



explained the coincidence of the two names.

The man Follitt about whom I wrote the other day has duly been sentenced. He was charged with "conduct prejudicial to good conduct and camp discipline in that on (the day in question) he did carry on to the parade ground on his person before proceeding on an outside fatigue \$2.10 concealed in the collar of his shirt"! The camp disciplinary committee sentenced him to "no further outside fatigues for a month; deprived of the privilege of participating in purchases from the camp shop for a month; to do 14 days extra fatigues inside the camp." All very funny in my opinion.

And talking of outside fatigues, Ralston of the bank staff got a smack across the face from a Japanese sentry during my absence in hospital. He was one of a party returning from outside fatigue a day or two after the Japs had warned the camp that no money might be carried outside, and he and some others took a chance and disregarded the order. When the party got back to camp they were searched by the Japanese. One or two fellows had tins in their pockets which were merely confiscated, but when the sentry came to Ralston he found the tins concealed inside his shirt, and this was too much for the little man. He appropriated the goods and smacked Ralston's face. On another occasion I hear an internee got a whack across the face with a cane, so now this form of illicit buying has ceased very definitely.

Artie Aston is going strong and I see quite a lot of him as he lives in D Block - in what is known as the Deanery as it houses Archdeacon Graham-White. He is still very dogmatic so I had to tell him the other day that he would get on in Government service if only he would keep his mouth shut and not argue, as every time he did this he gave himself away. But I must give him full marks for being an energetic worker although I think he is spurred on by nervous energy. He scavenges most of the time in our yard; I always see him brushing dirt or sweeping down drains. The other day I caught him rushing along with a pail of water and a broom and I shouted to him, "What's the matter, itchy pants?" He yelled back "Some dirty bastard has defecated all over the floor of the small W.C. and hasn't had the decency to clean it up, so I'm going to do it!" I shouted back, "Oh, Artie, you, a senior Government official, cannot surely stoop to such menial tasks", but he passed on, ignoring my feeble remark.

I was having a friendly chat with him (Aston) yesterday when we discussed the merits and demerits of the British race. He was inclined to the view that we were degenerate with soft living and were no longer a race of men, to use his own expression. Just at this very moment the Archdeacon, a funny little thin red faced man, ran past us on his way to the outside lavatory, clad only in a very abbreviated shirt and shoes - no pants. Artie looked at him and said, apropos of our conversation, "Now there's a real man for you". (The Archdeacon has lots of "guts", to use a vulgar expression). As a strong wind was blowing at that very moment and all the necessary evidence was available to the naked eye, I was, for once, in full agreement with my friend Artie!

The Governor and party have not yet departed for Japan. I met him this morning and he shook me by the hand and said how pleased he was to see me back from hospital and looking so well. I told him I was delighted to see him but expressed my regret at his impending departure. He said "What do you mean? I haven't gone yet", as if to imply that as he hadn't gone he might never go.



Our views are all turning to exchange, and opinion is veering towards an early relief in this way. We read in the local paper that some British civilians (prisoners) are going to Lorenzo Marques from Japan, Occupied China, Thailand, and the Philippines, and it seems logical to suppose that if British subjects are to be exchanged from one part of the Far East, they will be exchanged from another. I am optimistic about it and have taken two small bets that we shall be away before the end of the year.

Saturday, 8th August, 1942.

We have had an influx of 37 new internees. They are the passengers and part of the crew of the s.s. "Hauraki" of the Union S.S. Co. of N.Z. which was intercepted in the Indian Ocean by a couple of Japanese raiders. A Jap guard was put on board and they were ordered to sail for Penang. When they got there the party now interned here disembarked, but the engineers and some of the crew remained on board to navigate the ship to Japan.

These people are full of stories, and this is the place where any story, however incredible, will quickly go the round of the camp. The raiders, they say, were operating from Madagascar, which doesn't sound good at all. I thought we'd occupied Madagascar some time ago. The Japanese told them that they'd sunk 40 ships in the time they had been in that district and expressed confidence in winning their war in a year from now! One man said that he was told they were being taken to Singapore whence they would be repatriated by the end of September, which sounds too good to be true - if they mean this year!

We are also told by these new internees that the Yanks in Australia are a fine body of men and are behaving splendidly. They are a smart crowd and have arrived with the best of equipment. The niggers amongst them are reputed to be going around saying that they've been sent out to fight for Australia so that they will be able to preserve it exclusively for the white man!

One of the passengers, who has been allotted to our floor, is an employee of the Asiatic Petroleum Co. who got away from Malaya on 8th February last. He spent the time since in Australia and was on his way to Bombay to take up a job with his employers there. As luck would have it he chose this unfortunate ship so he is now back in Malaya a prisoner of war. He came in to our cell last night and we had a bit of a chin wag.

No one has attempted to escape yet. In a camp of this size one would have thought that someone would have had a shot at it by this time, but no, we have all been good boys. I suppose being, as we are, in an Asiatic country, the chances of success are pretty remote; colour, language, and the distances to be covered in a tropical country are so great as to make it a very difficult venture, apart from the fact that I understand the Japanese are offering \$100 for information leading to the capture of an enemy subject.

What made me refer to this subject was an amusing incident which occurred the other day. Our block was taken under armed escort to the sea to bathe (for the second time only since our internment in Changi Prison), and after most of the internees had been in and were dressing preparatory to returning to camp, one of the sentries decided that he too would bathe. So he handed over his rifle to one of the internees, undressed, and into the water he went!

We were treated to a most excellent concert the



other evening. It was exclusively piano solos and choir and seldom have I enjoyed anything so much. Remember that we are starved of good music and the average entertainment is the usual variety concert type which palls after a month or two of much the same talent; I have referred little to the latter type of entertainment which goes on all the time.

This particular concert was held on a most beautiful evening, starting in daylight under a clear blue sky and continuing into the night (twilight here is very short) which was lighted by a perfect moon. Denis Soul of the bank staff performed; he gave a piano solo and was also responsible for the composition of a lullaby which was sung by our choir, and which brought forth prolonged applause. The choir is about 35 strong now.

There wasn't a sound during the performance from the four or five hundred who attended it, a motley crowd of Government servants, police, merchants, bankers, miners, planters, professional men (lawyers, doctors and the like), pre-war prison warders, half castes, beachcombers, and even a few undischarged prisoners who were serving their sentences when the war came to Singapore and they were released. One of the last mentioned I recognised was Loveday (ex-Captain in the Royal Engineers), who was tried for conspiracy and fraud last year and sentenced to seven years rigorous imprisonment. This man was serving his term in this very prison when the Japanese reached Singapore and he was released with the other criminals when the warders decided to make a getaway. The local wags say that Loveday is indignant because he has to share a cell with two other men whereas he had a cell to himself in the old days!

