

P.O. Box 128  
Freetown. Sierra Leone  
Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> 1941

Dear John.

At long last I sit down to pen a letter to you, hoping it will find you as it leaves me. I received Christopher's Christmas Card safely, and please thank him very much indeed: although I neglected my own Christmas mail, being somewhere between India and Africa when it should have been posted, I hope to write to Christopher a wee bit later on, p'raps for his birthday?

Well I had a letter from Peter yesterday, and he tells me you are the proud owner of a Talkie. I am surprised: it must be a great boon to everyone, and I daresay Christopher and [Page 2] Joy appreciate it too! Freetown is also proudly in the possession of a talkie: but it only functions on rare occasions. We went a short while ago and saw "The Texans" – a Wild Drama of the Middle West, Stirring the Heart, and causing the Breath to come Running in Short Pants. The Heroine was cool and calm in it all, with a new frock and hat for every thrill.

But you must not think such excitement often comes to disturb the quiet peace of Freetown. We live soberly, if not so much righteously as we might. (And I must confess that certain Visitors to our Town sometimes go a wee way off the road of Soberness as well.)

I think I shall find life a very happy thing in this place, if my imagination and initiative will enable me to find ways of doing what I should. Mr Hooper of C.M.S. thinks there is a big work [Page 3] to be done here, and contrasts it favourably with the work of a "mere army chaplain". But perhaps this is just a sop, seeing the C.M.S. successfully kyboshed my obtaining a chaplaincy in the Forces. I do not trust C.M.S. further than my Nose, these days. If the New Order in Europe starts from Salisbury Square, it will be O.K. by me. And I was so fond of C.M.S. once; it is really rather a pity.

The letter I receive, from London and Bristol and other places, are written in such a matter-of-fact way that I cannot quite understand what England must be like. I wonder if you have been in an air-raid yet? It must be a frightening Experience, tho' from the point of view of personal discipline, its price may well be above rubies. Perhaps tho', you would prefer the rubies? I think the [Page 4] difference between a man with a house and family and an unattached, or semi-detached, chappie, must be just all the difference. It is the case of giving Hostages to Fortune yet be it thus withal I fain would have it so. I have but lately received letter from one of my young friends who must alas! be nameless, for she is, I fear, too beautiful. I would indeed have liked to come home forthwith, and see if I could not put an end to the ploughing of a lonely, and withal crooked furrow, but Fate shook her head sideways, and with beetling blows fixed me an Icy Glance of Non-Affirmation, so here I am.

I take services at the wee English Church twice a month, and a service (like some of yours, I fancy) every Sunday morning at 9am. Today, too, I preached at the Cathedral, and sometimes I am limited [Page 5] to some of the African churches. Freetown swarms with Churches, and should be a most godly place.

Well, I have little news I fear, beyond what I have said in my Circular letter, which I enclose. Could you circulate same? And when you write to Peter could you slip in his one, too, (from me).

I trust you will all continue to be safe and well.

Your loving bro'

Joe