and return their tools to store; the fatigue officer has been instructed to employ these people in cleaning up the gardens; it is rumoured that all the pigs are to be killed for food; further rumour has it that we are to have Red X parcels, possibly one each, probably one between a few; our guards and interpreters are pretty well steeped in alcohol most of the time. When we have roll-call - and the Japanese turn up, which is becoming less frequent - the officer on duty, as he passes down the line, generally reeks of booze. It's quite a treat to get a good whiff sometimes!

Later: Camp optimism has received something of a setback in the form of a plane, presumably British, which sailed over Singapore about 1 p.m. followed a long way behind by anti-aircraft bursts. I said to Jock Sutherland when this happened "Well, that takes a bit of the wind out of our sails", and the lugubrious reply was "Not out of my sails". I could not resist the temptation of adding "Wise guy".

I am still convinced that the end is either here or is very near, and nothing will shake my conviction. If time proves me wrong then there is no harm done and I shall have had a sort of respite.

Today General Saito has been in camp and I am told that after he had addressed the camp guards etc. in the Green House, he left them all in tears.

Sunday, 19th August, 1945.

We are in a state of tension where we are convinced that the war is over, and yet we cannot definitely say that it is so because we have no official intimation to this effect.

Late last night the Japanese intimated that a flat rate of 500 grs. of rice per internee might from now on be issued, and this news has brought the feeling that all must be well; they would never have made such a concession otherwise, we feel.

Rumour has it that the British fleet is lying off Penang where a conference is to take place between the Allied and Nipponese Commanders to decide on the method of handing



and taking over.

The only work now being done, apart from the ordinary domestic routine, is work in our inside gardens - which work must go on if we are to have anything besides rice to eat.

And such is the position at the moment. Everyone is elated. I too would be so were it not for the fact that I do not feel too well; have had a bad go of hay fever again which has made me feel like hell.

One wonders if it is all a dream and that waking moments will bring back the reality of internment. When Singapore collapsed we underwent feelings of a similar nature except in reverse, so to speak. The change was so sudden and so horrible and the outlook so obscure, that one felt that it really could not be true but that one was in the throes of nightmare to be dispelled in one's waking moments. Today the dream is almost too good to be true.

After three and a half years of internment one's mind becomes sort of numbed and imagination is dead. I am thinking of Helen all the time since the prospect of early relief has awakened us all and I get positively sick with impatience; I must hold myself in or I shall have a nervous reaction. As it is, with all this suppressed excitement I just cannot eat.

Someone said the other day that we were to be assembled on parade and that a message from King George was to be read out to us. One man who heard this said "I shan't go" and when asked why not he replied that he felt that he might react stupidly to the emotional excitement; and that, I think, is just how most men feel. These days before relief arrives are going to be hard. Few, I gather, slept much last night.

Monday, 20th August, 1945.

Not a sign of our troops or planes. Common talk is that the war has been over for four days and yet we still have to go on bowing to our Japanese custodians, in fact a notice has just been read out by Collinge, the Men's Representative, to the effect that the usual discipline must be maintained and work carried on as usual inside the camp, and that until some official statement is released we must remember that the Japanese are still in control.

There is always a danger that one of the Japanese may run amok and shoot someone as they are still armed. I do know that they have taken the surrender very badly and are in a dangerous state; many of them have actually been seen in tears and, as they are a fanatical race, we had better keep out of their way and do nothing to upset them.

The four men remaining in the custody of the Military Police in Singapore as a result of the dreadful double tenth raid in Changi have now returned to camp - they came back yesterday afternoon. Three of them (Earl, Cherry and Curtis) are in fairly good shape, but the fourth (Dr. Calderwood) is somewhat of a wreck and had to be carried to the hospital on a stretcher. Four other men who had remained out on parole from the very beginning working for the Japanese (one of them Bertwhistle of the Fisheries Department) also came back yesterday. I am told that there are two or three others working for the Japanese who have still to come back, but possibly these are essential service men - electricity or water or something of the kind - and will remain out.

I went up to see Artie Aston in hospital yesterday morning and found him very cheerful but still weak and unable to do much for himself. I took him up a 1 lb. tin of Canadian Red Cross butter out of my reserve, which pleased him very



mich. I also sent over to Freddy Bloom and Katherine de Moubray a tin of local condensed milk and a $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. tin of margarine each, also out of my hoard, which seemed to please them equally. I have 5 lbs. of Klim left and am having a heavy session of that myself; it's wonderful to be able to cast rationing to the winds.