A strange friendship has sprung up between Loveday and his old warder. They are inseparable pals.

Bugs! I laughed some weeks ago when these little pests were found in G. Thomson's cell. I laughed a little too soon - they've now been discovered in ours. The whole prison is becoming overrun by the pests and it is going to be very difficult to keep free of them for long. I understand they are very bad in the big rooms on the ground floor where they can spread so easily. Being in a cell is a certain protection but they still wander in now and again when we have to spray the whole place with Izal. There are small holes in the cement walls and they seem to get in there. Life is one long battle!

Tuesday, 11th August, 1942.

On Saturday we staged an excellent fair in the big yard. There were all sorts of booths - coconut shies, ring throwing over pots of jam and other odds and ends, tossing pennies on to draught squares for prizes, dart throwing on to a vari-coloured board (here I won a piece of toilet soap and an india-rubber eraser), a large sort of roulette wheel numbered up to 40 where two prizes were awarded on each spin of the wheel (here I won a tin of peach jam), a fortune teller dressed up as a gipsy, and other small side shows. The coconut shies etc. cost 20 cents a time to compete. I reckon I spent about \$5 on the miserable prizes I won! The camp funds benefitted to the extent of over \$1,000 as a result of this effort.

The camp is badly in need of money as the people who loaned to the camp fund in the earlier days of internment are now paupers and are asking for refunds of part, if not all, of their loans. No more money is coming forward as loans, internees now finding that they can acquire very necessary articles of food on the black market, so the finance committee



have to think out ways of encouraging people to unload any money they may have as painlessly as possible. Hence the fair. I understand, however, that we are pretty well supplied with food bought by ourselves to supplement the official rations, and that these should be sufficient to tide us over the end of this year. After that either Providence or the International Red Cross will have to provide.

On Sunday evening we were entertained by the camp orchestra, a new group formed during my stay in Miyako Hospital. The full orchestra is made up of piano, concertina, four violins, base cello, saxophone, piccolo and flute, and makes an excellent showing as the members of the orchestra are mostly expert or near experts. The conductor is the bandmaster of the F.M.S. Police Band and was one time bandmaster in the Scots Greys, and we have the leader of the band at the "Dog" in Kuala Lumpur. Then we have two or three piano players in camp who are in the first class - our young man Soul is one of them.

The Japanese gave permission for the musical talent in camp to go into Singapore and collect what instruments they could lay their hands on. As one or two members of the orchestra were in the Raffles Hotel band pre-war they were successful in finding most of the instruments described above.

Evening shows start about 7.30 p.m. when it is still daylight and run to about 9 or 9.15 when of course it is dark. On moonlight nights the whole effect is very soothing; the audiences are always perfectly behaved and a pin could almost be heard to drop during the classical and semi-classical concerts. We have also got a real stage now, rigged up by our carpenters, with flood lighting, set up by our electricians. The auditorium is the yard itself and we all sit around on our camp stools or stand in the background. It's the strangest sight on a moonlight night, these hundreds of internees sitting and standing around the floodlit stage. One has to put up with a lot in here where life is not all beer and skittles, and a little refinement now and again in the form of a good musical entertainment does a lot of good.

We are really not so badly off in many ways these days, conditions have definitely improved from the early stages, although life in prison under the circumstances in which we find ourselves must necessarily be a rough one. The Japanese make concessions which go a long way towards making life more pleasant, which concessions could very well be withheld did they wish to be unpleasant. I think really that our treatment is very fair except in respect of accommodation; we are insufferably overcrowded in this prison building, and the exercise space is quite inadequate. Our rations have definitely improved. We now get a good supply of vegetables and fatigues go out daily to collect bananas and coconuts of which we are handed out a plentiful supply. We get an egg for breakfast now on three mornings a week, and other eggs are sold to internees in between - in this respect we are probably better off than folk at home. On the average we get meat meals at midday about eight days out of every twelve, which isn't at all bad. Our evening meals are always rice pudding and tea (no milk or sugar). Recently we have been issued with one small 3 ounce brown loaf per day, and either a scraping of butter or margarine. Bananas, coconuts, eggs, butter, margarine, sardines, jam, toilet articles, tinned fruit, milk, and such like are all paid for out of camp funds collected from internees. The official rations are meat, vegetables, sugar (in very inadequate quantities), salt, ghee (an Indian condiment which is sometimes mixed with the rice), rice, flour (also in small quantities), and some other articles of such little importance that I have forgotten what they are. Cigarettes are also given to us by the



Japanese at the rate of about 30 a month per man.

We have asked the Japanese to give us a loan to enable us to continue making our private purchases in town, and the matter is under consideration. I have been asked if I would be prepared to guarantee such a loan on behalf of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank as the Japanese have stated that they will not accept the S.S. Government guarantee, their attitude being that no such body now exists! I have expressed my willingness to do so provided the S.S. Gov't will indemnify the H. & S.B.C. but have suggested that a joint guarantee be given by all three British banks (if they will co-operate) as I do not wish them to get the impression that I am putting a swift one over them. I have already done a lot for the camp in the matter of finance for which I hope the H. & S.B.C. will get some recognition after the war.

I have just been told that Mr. Kurushu and Admiral Namura, Special Envoy and Ambassador respectively to the U.S.A. visited the camp yesterday on their way through Singapore in the repatriation ship "Asama Maru", and that the latter expressed dissatisfaction at the conditions under which we are living. I suppose he referred to the overcrowding.

Saturday, 15th August, 1942.

I am afraid I am getting a bit restless and long for my freedom. The rumours of exchange which are running around have upset my dog-like submission to imprisonment and if we do not get exchanged soon I shall have to get myself under control again. Walking up and down the confined space of the yard is irksome now, and I crave to be out.

I sleep in the yard every night, as I mentioned before. Two nights ago someone else sleeping there started snoring louder than I ever thought it possible for anyone to snore. It was more like animal trumpeting than snoring, and it not only woke everyone sleeping in the yard (there are about 30 of us) but it also woke the occupants of the ground floor rooms of D Block. Immediately there were shouts of "Wake him up!" "Put a sock in it!", "Hit him over the head!" "Throw him out of bed!" and the like from most of the 250 people who had been disturbed by the snoring. This commotion startled the guilty party out of his nightmare or whatever it was and he, probably still half asleep and not realizing what the noise was all about, lost his temper and let fly a stream of abuse at all and sundry - threatening to come inside and teach somebody a lesson! Pandemonium had broken loose and I began to wonder if a riot or a fight for all was going to be the outcome. Then there was a sudden lull in the verbal battle and someone laughed and within half a minute the whole ground floor was in fits of laughter.

I have never experienced anything like this before; it was a sort of mass hysteria and no doubt a symptom of the strained state of our nerves. The whole incident did not last more than ten minutes and after it silence once more reigned supreme.

