



increase in the population of the gaol at a certain future date. There are the usual rumours going around of course that the Japs came across a couple of Eurasians in flagrante delicto that they found one or two cell doors wedged closed from the inside, and so on.

I asked Freddy Bloom how she was standing up to this life and she told me that at first she didn't find it too bad, but that now she was getting very very tired of it all; that without a sense of humour it would be terrible. At one time she dreaded the idea of repatriation as she felt she wanted to see it out with her husband who is a major in the R.A.M.C. and a prisoner of war in Malaya, but now she longs for repatriation, husband or no husband. She says the language and behaviour of the women internees is becoming quite impossible, that I would not believe her if she recounted all that goes on. All this has been confirmed to me by other men who were visiting other women. Their friends are beginning to wonder how much more of it they can stand without losing their reason. I gather the Eurasians in there are the trouble; their behaviour in front of the European women is deplorable. I imagine they are getting something back on the women whom they considered so "snooty" before the war - Europeans and Eurasians did not mix in the old days.

So can you now realize how truly thankful I am that my wife is not here? Had I gone in there yesterday and found her looking thin and wan, as most of the European women internees were, I am frightened to think what effect it would have had on me. What cruel fools these husbands are who kept their wives in the country at the end when things looked so hopeless, and to think that it was all done in a spirit of patriotism, a hopelessly misguided one but nevertheless a sincere one.

I am having a rotten time with urticaria. It left me for about a month, why I do not know, but now it is back with, if anything, renewed vigour. It is at its worst when I turn into bed at night and I am being cheated out of my sleep as it gives me hell. The doctors here are not helpful; their usual statement is that it is probably due to diet and that cannot be changed. I know that it is a mysterious complaint, and short of just cutting out all food I really cannot think of anything to do about it. My friend, Dr. Tweedie, who is not one of the recognised camp or block doctors, is sympathetic and is now giving me some injections of calcium on his own. He gave me some before which did some good so maybe I shall benefit from them again. Let's hope so anyway.

This diary, or shall we call it this letter to my wife, because that is really what it is, affords me relief from depression as I feel that when I have written a few lines I have been in long distance contact with her, and I am given renewed strength to face the future. The whole camp is a bit down these days after Churchill's speech in which he is reported, in the Jap papers, to have said that he does not anticipate that the war in Europe will finish before 1945, and that only then will the Allies be able to turn their attention to the Far East. If we are not repatriated this means that we must linger on here with conditions getting steadily worse, which is a gloomy prospect to say the least. I think this is responsible for the general feeling of dependency which one found in the women's camp, and I am not surprised.

The letters which I referred to the other day have not yet been delivered, at least mine have not. There must surely be one from Helen? If not I shall be disappointed more than I can say. I don't care whom others may come from, I must have at least one from Helen. The letters are all





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dated about June - July - August of last year but still the Japanese feel they must go through them with a small tooth comb. I think they hope to find some defeatist statements in some of them which they will seize upon to publish in their own papers. But they'll find none I am sure because there can be little doubt in anyone's mind, even the Japanese mind, that we shall win this war in the end.

Saturday, 10th April, 1943.

A hundred and ten new boys have come into camp. They are all Iraqi Jews and a dirtier and tougher bunch you have never seen. What it portends, if anything, has given us new grounds for speculation. Some favour repatriation on the grounds that if the exchange is to be one for one then it is in the Japanese interests to swell our numbers, which is quite logical; others say that it is merely a move on the Japs' part to remove any trace of British influence from Malaya, as so long as any remains the native element will continue to be fed with propaganda of our ultimate return to power. Whatever is behind it does not alter the fact that our numbers are swelled. There was a time when we were just over 2,500 internees; we are now well over the 3,000 mark and I hear more are to come. We thought we were overcrowded in the early days! It is wonderful what one can become adjusted to.

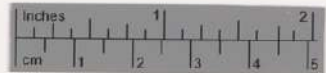
One of the stories about the new arrivals is that the Committee asked the Japs to provide us with 100 Osram lights as the camp has run out of electric bulbs, but the Japs misunderstood our request and sent us in 100 Israelites!

The other night while lying in my camp bed on the verandah unable to sleep because of the heat and my urticaria a man came up and peered at me through my mosquito net. He then leant down and seized my arm in his hand, leant forward against the net, and in a loud whisper said "it's all right old man, everything will be all right". I said that was good or something to the same effect, and suggested that he go back to bed and try to get some sleep. The man wandered away and I then heard him wake another man who appeared to be somewhat startled. A quiet conversation ensued between them, the first man protesting that he would not go to bed, then I heard the most heart-rending sobbing going on and I realised that someone was having a crise de nerfs. Next morning I was told that my friend Stanton-Nelson (the man who helped me fix my mosquito net to my camp bed some long time ago) was in a bad way, that ever since last Friday when he saw his wife at the fair he has been weeping a lot and cannot sleep. It's all so tragic and is the beginning of what I think will be a general break down of the morale of the camp. Churchill's recent speech wherein he prophesies a long war has upset quite a lot of men. The other day I was waiting in one of our usual queues to see the block doctor about my urticaria (which incidentally is ever with me) and was the next man for attention waiting outside the room. The man inside was sitting there talking away to the doctor and holding all the rest of us up so when I at long last got inside I said to the doctor "That bloke overstayed his time, didn't he?" to which the doctor replied that the poor man was in a bad way, that he was talking of stringing himself up to the wall with a piece of rope!!

Latest exchange rumour straight from the latrine - Itchigoya, the Japanese storekeeper of pre-war days, is to open up John Little's store as soon as his assistants return from internment in India!

Two of my letters have been delivered, the third one has still to come. So far one is from Fergy (J.S. Ferguson of Ipoh) and the other is from Rab Stuart, and from information contained in the latter I now know that my darling Helen





is safe in New York for which I thank God. Neither letter is very informative but it is good to get them just the same in spite of the fact that they are both dated in July of last year. I now know that the third letter cannot be from Helen as none of the present delivery is from the United States. Of course I am cruelly disappointed but I can take it as I know the omission is not Helen's fault. She apparently left Australia before official sanction was granted to write from that country to internees, and she must have arrived in America just about the time relatives and friends in England were advised that they could write. Oh, my darling, what would I not have given to see your signature once again and to have some direct news from you. Never mind, I am determined that nothing is going to sever the spiritual contact which I feel I have established with you and which is giving me courage to see this mess through to the end. Your courage in the past has been a lesson to me from which I have benefited. I endeavoured now to prove that I am worthy of your love and respect. I shall do nothing in here which would make you feel ashamed of me.

Grouse Davies has heard from Maria in England, in which letter Maria says she left Helen only a few weeks before and that she left her well. She also says that Helen had been such a pillar of strength to her that she hated leaving her.