The red Cross parcels I referred to the other day amounted to 300 only and out of them Stringfellow and I drew a tin of salmon, some mouldy chocolate, coffee and some sugar. Not too bad. And the pigs have not yet been slaughtered but probably will be when the Japanese hand the camp over to our own control. The increase in the rice ration has completely staggered me; I cannot manage more than about half of my share which is just about the amount my stomach has become adjusted to over a long period.

Tuesday, 21st August, 1945.

Late yesterday afternoon the following announcement was read out in huts:

"ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MEN'S REPRESENTATIVE.

General Saito has just informed me, together with Miss Hegarty, the Women's Representative, through Mr. Davidson (camp interpreter) that it is possible we may shortly be going back to lead our normal lives. He pointed out, however, that the precise moment had not yet arrived, nor is it yet known. Negotiations are now proceeding and we must await a final decision. In the meantime and pending a definite decision, the Nipponese remain in control of the camp. This being so, he emphasised the great importance of maintaining the camp on its normal basis, taking great care to avoid any act or word which may cause difficulty and lead to incidents. The General also mentioned that during the period of his control of the Civilian Internment Camp - about a year and a half - he has done his best for the welfare of internees, supplying us with essentials, of which there has been unfortunately a severe shortage. He also regretted the unavoidable deaths of a number of internees. On this momentous occasion, for which we have all been waiting patiently, I wish to put clearly before the whole camp what, in its best interests, I consider our course of action in the light of today's interview with the General, should be. Very naturally we all hope soon to be enjoying our freedom once more. The intervening period, however, calls for the exercise of restraint, tolerance and unselfish cooperation. All internees should continue their normal routine. Essential work, cooking, sanitation, the care of the sick, etc. must be carried on, otherwise there will be much unnecessary hardship and suffering. There is no need, however, for any worker to strain himself; indeed, if only those who are fit to do so continue their normal services, this period will be passed over smoothly and satisfactorily. A further point of importance: I rely upon all internees giving immediate response to instructions from Area Commandants, Police and other camp officials. For my part I shall do my best to keep the camp fully informed of developments. Let us all, with thankful hearts, unite to climax this period of internment in the best possible spirit, bearing each others burdens and cooperating loyally with the camp administration right to the end. I thank you.

(signed) C.E. Collinge

Men's Representative and Head Commandant.

P.S. Lieut. Suzuki has re-emphasised the fact that there is still some uncertainty as to the final decision and warns us that so long as the Nipponese are in charge of the camp there must be no demonstrations of any kind, e.g. singing, cheering, or the display of flags.

20th August, 1945. "



and that is the nearest we have so far got to an official statement.

The atmosphere is still somewhat tense and until our people are here I shan't be altogether happy. Last night, for example, two Japanese sentries passed our hut, almost rubbing against my bed on the verandah, armed to the teeth so to speak, and I was awakened, probably around about 3 a.m. by their loud talking. I had not realised in my half-awake state that they were Japs who were disturbing the night, and I was on the point of hollering out "Shut your bloody mouths!" but before doing so I happened to look around and I spotted the rifles and bayonets silhouetted against the moonlit sky, so I remained silent. The Japanese are very touchy just now and I feel that I had a narrow escape as I am sure they would have welcomed an opportunity to have had a parting smack at someone before packing up. Life with them is cheap, and to commit hari-kari by bumping off the odd European before departing for their heaven might mean an honourable way out.

Speculation is now rife as to what is to happen to us all when we do get out. All the bank staff are taking it for granted that they will more or less just step on board ship for England, but I am not at all sure about this. To argue on any other lines draws on one an outburst of indignant protest so I remain quiet but think a lot. I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind that if Stuart and company arrive to take over, and we internees are told that we must remain to help for a week or two, or even a month or two, there will be some grumbling but no more. They all know on which side their bread is buttered!

I hope that the incoming crowd will bring some mail. I have heard nothing from, or of, my dear Helen since May 1944, fifteen months ago, and am naturally impatient and a little anxious.

Thursday, 23rd August, 1945.

The farce continues. We are still prisoners although we know that the fighting ceased some days ago and that Japan has surrendered. Black-out shades must remain on lamps in huts and we are not allowed to have lights on in the mornings so that we continue to get up in the dark. We turn out for roll-call as usual and when the Japanese turn up, which is very seldom now, we are called to attention and have to bow! I say that the Japanese very seldom turn up to take the roll-call: that is so, but nevertheless we must be there in case they do.