Thursday, 20th August, 1942.

The Governor and his party went off two days ago. With them also went Spitz, the ex-Governor of Sumatra, who has been in solitary confinement here for some considerable time.

The G.O.C. Malaya, General Percival, and several high ranking military officers, have also gone, and I am told that



the whole party were made to strip and have a disinfectant bath in one of the godowns on the docks prior to embarking on their ship. They were then conducted to their quarters in the hold where wooden benches had been set up to serve as beds. Their latrine was a plank protruding from the side of the ship, at least so I am told. General Percival is reported to have protested strongly to the Japanese, but his protests were unavailing.

The Governor had to leave his wife behind as the Japanese would not allow her to accompany her husband. They did, however, permit them to meet and converse for an hour immediately prior to his departure.

Our Central Committee have asked the Japanese Commandant today if there is any truth in the rumours which are going around that we are to be repatriated. There have been several references to repatriation negotiations in the Sayonan Times lately. The answer was that he (the Jap Commandant) knew nothing of exchange negotiations and his advice to the camp was that it should not listen to any rumours it hears in this connection. So the exchange market is very weak today.

One runs hot and cold all the time, elated or depressed according to the faith one feels one can place in the many rumours which literally swamp this place. We live on rumours! I myself am a strong supporter of the exchange theory and will be sadly disappointed if we are not out by the end of this year. If we are not exchanged I foresee a very long term of imprisonment as I am convinced that the Allied Nations will not attempt any large scale offensive against Japan until they have conquered Germany. I give Germany another year at least; after that it will take six months or more to organise an offensive against Japan, unless of course Japan sees the futility of continued resistance to what will to all intents and purposes be the united might of the rest of the world, and throws her hand in.

Japan I am sure hopes for a stalemate in Europe and a negotiated peace in the Far East, out of which she expects to gain something - possibly Indo-China and great concessions in China and Thailand. She will be disappointed I think and the result will be the relegation of Japan to obscurity for a time. I feel that she made the same mistake as Italy; she struck when she thought Russia was on the verge of collapse and when she considered that her entry on the Axis side would definitely decide the Russian downfall. Italy struck when France was on her knees and she expected that her entry into the war would compel Britain to compromise. She must have regretted her action ever since.

It will be interesting to see just how my prognostications work out. I get a lot of entertainment arguing with myself on this subject! One good thing about arguing with oneself is that one does not lose one's temper and cannot very well walk away muttering "bloody fool" under one's breath!

I continue to sleep in our yard and find it extremely agreeable so long as it does not rain. I have only been driven in three times by rain or threatened rain; on these occasions I whip off my mosquito net, lay it on my bed, carry the lot inside, then strip my mattress and bedding off the bed and go up to my cell to finish my sleep - if I can. The storms in the night come up very suddenly and one has to move fast to avoid being caught and washed out. A high wind generally precedes the rain and this wakes one and gives a few minutes warning of the approaching rain. We call these sudden storms "sumatras" out here. Some nights we have the brightest moonlight and it gives me intense pleasure to lie



64.

in the open and think.

Before turning into bed last night I had a long talk with James Leitchford of the British American Tobacco Co. while walking up and down our yard in the moonlight. We got on to business and I got a promise out of him that he would see that the Hongkong Bank got some of his firm's remittances after the war. They have worked exclusively with the Chartered Bank in the past, and, although we and the Leitchfords have been the best of friends always, I have never succeeded in getting James to move from the Chartered. I wonder if he will remember our talk?

Friday, 4th September, 1942.

We Hongkong Bankers have been holding some lectures on our own subject to our own staff. I thought it would be a good idea so I got Sutherland of the Book Office to start the ball rolling by a talk on his own department. Then I followed with a couple of hours on rates, and Brown is lecturing on Accountant's work. I may get others later. This all helps to pass the time and it is of some value to the junior members of the staff who are showing a very keen interest.

We have lost our friends Lieut. Okasaki and Second Lieut. Takuda, and our Japanese sentries. In their place we have one Mr. Asahi, with the title of Custodian of Enemy Civilians under the Military Administration Department, and he is assisted by four Japanese non-commissioned officers of the Sergeant-major type and a handful of Sikh Policemen. The last mentioned were police in the old British Malayan Police Force.

The Sikhs act as sentries at the main gate and at the entrance to the women's quarters, and when an internee passes one on duty the internee, man or woman, has to bow to him as we had to do to the Japanese sentries before. The Central Committee have protested to the Japanese about this, pointing out that the Sikhs are not Japanese subjects, but the Japs maintain that they are Japanese subjects now and that when they are on sentry duty they represent the "great" Nipponese Army. So that's that!

There was a hell of a to-do the other day: a Sikh sergeant was assembling the outside fatigues in the front yard prior to their going out on duty and he was trying to get the internees to number in a military manner, a thing which had never been done before. This led to some misunderstanding and a second and third call for numbering-typically army and quite foreign to us - until one internee got fed up and refused to number again. In other words he wasn't going to be "buggered about by a bloody Sikh"! The Sikh then proceeded to slap his face in true Japanese fashion. This was too much for the British prestige so the whole fatigue party turned and walked back into the camp; they rebelled in other words.

Johns, the surgeon (now our Commandant in place of McRae who has gone to Japan) applied to see Mr. Asahi in order to protest against the behaviour of the Sikh sergeant. He first met one of the Japanese non-commissioned officers who led him into some committee room or other and locked him in! Things were beginning to hot up a bit and I really began to hope for some incident to break the monotony of the last few months, but no, Johns was released after about an hour or so - no explanation nor apology given. It was not until the following morning that he succeeded in contacting Asahi and I do not know what transpired at this meeting. All I do know is that Johns was told that we must obey the



orders of the Sikhs in the same way as we would the Japanese.

So the whole thing collapsed like a burst balloon and the storm in the teacup subsided. I was disappointed as I hoped for some excitement.

Monday, 21st September, 1942.

Since last I wrote up my diary nothing very much has happened so I haven't bothered to add to it. Today, however, another incident cropped up which merits comment.

Last night, or rather early this morning, an internee was caught by a sentry outside the prison. As a result of this a camp roll call was made to find out if any others were missing, but all were present. The story is that this man went off two days ago, letting himself out by climbing into one of the lookout posts which are placed at intervals along the outer wall, which posts have up to date been left open on the inner side, and dropping to the ground by a rope on the outer side. He must have had a confederate who pulled the rope up after his departure. The thing was done not with any intention of escape but merely to afford him an opportunity of making whoopee in some neighbouring village! The man's name is Roberts and he is a member of the Malayan Police Force in normal times.

His intention apparently was to make his re-entry in a similar manner, by climbing up a rope on the outer side of the wall into the post on the top of the wall, and so down the steps into the passage which divides the outer from the inner wall. He was unlucky to be spotted, but lucky not to have been shot.

