



our hopes concentrate on repatriation.

Still no indication of Yoxall or the Bishop returning from durance vile and I am beginning to get a bit anxious about the former. He's pretty tough but I think he is having a bad time and will need all his toughness to see things through. Mr. Justice Worley returned some week or so ago and is now out of our local hospital looking like a shadow of his former self.

I have lost a bit of weight recently, but so have all of us, in fact I show fewer signs of malnutrition than most. My pre-war weight used to be around 156 lbs. I went up to 160 lbs in Miyako Hospital in 1942 and I am now 146 lbs., and that's after a recent bout of diarrhoea which pulled me down a lot. The trouble in here is that once you lose weight it is almost impossible to put it back. Nevertheless I feel wonderfully well and am beginning to wonder if my lung trouble ever did get a real hold or just demonstrates itself when I get a bad chest cold. I wonder what X-ray will reveal when I get out of here?

On Saturday we had a visit from a Major-General Saito who went round to each block in turn and addressed internees in the following terms. The address itself was delivered in Japanese interpreted by Bambo, and here is a translation which was officially passed around afterwards:

"Gentlemen, let me introduce Major-General Saito, the new commander of internment camps. Major-Gen. Saito came here a month ago but had no opportunity to speak to you. Therefore he has decided to visit you this morning. You have all been in camp for over two years. During this time I understand you have worked in various ways, both inside and outside the camp, to improve your supplies and to assist in running the camp satisfactorily. I have not seen much of the internal arrangements but during the past month have observed the good work done in the gardens outside. For all you are doing I thank you. The war now going on is very widespread and is causing a great deal of hardship in every country. Supplies, foodstuffs are short and increasingly difficult to secure. Such shortage is felt not only in Malaya but in all countries including Japan, U. S. A., and England. Therefore you must recognise this position as being a result of war and do your best under the circumstances. I am working on some new plans and ideas for the improvement of these matters. At present the Nipponese forces are in Burma and have invaded India across the border, and they have reached a point near Imphal. The war in the Pacific is being waged with great intensity. U. S. A. warships and submarines, as well as aircraft, are attacking Japan (? Japanese occupied territory) day and night without cessation. And Japan is strong and cannot be defeated and will continue to fight. All Japanese men, women and children are determined to give their utmost in the cause of this war. When the war will finish no one knows but when it ends Japan and Britain and U. S. A. will arrange exchange ships and you will go back to your countries and to your families and friends. At that time you will wish to return in excellent health. Therefore take care of yourselves and this will be a fine gift to your wives, children, sisters and other relations. I will do my very best regarding food and supplies but you must appreciate the real difficulties of the present situation."

I do not know what to think of all this except that it is a very mild and friendly-sounding statement, and very different from the tone adopted by Major Kato when he addressed the camp in Karikal two years ago.



Saturday, 29th April, 1944.

All our hopes of repatriation have been dashed to the ground. We have been warned to move at a moment's notice to Sime Road Camp at Bukit Timah. It is rumoured that we are to take over there from the military P.O.W. who will move in here. All is now bustle and unrest. This news came as a disappointment to most, whatever else they may say, but now that we know the worst we feel that it will be a change for the better. Anyway we shall get away from prison walls which will be a great relief to me.

I got a terrible shock the other day from which I have not yet recovered. My good friend James Luetchford committed suicide on Wednesday. This is the second suicide in camp, the first having happened a long time ago when another friend of mine, Dr. Lawrie, bumped himself off. Both were particularly gruesome, the first mentioned being, if anything, more unpleasant than the last. The terrible thing is that James arranged to meet me in the yard after the evening meal on the eve of his tragedy - he particularly asked me to meet him for some reason which he would not at the time state - and when I went down there a third man joined us and James sat for about an hour and practically did not open his mouth. Perhaps he wanted to confide something to me, perhaps not, but I feel that if he had opened his mind to me I might have been able to do something for him. I think the Gestapo business was on his mind. The presence of the third man closed James up and after that he probably changed his mind about speaking to me. What a tragedy! His mind must have just snapped and he had no control of his actions thereafter. I attended the funeral service the following day at which there were present a large gathering for here. I acted as a pall-bearer from the mortuary to the motor lorry at the gate of the prison, and saw his mortal remains driven away to the grave. He was attended only by the Padre and one chief mourner, Moore of the B.A.T. Poor James, and poor Olive, his wife.

Another letter from my darling wife was delivered yesterday, dated 5th February 1943. It's grand to get news from the old puss-face. How it has braced me and given me renewed courage. There are perhaps more to come, and if so I hope they are delivered one by one so as to prolong the pleasure. There is a new arrival of 30,000 in camp and these have just been sorted out by our sorters but when they will be released by the Japanese God knows.

We were granted an unexpected favour today. Relatives were permitted to visit their womenfolk from 11 to 12 noon. I went in to see Freddy Bloom and found her bright and cheery. It's wonderful what a treat it is to see a few women again, and they all look quite smart. There was an air of gaiety about the meeting which all helps.

I hope the war in Europe will soon finish - I feel that it must be in its final stages - and that the Allied Nations will get down to this one in all seriousness. I am convinced that the limited operations out here are merely a play for time and that when the real showdown comes there will be some unexpected fireworks which will surprise the Japanese. If such bombing as Germany is now suffering is ever brought to bear upon Japan proper the results should be immediately disastrous to them as their industrial areas are so few and cover such limited spaces. There is the Yokohama/Tokyo district, the Kobe/Osaka district and the Nagasaki one to my knowledge, and there are no doubt others sprung up since the war but probably not on the same scale. Modern bombing should wreck havoc on these places, but just imagine what it



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will do to the wooden construction houses of the masses. Large scale bombing of Japan will be a terrible massacre and I suppose the Christian attitude would be to wish that it will never come to that. Well, it rests with the Japanese themselves to decide. After the collapse of Germany the reasonable thing for Japan to do would be to come to terms with the Allies. I should not be surprised to find that Russia is committed to join us against Japan after Germany is crushed if only as a quid pro quo for the material assistance which we and America have given her since she was drawn into the struggle.

Saturday, 6th May, 1944.

The large majority of us have now transferred ourselves to Sime Road Camp. I personally moved in last Monday, the first day of the move, when about 900 odd of D Block made the change.

All was a bit chaotic, as can well be imagined. The Japanese would not permit any advance party to go ahead and plan out some sort of temporary billeting so that accommodation was more or less snatched where available, and was haphazard and cramped. Only a small part of the new camp was made available to us as the military prisoners had not even started to move out but were herded into the two-thirds of the camp not at first released to us. Next day when 900 more internees joined us matters were worse, and so on each day since more and more have been added to our numbers and no further space allotted. At the moment the congestion is appalling.