It is a hot rumour that the end comes tomorrow and we have been quietly warned that when 'Zero' hour strikes internees may gather at the main gate where the Union Jack will be hoisted. A Thanksgiving Service will also be held and meetings between the men and the women will be less restricted, although still under control. Presumably the camp authorities do not wish to encourage unseemly conduct. So far as I am concerned they may open wide the gates because no woman need fear my intentions. Neither have I the strength nor the inclination to embrace anyone but my darling wife.

And the damnable thing about it all is that I am really not feeling at all well and I am pretty certain that I am suffering from a flare up of my old chest complaint. I am running an evening temperature of around 100 and I'm coughing a bit, but I am determined to keep out of camp hospital if I possibly can. I don't want any busybody to cable home to say that I am in hospital and so cause unnecessary anxiety to those dear to me.



Friday, 24th August, 1945.

About three days ago our camp authorities erected an extension to the main flagstaff at the entrance gate in anticipation of the flag raising ceremony. This apparently was done without the sanction of the Japanese, so today, by order of the Japanese, the flag staff extension has to be taken down! Rather humiliating. The little devils are determined to maintain control until the bitter end. I think, as a matter of fact, that our people were foolish to do what they did, and laid themselves open to the rebuff, as the Japanese must have known quite well what the extension was intended for. It would have been better to have waited until zero hour before taking such steps.

The local International Red Cross representative - one Sweitzer, a Swiss, is active in our interests and we are feeding quite well now. He has sent in some tins of chicken curry, corned beef, honey, powdered milk, some singlets, shirts, soap, and other articles of food and clothing. Today, for example, we had corned beef and chicken soup at mid-day, and tonight we are to have chicken curry sauce with our rice, and some biscuits and jam. Such a feed we have not known in years. Over and above this Stringfellow and I are using up some of our emergency tins; as no emergency is likely to arise now we are having a good time to ourselves! Unfortunately my appetite has very nearly gone and I have to pass over lots of things.

I am in the throes of hay fever at the moment and this leaves me irritable and woolly in the head. I rather fear that the hay fever is in some way related to my chest weakness.

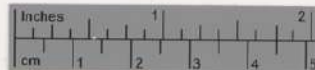
Still not a single sign of our own people - nothing in the air and nothing on the ground. We are all getting very impatient.

LATER The Japanese have at last come out into the open and told us officially that the war is over. Tonight a notice has been read out to this effect, stating that the Men's and Women's Representatives had been called up to the Green House this afternoon where they were met by Gen. Saito, Lieut. Suzuki and several staff officers. General Saito then proceeded to inform Collinge that the War was definitely over but that it was unlikely that British troops would be here to take over until the beginning of next month. In the meantime the Japanese would remain on guard over the camp, and he hoped that internees would do all possible to avoid incidents due to misunderstandings. He said that Lord Mountbatten and the Japanese C-in-C were still in conference, and he asked us to remember the unfortunate position the Japanese were now in and to behave in a reasonable manner under the circumstances so as to avoid any trouble. We would all understand what it meant to them at this time.

He went on to say that he would do all in his power to help us and that we should tender our requirements to him in this connection. He did not wish for any demonstrations, the hoisting of flags or the singing of our National Anthem. It was also stated at the meeting that British planes might be expected over Singapore from 5 a.m. tomorrow morning and that they would drop parcels in the various P-O-W camps, and if any such were found they should be collected and handed in for the general benefit of the camp.

Relatives' meetings may now take place every afternoon from 2.30 to 4 p.m.

And that, as far as I remember, is all for the time being.



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Tuesday, 28th August, 1945.

Still not a sign of a British soldier, nor have any of our planes put in an appearance. However, our treatment has certainly changed for the better, and the International Red Cross is sending in foodstuffs as fast as it can lay its hands on them. In this way we have been issued with 7 oz. butter and one and a half tins of cheese each, over and above sundry odd things which go direct to the kitchen, things such as fish, tinned meat and cereals. The Japanese have authorised the slaughter of our farm stock and we have already disposed of the two cows and all the goats. The pigs will follow in a day or two. So as regards food we are really well off now.

Last night a long notice was read out in huts. The British forces will arrive in from six to ten days and after their arrival plans have been made to move us all out to such places as the Adelphi Hotel, Sea View Hotel and flats in Grange Road. I gather these arrangements are provisional and probably subject to military approval.