Stuart's only remark about Helen is "Helen is in New York and appears to be all right. She has written me twice." Something very cryptic about that passage and I am inclined to think that Helen had upbraided Stuart for leaving us all at the end. I wonder if I am right?

Poor Sam Middlebrook has just heard that his son Stephen, aged about 3, is dead. He was sent for by the Japs who handed him a cable, or radio message, from his wife stating that Stephen had had an operation for mastoid which had resulted in his death. The message apparently came through the Red Cross. Sam is taking it bravely although I know how cut up he must feel as he was so proud of this kid and used to talk of him all the time in the old days when we played golf together in Singapore. I am rather inclined to condemn the wife for having passed on the news. God knows we have enough to put up with in here without having to add to our troubles. Would it not have been better to have withheld it until Sam was free again and in a better state to take it? No harm surely would have been done to anyone by such action.

I do a little physical labour these days in spite of the doctors' veto. I found that doing nothing was getting me down and instead of having the desired effect - to keep me well - was making me feel depressed. Now I help Artie Aston in the block yard, principally in watering flowers and loosening up the flower beds with a fork. I only give him about an hour of my labour, but this makes me sweat a bit, and from there I go down to the laundry and bath. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays I have a French lesson from 11 a.m. to noon, and about three afternoons a week I do my washing. I am fond of having clean things next to my skin so washing has to be done at least three times a week. Some of my garments are beginning to get a bit threadbare, singlets and face towels for example, but even so they are better than the average camp garment. I've gone through two pairs of short trousers so far but have four good pairs still going strong. What will happen when I've gone through these I dread to think; I may have to go about naked! And why not? There are no women here in our camp and no one sees us but ourselves.

(Graham-White)  
The Archdeacon and I help Artie in the block garden in the mornings and we have a lot of fun. We call the Archdeacon "Archie" and try to pull his leg now and again but he





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generally gives back more than he gets; he's a good sport. He suffers badly from a gastric condition of the stomach and this diet is doing him no good. Once or twice he has gone into Miyako Hospital and many have doubted if he'd ever come back, and then back he'd come full of good spirits. In here there are days on end when he has to lie up in bed in a state of collapse. I say to him sometimes "Come now Archie, you can't slack about like that and leave all the hard work to me. Put your back into it!" and he will say in his high pitched clerical voice "Now, now, Duncan, you can't talk to me like that. You forget you're only the number three coolie while I'm the number two!"

Thursday, 15th April, 1943.

The fellow I told you about the other day who came along to me in the middle of the night and told me all would be well - Stanton Nelson - has had to be removed to the mental side of Miyako Hospital. He got to the stage of thinking he was Christ in the garden and had quite lost his reason so was removed more or less forcibly to the camp hospital. Poor devil! The mental ward in Miyako, from what I hear of it, won't do him any good, rather the reverse. His wife is in the other side here and is, I understand, terribly upset about it all. They hope this won't send her off her balance too. God! How cruel this whole business is! Is there such a thing as Christianity and are we, particularly we Europeans, really civilised or are we still just half baked savages? The world has gone mad; anyway the Axis half of it has and one feels that it would be a good thing if the breed were to be wholly exterminated this time. However much I long to be freed from this miserable existence I do not wish to be freed at the cost of a compromised peace. This time we must crush power politics into the dust so that nations can live in the future as citizens do in free countries, without fear of oppression and in the knowledge that justice will be dispensed without fear or favour.

My third letter arrived yesterday - it was a duplicate of Fergy's first letter which he sent as he thought he had addressed the latter wrongly! What a disappointment, as you can well imagine. At the back of my mind I had always hoped that it would if not actually be a letter from my wife, at least contain some real news of her. I feel that I shall have difficulty in accepting any excuses Stuart may be able to offer for not having told me more of her in his letter. He said he had heard from her twice and just left me in the air, so to speak; is it not reasonable that I should suspect that all is not well with her? I can stand a lot of this so long as I know that Helen is all right. If she is not then I doubt if I shall be able to contain myself. May God protect her in my earnest and ever repeated prayer.

I hear another 20 bags of mail has arrived for the P.O.W. and ourselves. Maybe amongst that will be one with cheering news. I hope so.

We see from the Jap paper that we are doing big things in Tunis. This is very gratifying. When the war becomes more active and we begin to put the thumb screws on the Axis, then life in here will pass more quickly and so bring release more rapidly to us. I have no doubts as to the ultimate result; what I want to know is when it will be accomplished.

The second Fair, mooted for the 28th of this month in the mens' block and on which day I had extended an invitation to Freddy Bloom and her cell mate to visit us in here and partake of tea, will not now take place, by order of



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the Japanese. Why, we do not know because we have not been told.

The total population in camp today is 3,481. We started with just over 2,500 and thought then that we were overcrowded!

Wednesday, 21st April, 1943.

Johns, our own camp commandant, is once again in disgrace. In other words the Japanese have locked him up in the lavatory in the administration block!

It all came about in this way: The Japanese superintendent of the prison used to be one Nito until the day of the fair in the women's quarters, when a new superintendent was appointed. Whether the change in command was made as a result of the fair I do not know, I am inclined to think not and that the change was made quite in the normal way and took effect from the day of the fair; also that as a result of it certain privileges which had been granted to us by Nito (tea in cells during the fair, for one) were summarily cancelled.

Nito is reputed to have been a very reasonable man but his successor, Mr. Tominaga, is not.

Two Sikh guards were wandering around the camp the day before yesterday in the normal course of their duties, when they came across some internees removing a large sheet of expanded metal from one of the open air corridors. On their return to the guard room they reported the matter to the Japanese. Now in the ordinary course of events the removal of expanded metal from one place to another, or the removal of concrete blocks from the side of the prison building to allow the better passage of air, or any such structural alterations, would never have been interfered with or even commented upon by the Japanese, but on this occasion Mr. Tominaga appeared on the scene, stopped the work on the metal, and sent for Johns.

Johns duly turned up and was told that the prison was Government property (Japanese Government, presumably) and that structural alterations were forbidden without permission. A discussion ensued in the course of which the two men found that they had worked their way into the hospital block near at hand. In there they were joined by Dr. Boyer, internee doctor in charge of the hospital, and in the course of their wandering they came to three beds in one of the two wards which were unoccupied. Tominaga wanted to know why they were unoccupied and was told that it was necessary to keep one or two beds vacant for emergency cases, that by the evening even these beds would no doubt also be filled. Tominaga promptly cancelled the permission he had given earlier in the day for three internees to be transferred to Miyako Hospital!

Johns protested strongly against this but he was told that the British authorities in India had treated the Japanese internees very badly and that we should suffer as a consequence. Johns denied that this was so and said that he himself had been told by one of the Japanese internees (an interpreter who had actually been interned in New Delhi and subsequently repatriated), that the treatment of the Japanese in India had been very fair. Mr. Tominaga then went off and left Johns.