I am one of several who, with bag and baggage, are living under a corrugated iron roof only, no side walls whatsoever, so that if we have any heavy rain accompanied by wind we shall be in a sorry plight. Last night we had a heavy thunderstorm accompanied by much rain, and, as the roof leaks like a sieve, we were all but washed away. For an hour or two, until the rain subsided, we had to lie and sweat under our ground sheets (those of us who were lucky enough to have them). Poor Stringfellow fared worst of all as his corner let the rain through in small streams and he had to sit up on his rolled-up bedding most of the night, swathed in his ground sheet, looking like 'Big Chief Rain-in-the-Face'! I tried plugging the small holes above my head with soap but it seemed to make the water pour in instead of just drop in! Johnny Raikes was on one side of me and Stringfellow on the other and I will admit that the humour of the situation appealed to us now and again. It recalled to me a shooting trip I once went on in the bank houseboat in Shanghai, with Major Franklin Steel of the U.S. Marines, when it was bitterly cold and miserable and we just couldn't keep warm. At one time on that trip I was awakened by Steel shouting out "Jesus! What's the matter with this boat?" To find that we were at an angle of about 45 degrees off the level as the boat had settled down on a mudbank with the going-out of the tide. The rivers were all tidal there. Franklin Steel was more or less standing up in his bed instead of lying in it.

When the whole change will be completed I do not know. I imagine a day or two more will see us through. The quarters we are now in are temporary ones only, so that conditions should improve. The food to date hasn't been so bad considering the difficulties the kitchen staff must have to contend with.

This is a hatted camp, but most of the huts are in a pretty bad condition. The surroundings are not at all unpleasant and such a change from the old prison. We are now out in the open in the midst of rubber trees and greenery which



has a more stimulating effect on the mind. The drab grey walls of Changi Prison were depressing to say the least. The Golf Club buildings are within my range of vision, about a quarter of a mile away over a small valley, and they bring back happy memories of evenings spent on the verandah, after golf, with Helen. When we finally get settled down I shall describe my new quarters.

Taken all in all this new place may suit me very well as we shall be living an open air life without a doubt. In fact, when it has rained, we have had a little too much of the open air life.

Wednesday, 10th May, 1944.

Things are beginning to take on some sort of semblance of order. We have moved out of the temporary erection where we were at the mercy of the weather, and are now in quite a decent hut with a fair verandah - an attap-roofed wooden affair with a would-be concrete floor. The floor is in very bad repair but the general condition of the rest of the hut is good. This new home houses some 90 of us, the major portion of the old D-2-23 crowd from Changi, and there is absolutely no privacy whatsoever. Any light-fingered gentleman would find this camp a perfect paradise.

New camp life has some advantages over the old prison one. The surroundings are much more pleasant to the eye, but there are many outstanding disadvantages. All the latrines are out in the open with no head cover at all; washing of the body and clothing has to be done in the open too; kitchens are all some way from the huts and food will have to be carried across the open in all weathers; and so on. It is going to be a Spartan existence all right, and it seems to me that it will either kill or cure. I have volunteered to do light fatigues as I cannot bear to be idle under such conditions, and I am now one of a gang of elderly gentlemen who sweep down the open outside concrete drains twice a day.

The food has gone off since we came in here and is now lousy. Unsweetened rice porridge and tea for breakfast; cooked dry rice and vegetable soup for tiffin; and more unsweetened rice porridge and tea for our last meal of the day about 5.30 p.m. The principal trouble is that we don't seem to get enough of anything so that we are always hungry. The neutral agent in Singapore hasn't yet sent in anything to this new camp and so we have no maize cake with our evening meal which makes a big difference when the standard is so low.

I sleep outside the hut under the eaves of the narrow verandah which runs around the hut. We have had one bad thunder storm since we moved into these quarters but that was during the day so I have not yet been disturbed at night. I have rigged up my tarpaulin sheet, which measures 12' x 8', so I should be all right in bad weather. Inside the hut String-fellow and I have been allotted space side by side and have already rigged up empty boxes as cupboards and boards as shelves. We dismantled everything of this nature which we had in Changi and brought it here when we moved, so we are quite well established in our new quarters; and we have a corner site near the door which is a distinct advantage.

I will say this for General Saito, when we moved to this new camp he allowed us to dismantle everything we had of our own in Changi and provided motor transport for its removal.

Apart from Yoxall, of whom I know nothing, we Hong-kong Bankers are all pretty well. Ormston, unfortunately, had a go of malaria in Changi just before we left but has



got over that; he had lived 30 years in the Far East and escaped it in all that time and now I suppose it will recur. He looked a shadow of his former self just after he came out of hospital but has staged a good and rapid come back. There is a disquieting rumour going around that Henry Mills of Ipoh office and Johnny Walters of Penang have both died as military P.O.W. They were in the local volunteers.

Thursday, 11th May, 1944.

Yesterday I received a brief message from the camp office in the Green House to the effect that I was to present myself there without delay to be interviewed by a gentleman from the Gestapo. When such messages are received one begins to wonder a bit; they are generally followed by the removal of the recipient to Singapore for an indefinite period. I therefore dolled myself up in my best shorts and shirt, stuffed a few handkerchiefs into my pocket, and away I went feeling a bit uncertain about the future.

On my way to this interview, all dressed up to beat the band, I had the misfortune to slip on some wet concrete just outside one of the bathing places, and down I went on to the seat of my nice clean white pants! I got thoroughly wetted and thought to myself that if I were to be removed to Singapore I should have to spend an hour or two in some discomfort, as there would be no chance of changing into something dry.

On reaching the Green House (Langdon-Williams' old residence on Sime Road) I was received in a room alone with a Gestapo gentleman and a Eurasian interpreter. We all sat down at a large table.

The interview was very mild. I was asked if I had borrowed any money in camp and I replied that I had done so on more than one occasion. From whom? - from the Bishop of Singapore and one or two other internees. How much had I borrowed? - I had borrowed about \$12,000. What had I done with so much money? - I had lent the greater portion of it to others to enable them to buy things in camp, and the rest I had used myself.

My interrogators were quite mild and I gathered that they were checking up statements extracted from the Bishop under arrest in Singapore.

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NOTE (What was not in my diary was that I knew from a returned prisoner - Mr. Justice Worley - that the Bishop has made a full confession of his activities in camp and before he came into camp, and that the information I was giving them was already known to them. The Bishop had asked Worley to pass on this information to me on his return to camp. Had I not known what Worley revealed to me, it was my intention to conceal the fact that the Bishop had lent me money as the money he lent me was being smuggled in from residents in Singapore, and I did not wish to get anyone else into trouble. I would have been caught out in a lie had I done this and the consequences to me might have been disastrous.)

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After about three-quarters of an hour of this, during which time there was some checking of my statement due to a trivial difference with the Bishop's, I was dismissed. When I got outside I breathed a deep sigh of relief.

The man who followed me for his interview - Green of Fraser & Neave of Singapore - had a less harmonious interview which he told me about afterwards. He tried to conceal certain facts about accounts left unpaid with some shopkeepers in Singapore for stores supplied to the camp, the understanding



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being that they would be met after the war, not knowing that the Gestapo were already fully informed of them from other sources, and he was threatened with a beating. He was told that they had a good mind to take him into Singapore. However they did not do this, and Green returned to the fold somewhat shattered by his experience.