James Leutchford saw Roberts later in the morning being led across the vegetable garden (where Leutchford works) towards the corner of the wall where the post from which he is supposed to have made his exit is, presumably to demonstrate how he had managed it. Two Japanese soldiers led the way, Roberts next with his hands tied behind his back, then a Sikh policeman, and finally two more Japanese soldiers. All the party except Roberts were carrying sticks, and I understand Roberts was looking very sorry for himself. I do not know much more but am told on good authority that Roberts has been badly beaten up and has not yet returned to camp. There may be repercussions, in which case I shall have more to write on the subject later.

A very successful Arts and Crafts exhibition was staged in camp not so long ago, where articles produced in camp by internees were shown and prizes awarded. The crowds which milled past the exhibits was astounding, people who would very definitely never have been interested in such a show in normal life crowded to see the different products. There were paintings, drawings, needlework (from the women's block), models of yachts and liners, chairs and tables, ashtrays, buttons, cigarette boxes, and regimental badges made out of coconut shells, brooms, rope and swabs made out of coconut fibre, and lots of other things which have escaped my memory. Some landscape drawings were by Freddy Bloom and brought her a second prize, and there were some excellent oil paintings by Walker, the Art Master at Raffles College. The latter had a portrait of a woman, head and shoulders, entitled "Memory of a Smile" and I recognised his wife with whom Helen used to play bridge.

I wrote to Freddy Bloom, ostensibly to congratulate her on winning a prize at the show but actually to give her Joe Swezey's address, care of which I asked her to wire Helen immediately on her arrival in a British port in the event of



her being repatriated before me. I have had a reply assuring me that she will do this and offering to let me have some of her pastels if I wish. I am on the point of writing again to ask for some; I should most certainly like to have them.

Sunday, 27th September, 1942.

Roberts, the man who was caught outside the prison, was returned to camp on Friday last by the Japanese somewhat the worse for wear! With him came three confederates whom he had given away under punishment.

Roberts, apparently, was beaten until he revealed the names of the men who had been implicated in this business with him. The Japanese knew that he must have had associates and put him through a pretty stiff grueling until they got the information out of him. As a result of this three others were taken into the guard room by the Japanese and the whole party were very severely beaten and knocked about. On Friday when they were released, three of them had to be assisted by other internees as they were unable to walk alone; they all then went into the camp hospital where they have been ever since. I am told that they are all black and blue about the shoulders, chests and legs, besides having bruised faces. The Sikhs appear to have had an innings as well as the Jap non-commissioned officers, and I understand the former took a sadistic joy in the proceedings. God help the Sikhs if any of the four ever lay their hands on them after the war!

One of the four (not Roberts) told the Sikhs what he thought of them while he was being subjected to punishment and this brought upon him a heavier measure of chastisement. He is reported to be the worst of the lot. So it might seem that this particular brand of Sikh doesn't like the British.

Still no news of relief of any kind. I had hoped that by this time we should have heard something authentic about repatriation, but all we see is the brief and somewhat vague news of it which appears in the local paper. We read that Americans in Japan are awaiting the next repatriation ship and that others have been transferred from the Philippines to Shanghai for the same purpose.

Sunday, 4th October, 1942.

At first, in the earlier days of internment, when we were told that some disaster was about to befall, such as a cutting down or complete elimination of certain rations or further restrictions to our liberty, we used to get very depressed and we would feel that anything more in these lines would be the last straw which would break the camel's back. These cries of "wolf" have been so frequent and so regular and have generally resulted in little, if any, change, that we have become quite immune to them.

Several times we have been told, for example, that we should be issued with no more flour and this would have meant extinction of our meagre bread ration, but still we get bread. About three days ago it was officially announced by the Japanese that no more flour would be issued to the camp and it looked as if this was no false alarm. We were also told that there would be no further issue of cigarettes.

Yesterday, however, six lorries were called for to go into Singapore with an adequate number of fatigue men to take delivery of some comforts which had been brought back from Africa on the last repatriation ship to return from Lorenzo Marques. These lorries brought in a lot of condensed milk, some flour, tinned meats and soups, cigarettes and



other odds and ends despatched through the channels of the International Red Cross, so it looks as if the bad days were again to be postponed. And I understand that there is more stuff at the docks waiting to be collected.

So it might seem that if contact is going to be allowed with the International Red Cross in this way we should not starve. It is pretty evident that supplies of this nature will have to be sent to us from the outside world if we are to remain here for a prolonged period, which seems to be quite likely. We have to a very large extent been existing on the stocks which were imported before the outbreak of the Japanese war to meet a prolonged siege, and these must be coming to an end I should think. It must not be overlooked that the British military prisoners have also been drawing upon them. Flour I imagine is finished or very nearly so, meat cannot last much longer, milk stocks must be getting very low, tinned stuff of all description is, I should say, nearly finished, and sugar and salt are commodities with which we are issued sparingly although the former should be plentiful as it is produced in Java and the Philippines.

We all do at times get depressed. One day it is my turn, another day someone else's, and when I meet anyone in this state I try and argue him out of it. In thinking things over I suppose depression, at least the kind of depression one suffers from in here, is a form of self-pity. I found myself analysing my miserable state the other day when I wasn't feeling too happy, and I came to the conclusion that I was just plain sorry for myself at having to undergo these conditions. Admittedly I am separated from my wife, but I am alive and well and as far as I know so is she, besides which I have a future and I am not ruined by the war - yet! I began to count my blessings and to compare my lot with so many others in here who do not know if their wives have escaped in their endeavours to get away from Singapore in the last few days before its surrender or who are very probably faced with financial ruin, and at a late year in life.

I was talking to a bloke the other day who was captured by the Japs early on in the war up near Ipoh. His tale was very interesting and I feel I must give a brief outline of it here. The man himself, Allan by name, is a rubber planter in Kedah and is only about 5 feet high.

Allan was in the Volunteers in Kedah when the Japs attacked the aerodromes up there, and during that time saw some fighting. For some reason or other the Volunteers were disbanded and Allan joined the military forces as a gunner in an armoured car. His car, with two others, was driving along the Gopeng Road, near Kampar, when they ran into anti-tank shelling and were all hit and brought to a standstill. The occupants of the two other cars were, Allan thinks, all killed, and the driver and other gunner in his own car wounded one in the leg and the other in the arm, both slight. They got out with their arms raised in token of surrender and were led to some sort of company headquarters and there squatted on the ground with their hands tied behind their backs. In due course an officer came along, planked himself on a chair in front of them and regarded them for a few moments, then he got up, came over to them and solemnly kicked each of them on the back or shoulders. There were many soldiers crowded around taking an interest in the proceedings.

