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MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

Aug. 12. 1921.

My dearest Ruth,

I have two projects which I want to communicate to you.
(a) Would you like a little holiday with me, on my way home?
I think it might be very nice for you. You haven't been abroad since Venice, & you've more than earned it! And November is such a good month to spend out of England.

Unfortunately the P.O. (as I know nothing about any other steamers) mail-boats from Bombay don't touch at Brindisi (in which case we might meet in Rome) ~~or~~ & I don't know that they stop at Marseilles. The first plan therefore that occurred to me was that we should meet at Marseilles & make a tour in Provence - Arles, Nîmes, Avignon & any other show places worth seeing & then west walking as much as possible (perhaps 5 or 6 days with rucksacks) across what I believe is beautiful low hilly country to Bordeaux. I know nothing about the climate but imagine it ought still to be warm enough & not wet till we approach the west-coast. And from Bordeaux we might stop at one or two places on the way back - Tours, Chartres, Paris if you like.

But there's a more wonderful plan than that if it can be worked - that you should meet me at Gibraltar (take a boat from Southampton), & we could go to Seville, Granada, Madrid anyway, & perhaps ship back from Lisbon (a cheap way)

I don't know if P&O boats stop at Gib, but in any case I could get a boat on without much delay & you ought to be able to give the time within a day or two.

I think either of these plans would interest you more than the Riviera, where of course we could stay with the Bussys if their room were vacant or with my barn at Nice perhaps.

But if you would enjoy Italy more we could quite well meet at Genoa ^{or Naples}, (29 hrs I suppose from Marseilles by train or I might get a boat which would be cheaper.) I should be happy whatever plan you make. Perhaps the best Italian plan would be to get some other line from ^{Bombay} India which stops at ^{an} Italian port, & works north from south Italy.

It would probably be much slower than P&O. To change at Port Said would be expensive I expect. You must remember in making plans that I can find out nothing at Darjeeling, & I shall be there several days before going down to Calcutta; that my dates are quite uncertain. I hope to get to

Darjeeling by Oct. 1 but I may be 10 days or a fortnight later or even possibly a week earlier; & then I must be allowed 2 to

3 weeks in India - I shall be prepared to cut that down to suit plans. Also you must come supplied with information

- I shall know nothing about trains in Europe or suitable hotels; & if we go to Spain or Italy you must be responsible for the language - phrasing - grammar. The best person for me to get in touch with about travelling ~~and~~ would be Selby Lowndes - but when it comes to details of you'll

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

probably find it necessary to pay a visit to Cook's office or perhaps even better Cox's Shipping Agency. Don't despise old Baedaker - he's very good about 'art' or he might give you many ideas of where you want to go. Uncle Haues of course would help you about Spain.

This is to be your chosen holiday. Don't think I want to defer my home coming; there's nowhere I shall more want to be, naturally, once this show is over; and I shan't be one little bit disappointed if you say No.

About money - £500 War Saving Certificates, or anyway a large part of the £500 we saved should be coming in in September (see Raxworthy about it); and I see absolutely no reason why we shouldn't spend some of it in this way. I want to spend some of it in giving you a really lovely holiday. And if we go to out of the way places, arrange that we can draw largely at different places - 3 times as much as we are likely to want. I expect Raxworthy will advise a circular letter of credit. It's worth considering very carefully any ticket that holds out a prospect of a return fare - it's often cheaper to have a circular return ticket that takes you out of the way than go 200 miles (or far) buying them as you go. And information as to relative prices of hotels is worth a lot, & you ought to consider relative prices in different

countries. But don't sink the ship for a halfpith of tar. If Spain costs £50 more it doesn't matter if you'd much rather go there. It wouldn't of surprise me to hear that the Spanish plan was the cheapest.

There is only one way to make arrangements. You must telegraph not to me but to "Bullock, Bellevue, Darjeeling" telling me at what town to meet you. The one word will be enough. If it is Marseilles stay at the Hotel Louvre et Paris & if I don't find you there I shall await you there. If at any other place & you haven't mentioned an hotel in your telegram I shall go to the Poste Rest office & if I don't find a note from you addressed Poste Restante I shall leave one there for you to say where I'm going; and as an additional precaution I shall go to the Post Office every 5 hrs beginning at 9 a.m. & wait 5 mins. outside the main entrance. If we were to go to Brounce you might rather I came straight on to Arles or some other place of your choice. Marseilles is not worth a visit I gather & can't be at its best when a P&O steamer comes in - I shall have no wish but to meet you & no desire to stay in Marseilles.

Don't leave out of your thoughts the possibility of a night or two in Paris on the way home (in which case you should ^{have} an evening dress for the Opera) & find out if possible some hotel where one can stay in reasonable comfort at a moderate charge - I couldn't take you where I have been, it is too dirty & depressing. Ka Arnold Foster might know of somewhere better than in Rouen (we might come back that way, but it's not going to be a time for lingering in Normandy. Don't make up your

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

mind never to be smart - it might be rather amusing for a change once in a way & it may be expected for instance in Madrid - by which token I have no tidy suit other than grey flannel - evening dress; if you design more than a couple of nights in any great city perhaps I should have some dark cloth clothes. But don't worry if they don't happen to fit in.

I see on reading this over that I have not said a most important thing. On receipt of your telegram I shall make my plans & write you the date of my departure from India (Bombay unless I say otherwise) & the name of the ship (BO unless I give the name of another shipping line). This will enable you to find out through the London office the probable date of my arrival at the port ~~you~~ or town by your name. If Gibraltar you must allow so many days from Marseilles according to advice from shipping people (presuming the mail boats don't touch there). But again if Gibraltar find out a suitable hotel from Ralph a wise it ~~is~~ - then I shall be able to write you from Marseilles & you can address a letter to me there 'to await arrival' so that whoever gets there first will know when to expect the other.

