

Kalimpong,
March 27. 22

My dearest Ruth, There's a lot to be said; I hardly know where to begin. I think I must tell you first something of plans & prospects. From here we shall proceed in two parties (self in first) to Phari, following last year's march. From there Bruce wants to proceed all together with 300 animals! But whether or no he can manage to collect so many an advanced party is ^{what we get there} set to work at once, moving stores up the East Rongbuk Glacier & eventually fixing the camp on the North Col (I gather I shall have to go up to express an opinion about the condition of the snow); during this performance a party of 3 will try to beat the height-record without using oxygen & they have been provisionally selected - Messner, Norton & Jung Bruce. The reason behind this is that the oxygen is delayed & Frick who is very properly O.C. oxygen has declared that a man should have a fortnight's training with the apparatus & that unless he has it he won't be responsible for anyone's safety when using it - of course this is fantastic nonsense - two days would be ample training. But so long as it holds good the 3 I have named are excluded from the possibility of getting to the top with oxygen, because there won't be a fortnight to spare for training them. I don't much expect that the ple

will work out exactly according to the intention & I fancy
Bruce won't be rigid about any such matter. He is being
absolutely splendid. The weakest spot in our organiza-
tion is in the number of coolies - only 40, which to my
mind is quite inadequate; they are good men selected
from 150 Nepalese; among them are 13 of my climbing kit
of last year; but I reckon they will have to make about
4 journeys to the N.M.C. & 2 up from there to 25000
ft., & that's asking too much. Bruce has been short
of time & couldn't gather more men worth taking or
equip them. He plans to save these as much as possible
on the journey & possibly gather a few Tibetans, our
old friend Dorji Gampo for one.

I'm enjoying this venture hugely. It's the jolliest
party, & everything is well arranged. Fr. Bruce, Wakefield,
Stuart, Noel & self went down to Sibirgum yesterday;
young Bruce had gone ahead to act as adjutant & looked
after all the baggage & when we got to the bungalow after
dining in the station we found all our beds arranged with
mosquito nets - the proper way to travel: but I can't say
my net proved very effective & I was bitten half a dozen times
during the night; fortunately I had my iodine bottle handy &
with the help of prophylactic quinine I hope to escape fever.
To-day we come up the Teesta valley to railhead - a short

from my starting if he left about 8 o'clock, & a very lively one - Pomeroy
will be heard out of the window most of the time. Drimming over with
joy and waving his handkerchief to passengers, and ~~North~~ ~~North~~
on the roof of the train working his various apparatus. It was
very hot at seahead & we spent some time there arranging stores before
rising up to Teesta Bridge. From there the general walked up
about 400 ft - you know his figure & you may imagine how he
watered the paths. but what energy! Personally I took most of the
day as I had no prospect of a change, but I'm a fit as a fiddle.
Just wonder why we come round by train - it was to save 300
pounds, but the rest preferred to start early this morning, starting
out from Darjeeling about 8 miles - the walking.
My companions from here will be both Bruce, ^{Longstaff} Norton & Noel.
Hugh remains behind at Darjeeling with Crawford to bring on
the oxygen. They will probably be about 10 days behind us &
I feel with rather hard luck for them. From to-morrow I shall
be separated from all my companions of the voyage. To-night
I'm sharing a room with Longstaff & I think we shall get
on together very nicely.

I suppose I should have given some account of my
activities in Darjeeling, but it would be largely a history
of idleness. I had one good early walk with Wakefield, North
& Somerswell, but the mountains though wonderful in
rather dim way were not at their best. The magnolias
& Sen-schal were glorious - spray blossom but more so
- a richer & finer effect than any cherry or apple or pear
because the individual flowers cluster in so much more

and the colour counts for more - some of the plants were
very deep - but after all not so lovable as our English
flowers. There were a few buddleias out near Darjoh,
but generally speaking everything is wanting for the first time
showing which have been threatening every day & I don't expect
to see a great variety of flowers in Sikkim until we come
to the sub-tropical zone. The best I have seen today were
occenas with a delicate lilac coloured flower - very
charming. The little garden here is gay with glorious
scarlet cactus in pots, roses & a great shrub of red
hibiscus in full bloom. Do you know *prostrata*
(I don't guarantee the spelling), a rather rare green house plant
at home? There are some splendid little trees blooming
here now. Talking of flowers I ordered Anchi to
send you a book which should be useful in identifying
wild flowers. I thought perhaps you could collect some flowers
with clear & colour the plates for her - All this a brother
present if you will, I fear you will get no other.
The English mail with a letter for you I hope actually stopped in
Sikkim this morning while we were here - it should reach this place
to-morrow evening & I have no hope we shall get our letters
next morning.

28th No chance of finding anything this morning - heavy
of early in a good spirit - the sun shone over banks of dark
clouds filling the valley.
Great love to you dearest & to the children
Ever your love,
George