After some time a doctor came along and looked at the two wounded men, dabbing their wounds with something or other. One would have thought from this that all was going to be well, but a few minutes later these two men were led away and he feared that his comrades had been led away to be bayoneted to death. The Japs had no time for wounded prisoners.



68.

Soon after his comrades had gone, some jester approached Allan as he was standing around with his hands tied behind his back, waiting for something to happen, and made a lunge at him with his rifle and fixed bayonet, then turned away laughing. This joke nearly cost Allan his trousers as he all but behaved like a child! He managed, however, to return the smile, but he feels that the attempt was not very convincing.

Allan waited with (as he described it) a sickly feeling in his stomach, for what was to come next, anticipating the worst. He was then taken to some more important headquarters and seated opposite a staff officer who spoke good English. Here he was asked lots of questions of a military nature which he was quite unable to answer, and then whether he could drive a lorry which he was glad to be able to say he could do. The officer gave him a cigarette and when he left the room wished him luck.

When he got outside a sentry led him to a bicycle and gestured him to get on and follow a cyclist company which was about to move off. The sentry also made a significant gesture; he said "no drive car" and ran his hand across his throat with a smile, evidently to indicate that had Allan not been able to drive a car he would have had his throat cut! Allan said he again smiled feebly in return and experienced that sinking feeling of the stomach once more!

Off went our hero with the cyclists for a few miles, at the end of which he was handed over to a lorry group and from there on to the time he reached Singapore he drove a lorry for the Japs, following close on the heels of the advancing army. His first day with the lorry unit he was handed a quantity of flour intended presumably for food, and he put water into this and swished it about, then tried to cook it, but the result was a complete failure. When the Jap troops saw that he was no cook they let him share their rations with them.

On arrival at Singapore, and some days after the surrender, his captors issued him with a small attache case, a spare pair of shorts khaki trousers, spare shirt, soap, razor, some tins of pineapple and other odds and ends, and joined him up with others en route to the internment camp. When he left one of the Japs who spoke some English impressed upon him that he was to say that he was a civil prisoner and not a military prisoner, and the lot of them waved to him shouting "good-bye" and "good luck", two English expressions which apparently most of them knew.

The poor little fellow had a pretty bad time and as a result of his experience says that he is perfectly happy in here. At least he is alive, he says!

Monday, 12th October, 1942.

I must record a conversation I had this morning with Arthur Sleep, Assistant Financial Secretary, S.S., which took place as we were both enjoying a morning stroll up and down the yard. It was on the subject of banking and kindred matters.

Some days ago it came to my ears that Nelson-Jones had expressed the view that Government would insist upon proof of title being produced after the war before accepting their own currency notes, so as to eliminate any possibility of Japanese interests benefitting in any way. As Nelson Jones is a Government man I was anxious to know if the matter had been discussed by the financial heads and, if so, whether they had actually considered such drastic action, so



I put the question point blank to Sleep. He knew nothing of any such proposal and denied that it had even been discussed by him or anyone else in authority. He was of the opinion that the outstanding circulation would be treated in the same way as it was just prior to the capitulation, that is that the restrictive regulations re its export would continue but that there would be no suggestion of any ban being placed on its circulation within Malaya, and I told him that that was my opinion as I felt that any interference, such as Nelson Jones talked of, would be very obstructive and cumbersome and would create considerable financial mistrust which would reflect on the Government. So that cleared up that point.

As an opportunity had presented itself to switch on to other subjects, I brought up the question of the iniquitous regulation whereby banks are compelled to purchase ready T.T. (Sterling) at $2\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{3}{16}$ ths when the transaction might quite possibly involve a sale to Government at the same rate to provide the funds to finance the transaction. I mentioned that this was one of Nelson Jones' brighter efforts! Sleep's come-back to this was that banks in Singapore had been making such large profits that they could well afford to carry an unprofitable transaction now and again, to which I indignantly retaliated that the profits which banks had made in the two years or so of war were well merited as they had worked extremely hard to earn them and that they had not been made out of any wide span between buying and selling, but out of the colossal turnover which the war prosperity had brought to all in Malaya; also that they had been no greater proportionately than the profits made by the trading firms of the country. I pointed out that we had had many lean years in the past to more than offset anything we had made since the war; that we had given valuable service which had cost us money to maintain; and that banks had to take risks. I might have mentioned, but overlooked to do so, that out of the profits made up to the 15th February 1942, we should no doubt have to meet considerable losses at the end of the war.

Out of this arose the question of a central bank for Malaya. This apparently has been considered on more than one occasion but nothing has ever resulted. The subject arose when we were discussing the $2\frac{1}{4}$ $\frac{3}{16}$ rate for buying ready T.T. Sleep let slip that the suggestion had come from some business men, that they had been the ones who had brought the matter to the fore again in recent times. I asked him what benefit he considered the Government would get out of such a step, particularly in quiet times when there would be little call upon them to do anything at all while they would always have to maintain a staff to run the central bank. He said that he himself was against it but that there were others who were not in agreement with him. I suggested that Malaya was altogether too small to need a central bank, and he told me that the "business men" had pointed out that Java was a small country where a central bank was run, and run profitably. I agreed with him on this point but I emphasised that the Javasche Bank was more than merely a central bank, it was also very much an ordinary trading Bank and operated in competition with the joint stock banks, dealing in every form of banking and taking the risks and losses as well as the profits, and I asked him if the Malayan Government contemplated the running of such a concern in competition with ourselves, buying and selling exchange of every description and entering into domestic banking by making packing credit advances and advances against property and shares. This, I said, would be nothing more nor less than Government entering into trade in competition with public enterprise, and that if they considered doing this why stop at banking and not branch out into the tin and rubber business. I suggested that if the business community brought up the suggestion again after the war he might ask them how they would like it if the



Government encroached on their preserves. He was entirely in agreement with all I had to say on these lines.

Then we got on to domestic banking, and the Overseas Chinese Bank and the Bank of China came up for discussion. He mentioned that some years ago he had been told by a Hongkong Bank man in Kuala Lumpur that the Hongkong Bank's functions did not run strongly to domestic banking, and Sleep considered that banks like the O-C Bank served a useful purpose in consequence, but he always had the fear that in the event of a depression a repetition of the disaster which befell the old Bank of Malaya might happen, and that it was a pity therefore that the British banks did not enter more into the domestic banking side and expand more by opening branches in the smaller places. I strongly repudiated the statement by my colleague (Sleep could not or would not remember his name) that we were not greatly interested in domestic banking and pointed out that we were very much so, but that the question of opening up in small places was one which involved the cost of running the office and that in this respect we were at a disadvantage compared with the purely Chinese concern, as their overheads were always considerably less than ours. I mentioned Sungei Patani office as an example of an office of our bank which brought us in no revenue.