Saturday, 20th May, 1944.

We are now settled in here quite comfortably and I would say that living conditions are going to be somewhat better than in Changi Prison. A serious menace, however, has reared up its ugly head in the form of malaria. Since our arrival in this new camp about twenty new cases have been diagnosed and admitted to hospital. This is very bad as it proves the presence of the anopholes mosquito, and probably means the spread of the disease unless health measures are taken without delay. Two men have gone from my hut.

The food, if not exactly improving in quality, seems to be at least increasing in quantity. Our hunger is not by any means completely satisfied but most of the time we are pretty well filled with rice. The vegetable soup which we get every day is about 80% sweet potato leaf. Now and again some few hundred pounds of pork or blue buffalo meat is added but as the average amount is only about 300 lbs. and has to be divided amongst 3,500 internees, it makes little difference to the flavour of the soup. The diet is very definitely of a low standard and one begins to wonder if beri-beri will not soon be getting a good hold. Some signs of oedema are here and there in evidence with the swelling of ankles and legs.

Now and again I am fortunate enough to draw second helpings at meals. When I get seconds of rice at mid-day I "budlee" (a banking expression) half of it with Mike Turner for half of his seconds when his turn comes around. The other day it came to the turn of Stringfellow and myself to scrape the container in which the food is carried from the kitchen, and that alone yielded quite an extra helping each both at breakfast and evening tea. We felt all distended like by the end of the day!

The black market is booming. I bought an 8oz. bottle of Marmite and an 8oz. bottle of Bovril today for \$200. Small cheroots which cost a cent or two in Singapore are selling here for .50 cents to \$1 each. I'm afraid I've spent a lot of money in here and I sometimes wonder if I am justified in struggling to ward off illness when the Japanese may bump me off anyway when this war gets near the end.

Sunday, 28th May, 1944.

Yoxall and the Bishop have at last returned to camp, very much the worse for wear. They came back last Thursday and I visited them in the camp hospital yesterday. I was shocked to see the state they were in; they resemble two who have arisen from the dead, they are so pale and emaciated. Yoxall's thighs are like sticks, with absolutely no flesh on them, then come the bulges of the knee bones, and on down to the calves which are also nothing but bone. There isn't an ounce of fat or flesh left on his body which reveals the story of starvation and torture. I found, however, that his spirits are high and that he is the same old Yoxall as far as his conversational powers are concerned, proving that the Japanese have not killed his spirit as they have very nearly done his body. I had a long talk with him which was most interesting. The Bishop I just greeted and congratulated on his relief, and I am going up again tomorrow to have a talk with him alone. I cannot write very fully on this subject as



I know very little of what went on in Singapore; people who come back from the Gestapo are all afraid to talk. No doubt we shall hear all about it after the war - if we survive.

Malaria is tearing through the camp and it looks as if we were all bound to get it sooner or later. There have been well over 100 new cases since we came in here and every day brings reports of further ones. Several men in this hut either are in the throes of their first bout or are just recovering. The hospital cannot admit any more cases as there isn't the room for them all, anyway I don't think they can do very much about it as they don't appear to have the proper drugs to deal with it.

Got another letter from Helen today dated 4th May 1943 - just over a year on the way. It told me that she had heard from the bank that I had been reported in the official list of internees in Changi. Over 100 radio messages have been delivered to internees from relatives abroad during the last day or two, and the Japanese have allowed them all to write replies of 25 words each. The inward messages were dated as late as this month.

Friday, 2nd June, 1944.

It amazes me that the women and children and the old men have not been repatriated long ago. Healthy men have already gone from other parts of the Far East but still no one from here, and the Americans have succeeded in negotiating one exchange at least.

None of us are very happy but there is no suggestion of despondency in our bearing, and why should there be, we are all sure of final victory. But it has been so long and resistance can be undermined by ill-health and none of us can claim to be in robust health now. We have one and all lost weight, some more, others less, in fact one or two men have actually lost more weight than they now weigh. I was talking to a man the other day, a man who used to sell me Roneo equipment in Ipoh, and he told me that he was 23 stone before internment but now weighs just over 11 stones. I am one of the mild cases; today I am 141 lbs. compared with pre-war 156 lbs. I must say I feel remarkably well in spite of everything. I confess to mild fits of depression now and again but they never last long; I soon shake myself out of them. From what others tell me I gather I am not the only one who gets down now and again.

Malaria has claimed as victims Ormston, J.C. Sutherland, Guy and Doyle of the bank staff. The second mentioned is very very sorry for himself and is ably assisted in his misery by his Chartered Bank brother who makes a hell of a fuss around him to the general annoyance of neighbours.

Yesterday the Japanese staged photographic scenes for their official photographer, no doubt for propaganda purposes. Photographs were taken of field workers, the hospital, the camp band playing to the women (it has not been permitted to play to internees since the 10th October last!), united families on the golf course, Tomimaga handing letters to the Camp Commandant, internees reading these letters, padres in surplices holding religious service with a congregation of 50 internees, and so on.

I got a pain in my chest the other day so am once again doing no fatigues. The doctor ran over me but did not appear to be unduly upset but he put me off fatigues so I am once again one of the unemployed. It is really easier to do something than not. The difficulty in here is to kill time.

The prices of things in here are fantastic. I have



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been laying in as much milk as I can at \$35 a tin of condensed. Somebody was hawking around a 5 lb. tin of Klim for which he was asking \$1,000! Sugar is \$1.50 an ounce.

Monday 5th June, 1944.

Yesterday I received three more letters from England, two from my elder sister and one from my brother Willie. They conveyed to me the sad news of another brother - Graham's death. Poor fellow was killed in the North African campaign while serving in the 60th Rifles (K.R.R.) I was very upset and am so sorry for poor Peggy Ann, his wife, and their two kids. I hope he was an officer and that his pension will be enough to be of some help to her.

We were allowed to meet relatives yesterday so I went across to see Freddy Bloom. It was very pleasant sitting chatting for an hour under the trees. But for the malaria threat this place is far and away superior to Changi Prison. Freddy, Mrs. de Moubray, John Dobie and I always sit together on these occasions and it is a very pleasant change from the humdrum male existence.

Friday, 9th June, 1944.

What a change from Changi this place is! In good weather it is really quite delightful and if only the Japs would give us enough to eat we should be more or less contented. The food question is always troubling us as we are always hungry, and not only that but the quality is poor in vitamins and proteins and things like that. We see a little pork about once in from three to five days, and then the quantity is so small as to be practically negligible. The most we have had in one day in our area is 120 lbs. for over 800 people, but generally speaking the ration delivered is around 50/60 lbs. To feel the pangs of hunger for a day or two at a time is annoying enough in all conscience but to be hungry every day for days and days on end is just bloody. We get enough to keep us alive but not enough to satisfy our hunger. I suppose I must have a good lot of resistance as I keep pretty well in spite of the food difficulties, and I pray that my resistance will hold out until we are relieved.

