

Rogbu Base Camp

April 30, 1924.

Dearest Ruth, We've had unexpected notice of a home-bound mail to-morrow & I've no letter ready. We arrived here only yesterday, & I have been busy ever since, the reason for this is in part that we have arranged for an army of Tibetans & coolies to carry our loads up the glacier to No 2 camp; 150 have actually gone up to-day; consequently we have had a great rush getting our loads ready to go up. My special concern has been with the high-climbing stores & provisions for high camps. Yesterday morning as the animals arrived here I got hold of the boxes I wanted most of which I knew by sight - from among the feet of the donkeys - Zohs had them carried to a place apart. So I was able to get ready 30 loads, apart from food stores, yesterday afternoon. Later Norton & I had a long pow-wow about the whole of our plan as affects the porters. It is a very complicated business to arrange the carrying to the high camps while considering what the porters have been doing - where, during the previous ten days, so as to have sufficient regard to

their acclimatization - fitness; further one has to consider the filling up of Camp III which will still be going on ~~at~~ after we have begun the carrying to IV; the accommodation at the various camps; & finally the escorting of porters from III upwards. However I have made plan for the porters which fits in with that previously made for climbers, & though a plan of this kind must necessarily be complicated it allows for a certain margin & even a bad day or two won't necessarily upset our programme.

Irvine & I with Beetham & Hazard start from here on May 3 & after resting a day at Camp III the last 2 will establish Camp IV while I & I have a cutter up to about 23000 up the E. ridge of Changtse, partly to get a better look at camping sites on the mountain - partly to have a trial run & give me some idea of what to expect from

Be H, two days later will escort the 1st lot of loads to IV; Odell & Geoffrey Bruce the second, establishing Camp V on the following day; Norton & Somervell, & both Irvine & I follow; Irvine & I will get 2 or 3 days down at Camp I meanwhile.

The Rongbuk Valley greeted us with most unpleasant weather. The day before yesterday & the following night when

we were encamped outside the Rongbuk Monastery, a bitter
cold wind blew, the sky was cloudy & finally we woke
to find - snow storm going on. Yesterday ~~after noon~~ was
worse, with light snow falling most of the day. However
to-day has been sunny after a windy night & the condi-
tions of Everest have gradually improved until we
were saying to night that it would have been a
pleasant evening for the ~~free~~ mountain. It is curious
that though quite a considerable amount of snow has
fallen during these last few days & the lower slopes
are well-covered the upper parts of Everest appear
scarcely affected - that is a phenomenon we observed
often enough in 1922 & notably on the day when
we made the first attempt.

I shall be busy with details of personal equipment
amongst other things these next two days. But I
also hope there'll be a mail from you & time to read
letters & think of you at home & perhaps write
you another letter though the Lord knows when the
next mail will go away from here.

We continue to be a very pleasant party - Hazard the
only difficulty - we have tamed him somewhat. He &
Rielham don't love each other but I hope they'll manage
to hit it off as they are put to work together. B.
has had a truly marvellous recovery, but I can't quite
believe in his being really strong yet though he makes
a parade of energy & cheerfulness - I'm a little
doubtful about his being one of the first starters.

Sorry to write so poor & hurried a letter.
I'm very fit - perhaps not just so absolutely
a strong man as in '21 but good enough I believe
- anyway I can think of none in this crowd
stronger, & we're a much more even crowd than
in '22, a really strong lot North & I are agreed.
It would be difficult to say of any one of the 8 that
he is likely to go further or less far than the rest. I'm
glad the first blow lies with me. We're not going to
be easily stopped with an organisation behind us this
time.
Great love to you dearest one &
many kisses to the children.
Your loving George.