Later in the day Johns was again sent for and as he entered the Japanese office his arm badge as camp commandant was torn from his arm. He was then placed before the particular interpreter whom he had reported having stated that the treatment of the Japanese internees in India had been fair, and in front of Johns and Tominaga the frightened interpreter





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denied that he had ever made such a statement! Quite obviously he had been intimidated by his superior officer. Johns was told that he had lied to Tominaga and was there and then removed to the lavatory where he now is locked up. That was two days ago.

No food nor bedding was allowed the poor prisoner on the first day and the first meal which he received was a plate of rice and some salt yesterday midday. In the evening there was some misinterpretation (intentional?) of Japanese instructions and Johns received a meal of soup and cold timed tongue at six in the evening before it was discovered that this was contrary to Mr. Tominaga's wishes. Now poor Johns is back on rice and water.

The Central Committee have been told that they must find a new representative. One wag has suggested that we all draw lots for the job, the loser winning! The Central Committee have also been told that if one of them, with the sole exception of the Secretary, approaches the Japanese he too will be cast into prison. And that is where we are at the moment and everyone is awaiting developments. It strikes me that it won't be an easy job to find anyone willing to fill John's place if any argument or discussion with the Japanese is to mean solitary confinement on rice and water for an indefinite period.

It all boils down to this, that there is to be no such thing as justice or humane feeling on the part of the Japanese. My own impression is that we should humour the little fellows and give no indication whatsoever that we feel that we have rights. We have no rights according to the Japanese and must accept from them whatever treatment they choose to mete out to us. Why argue with them, when all this has been demonstrated to us on so many occasions? We are the under dog now and to be humiliated for our superior attitude of the past, and by God they mean to rub it in!

Friday 23rd April, 1943.

To keep a check on the date Stringfellow and I have been in the habit of writing it up day by day on the white-washed wall of our cell, behind the door. For quite a long time, what with being in hospital and one thing and another, I have neglected this work, but on looking behind the door the other day to see if Stringfellow had kept it up to date I found that he had and I also found the following couplet against the 6th March, 1943:-

"A year today we've been in quod,  
We think it quite enough, dear God."

Johns has at last been released from solitary confinement. Today he was let out, but before being released he was interviewed by Tominaga. He was told that the Japanese military must have first claim on the hospital accommodation and the medical supplies available, which was really irrelevant. Then Tominaga told him that he hated the British flag (also quite irrelevant) because at some time in the past, in Manchukuo I think, the Chinese had advanced on Tominaga's unit waving a British flag and the Japanese had withheld their fire until too late, the Japanese unit being all but wiped out. What this has to do with the hating of the British flag, or rather the British people, to such an extent as to prompt him to vent his spleen on poor Johns I fail to see. Anyway, honour appears to be satisfied for the moment, and quiet reigns once more - until the next incident. Whether we have to find a new commandant or not remains to be seen; nothing more has been said about it and perhaps, provided of course that he is willing to carry on, Johns will continue in





his post. I should think, however, that he will be more than ready to hand over to someone else.

I have got so thoroughly fed up doing nothing that I have taken the law into my own hands and go out every second day as a casual labourer in the outside gardens. I am praying that it will have no detrimental effect on my health as it is just the stuff and makes me feel like a million. I go out with the crowd at 10 a.m. and return at 12.30 p.m. and during that time do quite a lot of rough work in the fields. So far I have worked only on the sweet potato patches as a "tattie hawker", collecting the stalks and leaves as they are cut away from the roots and carrying the lot to a dump a hundred or so yards away. At other times I collect the potatoes as they are dug up and tossed aside by the diggers and pile them at a collecting shed. Skilled labour - I don't think!

I found on the first day out that this work was so hard on the shoes that I should either have to give it up or work in my bare feet if I wished to retain any sort of footwear to leave here in, so I now work in my bare feet. In fact the one and only garment I wear on this work is a pair of running shorts, also my hat when the sun is up. After all, 10 a.m. Tokyo time, which is the time we go by in here, is only 8 a.m. by the sun, so that we knock off at 10.30 a.m. by the sun, which isn't really so bad. Some of the gluttons for work go out in the afternoons from 2 to 4 p.m. but not this child! I'm neither a mad dog nor am I an Englishman!

This is Good Friday, by the way. The Bishop, who is one of us now, has intimated that he will give an Easter present to each internee of either a stick of gula-malacca or some cheroots, each internee to make his choice. I said to Digger Doyle of the bank, "You're a Roman Catholic and of course cannot accept a bribe from the Anglican Bishop so I take it you will be prepared to hand your gula-malacca to me?" to which he replied "Not on your life. When I was in Hong Kong some years ago, Eric Wilken asked me one day to attend an organ recital at St. John's Cathedral (Episcopal) with him and I agreed. During the recital a collection was taken and I was stuck for a dollar! Now I'm getting my own back which will make it all right with Father Cosgrave."

Lt. Col. Asahi, the superintendent of all civilian internees of this South-West district is being moved to Sumatra and in his place has been appointed one Lieut. Suzuki. The former interviewed the camp committee the other day and an account of this interview has been posted on our notice board. The crowning effort is the penultimate paragraph which deals with money. Asahi is reported to have said that he allowed internees to retain their personal possessions and money when they were first interned, a concession which was not allowed the Japanese interned in Malaya, and that when we had approached him for a loan he had arranged for the International Red Cross representative to furnish us with food-stuffs and other necessities without payment. This is true. Then he went on to say that he had also sent into the camp 100 odd Jews who had brought into internment with them over \$100,000 which also is true! In other words he could not arrange a loan for us but he gave us 100 additional internees with sufficient money in their possession to enable us to raise a loan from them. Maybe this is Japanese humour. If so, the poor Jews don't think so.

In the course of this same interview Asahi made some reference to the shooting of Japanese unarmed prisoners in New Zealand, saying that it was a most regrettable incident. He added that we had better be very careful to behave, as our guards were armed and would have no hesitation in shooting if the occasion demanded!





One of the committee members asked Asahi if our chances of repatriation were favourable and the reply was that this was a matter which was outside of his province and one which concerned the Foreign Office alone. He did say, however, that the Japanese had no use for us here, nor had the British for Japanese internees in their countries, so that it would be a good thing if exchange could be arranged.

Wednesday, 28th April, 1943.

We've had a spate of religion and religious music over the Easter week-end.