I mentioned good weather in the foregoing paragraph. In bad weather things are not so pleasant here and when it rains hard the camp resembles somewhat a nudist colony. Men run about naked as there is no object in going out and getting what little we generally wear wet.

We have over 100 Jews in here and they are a sore affliction. I don't blame Hitler for persecuting them. They run a black market in smokes (which come in legitimately very seldom and in small quantities) and sell to the internees at fantastic prices. Their technique is to buy watches and jewellery from we poor mats, get the Japanese interpreters to sell them in Singapore, and with the proceeds of the sale bring in cheroots and cigarettes. In the mass they are a contemptible lot but one does now and again come across an exception who is sincere and charming. The average Jew in here is just the scum of creation. There is a move on foot for the release of internees who have relatives in Singapore able and willing to support them, and I understand that most of the Jews have applied to be released under this scheme. I pray that we shall see this scheme materialise and so rid ourselves of such unwelcome companions. Altogether 340 odd have applied for release, Jews and Eurasians mostly, but maybe more will go if it comes to anything.





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Thursday, 15th June, 1944.

The food situation is unchanged. We are all hungry all the time. Today Stringfellow and I are "scrapers" for the hut which means that we are privileged to scrape the food tongs which carry the food to the hut after all have been served and there remains what is still adhering to these containers. If we survive this ordeal we shall, no doubt, indulge in a quiet smile on the first occasion when we sit down to a meal at the Berkeley Grill or some such paradise, and recall this concession. The scrapings yield quite a goodly helping and are not by any means to be sneezed at.

We run a small pig and poultry farm in here, most of the live stock having been taken over from the military P.O.W. who were here before us. It is served by internees. It contains a few pigs, some moth-eaten hens and a few ducks. The pigs get the swill from the camp kitchens and it is suspected that the swill carriers share the swill with the pigs! The temptation must be very great these days. The poultry produce the odd egg which goes to the hospital so that the common or garden internee like myself has in no way benefitted from the farm up to date. They say the Japanese have promised us cows and goats but I shall believe this story when I see the animals.

Wednesday, 21st June, 1944.

We have been allowed to hand in another radio message for broadcast. I made mine out direct to Helen c/o New York Office this time, and worded it as follows:

"Many letters including August 1943 received bringing great comfort Grouse and I in best health ever hopeful other staff interned well fondest love my darling"

We are again getting enough to eat, anyway as much as our stomachs can cope with, but what we get is almost exclusively carbohydrates and vegetables. I have been fortunate so far in that I have always been able to raise money by borrowing in here, and with this I can now and again lay my hands on such things as condensed milk and tinner butter. Prices of such articles on the "black market" are almost prohibitive, for example, butter is \$60 a lb, local condensed milk \$30 a tin, sugar \$1.50 an ounce, tinned corned beef \$50 for a 12 oz. tin, 3 1/2 oz. tins of American Red Cross corned pork loaf \$20 and so on. The supplies are limited, and very naturally the prices are pushed up week by week.

The authorities appear to be getting malaria under control more or less. We have now cut the lallang around the camp which, although in the initial stages disturbing the mosquitos which harboured there, has destroyed the menace to a great extent. Scott of the bank is our last casualty but he has had a very mild go of it. Poor Ormston is now in the throes of another relapse and is feeling, and looking, very sorry for himself. Another malady which has reared its ugly head is Japanese River Fever, and several internees are now down with it. Fortunately it has come in a mild form and so far we have had no deaths. The Japanese medicos are interested in this and several of their doctors have visited our hospital to inspect the patients and take cultures for research work.

Conditions here are definitely very much pleasanter than Changi. After I have washed and shaved of a morning, in the interval between that and breakfast, and in the evenings after our evening meal, I sit on a grassy hummock at the side of our hut and enjoy the landscape which stretches out in front of me. I have a view across a small valley over to a wooded hillside about a mile distant and it is attractive.



When this is all over and I return to duty here with my wife (if this is to be my good fortune) I shall take her to this very spot and show her where I really felt occasionally that the world wasn't such a bad place after all. I sit in solitary state here sometimes and dream of the future, of all the things I want to do with Helen, to travel and to have a nice home; and I know that our home will be a nice one so long as I have Helen by my side. For the first few weeks of my leave when we get out of this, I want to go to some place where I can enjoy the peace which passeth all understanding. I dream of Taborton, California, Glenfeochan, Cranbrook, the Lake District and other charming spots which I have visited, and feel that life is not going to be so bad when all this is over. Just give me back my wife and all will be well in the best of all possible worlds.

Saturday, 1st July, 1944.

We had a visit yesterday from Lieut.-General Doihara (whether he is the man who is known as the Lawrence of Manchukuo or not hasn't yet been decided) which was very unexciting. He made no comments whatsoever and went through the camp like a dose of salts. Everything in here is running very smoothly at the moment and we all hope this condition will last. After the arrival of Tominaga and his assistants we were subjected to a certain amount of inhuman treatment, individual incidents I mean, but recently there has been nothing of that sort. I think the Japanese are doing their best to feed us but there must be difficulties these days as our diet is very dull. I have already described this. I continue to buy all I can but stocks of tinned things are running low and there is very little offering.

Relatives meetings are taking place nowadays about once a week. I see Freddy Bloom on these occasions and it brightens things up a little bit. There is a spot of neutral ground in camp where these meetings take place and for the hour allowed to us the atmosphere is something in the nature of a garden party. Four of us always foregather - Freddy, Mrs. de Moubray (both of whose husbands are in the prisoners of war camp), the latter's nephew named John Dobbie, and myself. Freddy isn't so well at the moment, she has septic feet due to pellagra, an aftermath of her sojourn with the military police in Singapore. The women one sees are a motley crowd, as a matter of fact. There are all classes and nationalities - British, American, Eurasian, Tamil, Chinese, Siamese, Iraqi, Russian, and even German and Japanese, all the wives or relatives or male British subjects. The non-British are very much in the majority and, I believe, are responsible for a certain amount of disharmony (to put it mildly) in the women's section. When I see them all together on the meeting days I thank God a million times that Helen has been spared this experience. This life is nothing to a man - it is ease and comfort compared to what one had to go through in the last war - but it must be hell to a cultured woman. Freddy Bloom is brave, or rather adopts a brave attitude about it all, but I can read beneath the veneer of gaiety which is assumed on meeting days and see that she is a bundle of nerves. Lady Thomas, who appears at these meetings, is a shadow of her former self and she was slight enough in the old days. Mrs. Justice Aitken and Mrs. Bateman are both going strong, which all goes to prove that these small women are pretty tough. Mrs. Murray-Ainlie and Mrs. "Firestone" Thompson appear to be weathering it all with fortitude as they do not show much outward change.

Thursday, 6th July, 1944.