As regards the O-C Bank he asked what would happen if they got into queer street and were threatened with bankruptcy; he suggested that the British banks might find it in their own interests to help to keep them going. I asked him why, and what security he thought we should be offered, and he replied that if a bank like the O-C went to the wall the British banks would be adversely affected and might suffer losses as a consequence of its collapse. He agreed with me that the security which we should in all probability be offered would be title deeds which would not be acceptable to us. I told him that it would be better to allow any mushroom concern, which called itself a bank and was really a mortgage company, to go by the board; that such concerns had been largely responsible for the terrible financial catastrophe in the United States from 1929 on. I said that the use of the term Bank should be controlled by Statute.

Then the Bank of China: why had the Malayan Exchange Banks Assn. not protested to Government when they first started domestic banking in the interior, he wanted to know? This was a bank domiciled in a foreign country, the state of whose finances was quite obscure as we never saw a balance sheet, and yet no word of protest had been issued when they began to infiltrate into the hinterland. Sleep told me that when they (the Bank of China) applied to him for a licence to open an office in Johore Bahru he called for our Sub-Agent there to come up and discuss the matter with him, and he then expressed the very views which I have described above. I seem to remember Doyle having brought up the subject but cannot recall that he advised us fully of the reason for Sleep bringing him into consultation, and I think that we felt that we could raise no objection to their establishing themselves in Johore Bahru if they wished to do so and Government had no objection. Had we known that Government were waiting for a move by the Malayan banks we might have done something about it. However the Bank of China have not so far opened up there.

Saturday 17th October, 1942.

Today each internee had to sign his name to the following undertaking: "I, the undersigned, do hereby swear by Almighty God that I shall not attempt to escape from Chengli Internment Camp and that I shall obey the camp rules". We were warned by our respective Block Commandants yesterday that the Japanese had called for this and we were advised to sign as the penalty for refusing to do so would be imprisonment - it was not stated where!



As signatures have been extracted under duress the whole thing does not amount to a row of beans. Anyway no one wants to attempt to escape from here as the chances of success are practically non-existent. A white man wandering in these parts would be much too conspicuous. I have no doubt, had the chances of success been favourable, we should have had several attempts by now as lots of internees are finished Malay scholars and the question of language would not therefore have been a deterrent.

I think myself that this is an outcome of the Roberts escapade. The Japanese are perhaps annoyed to think that such practices should have been going on under their very noses and probably imagine that by signing the above undertaking internees will punctiliously abide by it. No doubt they will, but simply because there is no incentive to do otherwise and not because they consider the oath binding.

Wednesday, 21st October, 1942.

There are a good many children in here, something just under a hundred I believe, and the boys over a certain age are housed with the men. It is tragic to see little fellows about eight years old wandering about the long bleak corridors or playing in small groups of varying ages in ugly prison yards. They have regular lessons, of course, as there is plenty of schoolmaster talent available, so they don't miss anything in that way, but they have all been living in circumstances which are altogether unsuitable for children and I am afraid that the experience will influence their minds to a very great extent. Over and above this the diet must be entirely unsuitable, as such commodities as milk and butter, when they are used, are used in such minute quantities.

Most of the small boys' fathers are with them, but for many months there was no contact permitted between mother and son. It is only within the last few weeks that male and female relatives have been allowed to meet; parents are now allowed to see and talk with their children for a very short time on certain days (I think for ten minutes only); in-laws may meet in the same way; grandparents are allowed to contact grandchildren and so on, but still no meetings are permitted between husband and wife! It is impossible to understand how the mentality of our little friends works.

Many of the boys in here are Eurasian and it is not good to see them hob-nobbing with the white children. I am quite sure their influence is bad as many of the former are mature lads of about fifteen and I wouldn't trust them far. A British subject married to a native or Eurasian woman had to bring his wife and family in here with him.

Two conversation pieces:

Stringfellow: I think we should go to see the Kreuger National Park when we reach Lorenzo Marques. It is only about 75 miles away, I am told.

Johnny Raikes: Not me. If there is that amount of time to spare I'm going to spend it with a Portuguese girl.

Me: Why not take the girl with you to Kreuger National Park and kill two birds with one stone?

Stringfellow: Yes, and throw her to the lions when you've finished with her!

.....

Louis Day: Why do you keep on reading French all the time?



72.

Me: It may be a good language to know after the war. One might settle in the South of France where one's money may be worth something. I know some French, my wife speaks Spanish, and we are both fluent in English and American, so we can go anywhere.

Louis Day: Yes, and you talk a lot of Balls too, don't you?

Me: I certainly do, but then that is only because I shouldn't be understood in here unless I did!

Saturday, 24th October, 1942.

Mike Turner has received three letters from his wife today and is like a dog with two tails. She is safe in South Africa. Her letters contain some news of others and I hear that Helen has "gone home to England with Maria Davies and Dorothy Bacon", which I take to mean that she has gone to the States and the other two have gone on to England. It is pretty obvious that they have travelled via the Pacific as they would doubtless have gone with Wendy Turner had they travelled in a ship via South Africa. I pray that Helen has arrived safely.

The rest of Wendy's news is also extremely interesting. We hear from her that Stuart, George Stabb, Clark and Self, all of the bank staff and all of whom left Singapore at the very end (they are referred to in the early pages of this diary) are safe and in England. We also hear that the London Office of the bank is caring for wives and families of interned members of the staff. This we all expected.

The news of the safe escape of the last three mentioned in the preceding paragraph has made a few of the younger members of the staff interned here (all of whom had the same opportunity to leave) feel a bit sick they didn't take the same chance. I am overjoyed to hear of this successful conclusion to their venture; stout fellows all of them! This of course means that Colonel Wolfe-Murray is also safe. Had I been a younger man without responsibilities I too should have been one of the party.

News has come through from another source that Miller of the Chartered Bank, who left with Stuart in the "Kuala" on Friday the 13th February has died in Bombay from enteric. That's bad luck after all that he must have gone through between here and there. Another Chartered Bank man in here, Sam Fortune, is to undergo an operation to have one of his legs taken off as a result of some disease or other; he is in Miyako Hospital. The poor old Chartered don't seem to have the same luck as the Hongkong.

One of our men who has just returned from Miyako Hospital tells us that the native patients in there are dying off at a high rate. Apparently there is a shortage of medicines and they cannot be treated adequately. The doctors there are of the opinion that there is a very bad time coming in a month or two when malaria, dysentery and beri-beri, which are now beginning to hit the native population, really get a hold. The Japanese co-prosperity movement is not apparently working out quite as they hoped. Maybe the Indians who have joined with the Japs in the co-prosperity idea won't be quite so enthusiastic when they begin to die off for lack of medicine which comes from other parts of our Empire, and of the health supervision which was one of the most efficiently run departments of British Administration. The Japanese have a



big problem in front of them if they wish to sweeten the local population. Over and above this, the water is no longer chlorinated at source as from the 1st of November, so that unless it is boiled before being drunk it will spread all sorts of diseases. The outlook for Malaya while under Japanese rule is gloomy to say the least.