First of all there was a service on Good Friday in the morning and in the evening the camp choir rendered the "Crucifixion" (Stainer) in most excellent manner to a very large and appreciative audience. Saturday nothing of interest took place, but on Sunday morning at the crack of dawn I was awakened by what sounded like mad harmony! It was about five o'clock and early morning services being held simultaneously - the United Churches service in our (D) yard, the Presbyterians bellowing forth hymns in the adjoining (C) yard, the Roman Catholics holding High Mass in Hudson's Bay, the Plymouth Brethren (of whom we have a few in here) raising their voices in praise of the Lord and the Salvation Army going strong below. It was all pretty ghastly to the musical ear.

Sunday evening at 7.30 a united service was held which I attended. The American Methodist minister conducted it, the Presbyterian minister (a worthy brother Scot) prayed for hours on end in true solemn Presbyterian fashion, Col. Lord of the Salvation Army read the lessons, and my friend Archdeacon Graham-White preached a sermon which was excellent. At the end of the service the Anglican Bishop of Singapore (Wilson) delivered the benediction.

At this evening service we were assisted by the camp orchestra and choir and the result was very very impressive. There was a very large attendance and I saw one or two Jews present.

I prayed silently for my darling wife, for her mother and dad who are so dear to her and to me, and for all my own relations. I am not a religious man and cannot say for certain to Whom I prayed. Some Power which is behind us all I hope heard me.

As a contrast to Christianity: Word is going round the camp that Mr. Tominaga wandered about the camp this morning and amused himself by kicking one or two of the internees who had apparently not observed him and so had not stood up. One man was working on the binding of a book and had no knowledge that Tominaga was in the vicinity until he was sent for by an interpreter, asked why he had not stood up, and on replying that he had not seen Mr. Tominaga, was smacked three times on the face. Nice fellows our custodians!

And a strange thing happened yesterday. The Americans were all sent for by the Japanese camp superintendent and when they appeared before him in expectation of something unpleasant, were informed that Cordell Hull had broadcast to tell them that internees were in the thoughts of the Government, or something to this effect. What the significance of the statement is I do not of course know, but one likes to read into it that the statement was made to show that the Government at home were trying to do something to help us; either to send us relief in the shape of food and medical supplies through the Red Cross or to hurry on the exchange negotiations which are reported to be going on. I cannot see





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any object in the message otherwise. They would not say that exchange negotiations were going on for fear of raising our hopes unduly but the fact that they have stated that they are thinking of us has some significance I am sure.

8 p.m. same day:

We have just had a long discourse delivered to us by our block commandant on the incidents of this morning to which I have briefly referred above.

What happened was apparently this. Mr. Tominaga started round the camp this morning and during his progress one or two internees who did not see him and his retinue failed to get up and bow, as is the ordered routine when an officer passes, with the result that they were slapped as I have stated. On entering the main yard Mr. Tominaga saw the V (victory) sign which appears on the upper arch of our open-air stage and called up one of our new Jew internees to ask how long it had been there. The Jew replied that he did not know as he had only just come into internment, so Tominaga sent some other internee off to fetch Morgan (an internee who speaks Japanese and one of the two men who recently suffered solitary confinement in here for several months). The Jew then thought that his presence was no longer required so started to move off. He had not made a couple of steps before a Jap threw him to the ground and while he was on the ground he was kicked in the abdomen and face. He was taken off to hospital but it was found that he was not seriously hurt. Mr. Tominaga then moved off and sent word that he would see Morgan at 2.15 p.m.

At the afternoon meeting with Morgan Tominaga asked straight out if the sign above the theatre was in fact the Victory sign and the reply was "yes". This incensed him somewhat and Morgan tried to calm him by pointing out that some of the cigarettes which had come to us from the South African Red Cross had borne the victory sign and the Japanese had taken no exception to that. So he asked Morgan to get a specimen for him to see. Morgan went off and soon came back with an empty carton which he showed to Tominaga. Tominaga looked at it and then said that these cartons should be destroyed, that internees must not keep them in their possession! Tominaga then ordered that all who had had anything to do with the erecting of the theatre and the sign should be sent to him and in due course one McDermott and four electricians turned up. They were duly slapped on the face and locked up in the tyre store room, which is a room without either water or sanitation. There they still are and no food is to be sent to them until permission is given by Tominaga.

Incidentally, immediately after the locking up of the five internees one of the Sikh guards was seen to go to their room but returned immediately afterwards and was later seen tied up in the guard room. I believe that he was asked to beat up the prisoners but replied "ta mau" - not want. The next order was that the stage had to be torn down and as this was in process of being carried out a second order came along to the effect that the platform might remain but all superstructure (wings, roof, etc.) must come down. This order has been carried out.

We have also been forbidden to walk outside for the time being; the male liaison officer between the men's and the women's camps has been forbidden to visit the women; and, as I have said, the stage superstructure had to be pulled down.

There is a feeling rife in camp that Asahi's warning to the Committee the other day about the guards being armed was a veiled hint that Tominaga might be intent on inciting us





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to create an incident which would give him an excuse for revenging his fellow countrymen in New Zealand, but I am inclined to discount this. There is no doubt, however, that we have run up against one of the more arrogant of Japanese in Mr. Tominaga and it behoves us to be on our guard.

I am also told that the men living outside in the old Sikh warders quarters had their baggage searched the other day, so I propose to place this diary in some place where I hope it will not be found in the event of a search. I shall continue to write up something in the hope that I may be allowed to carry what I write out without let or hindrance in the event of repatriation, but I shall have to be very guarded in what I write. As a matter of fact I have been very guarded in what I have written to date; there is much more that I could have said but dared not do so for fear of my diary being discovered by the Japanese.

Friday, 30th April, 1943.

Incidents are following one and other in rapid succession and I am beginning to turn to the view that Mr. Tominaga is intent on inciting us to some action which will give him an excuse to turn the guns on us. Who knows what the morrow will bring with such a man? It almost appears that he means to goad us to action which will bring death and destruction in its train.

Yesterday the electrical engineers were released but in their stead the commandants of B and D blocks were sent for and interrogated for some time, at the end of which they in turn were placed in the tyre store under lock and key. They are still there.

No one knows for certain what took place during this interrogation but it is rumoured that they were asked if they were Mr. Churchill's representatives and on the answer coming that they presumed they were - as they were the two senior representatives on the committee elected by the internees - they were slapped and beaten and then thrown into solitary confinement.

Now we have no camp commandant, as the Japanese have confirmed that Johns must be replaced by someone else and no one else has yet been elected, and only one remaining block commandant out of three, C Block commandant, has not yet been molested, possibly because he has not long been in office.

The two men now in confinement - Mr. Justice Worley and a Mr. Pensslaer - have been allowed one blanket each, but no water has yet been sent in to them. Today when their mid-day meal arrived the sentry said that Mr. Tominaga wished to see it first. It consisted of soup, a tin of sardines and some dry rice. When Tominaga saw this he said that it was better than he himself was served with and he then sent for Austerhouse (the Nazi fellow who is still in solitary confinement) and asked him if this was what he got to eat, and Austerhouse replied that it was better than the food generally sent in to him. The soup was then returned to the kitchen and half a tin only of sardines passed in to the two prisoners.