I circulated a notice to the bank staff today setting forth what would be expected of them in certain contingencies: we may be called upon to take the office over from the Japanese in which case I shall require the services of everyone. There had been some irresponsible talk going on as to just what certain members of the staff proposed to do off their own bat and I thought I had better squash that at once. All initialled so that they now know that if they leave the Colony without my permission they will have to explain their actions later. Guy at first refused to initial but thought better of it later and came along and did so. His better judgement prevailed.

LATER. This noon British planes began to come over, one first appeared and circled around flying low. It caused tremendous excitement. Leaflets were dropped in Japanese, addressed I understand to the Japanese troops and guards, telling them that Japan had surrendered and that they must be careful of foreign life and property; also that other planes would appear later to drop leaflets in other languages and parcels. Later in the day other individual planes appeared and this sort of thing went on until about 6 p.m.

Today my name was drawn out of the hat to send a 15 word radio message and I handed in the following addressed to Atkinson in Perth:

"Advised wife through bank overjoyed war finished
twenty-five interned staff all well home soon love"

which I trust will be picked out of the air and relayed. I addressed it to Atkinson and not direct as I know that many messages, including at least one of my own, are getting to Australia, while they are failing to reach other parts of the world.

Friday, 31st August, 1945.

I am not feeling at all well and am running a slight temperature nearly all the time now. I'm afraid my hopes of taking over the bank from the Japanese are to be shattered.

I had an interview with Collinge, the Camp Commandant, yesterday when I told him that I was extremely anxious to take over the bank office from the Japanese at the earliest possible moment. I want to get in before they are interned so as to prevent any looting by our own people. He has passed on the request to the Japanese Military, through the Swiss Consul (Wild), and a staff officer who received the request has noted it and promises to pass in on to Higher Authority. I also asked Collinge to put forward the same request to the British



Military authorities when they arrive, if the Japs have done nothing about it. I can do no more so must just wait and see what the next few days will bring forth.

There has been a classification of internees today and I hear that the block doctors have placed me on the priority list for evacuation by hospital ship. I think I shall accept this decision as I don't feel so good. In the event of my being unable to take over the bank I have told Ormston that he will have to do so. He is quite agreeable although he too is not at all fit. But somebody must do it.

Was called up to the Green House today by Collinge to meet Gordon Waller of the bank staff - a Captain in the s.s. Volunteers and a P.O.W. in Changi Gaol. I thought he looked a bit emaciated and his colour was very bad. I really think these military prisoners have fared very much worse than we have, whatever stories one may hear to the contrary. We all along have had money with which to buy extra food and have been left more or less alone to carry on the even tenor of our ways, while they have been made to work on railways in Thailand where the death rate, due to the appalling conditions, has been very high. We might almost say, comparatively speaking, that we have been pampered!

Parcels from outside sources are now allowed in and it is amazing the amount of stuff which is making its appearance. Gian Singh, the Indian merchants, have sent in presents to several of the staff and G.G. Thomson has received a parcel from his old Chinese cook.

Six British soldiers landed by parachute at Changi yesterday from Colombo to inspect, and two of them visited the camp in the afternoon. After their visit it was given out that neither the Japanese nor the Sikhs would be allowed inside the camp in future but would remain to guard us from the outside. I am told that this change was brought about by these visiting officers. So now we can run our own camp without Japanese interference. Roll-call has been a thing of the past for a few days now. At long last we have shaken off the little swine and I can safely say what I like about them!

LATER Another parcel has just been handed to me from Mrs. Beryl Bain, our pre-war office telephone operator. It contains two 1 lb. tins of meat sausages, two tins of corned beef, one small tin of milk and a small tin of sardines. G.G. Thomson, the Singapore Sutherland, Raikes and Yoxall all received similar parcels. Such articles of food at the present time must have cost a fortune and, mark you, this is just one incident of many such in camp as parcels are rolling in by the score daily. There wouldn't seem to be much doubt about the feelings of the local community as regards the "hated" European. I think this experience of Japanese rule will make them appreciate all that we have done for them during our time, how we have raised their standard of living and brought law, order and justice.

Tuesday, 4th September, 1945.

The Union Jack was at last raised to the mast head yesterday by Lady Thomas, wife of the ex-Governor of the Straits Settlements. I was unable to attend the ceremony as I am once again in hospital. The camp is one buzz of excitement and it is very depressing not to be able to participate.

