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AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL  
Lagos, Nigeria; September 22, 1942

Dear Folks:

I have just received two letters from Sarah, one post marked June 4th and the other dated August 21st. The former came by sea and was with a lot of other mail which had been on the way for a long time. Sea mail is so bad now I am thinking of giving up my subscriptions to some of my magazines.

I am glad to hear that the Grand American was such a success, especially since it appears that it will be the last for the duration. I have also read that this is the last year of collegiate football, so it looks as if a lot of familiar landmarks would be gone by the time I get home - assuming that I get home myself before the end of the war, which is by no means certain. However, while we are on this subject, I have just had a little something in the way of encouraging news. Anderson, now at Accra, has been informed by the Department that he will be transferred and given home leave en route to his new post within the next two months. I was anxious for him to leave, since he is the only one now in British West Africa who has been here longer than I have. I am now the next in line, and will be due for leave in February. However, Andy had been in South Africa since 1939, so he has been in the field considerably longer than I. He will have 90 days in the States. If I succeed in getting Philinda out here, I will not apply for home leave until my two years here are finished, which will be in December, 1943. Although that looks like a long time when you write it out, looking back to December, 1941, doesn't seem so long. It won't be long now until I will have been here a full year.

Since my last letter, I have had a bright new idea about Philinda's transportation. I have learned that there are good Portuguese vessels running between New York and Lourenço Marques, stopping at all the Portuguese colonies on the way. My Pan American friends tell me that it would be easy to get a plane from Bolama, Portuguese Guinea, to Liberia, from whence it is not difficult to continue to Lagos by air. I think that travel on a Portuguese vessel would be fairly safe, and I am therefore doing everything possible to find out about the details of this service. I hope it will turn out all right. I am still very opposed to having Philinda come by belligerent ship, as all too many are being knocked off.

In spite of the above mentioned dangers, Mac and I

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received a shipment of liquor from the U.S. Now all we have to do is drink it - and pay for it. I hope the former will be long-drawn out and the ~~former~~ latter quick and relatively painless.

We have a new member of our staff now with us. Mr. John Burleson arrived here a week ago Friday. He is an American clerk, and was formerly with my old friend Dick Davis in Tsingtao, China. He spent a couple of weeks in jail after the outbreak of war last December, and after a pretty miserable period of waiting was finally exchanged at Lourenço Marques with the others. Like the rest, he was disappointed to find out that he was assigned to Lagos instead of going home, but he is young and can take it. He is a nice fellow from Texas, and we are very glad to have him, as he relieves Mac and me of the drudge of doing the cipher work.

So many people are coming in here now we hardly know the old place. Even since I arrived last December, the change has been remarkable. We are able to see a good deal of the war effort in concrete terms out here, and it has the same light and dark spots which I gather from the magazines prevail in the States. There are a lot of people drawing very fancy salaries, and other working very hard for almost nothing. I don't mean to imply that some of the high salaried ones don't work hard too. They frequently have the worst jobs from a physical point of view, and until we have complete conscription of the nation's manpower for all purposes, civil as well as military, it will be necessary to pay fancy wages to get men to come out to a place like West Africa.

I am very glad to hear that the new glasses are on the way over. You didn't mention how Bernie was sending them. I hope that you told him to send them to the Department, as they will be glad to send them out by pouch, like your letters, and that would greatly diminish both the risk and the time involved. I will certainly be glad to get them, because one of the temples of my old pair has broken off and is irreplaceable out here with anything even partially satisfactory. Let me know how much I owe Dr. Hatch and I will be glad to send him a check. I have some bills from him for the lens he sent me last year, but I would prefer to settle the whole business at the same time. Thank you very much for your trouble in this connection.

I am glad to hear that Melody is going to Denison next year, and I am sure that she will enjoy it very much. I have always had the feeling that I missed an awful lot by not going to Denison, although it probably made me more self-reliant to be farther away from home. I always feel that the education is there, if you want to get it. Most people have to have it crammed into them, but those who have a thirst for knowledge can get plenty to drink in Granville. Although, as you say, her irregular education may hold her back a little, still she has learned a lot that she could never get out of books, and this plus her high native intelligence will insure that she will get just as far and do as well as she wants to. Please wish her good luck for me.

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