We are getting a certain amount of bad weather these days which isn't so good. They tell me that this is some monsoon season or other, the North-East or the South-West or something. The effect of this is that I am being driven indoors at night pretty regularly and it is very annoying to say the least. I sleep out in the covered verandah of our yard, as you know, but that is no protection when wind and rain combined suddenly strike the camp; we fresh air fiends immediately pack up our bed and bedding and make a wild rush for the one entrance into the building. I go back to my cell with my mattress and blanket, spread these out on the cell floor, and continue my sleep if this is possible. I have a portable mosquito net which is cunningly fixed on to four bamboo sticks to fit on to my camp bed, and this too I have to carry upstairs to my cell, so, as there are no lights whatever along the cell passages and our cell is at the far end, the trip along the passage is fraught with difficulties. When it is particularly dark outside, and this is generally the case when it rains, I am always afraid of stepping into the wrong cell and on to the face of some sleeping inhabitant. I am told by the old inhabitants that this sort of weather is likely to last until the beginning of December, which is very discouraging. Of course it doesn't always rain at night; at the moment it is coming down cats and dogs so it may rain itself out by evening and give me a quiet night outside.

Friday, 30th October, 1942.

Life has been very humdrum of late and it is hard to think of anything worth writing about. There have been no incidents and our ordinary routine goes on without change.

In the old days, when rain at night was nothing more than an occasional incident, I would pack up my bed and bedding and move up to my cell where my sleep could be continued on the floor. This practice had been so regular that my cell-mate, Stringfellow, would wake at the sound of rain and wait for my arrival before falling back into slumber. The other night when I was driven in by rain I decided that I would seek some vacant space in one of the public corridors (quite a number of internees sleep there in the ordinary way) and park myself and my bed there instead of struggling upstairs in the dark; I had an idea in my mind that, as rain is to be expected almost nightly now for a couple of months, I would in future make a practice of moving into the corridor when disturbed by rain. I found a suitable spot and spent the remainder of the night in it.

Next morning I came upstairs about 7.30 and found Stringfellow already awake. I asked him how he'd slept and he replied that he'd had a very bad night. I inquired why and was told that I'd kept him awake by not coming back to the cell! He had wakened as usual at the sound of the wind and the rain and had lain there waiting for me to turn up with my bed and bedding, trying to get back to sleep but finding that he could not do so until I had settled down as my arrival in the cell always wakened him! This went on all night. I laughed and explained that in future he need not anticipate my return to the cell as I had found other accommodation.

I went to one of our usual weekly concerts last Saturday and on this occasion I took a folding stool with me.



74.

Just behind me were standing a few lads who had been members of the crew of some ship or other sunk in the last days of the Singapore fighting. Some items of the programme did not appeal to them and they began to criticise it and it was brought home to me how limited is the vocabulary of the scum of the Liverpool Docks, which is just what these men were. Every second word was a swear word and the only adjective they seemed to know was "fooken"; it was "fooken" this and "fooken" that until I got so thoroughly fed up I wanted to tell them to "bugger" off, but feared to do so in case I'd get a thick ear! Instead I moved my chair to another part of the auditorium.

Today we have been handed another post card to send to our next of kin and this time we are to be allowed to fill it up to capacity provided it is legible. I shall fill it all right and only hope it reaches my wife in record time and is not unduly delayed enroute.

NOTE: At this point I lost my nerve to some extent as I was scared of my diary being found by the Japs, so I concealed what I had written to date. However, as nothing untoward happened I resumed keeping it after about a month.

6th December, 1942.

Prison life is very humdrum and the daily routine has little change for anyone. I, because of my old lung trouble, am excused all fatigues so my life is very monotonous indeed. However, I try to kill time by reading French when I am not washing clothes or taking some exercise walking up and down one of the prison exercise yards. I also have a French class for an hour a day, but this is very easy going and I am getting nowhere fast. There are six of us in the class and our teacher is one Mc Inerny, a Frenchman, who was manager of a French-owned rubber estate up country in the pre-war days. He is a brother of Mrs. Grant-Watson whom we knew so well in the old days in Ipoh, and an extremely nice fellow. When I say I am reading French, I am struggling through "Monte Cristo" in six volumes. I am now in the middle of the fourth volume.

7th December, 1942.

God! What weather! The last few days we have had not only rain but heavy rain interspaced with cloudbursts. And on top of this the Japs have ordered a black-out state of emergency so that we are not allowed to have any lights in the prison between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. next day. How long the emergency will last I cannot say but it has cast a spell of gloom over the whole place. Rain, such as we are now having, and the black out, is a bit too much. The only redeeming feature about it is that the state of emergency may have been brought about by the activities of our own forces, in which case we are prepared to put up with a lot. The local paper has given away the fact that the Allied Nations are now in Morocco and Algiers and fighting at the gates of Tunis and Bizerte, also that we have driven Rommel almost to the borders of Tripolitania. This is the most wonderful news and seems to indicate that the initiative has now passed to the Allies.

Some months ago I placed great hopes on repatriation: the local paper had quite a lot to say about it and two lots of British internees had actually left Japan and China for Lorenzo Marques. Since the completion of this first exchange a long time has elapsed and we are all gradually giving up



hope. I haven't yet done so completely. I cannot bear to think of having to stand another year, or more, of this, so I indulge in a lot of wishful thinking. It is bad enough to be cooped up in this bloody place, but much worse to be separated from my wife. The hardest part of it all is this long separation. I know I should count my blessings, but I've done that for so long now that my blessings are beginning to wear a bit thin. I suppose I am being patient. I do my best but it is very hard. I am not so young as I was and I genuinely admit that I hate it all. There are days when I get very depressed, but there are also days when I don't feel the strain very badly. It's all probably a question of the state of one's liver! My liver can't be ticking over on all cylinders today, as I appear to be writing in rather a gloomy strain. I think I'd better dry up.

9th December, 1942.

Depression has rather got the upper hand of me these last few days, due to a great extent to the weather no doubt, and also to the fact that I have had a mild attack of hives. This distressing complaint hit me very badly in Shanghai in 1937/8, when it stayed with me for six months and subjected me to the tortures of the damned, and I have a holy dread of it staying with me again for as long or even longer under present conditions. One has enough to put up with in here without adding to one's troubles.

I have seen the doctor and expounded to him my theories! I think it is halibut liver oil, of which I have been taking a regular dose since I came out of hospital last July, so I've given it up and seem to be improving. It's dreadful to wake up in the morning with a lip like a banana or an eye half closed.