Saturday, 1st May, 1943.

The two block commandants are still under arrest. Tominaga wants to get to the bottom of this "Churchill Movement" as he describes it, so if he intends to keep these two in confinement until he succeeds then they are in for a very long spell as there is no such movement in camp so far as I know.





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Today's little gesture of frightfulness: the men who have been living outside in the old Sikh quarters have been ordered back to the prison building. They must all be inside the walls by 6 p.m. today. And so congestion is to be worse congested.

Things are getting to such a stage that I really feel that I must put this diary away in a safe place, which means too that I shall have to give up writing it - anyway for the time being until things simmer down. If there is to be a general search of the whole prison - and this I think is quite on the cards - and friend Tominaga gets his hands on it I shall be for the high jump, and as I never was much good at the high jump I think I shall steer a safe course. Solitary confinement on dry rice and water has no appeal to me, so away this goes. I may take up the traces again at some later date if a more reasonable Jap commandant comes along, but we'll see. I want to preserve what I have written to date, also to conserve a bank report which has been compiled in here so I think a quiet burial in the near future is indicated.

Sunday, 2nd May, 1943.

It's dreadful to think that one should long for the day to draw to a close and that a sense of relief should come with the evening because it brings one closer to the next day and so nearer relief. That one should want time to fly past as quickly as possible is a terrible thing, but that is what we have all come to in here. Deprived of one's liberty and separated from those who are dear to one, wandering along as we do in the shadow of the valley of death, is hard to take. It is such a complete change from the life which one has known for so many years, the life which one had become accustomed to, that I fear I do not get any more patient with it at all and shall never become completely resigned to captivity. I chafe against it all the time.

Nevertheless, I am at the moment in good health and hope to continue so; one mustn't let oneself get down. I am leading a more active existence these days, going out to work as a casual labourer in the fields three days a week and messing about in D yard the other three working days, and I find this helps. I still get a touch of urticaria now and again but this is going. Perhaps the urticaria has nothing to do with diet but is maybe due to nerves brought about by an inactive life. When I look back to the time when I suffered from this distressing complaint in Shanghai I feel that perhaps there is something in this new theory, as I then chafed against the inactivity of my job in Hongkew Office and the idea that I had been sidetracked in the bank. I was ambitious in those days and was always a bit of an "itchy foot" as Helen would say!

Worley and Pensslaer are still imprisoned by the Japs. Today they have been allowed a clean shirt, a clean pair of trousers and a couple of handkerchiefs each, as well as washing and shaving kit. Speculation is rife as to whether this means that they are "in" for a long term or that they may now spruce themselves up for discharge.

Monday, 3rd May, 1943.

The two prisoners are now allowed three meals a day like any other internee. Before they were only allowed one meal a day.





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Tuesday, 4th May, 1943.

An amusing thing happened today. The wood fatigue, a fatigue which goes out daily to collect the wood which has been cut by our woodcutters about two miles away, started off as usual in their big motor lorry accompanied by their Sikh guard of one man. About a mile away from camp they have to pass a Japanese sentry who is stationed on the road, and on every occasion to date it has sufficed if the Sikh has approached the sentry with his pass and received from him permission to proceed. None of the internees have been required to descend from the lorry or bow.

Today, after the Sikh had gone through his part of the ritual and been granted permission to proceed, the lorry drove past the sentry but had not got far before there was an irate shout from the sentry who made the Sikh return. A discussion took place between the sentry and the Sikh at the end of which the sentry proceeded to smack the face of the Sikh. The ten internees who were mounted on the body of the lorry were then made to descend and line up facing the sentry, and the latter proceeded to pass down the line and smack each face in turn! Scott of the bank was one of the fatigue and duly received his slap! He said it was difficult to refrain from laughing as the Jap started smacking with his right hand, changed after the third man to his left hand, then began smacking with alternate hands! They were allowed to go on after Japanese honour had been satisfied. One man got an extra smack for good measure.

On the way back the lorry was duly stopped and all the internees made a move to get down and approach the sentry with a view to making their formal bow, but in the interim the sentry had apparently been changed and had no time for this sort of thing, so waved them on with an impatient gesture.

What are we all supposed to do now if we don't want to upset our little friends?

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Sunday 5th March, 1944.

For a long time my diary has been neglected. There has been a very good reason for this and I shall have to go into the past to explain it.

For several weeks from about the middle of last year there has been held in camp, on Japanese orders and by the Japanese themselves, a weekly roll-call. The first of these was regarded with considerable suspicion as everyone imagined that it would mean a search of the whole camp; however, as week rolled into week and nothing of the sort happened we came to regard the roll-calls as a nuisance only and a feeling of confidence was engendered in us. This, as it happened, was where we made our great mistake.

On the 10th October, 1943 - ever afterwards known as the double tenth - the blow fell:

We were all paraded as usual in the main yard on this day, quietly awaiting the arrival of our own camp officials to take the parade, when in walked literally hundreds of Military Police instead! We all knew then that we were for it and one and all no doubt began to search in his





mind for something that he had done which might get him into trouble. Everyone felt frightened although the majority had really nothing to fear. We had heard about the Japanese Gestapo and we just didn't feel happy.

These gentry took complete charge of proceedings and while they kept us on parade in the yard, went through the building and its contents with a thoroughness which is only known to Military Police. From 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m. we were pinned down outside the buildings and our first meal of the day was a plate of kungi at 4 p.m.

As a result of this raid about 30 internees were removed from camp straight away and although about 10 of this number returned a few days later, others have since been taken so that the total arrested to date must amount to something in the region of 40. Yoxall of the bank went on the first day, and Bobbie Burns and the Anglican Bishop of Singapore (Rt. Rev. Leonard Wilson) a few days later. My friend Sam Middlebrook and two women have also gone; one of the women, Mrs. "Freddy" Bloom, is a good friend of mine. No news whatever as to the fate of these unfortunates has yet managed to reach the camp and there is wild speculation as to what they have done and what their fate will be.

Some of those who have gone are reported to have been operating radio receiving sets, while others are said to have been spreading the radio news around the camp. It is true that radio sets were being operated as these were actually unearthed by the Japanese in the course of their search. We were getting some sort of news in the days before the raid but no one knew, and no one asked, where it came from. I myself thought it must have been finding its way in from outside the camp in some way, as in the old days we used to find our own fatigues to go into Singapore and elsewhere, and there was nothing that I know of to prevent internees from engaging in conversation with the local inhabitants on these trips.

