

My dear All,

Saxons had a little mail,
Which travelled very slow,
And everywhere the "—" went,
That mail was sure to go!

(ORIGINAL POEM BY L.A. ABBOTT).

Probably you are wondering what on earth those four rather cryptic lines, can possibly mean — that is, other than their obvious meaning which is of course, that I have had a slight touch of the sun! so let me explain quickly, before you collapse with suspense. It simply means the mail hasn't arrived for anyone, and the agents say that it is not in their office, so it looks as if we shall just have to go without.

It has been hard lines on old Paddy, not being able to get leave after his second trip, especially after looking forward so much to dry-docking this time. He came rushing into the room this morning full of beans, and shouted the "Mails come," and was away again before I had a chance to reply! Being rather doubtful these days about such news, I went down to have a look. As I suspected, the agent was only

bringing some magazines on board. All he said was, "There's no mail; there's none in the office at all for this ship." You should have seen Paddy's face! I could have cried it was so comical.

I hope you got my air mail letter, because I mean it represents so much labour — how much labour, needn't concern us just now!

Oh! of course. I haven't told you the most important bit of news yet, have I? Well, the fact is we're not getting any leave this time, so that settles that. I was going to ask Marconis for my fortnight's leave which I have due me after a year in the service, but as things have turned out, I think I shall wait. You'll know why, later on.

I am sending you 5 lbs. of tea, 5 lbs. of butter, 3 lbs. of raisins, 1 tin of syrup, 5 lbs. of sugar and a Kamona, which isn't much of a thing, but I thought Iris might like it, though she will have plenty of pluck if she wears it.

Mr Bonner took three snaps of me, one of which was slightly over-exposed, but the others are fine (by that I mean the photography is good). I also had another one taken two days ago, & took three of Mr Bonner, so if I can get them

in time, I will send them along. I would be glad if you would let Mary see them, so that she can choose which one she would like a print of. I will tell her to call up some time.

I am also sending some drawings & ~~of~~. I tried to do what you asked, and I must admit, I did do more paintings than I thought was possible, if I was going to do the other stuff as well. All the same, I am only sending two of the paintings, as the others were hardly successful enough to be looked at, but I think they were of some value, in teaching me one or two things. The two I am sending have many faults, but I thought you might like ^{to see} them.

This jolly old pen that Eric gave me before I came to sea, has certainly done good work. I use it for everything, including ~~a~~ taking down messages, so you can imagine how much work it has done! (No remarks please!)

If I knew of a joke, I'd tell it you, but the only one I know, is ~~one~~ the one that's on me! Of course you've heard "I'll take the Messert. and you take the Heinkel etc., etc. So I won't enlarge

upon that.

We have just learned that our last captain, Captain Mackenzie, has just died. Although he was a bad lot, you can't help feeling sorry.

Our third mate is engaged to a girl working in one of the London Hospitals. He phoned up to-day, and learned that the hospital was raised to the ground, but she was all right. If we had the mail he would know the details, but the poor chap hasn't any mail, so...
Continuing after seeing M. & D.

As I thought might happen, the mail was on board when I got back, though it had only just arrived. It was a gorgeous surprise, and I have been revelling in the news — both ancient and modern.

The senior tells me that his mother says a ^{diary} ~~letter~~ was found in the Croydon Central Post Office, having dropped out from some parcel or other. He says there is all kinds of data in it about ship's movements etc., and that quite a row is being kicked up about it.

I had two letters from Jack, one of them written in Canada, the other from his home. He tells of how the poor old "Ethel" was "torped." by an E-boat. Fortunately all were saved. His letter

was practically in shreds, owing to the censor getting tough. He has a month's leave.

I have had two letters from Renée & two from Iris besides six from Mary, including a simply lovely Birthday Card. The "Signals" arrived safely as did all your letters and Frank's! Many thanks!

What an enjoyable few hours we had didn't we? It was great! I thought afterward that perhaps you thought I had become rather hard. As if I didn't care whether I got home or not. Perhaps you thought I had lost all feeling, but I guess that's just because you can't help "holding in" your feelings when you are at sea. — that is, if you don't want to feel miserable. Anyway I know you understand.

Yes! I thought that was a great joke about using up my money!! Some people sure know the tricks of the trade!

I asked Mr Bonner about the £30 allowance, but he knows nothing about it, unless Frank is on Naval work — oil fuel you know. That sounds most likely as he is on a tanker. He's lucky if he is.

Of course this letter won't be quite so long as it would have been, had I not seen you, but then there is no need to say things all over again, is there?

I am going to ask the senior what he thinks about the Income Tax, and whatever he says I'll send my earnings as near as I possibly can. So now, until we meet again, I say goodbye, wishing everyone the very best of luck and good health. Please don't worry about me and I won't about you, so cheerybye,

Your very affectionate son and
brother, *Len*x