It's raining heavily but nevertheless everyone is quite cheerful. I have just had my daily bath; I had to run



out naked into the pelting rain to our shower about 50 yards distant and got about as much bath in the rain as I did under the shower. And it was darned cold too. Now I have that nice warm glow that one gets after swimming. I don't drink my tea at breakfast but have a pal (G.G. Thomson of the bank) who keeps it in his thermos flask for me, and this I drink around 11 o'clock every morning. I've just had it.

We are getting enough to eat these days although it is very much a vegetarian diet. I have actually put on a few pounds weight in recent weeks, after having dropped about 10 lbs. since leaving Changi. The attitude of the Japanese since the camp was taken over by General Saito has changed very considerably. They now adopt a much more reasonable attitude and show a disposition to listen to our appeals and even to give them some consideration at times. There is no more beating up of internees. One or two of the interpreter-sentries have even adopted friendly attitudes. If the conditions do not change for the worse we won't do so badly for the remainder of the duration.

I have just this minute been handed a post-card from Angus Campbell of Dunstaffnage, despatched on 27th June 1943. Nice of him to write, and I appreciate it. He tells me that Bob Murray-Allan has also written but so far nothing from him. I think too that I have received all Helen's letters which came into camp with a large batch some few weeks ago.

I don't do any work these days so I spend about an hour of the morning wandering around the vegetable gardens which internees cultivate. On these jaunts I run into my old pals - Artie Aston, Clive Charlwood, Larry Lawlor, Doc Day, Cherry, and many other 'prison' acquaintances. The camp is an extensive area so that I can cover quite a lot of ground on these trips. One can go for weeks without meeting certain friends.

A Japanese sentry came back to camp drunk the other night and staggered into one of our huts by mistake. In doing so he encountered beds and sleeping internees in the dark, stumbling around amongst them, and some of the latter, not realising that the intruder was a Jap, got peeved and probably pushed him about, so the Jap did some ju-jitsu on one of them and sent him flying across the hut. The Camp Commandant was sent for and the commotion died down. Next day our Camp Commandant reported the incident to the Japanese Commander and the sentry was ordered to apologise. I am now told that the apology was framed along the following lines: "To those of you who have yourselves been drunk and understand, I apologise but to those of you who have never been drunk, I doubly apologise!" I believe this is quite true, anyway I do know that the sentry had to apologise, which indicates a very great change.

Saturday, 8th July, 1944.

We have been told that we are to be allowed to write a letter soon. The word "letter" was definitely used so we are hoping that it means so. But how long will it take to reach its destination? That is the important point.

When I look back through all the black days of these last two and a half years I wonder how I've stuck it. Had someone told me at the beginning that it was to be so long I think I should have given up the ghost, but it all goes to prove that hope is a wonderful stimulant. I have schemed and intrigued to raise funds all the time I've been interned, both for myself and for the other members of the bank staff, and with these we have all fared not so badly. It has made me sore sometimes when I have had to pay through the nose for



essentials such as milk, but I have always argued that life is more important than a bank balance and have not hesitated to snap up whatever has been offering. I think I have been right and that Helen will approve. I should like to come back to the East for one last spell but of course that will depend entirely on the state of my health when we get out. And this wish is not born in me by financial ambition alone; I am interested in my work and had reached the stage in Singapore when it gave me great pleasure - we were doing things in a big way and making profits too in a big way!

There is a definite feeling in the air that we are going to be relieved soon. What it is all about no one seems to know, but I've no doubt news is finding its way in somehow. We shall be quite lost at first when we are free again, but it won't take us long to get accustomed to it. I have been giving a lot of thought to the bank and its reopening these days. I wonder if Stuart and others will follow any advancing army, as the Japanese bankers did in 1942, so as to be on the spot as soon as possible after Singapore is recaptured? These fellows have been working in London for two years and should have come to some understanding about relief for internees; and they should also have new stationery and code cyphers ready for immediate delivery, even if they do not turn up themselves. It's all a dream and maybe a fantastic one but it is very stimulating I can tell you. We seem to be coming to life again after a long, long sleep. We may all become disillusioned and have to fall back into our lethargic state again, but I hope not.

Tuesday, 11th July, 1944.

Word has just been passed around that 5½ bags of mail have come in. Some people even go so far as to say that this delivery is 50,000 letters, so that I should get something out of that. I long for news of Helen and I am hoping that I shall be allowed to send her this promised letter soon.

In here the Japanese have made a distinction in the cereal ration to be issued daily to workers and non-workers. The former are entitled to 600 grammes of dry cereal per diem and the latter only 400 grammes. I find this does not affect me in the very least, as the 400 grammes appear to be quite adequate, but some of the hearty eaters are somewhat disgruntled. What amuses me is the classification of workers. Brown and Guy of the bank, do clerical work but are classified as workers, and there are many other such-like anomalies. Poor old Travers of the bank, who is a hearty eater at all times, is unable to do fatigue work as a result of his physical disabilities due to wounds received in the last war so is classified as a non-worker and receives the lower scale ration.

Our kitchen (Central Area Kitchen) do us proud with the limited resources at their disposal. Over and above the inevitable kung'i (rice porridge unsweetened) twice a day and the dry rice and vegetable soup at midday, they now bake buns, pork loaf (when there is a pork issue, which is very, very seldom nowadays), rissoles and fish cake. These do not all come on the same day but on about five days a week we get an issue of one or the other, and they are all very palatable. The foundation of each is rice flour, maize flour and red palm oil.

Clothing has been one of the difficult problems of internment. Some people managed to get in quite a wardrobe of stuff, while others brought only what they stood up in. Since the beginning, therefore, the standard of dress has gradually deteriorated until men's coverings have descended to nothing but loin cloths or the equivalent. Some of the shorts worn by



the better dressed are so much patched that the patches cover more body than the original cloth, and the cloth used on any one garment varies in colour very often, so that it is no uncommon sight to find trousers which were originally white patched with blue and khaki, or blue and grey, or grey and green, and so on. I am now sporting one old pair of shorts where the patches are of much superior material than the original stuff and cover so much area than one might say that the trousers are more patch than trouser! I am well provided with shirts as I brought with me about 8 of these, mostly of the short-sleeved sports variety, but one very seldom wears shirts, in fact the popular dress is just plain Vs, that is, a loin cloth, fundoshi, jockey shorts or similar covering. Shoes are not much worn as those which came into camp originally are mostly worn out, or internees are guarding their last pairs for 'going out'.

I wear jockey shorts from the time I get up in the mornings until about 11 a.m. when I bathe. Then I change into my well patched shorts for the remainder of the day. Sometimes I wear an old pair of sneakers which I brought in with me, and sometimes no foot gear whatsoever, but I am not one of the permanent barefoot. I have no long trousers, no palm beach suitings or European clothing of any description in my possession here, but I may with luck find some of that in the bank when we get back there as I left a trunk full of suchlike kit there just before the capitulation. No doubt, if I do come across it, it will be a bit mouldy, if not completely moth eaten.

The Japanese have provided us with practically no clothing at all, so little, in fact, as to be insignificant; and very, very few pairs of footwear have been allowed into camp. We are, in short, living on our own resources in this respect, and we haven't done so badly. It is fortunate that we are interned in a tropical climate where clothing is one of the minor considerations.