The day before yesterday discipline seemed to sort of crack and lots of people went into town - strictly against orders - and many town dwellers drifted into camp. John Dobie, Freddy Bloom and Katherine de Moubray got hold of one of the visitors cars at the main gate and got the chauffeur to drive them to the P.O.W. camp at Changi where the last two met their



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husbands.

Since then strict orders have been issued that no one may visit town or leave the camp without permission from the Men's Representative. These orders come from a Colonel Stewart of the Paratroops who dropped at Changi to take command pending the arrival of the Military Administration. I understand he is very angry about our behaviour!

As I am now confined to bed I shall be unable to do anything about the bank's affairs, but Brown and Thomson are working hard to get permission to visit the town and the office and find out all they can. I am told that the Japanese have all been ordered to concentrate at Jurong which means that the bank may have to be abandoned by the Japanese staff, and I don't like this. However, I am sure that the bank local staff will keep an eye on things and look after the bank's interests—and incidentally their own!

We hear today that H.M.S. "Cleopatra" and "Bengal" are in the harbour, under Vice-Admiral Power, and that H.M.S. "Sussex" is due today. It is all very slow work but I suppose with such untrustworthy people as the Japanese we mustn't take any risks. However, foodstuff is now flowing into camp so that we are suffering from nothing but impatience. Two days ago they issued to each man, woman and child $2\frac{1}{2}$ lbs of cold storage butter straight out of the refrigerator, and the result is that many are suffering from diarrhoea, while the unused portions have melted into oil.

Elizabeth Choy has just passed and I have shaken her warmly by the hand. The poor girl was in a very emotional state and weeping copious tears. The Bishop is taking her round the camp to meet all the people to whom she was so good in the old days.

Thursday, 6th September, 1945.

The cats here still retain some of their old bad habits. Last night again, when quiet reigned supreme and everyone was asleep, darned if two of them didn't stage their hurdle gallop down the verandah and through the ward. It made me laugh as I was wakened to the sound of galloping paws, skidding as they rounded the sharp bends in and out of the ward doors.

I hear that our occupying troops are now moving in so we may have some positive action in a day or two. I am getting fed up with the delay.

Saturday, 8th September, 1945.

I have been warned to be ready to depart by hospital ship either tomorrow or the next day.

Tuesday, 11th September, 1945.

I am now at sea in the hospital ship "Karoa" en route for Madras. We pulled out of Singapore yesterday at midday and are at the moment passing up the Straits of Malacca in convoy. These waters are mine infested so that we are all moving at a very discreet pace with sweepers in the van.

We are very crowded here, but in spite of this we are happy for this is luxury compared with what we have known for so long. I am situated in what was probably the steerage class in normal times; there are rows and rows of berths one above the other. We came on board on Sunday and spent that night in dock sweltering down below in the heat, but now that we are on the move with the air circulating freely it is cooler.



I went up on deck as we pulled out of Singapore yesterday and looked back at the old place, and I saw it again as I had seen it in October 1939 when Helen and I arrived after our last home leave. Little did I think as we entered the harbour then that so much incident and adventure was to be crowded into the intervening period. What hell it has been for both of us.

Driving through the town to the docks on Sunday recalled the dreadful days of 1942; my lorry passed along Tanglin Road and close to "Matheran", our home. I must say it looked well cared for - the green sun-blinds were down and the built-in verandah which served as our air-conditioned bedroom was unchanged. No doubt the Nips have enjoyed the comfort of sleeping in this very room, but that wasn't my intention when I fitted it up! The large trees in the 25 acre managerial compound were all flourishing and the place looked good to me and brought back happy memories.

Driving through the town gave me quite a thrill. We were the first batch of internees to get away and were cheered by the local inhabitants as we passed through the streets - why I don't know.

Some of those on board are in pretty poor shape, and one or two of them don't look as if they'd make the grade. The passengers are a mixed bunch of internees and military prisoners of war, the latter coming from Changi Prison where we spent the first two years of our interment. My friend Artie Aston is just a few beds along from me and the poor fellow is a mess with his legs almost completely paralysed; the orderlies have to lift him about when he wants to move.

And so at long last my term of imprisonment has come to an end, and with it the awakening from a dreadful nightmare. What a strange and unpleasant experience it has been, and so depressing to look back upon. I hope that I shall be able soon to forget it all and so erase the black picture from my mind.

THE END

Handwritten scribble or signature.