Sometimes I look to the future and it doesn't seem so good. I lose my confidence in repatriation and then I foresee a long term of imprisonment. My own impression is that the war out here will not terminate for some time, maybe a year, after the termination of the European struggle, so that the outlook, if we are not exchanged, isn't so bright. These are the thoughts which run through one's mind all the time.

Life is so monotonous; the same routine day after day. I do no fatigues on account of my health, so have to fill in time as best I can by my own devices. But it is surprising how much there is to do, even without fatigues; by the time I have shaved, bathed and rolled up by bedding, or put it out to air (which I do every day, weather permitting - it is time for breakfast. Then I have to do some block roll-call figures (I am at the moment block records officer) and report them to the central office at 10 a.m. daily. From then till midday dinner I am free, so I walk for an hour (again weather permitting) and afterwards read French. After dinner I lie off on a concrete seat in our yard until 3 p.m., from 3 to 4 I have my French class, and from 4 to 6, when we have our last meal of the day (tea, unsweetened rice and pineapple or stewed dried fruit) I do what washing of clothing may need doing, probably have another bath, and generally muck around, perhaps typing. Then after this evening meal I go into the yard again where I either sit reading French or chatting to some pal. I have even been known to play shove ha'penny with Robertson of the Bank on more than one occasion! When it gets too dark to read I may wander up and down the mainyard for perhaps an hour before returning to set up my bed in the yard preparatory to turning in for the night. Lights out is at 10 p.m. and from then to 10.30 normal conversational talking is allowed; after 10.30 silence indoors but up to 11 p.m. talking in the yard may be carried



on in subdued tones. From 11 p.m. to 7.30 a.m. next morning there must be complete silence everywhere.

About 10 p.m. James Luetchford and I generally meet and walk up and down our yard yarning until at least 10.30, sometimes until 11 if we get involved in some controversial subject - James is clever at raising controversial subjects as I know from past experiences of him at luncheon parties in the good old days. As we are dressed for bed by this time all I have to do when we part for the night is to crawl into my bed under the verandah of the yard.

But these pleasant little strolls up and down the yard with James are also out of the question these days. It's rain and more rain the whole 24 hours. Someone remarked the other day in the course of a conversation on the miserable state of existence in prison, that we hadn't yet had a suicide. If this deluge continues as it is doing some one may be driven to it! I hope it's not me!

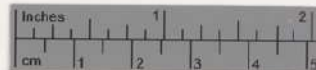
12 December, 1942.

I once saw "Rain", the play by Somerset Maugham, either on the movies or on the legitimate stage, I can't remember which, and what comes back to my mind about it is the steady sound of the tropical downpour. That is what we have been having these last five or six days and it is extremely depressing.

Nerves are beginning to get a bit frayed, too. For a long time there seemed to be harmony in the camp and one never heard of any open display of irascibility. This record has been broken and I have recently been told of one or two brawls, the outcome of some insignificant annoyance or rag. The legal adviser for the F.M.S., an ex-judge from Jamaica named Adrian Clark, and another bloke of no social pretensions whatsoever, came to blows the other day. They both live in one of the downstairs rooms, and Clark was heard to pass some facetious and disparaging remark about the electric lighting. The other man, who is electrician for the block, took exception to Clark's remarks and the argument finished up by the electrician calling Clark a bastard! As Clark probably isn't a bastard it was now his turn to take exception and he did so in a violent manner. He slapped the face of the electrician! The two then closed and within a few minutes were rolling about the floor amongst other people's beds and belongings. When they were finally separated it was found in the course of this all-in wrestling match that the electrician had buried his teeth in Clark's hand! As time goes on we shall no doubt find such occurrences becoming more common.

A list of names of women internees in Palembang (Sumatra) has been placed on our notice board and some men are relieved to see that their wives, who left Singapore just at the end, are at least alive. But there are others who seek such information and do not find it; either their loved ones are safe in British territory or dead, they do not know and the awful suspense must be killing. One man, for example, sees in the list I refer to the names of his wife and one daughter, but not that of his second daughter. He is just left guessing. I should be driven crazy if I were in the position of not knowing that my wife was safe.

Colonel Rae of Ipoh is in here and the poor old chap looks as if he were about to give up the ghost any minute. He is a walking skeleton. If he should die before relief comes to us it will be ironic to think that here was a man who, during his normal life, was eaten up with ambition. He was a member of the F.M.S. Legislative Council and also of the Perak State Council, as a result of which our grateful



77.

Government made him a C.B.E. ! He would probably have been knighted had we carried on the even tenor of our ways out here instead of having been disturbed by the Japs. What humiliation to die - if die he should - in an internment camp where he is nothing more than a unit like any winchman off a dredge, beachcomber, or bank junior arrived in the East for the first time! What a shadow ambition really is! I hope the old boy will survive.

15th December, 1942.

My miserable thoughts about Colonel Rae, expressed above, have brought on my head swift retribution. I have to go into Miyako Hospital again with another break down of the old tubercular trouble.

I admit to not having felt quite a hundred per cent these last few days, but I little suspected it was this. I imagined the complaint was hives, which it certainly was for a week or two, but this was wearing off, and now the t.b. I am not unduly concerned. It looks to me as if I should have similar recurrences throughout the rest of my life. It doesn't seem to spread which is a good thing, and I feel wonderfully well. I weighed 160 lbs. when I left Miyako in July last and I now weigh 158 lbs. which doesn't seem to indicate any rapid progress of the disease.

Stringfellow came back from an outside fatigue today and reported that one of the party had brought back some food. This innocent remark would have aroused no comment except for the fact that outside fatigues are forbidden to take money with them and so purchases are out of the question. Immediate interest was therefore aroused and the resulting explanation was that one of the camp dogs, which had accompanied the fatigue party, had killed a chicken and had successfully carried it past all the sentries back into the camp! What surprised me was that no one pinched it from the dog on its return. One might vary one's diet a bit by training a dog to make a practice of this sort of thing!

I go into Miyako on Thursday I am told, on the ambulance's next trip. This will break the monotony and I am looking forward to the change of surroundings and diet. I expect I shall be away from here for several weeks which is all to the good.

My temperament is mercurial. A few days ago I was wallowing in a slough of despond, relief seemed a fantastic dream and the future looked black. Today, now that I am due for a change, the sun shines again and I am almost happy. I must have patience and I must not abandon hope. After all, we have only been interned for ten months and it looks as if we have many more months ahead of us. I suppose I worry unconsciously, which is the very worst thing to do.

16th December, 1942.

The rain has lifted, anyway for the day. My bedding is out airing and drying and the world doesn't altogether seem to have been abandoned by God. I really think He must have overlooked us these last few days.

19th December, 1942.

I have now spent two nights in hospital and the change is already taking effect. I feel much better and my outlook on life has considerably brightened. These last few weeks in camp were getting me down, to say the least, I think