One must wear shorts (or longs), shirt and footwear when attending relatives meetings, and the women turn up in their best bibs and tuckers with powder and lipstick, and that is the reason why the scene on these days is one of some animation. These meetings last for an hour and, we have just been informed, will be permitted every Saturday in the future. I think they brighten the outlook a bit.

Thursday, 13th July, 1944.

Today seven of the Gestapo prisoners were returned to camp, I think from Miyako Hospital. They are Burns, Travis, Hebditch, Day, Goodall, Jilani and one other whose name I have forgotten. My good friend Middlebrook has not come back. I hear this new lot don't look so bad. They are shaved and their hair is cut.

Last night, about 11 o'clock, we had an air raid alarm throughout Singapore. This time we hoped that it would turn out to be the real thing as there had been no previous warning of a practice, but I fear that it was only a practice after all although some internees still maintain that it was not so. I was in bed on the verandah of our hut when the sirens went and I just lay on there hoping for the best. Very soon I heard the sound of a lone plane and shortly afterwards it dropped a flare some way off to our North. I got up then and went out into the open to see what was going on, but there was no excitement whatsoever. Not a sound was heard but the drone of the engine, and there was no anti-aircraft fire or searchlight. The plane flew around for about an hour and then about half an hour after that the all clear sounded.

No doubt some day, and I hope soon, the real thing



will happen. When it does we shall know that Singapore is in the public eye again. We have been sadly neglected for so long.

Sugar is now \$10 for a 6 oz. issue,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lb. tins of jam \$50, salt \$1 an oz., but the local condensed milk has gone down to \$20 a tin.

The Jews have been reaping a wonderful harvest in here. They have been buying up watches and jewellery of all descriptions which they hand over to the Japanese interpreters who take them to Singapore and sell them. With the money realized the Japs bring back cheroots, cigarettes, gula malacca, condensed milk, and other such commodities, at town prices, and these the Jews sell to us poor Gentiles at fantastic prices, so realizing huge profits to both Japs and Jews. Not satisfied with this, however, the latter then cash cheques with part of their gains, exchanging the Military dollar notes either at par to the Straits dollar or at \$8.40 to the pound sterling, thus assuring themselves of good currency when the war is over, and with the balance of their gains buy more stock and repeat their trading. In this way they hand us out the money (by cashing cheques) which enables us to buy from them the goods which are brought in by the Japanese. It's certainly wonderful finance! Some people are very incensed about it all but I think that it has opened up a market which we should not otherwise have had and so serves a useful purpose. The Jews are able to contact the Japanese in a way which would be quite impossible for us Gentiles.

Official intimation has just been given out that the recent arrival of mail is only about 11,500 letters for this camp and not 50,000 as was rumoured.

Monday, 17th July, 1944.

Official information has just reached camp that Coulson, one of the men who were removed to Singapore by the Gestapo on the 10th of October last year, has died. I am anxious about my friend Sam Middlebrook who was by no means in the best of health when he was removed.

We are being stocked up with a lot of rice, three months supply I hear, and I understand salt and sugar are also to come in in large quantities soon; firewood too is being accumulated as a reserve. Rumour has it that this is being done to enable us to withstand a siege! What is more likely is that precautionary measures are being taken by the Japanese in case there is any disruption of local transport as a result of bombing. They keep on impressing on us that we may be bombed, and have had us dig for our own protection slit trenches, so something of the kind may be in the offing. I hope so.

Full time workers are now paid at the rate of .50 cts. a day, and half time workers (or light workers) at .30 cts a day. The former get 600 grammes of dry rice as their daily ration, the latter 500 grammes, and the poor miserable non-workers, of which I am one, 400 grammes. One has got to work in here to earn one's daily bread, and working in this tropical sun is no joke. The heat at the present time just after the mid-day meal is really terrible and takes some time to get accustomed to. Everyone works as nearly naked as possible with the result that most men are almost black. Some of them literally have a hide which is chocolate coloured and tough, like a coolie's. We are having a long spell of dry hot weather just now which is oppressive. We would welcome some rain - a good thunder storm would clear the air.

The conversation revolves very largely around work and food these days. There is much grumbling as each one is



suspicious that someone else is wangling something and not doing his full share which entitles him to the rations allotted him. Some men certainly work hard and conscientiously while others certainly do not - there are lots of slackers around. As a non-worker no one can complain about me as I am classified in the meanest category and draw the lowest ration! the grumbling will go on so long as we are paid and draw rations on different scales and it is very often justified. A clerical worker in many cases qualifies as a full time worker and expends no energy in his work, which hardly seems right. Without all this bickering we should have nothing to occupy our minds.

The Japanese have allowed the boys' schooling to recommence. This was stopped on the famous double tenth. They have also renewed the permit for gramophone concerts on two nights a week, and have stated that sermons may once again be preached at Sunday services. Both these functions were also banned after the double tenth. The concerts are a great boon and they give me the greatest pleasure.

I'm afraid I have been very lazy in here. I have played at studying French but my French is little or no better than it was in Saigon in 1923. I have come to the conclusion that I am no linguist. I have taken on a job as part time "receptionist" in our area dispensary - every second day I sit outside the doctors' room and control the waiting patients, a job which keeps me occupied from 9.15 a.m. to about noon. I also register new appointments. The maimed and halt gather around the doorway, sitting in the drains and in the concrete passage-way awaiting their turn to go in to see one of the two doctors who are always on duty. Skin diseases fill about 90% of my book and some of them are pretty filthy looking messes. Sores on the feet and legs are very common in here and impetigo runs a close second.

Tuesday, 25th July, 1944.

Hugh Fraser and Alan Ker (Lewis & Peat) returned to camp yesterday from Military Police custody in Singapore, and both are in a serious state of health. When they arrived by ambulance they had to be carried to our hospital by stretcher. Fraser, they say, is in a critical condition. Both are covered with sores. This inhuman treatment of innocent men will go down in history as one of the most barbarous acts of this, or any other, war.

Tropical typhus (Japanese River Fever) is sneaking up on us and to date 22 cases have been diagnosed, four of which have proved fatal. They say one contracts it from being bitten by a tick which hangs about the lallang, and as most workers spend quite a bit of their working time in the lallang few are able to completely avoid the danger. New cases of malaria are few and far between now but there are plenty of relapses, and some of the relapses have been infinitely more severe than the original attack. I should say that 90% of the camp are bandaged somewhere, covering septic cuts and wounds. Our blood must be in a rotten state. Taken by and large we are pretty miserable looking - bandaged, skinny, in rags, many bearded, and some looking like death - The Cohorts of the Damned!

Wednesday, 26th July, 1944.

Hugh Fraser died yesterday evening. I have just returned from his funeral service which was held at 9 a.m. in the small camp church, St. Davids. There was a very large gathering, I should say something around the thousand mark, and about a dozen women were also present accompanied by a Sikh sentry. The women were removed just before the end by a



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Japanese sentry who suddenly appeared. My friend Freddy Bloom was there, also Lady Thomas.