Yoxall, Burns and the Bishop seem to be mixed up in some financial intrigue. The first mentioned, who was camp treasurer, was found with large quantities of Japanese Military dollar notes in his treasury, and as these could quite obviously not have been brought into camp by internees when they first came in, they must have been smuggled in from outside, all of which was evident to the Japanese. Burns was President of the Finance Committee. I used to be a member of this committee before my health broke down! I am told that the Bishop was found with some considerable quantity of dollar notes in his possession. I don't know, nor have I any suspicion why Sam Middlebrook was taken. Hugh Fraser, the Acting Colonial Secretary and the senior Government official in camp, was arrested and removed only a few days ago.

I don't think the arrests have come to an end. Every time the hob-nailed boots of the Military Police are heard on the concrete corridors one knows that it means another arrest, and everyone is tense until the danger is past. They come at all times, but generally in the early hours of the morning when one's resistance is at a very low ebb.

As a result of all this we have been going through a pretty rough time in here ever since the double tenth. All our privileges were immediately suspended and most of them are still in suspense. The issue of bread ceased; supplies from the neutral agent stopped and were not resumed until the beginning of this year; the purchase of bananas, coconuts and eggs which were permitted in the environs of the camp, stopped; the dover stoves in the yards which were extensively used for private cooking were all removed; all tools were impounded and for some time we were without these and so could not work





in the gardens, in the carpenters shops, in the cobblers shops and elsewhere, but these were later released day by day for use under supervision and returned each night for locking up by the Japanese; walking outside the walls of the camp stopped and has not been resumed; outside fatigues absolutely stopped for a long time but many of these have had to be started up again as the garden must receive attention, firewood must be cut and brought into camp, and so on; no lectures, classes, concerts are now permitted - not even gramophone concerts; and very soon after the double tenth the main (or big) yard was closed to us while Chinese labourers erected three large mat-shed huts there. A short time ago this yard was again thrown open and about 100 Jews moved from one of the main building rooms near the front gate into one of the mat-shed huts.

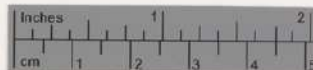
Some week or thereabouts after the Military Police raid more internees began to invade the camp. These were made up almost exclusively of neutrals and Eurasians; there were Chileans, Czechs and Armenians among them. Altogether some hundred odd have joined us to date but I suspect that there are many more to come. I now think that the mat-shed huts which were built in the main yard were intended for these newcomers but after the Japanese had sent in the present hundred they decided to let matters rest for a while, so this lot have been squeezed into the main buildings with the rest of us, again making congestion even more congested.

It is generally considered that the Japanese had come to the conclusion, from knowledge which they had gleaned, that we were communicating with the outside world, that we were involved in some sort of subversive activities, and so they decided to raid us. Maybe they found more than they bargained for, maybe less, but whatever they expected they have made a pretty good haul. As a result of all this commotion I am afraid I destroyed quite a large number of sheets of diary which I had been keeping for some time, for fear that the Japanese would read into innocent comments something not intended. I may also have criticised our custodians adversely and that was perhaps an unwise thing to do under the circumstances. My reason for now resuming it is that after two years of war out here things may begin to hot up and I hope to be able to preserve anything I write from now on. Besides conditions in camp are showing signs of getting really bad and if they should worsen then life should get more exciting and a record of happenings might be interesting to read later - if one survives

But the greatest event of the whole period of internment to date was the arrival of three letters from my darling wife on Xmas Eve, 1943. These letters had all been written in August of the same year, a matter of only four months on the way, and they transported my starved soul into the seventh heaven of delight. This, mark you, was the first direct news to be received in nearly two years and it was such a relief to me to know that all was well with her. I never doubted her loyalty or her love, but just to have her say that I was ever in her thoughts, to have it from her very self, was so comforting. How I blessed her - I could have wept from sheer joy.

These letters had been carried in the "Gripsholm" which also brought parcels from the U.S.A. Only about 15 men had parcels addressed to them personally but each American in camp was given one complete parcel and the rest were divided up amongst the other internees. I drew two 3½oz. tins of butter, an equally small tin of pork loaf, a small tin of coffee, and a packet of 20 Chesterfield cigarettes (which I later swapped for 6oz. of sugar). I have since purchased similar tins of butter at \$10 a tin. But that is nothing: recently I have paid \$120 for a 2½lb. tin of Klim. Any sort of foodstuff in here now fetches the most fantastic prices; 12 oz. tins of corned beef cost \$15, small tins of condensed





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milk \$15, 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ oz. tins of pork loaf \$8 each, and so on. I bought a pound of sugar the other day for \$17.

In January last the Japanese intimated that they were prepared to accept radio messages of not more than 50 words for broadcast from internees to relatives in Australia. I sent the following to Atkinson, sub-manager of the Union Bank in Perth and pray that it may be picked up by someone:

"Please cable Hongkong Bank London following twenty-five staff interned here all well cable wife three August letters received Xmas overjoyed am in best health good spirits looking ahead to happy reunion some day God bless keep you darling love"

Then in February we were allowed to send one to England on condition that we asked for a reply by radio, so I despatched the following to Morse in London Office:

"Twenty-five staff interned here all well cable wife August 1943 letters received overjoyed am in best health good spirits love wireless reply Duncan-Wallace February"

This last message was limited to 25 words and up to date I have had no reply. I am always hoping - we live on hope here.

The food situation here after the double tenth got really bad. The cutting out of our daily loaf, small though it was, was very serious. And on top of this the outside gardeners were not allowed outside for some days so that our daily soup ration was considerably reduced in solids such as sweet potatoes and spinach. No meat was coming in and the neutral agent's supplies of such things as eggs, red beans, maize flour, peas, gula batu (a sort of sugar) biscuits and tobacco ceased altogether for three or four months. We used also to be allowed to purchase eggs, bananas and coconuts on our own account from Chinese living in the vicinity of the camp, but this too was stopped and has not to date been resumed. In short anything in the nature of an outside contact was stopped.

Early this year the control of the camp was taken over by a Major Tanaka, and with him came a new interpreter of the name of Bambo. The latter had been an internee in the U. S. A. and spoke of the reasonable treatment he had received in that country. From then on, due to the efforts of these two men, conditions improved for a short time and it was thought that they would continue to do so, but about a week ago, for some unknown reason, our improved rations were cut down once again to what they had been reduced to after the double tenth except that the neutral agent's supplies were allowed to continue. Such is the situation today and we are none too happy about it. During the period of the temporary improvement to which I refer our daily diet was something on the following lines:-

Breakfast: A large plate of soya bean porridge and tea.

Mid-day meal: Vegetable stew (twice a week with an infinitesimal quantity of meat added) and a large helping of cooked dry rice.

