OK

Wednesday —
January 23rd -

My Darling Wife —

Although we don't leave for Calcutta till Saturday, most of my things are packed already - the only things that I want to do now are things that will be steps toward coming home to you - and packing is one of those things. I like to pack slowly - and since the words rush and hurry are no longer in my vocabulary - I just forgot all about time and spent the whole morning packing, taking my time - and now the job is well under way. Packing a duffel bag correctly is really an art, and I'm trying hard to become a master of the art, as I find that packing slowly, with a little afterthought, you can fit twice as much in a given space as your first glance leads you to believe. Even climatic conditions enter the picture. For example: in the States, the last thing to be packed, the article that is always placed at the top of the bag, the raincoat, here it goes on the bottom to keep out moisture and dampness when you "park" your bag on the ground and because it won't be needed till April when the monsoons begin. There's an advantage to packing your bag properly - it keeps your things in far better shape, for in a loosely-packed bag things are always shifting positions and getting crushed and wrinkled, where, in a solidly-packed bag, that shifting is eliminated and, if properly packed, creases are kept where they belong and wrinkles are avoided. So - that's the way I spent my morning.

This afternoon we pulled up our chairs in the sun and just had a general discussion - main topics being the trip home and a discussion of the various parts of the country - including differences in speech and foods. Let's see - besides myself, there were chaps from Massachusetts, New Jersey, Tennessee and Texas, and we spent an interesting afternoon. George took the cake with this one - ! when I talked about Philadelphia he told me he had quite an experience there. He and another chap spent a weekend in Philly and stopped at a restaurant for a snack -; from his description I couldn't identify the place - but, anyway, they thought the prices were terribly high - so - on their way out they walked up to the cashier's booth -, his friend threw his hands into the air, turned around and said to the cashier, "O.K. - you can have it - it's in my back pocket!" George said the cashier turned bright red and the customers near-by almost split their sides! George is a terribly conscientious fellow - and knowing him, I'll bet he was as embarrassed as the cashier!

I don't know if I'm doing the right thing or not - but when I say I'm cleaning house - I mean just that! Now I'm talking about toilet articles. I have only four cakes of soap and one tube of toothpaste and I'm bringing them along - but shampoos - hair oil - shaving cream - foot powder - I've got lots of them, but I'm going to bring along only one of each. The Yardley shaving soap will last for months - so all the rest I'll give away - and lots of fellows are in need. Already in my packing I notice a big difference between going back and coming over - we have less than half now - way less - and it's so much better this way. All the things we had in the pack on our backs will now go in our duffel bag - and they say that at Calcutta they take even more of our things away from us before we leave; we only keep 1 set of summers instead of three and they take our web equipment. From here on in I'll live on necessities alone and like it - 'cause I know it's bringing me home to you - and I want nothing along that will hold me back - just the things that I need to get by.

In my envelope this evening I'll be able to write two days more, and the way it looks now, the only big question is the boat. That article that I sent along gives the

scheduled date of the ship's arrival - but last month two or three ships were delayed - making the stay in Hanshirpara a few weeks longer for some fellows. Waiting till the fifteenth is going to be a long wait - and I hope nothing happens to make it any longer!

My shower today was grand - nice and long with lots of hot water - but I was thinking how much grander bathing will be when I can really take a bath - and 'specially so when you are there and we can scrub each other's backs! It's impossible to reach all of it. I have a large sponge for a washcloth - but it just can't be made to reach all of my back. When I come home you'll have to give it a good scrubbing - and I'll get busy, too, when you're in the tub and soon our backs will be shining to match the shine on our faces! And today was a sort of test. I passed it - and now I think I can shower in water just as hot as you like it!

Darling I've been thinking about Our Day - I've mentioned it before - having our first moments alone - and it's something on which I should have your answer, too; but now I'll be on my way before you can answer - so I'll say some more about it and we can discuss it on our phone chats. When that moment comes I'm going to hold you close - we're going to forget about Irma and everybody else - I don't want to share that moment with anybody else, - Mother, Dad, Aunt Nettie, Margaret, - nobody. With my arms still around you, we'll sit down - and talk - maybe - but I want to hold your hands, hold you in my arms, kiss you - just lose myself in the ecstacy of knowing that you're by my side - that we're together again. I just want to look at you and be near you - and - Darling, I'll say it - you do want it that way, too, don't you - alone together? As much in a hurry as I am to be with you, if, by waiting another hour we could have those moments just for ourselves - we will wait so we can have them alone, won't we? It's taking a long time to write this paragraph - I'm dreaming all sorts of ways in which Our Day may come -; there are already a million ways I've planned so we can be alone -. I want to see you - nobody but my wife - and then - later - we'll see everybody else. I'm going to turn all my energy to that - no matter where or when - we will have those first moments alone together.

Everybody is at the movies this evening - we're alone - the fire's crackling, and it's so nice here - chatting with you. Tomorrow will be another day of leisure - Friday will bring the IG inspection and we'll go to bed early 'cause we don't want to miss that 6:15 formation! Tomorrow I'm going to scout around for an alarm clock and the cooks is going to have one of the other cooks call us that morning - that's an important morning. Then when those Two or Three weeks in Calcutta pass and we get on the boat there won't be a thing to worry about 'cause the next stop will be Seattle and here in India even Seattle any part of the United States, means home. If I don't have the change for the phone call it will come collect - we'll settle bills later - 'cause a little thing like change won't going to delay that first phone call!

Again it's bedtime - another day has passed - and after tonight there'll be only two more nights in Lido. Let's crawl under and cuddle up. Cotton, I love my Cuddle - Bum so very much. Goodnight, Darling - Sweetest Dreams -

All My Love - It's Dear You - Always -
I love you very, very much.
Jerky 6x