This is the second service of this nature which I have attended recently. I put in an appearance at Coulson's a few days ago when around 300 of the camp were present.

The names of these two men can be added to the list of martyrs who have suffered unjustly and paid with their lives. I hope there will be no further names to add to the list. This has all been so dreadful and so useless.

I hope I shan't feel it my duty to attend any more such services, in other words I trust there won't be any more as they depress me intensely. The monotony of this life is probably its most trying aspect and I long for deliverance. The waste of the good years of one's life when perhaps so few remain is indeed bitter.

Wednesday, 2nd August, 1944.

Helen's birthday today, and still we are separated. But we are rapidly getting nearer to one another I am sure; and the darkest hours are past and we are fast approaching the light once again. I am full of optimism as I feel that having survived the last two years and a half I shall now finish the course, which surely cannot be so very long.

We are to be allowed to send one post card per internee, the text to be limited to 25 words, and mine to Helen which I am handing in today will read:- 'Fourth card; Am in best health, optimistic; many letters received bringing greatest comfort; thoughts ever of you particularly today darling; interned staff all well; love'; and I am addressing it to her c/o R.A. Stuart so that he may be in a position to cable to her, at least part of the contents, and pass on reassuring news to Cis. I hope to kill a few birds with one stone in other words. The cards will doubtless go to England so that in this way she should have news of me sooner than she would have had I address direct to the U.S.A.

Friday, 4th August, 1944.

Freddy Bloom told me that the reason for the removal of the women from Fraser's funeral service was that the Japanese sentry off his own bat had allowed them to attend, and that when 9.30 rolled along he got the wind up as his superior officers generally arrived about that time, so he hurriedly herded them out and back to their own quarters. On the way back I am also told that the women badgered the poor fellow by telling him that he had interfered with their worship of their God, and that his own God would certainly regard this as a bad action on his part, so that the poor sentry got quite concerned about it all and more or less apologised.

And I heard another story from the women's camp which will appeal to you, Helen. Mrs. Murray-Ainslie and a Mrs. Lawrence, the former the wife of one of Malaya's learned High Court judges and the latter the owner of a lodging house of doubtful repute in Singapore, were washing their breakfast utensils at one of the open air communal taps, when Mrs. Lawrence, presumably accidentally, sprayed some water over Mrs. Murray-Ainslie. Mrs. M.A. protested against this so Mrs. L. let more water sprinkle over Mrs. M.A. Mrs. M.A. then turned to Mrs. L. saying "Do you know who I am woman?" I am Mrs. Murray-Ainslie" and proceeded to throw a full cup of water all over her! Mrs. Lawrence, not to be outdone, turned to Mrs. Murray-Ainslie and said "And I am Mrs. Lawrence", accompanying her remarks with a bucket of water which drenched Mrs. M.A. who was at this very moment fully dressed to attend





Fraser's funeral service. As a result of this little piece of feminine horse play Mrs. M-A was unable to attend the funeral. A nice bunch of girls!

Talking of funerals, some few months before we left Changi for here the Japanese stopped allowing us to bury our dead in coffins, probably on account of wood shortage. No new coffins were permitted to be built but one particular coffin was retained for use in carrying the dead from the camp to the grave. The procedure now is that the body, wrapped up in a shroud of some description - probably old sacking - is placed on the base board of the 'pro forma' coffin, which base board is detached from the sides and lid of the coffin, the last mentioned parts being in one piece, and then the top and sides are lowered on to the base on which the body rests. The coffin is not screwed down in any way but is carried thus in one of the camp lorries to the cemetery. On reaching the graveside ropes are attached to the base of the coffin, the top and sides are removed, and the body is then lowered into the grave. Finally, when the base board and the body reach the bottom of the grave, the baseboard is tipped up so that the body rolls off it, and the base board is then pulled back to the service, the whole 'pro forma' coffin returning to the camp for use at the next funeral.

The slapping and kicking of internees by the Japanese is a thing of the past and I hope it will not be resumed. We are not unreasonably treated nowadays and cannot complain although plenty do complain. The food issued to us is not very nourishing, but after all there is a war on and the Japanese must be finding it increasingly difficult to import into Malaya. They impress upon us that we are likely to be bombed and they make us dig slit trenches, so that the position must be getting serious for them. Yesterday they produced three lengths of fire hose for A.R.P. work and they told us at the same time that we should probably have need of them very soon. I understand, however, that the hose is in such bad repair that it is useless for the purpose intended so I think we shall use it for making and repairing shoes.

Wednesday, 9th August, 1944.

Worked out on the basis of recent purchases made by the Camp in Singapore, purchases of such things as peanut, pea and maize flour which we endeavour to obtain as often as possible, the military dollar is now worth just over 3 cents compared with the purchasing value of the Straits Dollar before the war. Imagine what the cost of living of the poor natives must be.

The other day we received from Rome, from whom in Rome we do not yet know, some \$54,000. This remittance has gone to pay for the kind of goods referred to in the foregoing paragraph. Coming from Rome sounds strange, but I suppose it is from the Vatican.

Guy is having a rotten time with urticaria. He looks very sick and if we have much more of this to undergo I doubt if he will survive it. I feel very sorry for him as I have suffered from the same complaint on more than one occasion. There are one or two other cases in camp I am told, and I think the doctors are beginning to suspect red palm oil. I swear my urticaria was the aftermath of courses of Halibut Liver Oil but none of the doctors I expressed this opinion to gave it much credit. We get a fair amount of red palm oil in our food and many internees put in more, as this is a commodity which is now and again issued to us "on the hoof" as we say when goods are issued direct to internees and not retained for use by the kitchen. The medicos say it contains Vitamin A.

We are now entirely self-supporting in a medical and



hospital way. No cases of sickness have been sent out of the camp for a very long time, in fact all of the Miyako Hospital patients have now been returned to us. All operations are performed by our own surgeons, of which there are quite a number in a camp of this size. The main hospital block is one of the largest huts and it contains some 50 beds. Then in another somewhat smaller hut we have a dispensary, the hospital office, a dental clinic where two dentists operate, the hospital quartermaster's stores where medical supplies (what little we have) are kept, an optical cubicle, and two small wards each with about 8 or 10 beds for T.B. and dysentery patients. Another small hut is set aside for operations, for the office of the camp chemist who examines specimens of blood, stool, urine and all that sort of thing, and for out-patients who have been passed on to the 'specialists' from the different 'block' medical officers. The medical organization is quite good. The women, of course, have their own hospital in their own district which is run by women doctors; they have no dentists, surgeons, opticians or chemists, and operations, so far as I know, are performed by the male surgeons. Two babies have recently been born but these were brought into the world by women doctors.

I mention that two babies have recently been born in spite of the fact that there is no 'physical' contact permitted in camp between husband and wife. These were no immaculate conceptions but were quite natural occurrences - the two families concerned were both interned within the last few months.