Tea: (at 5.30 p.m. and last meal of the day): A fair helping of soya bean porridge, bread made in camp from ground rice, and tea. At this meal we now and again received a small helping of paste made out of salt dried fish and not very palatable, or very occasionally an egg

but when the change for the worse came again about a week ago we reverted to:





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- Breakfast: A small helping of soya bean porridge and tea.
- Mid-day meal: Vegetable soup and rice, both helpings being appreciably less than above, and as no vegetables are being supplied by the Japanese to supplement our own production, the soup is very thin and flavourless. Now and again we get some pork added to the soup but the amount is so small that it does not affect the flavour of the stew.
- Tea: A very small loaf (size about 3" x 2" x 2") or a small helping of soya bean porridge, never both, and tea. Sometimes fishpaste or a teaspoonful of local jam is added.

so that we are never really satisfied. We get no fats of any kind but a lot of red palm oil is mixed into the stew, which does not, to my way of thinking, improve its taste. We now know what it is to be constantly hungry.

The neutral agent's supplies augment to some, but not to any great extent the foregoing. For example, now and again we get a handful of small sweet biscuits per man - about enough to polish off easily in about three mouthfuls - but these only come along about every fifth or sixth day. About once a week we get an egg. Coffee we can buy and make for ourselves with hot water which is available, but that only fills the empty stomach and has no food value as it has to be drunk without milk or sugar. I have been issued with one papaya and two bananas in the last four weeks. That is about all except for tobacco, and I don't smoke.

When you study all this can you be surprised that the black market can demand, and get, such fantastic prices for any sort of foodstuff? The difficulty now is to buy anything at all, even on the so-called black market, and I do not see conditions improving because I feel that the Japanese are encountering difficulties in keeping this country provided with adequate food supplies for the masses, difficulties which in time will increase. The outlook is far from bright.

For a long time the milling of the soya bean and the rice for the manufacture of the camp loaf was done just outside the prison in garages close to the front gate. A permanent fatigue of internees was daily employed on this task.

About three weeks ago the Japanese discovered (I am told) that these men were trading some of our rice with the Sikh guard for tobacco and cheroots and they were arrested. They remained in the guard room for a week without food and during that time were subjected to some pretty rough handling at the hands of the Japanese. As a result of this the milling machines were moved into the camp and erected in the quarters previously occupied by the 100 odd Jews who were transferred to the mat-shed hut in the main yard. To this I have already referred.

On the 20th January this year the Japanese started the payment of internees who worked on camp work at the rate of 15 cents a day. When this arrangement came into force it was necessary to find men to act as paymasters for the different blocks, and to keep a roll of working internees. I was offered and accepted the post of paymaster for our block - D Block. This work has kept me mildly occupied of late which is all to the good as it is necessary to have something to do to occupy the mind. I used to do fatigue work in the days when we were pretty adequately fed, but now that we are on short commons I feel that I should be tempting providence,





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with my medical history, to undertake physical work, however much I might like to do so. Up to quite recently I chopped firewood and this was fairly strenuous work; this work would be unsuitable under present conditions if I wish to maintain some semblance of good health.

The poor unfortunates who were removed to Singapore on and after the double tenth took with them only what they stood up in. They had no washing kit or change of clothing. Some weeks afterwards one change of kit was allowed to be sent to them and on the 11th March, 1944, soap and a towel for each person. It is presumed from this that nothing of this nature had been supplied to them by the Japanese so that during these last five months their plight must have been a sorry one indeed.

Monday, 13th March, 1944.

The outlook is very gloomy and I have been feeling a bit depressed of late. I think the gnawing hunger and the prospect of it continuing for some time has a lot to do with it. We get no news now and haven't the least idea how the war is progressing, if it is progressing at all. God knows how much longer we shall have to live this unusual life; two good years have already passed and two, or even more, may lie ahead of us before we are relieved. The chances of repatriation seem to have died and no one appears to hope for that nowadays. There are optimists in camp who think that we may be relieved in a few months, men who base their views on a successful offensive into Burma and on to Malaya, but I am not one of them. I can see a long struggle ahead of us in the Orient and I very much doubt if we have even started on the fringe of it yet.

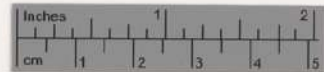
I wish we could get letters regularly. The three I got from Helen last Xmas raised my morale tremendously but I need more to maintain it at that high level. We were allowed to send our third postcard months and months ago but since then nothing. I cannot understand why we have not been allowed to send at least one more since then. One or two men have received radio messages from their kin in Australia and at home; Hayward-Waddington got such a message from his wife in England a few days ago, in which was stated "message received" indicating that the recent radio message he had sent out had reached its destination. He was allowed to sit down there and then and write a reply in which he was asked to state "your radio message of 2nd March received". If his radio message reached its destination there is some hope that others may also have done so.

For a long time now fatigues which marched out through the main gate had to bow to the sentries there as they passed. The other day, instead of the usual bow, the whole contingent—some 200 odd—of gardeners and woodcutters were lined up military fashion in the front yard, formed into fours, and marched past the sentries doing the goose step! This is now the order of the day and I am told that it is screamingly funny to see some of the older men perform. Some wear boots and some are in bare feet and the booted are expected to make as much noise as possible on the concrete pavement as they pass the sentries.

Thursday, 31st March, 1944.

I've been in hospital since Sunday the 19th with diarrhoea (suspected dysentery) and have just been discharged today. I've lost about 6lbs in weight in that time, and that I can ill afford to lose; weight lost can seldom be regained in here. I'm down now to 145 lbs. but my chest seems to be





all right which is all that really matters. The doctor who was looking after me and who knew my medical history could find nothing suspicious there.

Of the prisoners who went to Singapore with the Gestapo we now know that four have died. These are Adrian Clark, Legal Adviser of the F.M.S. pre-war; Bryning of William Jacks & Co. whom I knew when I was stationed in Ipoh; Stevenson who was caught more or less red-handed with a radio receiving set on the day of the raid; and one Buchanan who was a Post and Telegraph employee pre-war. Nine of the original arrests have returned to the fold, seven men and the two women. One or two of the men are in a pretty nervous state but I hear that the women appear to have borne the ordeal well and none show any physical signs of suffering. There is a rumour going around that Yoxall is all right and bearing up well.

I have done a lot of thinking in hospital. I believe I am becoming a bit more tolerant. I know how dreadfully intolerant I used to be and I hope that some improvement in my disposition will show after all this is over, and that this change which I really think that I find in myself is not temporary, brought about by necessity. I mean by this that I have to keep myself within bounds here and that I cannot with impunity run around visibly showing my resentment whenever life doesn't run smoothly, else I shall find myself in hot water all the time. This is communism and there is no class distinction, and one has to let the tide carry one with the common herd if one does not wish to get into trouble. I think too that I have developed some patience; I should have gone mad had I not. I don't as a rule allow myself to get despondent and I keep looking ahead with some optimism. I have faith in my wife, and that too gives me strength. She is so much worth while struggling for that I just won't be beaten.

