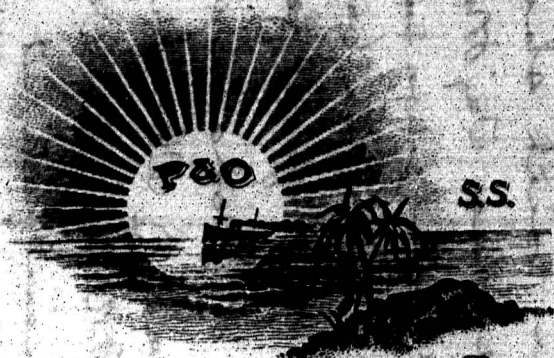


Alice Hegan Rice

9



On the Arabian Sea-
Jan 21-1909.

Very, very dear Julie!

Six months is a long time to take to answer a letter, but you will forgive me I know. I wanted to write you before I left home, first to say good-bye, and second to say some nice things about the mid-summer "Queen". That cover was the prettiest thing for an August magazine I ever saw, so the reader's good time began before he got inside the front door, and continued

2

right through to the back.

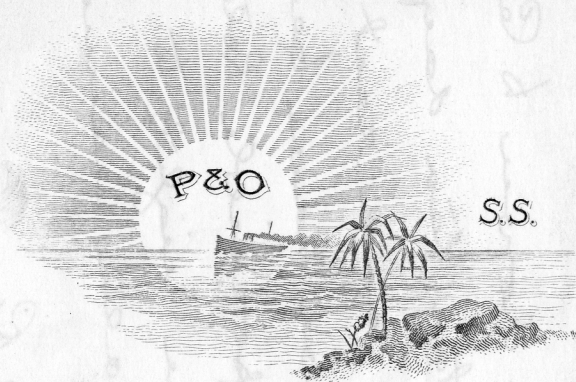
Well, here we are half way through with our wonderful trip, sailing on a June sea in January and having four days of much needed rest after nearly two months of sight-seeing in India, to say nothing of the months in Japan and China, and the Straits Settlement.

Since the first of December we have been literally submerged in India, seeing nothing else, reading nothing else, thinking nothing else. Not even a newspaper reached us for days at a time, and so far as we were concerned the outside world did not exist.

We spent our days in

the old forts and ³palaces of the departed Em-
perors, digging up all manner of romances,
we rode forth on elephants to deserted cities
and sat in marble courts where the old
Moguls used to play parcheesi with slave
girls for pawns; we haunted the Taj Mahal
by dawn and noon and night; we saw
the fifty thousand worshippers on the banks
of the Ganges, and joined in the great festival
at Delhi when thousands of Mohammed-
ans celebrated the sacrifice of Abraham
on the steps of the Tumea Masjid. We
spent four days of enchantment up at
Darjeeling, on the very border land of Tibet,
and sat on the roof of the world and
watched the sun rise four times over
the Himalayas. That is where you would
have been happiest, Julie! Way up there
in the mountains, with two yawning
abysms on either side full of iridescent
mists and mysteries, and over beyond
forty-five miles away, that supreme
vision of snow capped peaks, the most
utterly unbelievable, unconceivable,
soul subduing sight in the world!

What the sun saw, was four frozen, towed,
figures squatting on a narrow little balcony
with bed clothes, and coats, and rugs, wrapped
around them, quaking down big cuts at



scalding tea!

But, after all, it is not India, but her people that prove the great fascination. All the different races, the complexity of castes, the different religions, result in a social and political life that has no parallel in the world.

One moment you are carried ~~as~~ away by enthusiasm; the riot of color, the inevitable picturesque-ness, the caravans of camels, the gaily caparisoned elephants, the throngs of

people in their flowing robes and tinkling ornaments, satisfy every artistic sense -

The next moment, your very soul sickens at the poverty, the superstition, the awful desolation of the country.

I did not realize until I was leaving it all how utterly depressing it was. When we got on board this steamer at Bombay last night, and pulled our chairs out where we could lie and look up at the stars I heaved a great sigh of relief. It had been wonderful beyond anything I had ever imagined, but I had seen it all with tense nerves

and a troubled heart. In Japan we left
a wake of smiling faces; in China the
stolid indifference we found, but in
India we left thousands of thin, out-
stretched hands.

We are on our way now down to Cey-
lon where we expect to stay ten days
before sailing for Egypt. A good rest
will not be amiss, for we have been
staying at all sorts of impossible hotels,
rising at all hours of the night to
catch trains, and eating all manner
of badly cooked food.

In Shanghai, Calcutta, and Rangoon, we
had quite a jolly time socially. We were
in Calcutta just before Christmas and were
presented at the Viceroy's Drawing-room,
a function notable for its magnificence +
stupidity. Lord & Lady Minto asked ^{us} up to
luncheon later, but we could not stay
over.

How I should enjoy a good long talk with
you! I am eager for all your news, for
an account of the office affairs, for your
own personal doings, and for some word
of the General and the particular that he
happens to be accomplishing at the mom-
ent. We heard from Mrs Martin, and also
through Mr. Bradley, of the sale of the book

department. Cal's affairs are involved there, and he is a bit worried over the outcome.

He has been working steadily, in spite of our gypsy life, and has done some beautiful lyrics as well as the outline for a new play.

We heard only a few days ago of the death of Mr. Phillips' father. Please give him our love and deepest sympathy. He has had so much worry and anxiety these past few years, that I am especially sorry to hear of this personal bereavement.

Wasn't Margaret Anderson's trip a fairy-tale sort of affair? If she only

comes through it alive,
it will be the event of
her life!

Did you know I had been
doing some editorial work
for you over in Japan?
A nice young chap named
Green had a ms. returned
by Mr. Phillips with such a
nice letter that he was
eager to try another story.
He brought it to me, and
we spent a long morn-
ing hammering it into
shape. It had some good
stuff in it, but needed an
awful lot of cutting, which
I am afraid he was not
willing to do. At least he
wanted to, but didn't know
how.

Remember me to Mr. Phillips
and Mr. Bayden, and keep
much love for yourself -
Your affectionate friend
Alice H.