The dentists and the optician are very much limited in their scope, the former undertaking fillings and extractions only and the latter replacing only lenses which he actually has in a very limited stock he must have acquired from Singapore in the old days of Changi, when it was possible to get such things.

Friday, 18th August, 1944.

This is a darned uninteresting life in all conscience! Day in day out the same routine and no prospect of change unless we are moved to another camp or are relieved. One actually hopes for some excitement in the form of bombing. I wonder when it will come?

Internees are on a new scale of pay since the last of this month. What are described as technical workers draw 40 cents a day, non-technical workers 35 cents, and part-time workers (i.e. men who work only  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours a day instead of the recognised 4 hours of the full workers) 25 cents a day, while a bonus of 5 cents a day is promised to some. At the moment we are in the dark as to what the two first mentioned categories refer to and who is to get the bonus. The camp committee await enlightenment on these points. Little surprises like these are sprung on us frequently by the Nips.

We are having a good lot of rain these days which doesn't help matters. Bedding gets damp and may have to be slept in thus for two or three days until the sun chooses to come out again. And I am getting very tired of this close proximity to my fellow man and to the lack of privacy. There are times when one longs for solitude and cannot get it. All kinds are constantly milling around and it is not always easy to control one's tongue and temper even with one's would-be friends. But when one comes to think of it I have existed thus for over two and a half years now and have not yet been drawn into a vulgar brawl, which is saying quite a lot. Strange to say there has been very little of this, which I put down to no women and no alcohol.



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Friday, 25th August, 1944.

Times have very much changed since the days of early Changi Prison. I well remember when it was a very serious crime to buy outside of the camp, and it got to the stage where internees had to be searched by our own police before going on any outside fatigue to see if they were trying to smuggle out cash. Ralston of the bank was slapped by the Japanese on one occasion for trying to bring in a tin of jam or something of the kind hidden underneath his shirt. Now internees who go outside of the camp for work in other areas (and there is a lot of this) are allowed to carry out hundreds of dollars with which they make purchases of such things as gula malacca, coffee and cheroots. These purchases are all for their own account but lively trading goes on inside here on their return and people like myself, who do no work, can generally buy these articles - at a price. For example, I have obtained gula malacca and coffee at \$20 and \$25 a pound respectively, articles which cost the buyer only \$9 each per pound outside.

There is an amusing tale told, and it is a true tale too, of one of the sentries accompanying an outside fatigue the other day. He apparently wanted to nip off somewhere for a few minutes, perhaps to buy cheroots or something of the kind, so he parked his rifle against a wall near to where the internees were working. This was bad enough but when a non-commissioned officer was seen to be approaching the internees thought it didn't look so good for their escort to have sloped off and left his rifle, so they very kindly hid it behind some bushes while one of them kept an eye open for the sentry returning to warn him of the arrival of his superior officer. The latter, however, departed before the return of the sentry without noticing anything amiss, so all was well.

We have had a sudden order to dig six wells in the camp, these to be completed before the end of the month. It seems to me that this can only mean one thing - imminent air raids. My pal Stringfellow is working on one of these and I told him yesterday that little did he think when sitting in the managerial chair in the bank at Malacca, that one day he would be a common well digger. A couple of days ago he was carrying bricks for the bricklayers who were making a new oven in our kitchen, and not so long ago he was cleaning out the area septic tank, a filthy job. Doctor's receptionist, which is the job I do, is a much more congenial occupation, but it carries no pay and gets short rations.

The pay question has now been decided: full time workers get 40 cts. a day and part time workers 25 cts. We shall see how long this will last.

Wednesday, 30th August, 1944.

This morning we had a rollcall, the first for nearly four months. It was done by huts and the Japanese counted the occupants of huts only instead of making us answer our names as we have always done heretofore. It meant that we all had to be confined to our huts for over two hours.

The whole camp has to be inoculated against typhoid, by Japanese order. I have just returned from having this done.

No excitement, no air raids, and speculation rife as to the present general military situation. I wonder what really is going on and when we can reasonably expect relief. I am getting so very, very bored, like everyone else.

Gen. Saito visited the camp two days ago and while in the women's section demanded to see the two infants recently born. After remarking that one of them was very "ketchil"



(small) he then presented the mothers with 5 tins of local condensed milk and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. of Klim each, which I think was quite decent of him considering everything. Since his taking over of the camp there is no doubt whatsoever that the Japanese guards and interpreters have been much more reasonable and human than before. After the departure of Colonel Asahi and up to the arrival of Gen. Saito we went through a pretty rotten time when the Japanese attached to the camp gave free reign to their sadistic feelings. That sort of thing is, I hope, over for good.

Sunday, 3rd September, 1944.

Yesterday they slaughtered four of our own pigs from the pig farm and we are to have pork today. Tremendous excitement! And the amount allotted to our block to be divided amongst 790 internees is about 70 lbs. However we shall get a faint taste of meat again after some two or three months, which is something.

I am very restive these days and feel that big things must be going on somewhere. Surely relief must come within the next twelve months? I get terribly bored at times and the unfortunate thing is that I do not seem able to concentrate. I am thinking always of the future and the return to my darling wife. I am building castles in the air all the time. One of the disadvantages of having no physical work to do is that I have too much time for meditation, and my thoughts wander when-ever I turn to French or reading of a solid nature. My duties as doctors' receptionist fill in part of my day satisfactorily but that work is only every second day - if the other man (unfit like myself) would only chuck in his hand I should willingly take on the whole time job, but I don't want to suggest that now as the other fellow no doubt feels very much as I do. Even doing my washing once a week is occupation which is not so unwelcome as it was in the early days of internment. Some men grouse at the work they have to do. I think they are fortunate to be able to occupy themselves in this way.

Stringfellow and I have a few odd tins of bully beef which we have set aside for an emergency, some we bought on joint account. We have decided to broach the first one when we hear that Germany has capitulated. I have another tin of meat and vegetables in my own possession which I have promised to share with a man Fleming when the same news reaches us, so that day is going to see me well filled. Fleming is an M.C.S. man who was immigration officer just before the fall of Singapore, a great friend of Sam Middlebrook and James Leitchford who were both particularly good pals of mine, and so we now have struck up a close friendship. We meet after the evening meal daily and exchange the gossip of the day, or we attend gramophone and band concerts together. I think Helen met him once at a Leitchford tiffin party pre-war; Olive Leitchford worked in his office for a month or two before the collapse of Singapore.

Wednesday, 6th September, 1944.

I spoke too soon when I said that brutality on the part of the Japanese was a thing of the past. An unfortunate incident took place yesterday which broke the good record.

Some woman in the women's camp complained to one of the Japanese interpreters that certain of the children were stealing fruit or vegetables from the camp gardens, a thing which is very much frowned upon. The interpreter could not get any particular child or children to confess to the crime so he made five young girls kneel on the ground before him for two hours or more while he himself sat in a chair facing them. One version of the tale has it that one of these young girls