There are one or two diabetics in camp and I am told on very good authority that the insulin supply is due to run out any day now. Two of them, Trevor-Hughes is one, must certainly die if it is not replenished, and I think they know the situation. Several applications have been made to the Japanese without result so far.

The quantity, but not the quality, of the food is on the upgrade again. The neutral agent (Sweitzer, a Swiss) is pushing in a lot of maize and sago flour so that for the time being we are all getting a plate of kungi in the evening with the small piece of soyabean bread. This helps considerably and I have hopes of at least holding my weight if the diarrhoea has gone for good.

Some 7,000 letters have come into camp and I am told by one of the "sorters" that there are one or two for me.

Sunday, 2nd April, 1944.

Had a long chat the other day with a Dr. Fisher who returned from Singapore recently with the released Gestapo prisoners. I was shocked at his dreadful appearance which, in itself alone, revealed a tale of suffering and fear. He wouldn't say much; conditions bad and food worse, and as a result of this they are all suffering from vitamin deficiency. He told me that 16 of them were locked up in one large cell, 9 local natives, 5 European men and the two European women from the camp, and that one open squat closet in the corner of the cell had to serve for them all. Some of them contracted dysentery and he and Miss Cecily Williams, who is also a doctor, attended them as best they could. What impressed me most was the look in Fisher's eyes. He looked





like a haunted man, emaciated, with skin as white as a sheet - an outstanding contrast when set against the bronzed appearance which the rest of us have in here.

The Gestapo prisoners have had, and many of them are still having, a bad time, and it shames me to think that I have sometimes indulged in self-pity on account of the conditions under which we more fortunate internees have had to live. We know that four out of 40 of these prisoners have to date died within six months of their arrest, while the death rate in here has probably not passed the 2% mark in two years. I am worried about Yoxall who is still out, also my friends the Bishop and Middlebrook.

And arrests are not yet finished apparently for no longer ago than yesterday one or two members of the Military police paid us another visit and carted off Rendle, of the Malayan Civil Service, Pensellaer, manager of Raub Gold Mines, and Ker of Lewis and Peat, Singapore.

The amazing thing about all this is that a few days ago the camp Japanese administration handed to 15 internees, names picked out by them, a memorandum of questions which they wished to be answered. Ten men and five women were chosen for this. The questions revolved around conditions of internment and aimed at getting an honest uncensored expression of opinion of internment as we found it. The questions appeared to have been set by the Military Administration and not by our local custodians, and it was impressed that there would be no infliction of punishment as a result of outspoken criticism! The chosen 15 were asked to express themselves as openly as they would were they writing a private letter to relatives at home.

I am now sorry that I destroyed so much of my diary as there was nothing in it to which the Japanese could have taken exception, and now that they know all about our secret activities anything that I might have said would have been of no significance. It is quite impossible to recall all the minor incidents which were related. I admit that I lost my nerve.

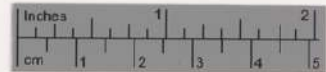
I managed to buy some sugar the other day for \$18 a pound.

Monday, 17th April, 1944.

A strange lethargy seems to have hit me these last few months and I don't appear to find anything to write in my diary. I sit down at my typewriter and gaze at the blank sheet before me and stir my mind for anything interesting to write about, and nothing happens.

On Good Friday there was a special meeting of relatives for an hour so I was able to go across and visit my unofficial cousin, Mrs. Freddy Bloom. She did not look nearly so bad as I had expected after her ordeal in Singapore. She always was somewhat pale and thin but I think she looked a little more so than usual; her feet were covered with sores and her face was spotty and she told me that the swelling of her body (oedema) had altogether subsided, as a result of which she had lost 16lbs. weight since her return to camp. Superficially she was much the same as ever - bright and cheerful. On one occasion when we were laughing at something I felt that it would not take much to send her laughter into hysteria. She's had a rotten time, poor girl. I immediately thought that had my Helen been interned she too might have had to go through what Freddy had gone through and I thanked God for her safety. It would all have been such unnecessary suffering which only my





own selfishness could have been responsible for. She herself pleaded hard to be allowed to remain with me to the end.

Repatriation has reared up its head again and all sorts of rumours are going the round. It has lighted a little ray of hope but, like its forerunners, it will doubtless come to nothing. What has actually happened is that the sparrows which nest just above where I sit under D Yard verandah have twice dropped "merde" on to me in the last week, and that's supposed to be lucky!

Two unfortunate cancer cases have died within the last 24 hours. Something might have been done for them had they been at home, but nothing here, so the poor devils, knowing this, just had to watch death rapidly overtaking them. On the other hand, the diabetics have been given a new lease of life in the shape of more insulin which the Japanese have provided at the very last minute. How long this will last I have not heard.

The food is literally bloody awful. Soyabean is now off the menu so that for breakfast and tea we get a porridge of maize and rice, and for dinner at midday vegetable soup and dry rice. The soup is made from spinach, byam stalks, sweet potato leaves and a very small quantity of sweet potatoes. We also get a small piece of unsweetened cake made out of rice and maize flour once a day. About twice a week about 200 lbs. of local pork is added to the stew, but what is 200 lbs of pork among 3,500 internees. Jesus Christ should descend from Heaven to distribute our meat ration. The neutral agent now and again sends in some sweets, tobacco, honey, bananas and papaya but these seem to just aggravate the appetite.

We have been allowed to send food to the internees who are in the hands of the Military Police in Singapore. The day before yesterday marmite, tomato juice, bully beef and maize cake from the hospital reserve stock went in, and today I hear more maize cake and some cooked spinach has followed. In all, rations for 22 were sent to town each day. They have probably all got beri-beri by this time, poor devils.

We don't seem to laugh so much as we used to do. The humorous side of life is not so evident somehow. A terrible lot of bridge is played and it has become quite an obsession with some. My cell mate MacLennan, when not actually playing, deals himself hands for hours at a stretch and works these out. I come into the cell sometimes to find both him and Stringfellow concentrating hard on what should or should not be the correct thing to do under certain circumstances. This I suppose is their form of mental exercise, a thing so necessary in here. Stringfellow, incidentally, has some dirty sores on his feet which don't heal.

Monday, 24th April, 1944.

I have had four letters from Helen delivered during the last week, letters written in January, February and April (2) 1943, and they have brought me the greatest joy. The earliest dated one told of Helen's nervous state on her arrival in New York, and her anxiety in Australia before she left for the States, and it depressed me, but the later ones dispelled my gloom as from them I knew that all was well.

The camp is alive with rumours of repatriation. Two of the Japanese interpreter-orderly officers have made vague suggestions that some good news is coming to us within a month, and the Japanese have called for a statement of our needs in the way of footwear, i. e. of those who have no footwear whatsoever. We feel that some move is in the air and