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

(6). Now as to my other project; it is, briefly, to bring back one of the expedition cookies as a servant. This seems well I know & it will be for you to decide whether it can be worked. The person I have in mind could be turned onto my job & would do twice as much as any English servant. He would, if he came naturally, be turned on to all scullery work & floor scrubbing, carrying coals, cutting firewood, lighting the kitchen fire at as early an hour as you like, washing clothes (John's included). In addition he could be turned onto a certain amount of more refined work; he would be my personal servant & "do" my dressing room & study; & he could learn to bring in mail & wait at table. The boots, knives, smith pairs, bicycles, cinders & the greenhouse stove if ever we have one would all be his province; - and of course he would do all unskilled labour in the garden.

The problem for you to solve is to fit him in with other servants & save enough labour to make it worth while. But beyond possible economy we should have much done that we never have had done properly - for instance wood supply, sifting of cinders & ^{tidying of} the greenhouse garden paths & loggia. And he would fetch & carry as he is a cookie whose job is to carry; & if you wanted a box weighing 70 lbs brought from Westbrook or the station I would simply send him to get it & send him several times if necessary without the slightest qualm that he would consider himself put upon. He would save many taxi-drives by carrying luggage to the station.

And now about his self. In the first place Nomya is a boy. I don't know what his age may be, I suppose 18. But he has the boyish outlook on life, & he would remain a boy toward the women in the house. And in the second place he has a perfect temperament for what I propose he should do; I have watched him from the day we left Dasjehing; he is one of the most helpful people I have ever seen, always the first to shoulder a heavy load or whenever anyone is tired after a day's march to turn his hand to some job that must be done for camp-craft, a ready, willing, unselfish & extraordinarily happy & smiling character from first to last. And he has a great quality of devotion; if he came to us he would stick to us for the term agreed & serve us faithfully & do anything for us. He would have a lot to learn of course; but he is intelligent & quick. Language would be a difficulty; but he would pick up a good many English words between Dasjehing & Godalming & we should get him to understand the things of everyday life. He is one of the few coolies who can speak Hindustani tolerably well.

There is much else you will want to know. Wages? Probably 7/6 a week rising to 10/- at the end of two years. Food? I don't know how that would work out. His present diet is chiefly flour & water, rice, occasionally meat, and as luxuries a little tea & butter. By making him prepare his own breakfast & giving him his meat every other day at the kitchen dinner & on the other providing him with the staple diet of rice - or by such dictary you could feed him in a way economical to himself, luxurious to him - no trouble to anyone. The expense will

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

would come in transporting him from a possible back to India. One must reckon £30 for that. He would have to agree to come for at least two years to make it pay very well indeed as a speculation in labour. He would then probably return to India & become a regular native servant ("khaser") & his desire to better himself in that way would be a principle incentive to do well with us — besides his good nature.

There are naturally one or two other considerations about this plan. (1) Where is he to sleep etc? I believe that can very easily be solved. You must remember that he comes from the hills & is hardy. He wouldn't make the least objection to sleeping in the loggia for a few weeks prob. tem; and after he might either inhabit part of the cellar — we could knock a window in the west wall & make a partition — or the outside coal shed might be freed by storing coal in the cellar, & the proper arrangement once we have a strong arm to carry the coal upstairs. & when cleaned would make a palace for Nemiya.

(2). Would he be happy & would other servants like him? Well, he is a clean animal & though he would look a bit queer to them at first they couldn't help liking him. He is not very dark skinned like a plainsman. I don't see why he shouldn't be persona grata at Westbrook for instance & Westbrook might be very glad to have him when we are away from home. He would make a most lovely

curry for Marty.

Well that's all I have to say about it. If you begin to write to me 'Yes' or 'No' I shall know that refers to this question - if you say 'Yes' I shall make arrangements for bringing Nuniya or sending him later according to your holiday plans.

I see this is all very wild - requires your domestic art to reduce it to order if it can be reduced - but there it is, a suggestion that might contain just the thing wanted.

I've broken down for the moment; and it's a very critical moment. After two days' breaking since my last letter I found the trouble only accentuated & stayed in bed yesterday hoping to start with Bullock this morning - but when I woke still with sore glands & throat it clearly wasn't worth the risk of going up - I must save myself for the big attack now - So B. has gone up alone; I have just had a chat from him reporting that even this valley does not lead to our north col - it ends quite soon in a col between two peaks 25800 - 23900 N.E. of Everest. So our middle is still unsolved. Will it be solved tomorrow? And in what unpleasant sense? All depends upon what sort of way we find to that north col; and it now looks as though there is no good way. And I can't go to see!

Luckily I have been cheered by Morshead who arrived this morning to sojourn with us.

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

Aug. 14. After posing as a complete invalid yesterday I decided
not to pose as half a one today on Marshfield. I went up the
valley rejected by Bullock yesterday. It was very interesting
to hold out fair prospects of a way over a snow shoulder
to the north col. We are going to camp up there to-morrow
or reconnoitre.

Monday were out 8 hrs today I went to
bed as soon as we came back & am no worse. I feel certain
I can survive there next two days & then there'll be time to
rest if necessary - so don't worry about me.

I'm tremendously excited. The day after to-morrow we
may have our line of attack fixed & if we have it will
be a very good line because we shall be able to get a very
long way without camping on ice.

I must get a long sleep, so Good Night.

This will go down to-morrow. The mails are all wrong
I haven't heard from you since July 23 - 3 weeks ago &
more. How are letters from home?

Great love to you

Your loving
George.

