

2<sup>nd</sup> Advanced Camp

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

July - 12 - 1921

My dearest Ruth, I've had a dear letter from you to-day - unexpectedly early. You've had my parcel from Madras and my letter from Calcutta. I'm wondering how about the parcel from Colombo; I expect it will reach you by the next mail. I'm very sorry you are being so much troubled by the boils; no doubt you are a bit run down as a result of all your domestic energies & worries, but I very much hope you will have got rid of them - the boils I mean - by the time you next write.

We've been having rather hard time here - bad weather & nothing done in the way of reconnaissance. However I have moved forward about 3 hrs to a good spot, sunnier than the last & at the same time have moved the base camp to a very good place just short of the end of the glacier. The 1<sup>st</sup> advanced camp has become a dump for stores; no one sleeps there but the sahib's eight pound tent stands there in lonely state with the stores inside & we shall go back there when this camp has served its purpose & we want to cross the glacier eastwards.

To-day, the first fine day after the bad spell, was not wasted. The start was rather late - nearly 6 o'clock & we had sun at once & cross the glacier; but it was highly enjoyable but we went wrong & had much cutting up & down to get off the glacier on to the moraine the other side which we did not reach till 9.30. I don't regret the mistake which was unavoidable as it gave the coolies very good practice & they learnt a lot: but it meant that when we rounded

the corner working into the W.V.W. even the clouds had come up & we saw little - so we pursued the venture no further & came back in leisurely fashion. To-morrow we shall start early (if it is fine), profit by our mistake I hope, & get well into the com. It is an exciting prospect.

I'm still going very strong myself. Bullack seems to have been tired since our great climb up Mt Kellas as we call it - he was very tired for instance coming back this afternoon. I hope he will get properly fit before long - at present he's apt to be a trifle grumpy quite apart from any climbing strength.

We've had a great blow in discovering that our specially adapted high-climbing Promis Stoves are useless; when it comes to camps higher than this we shall have to get on with methylated spirit & the supply is very short at present.

We're now at nearly 19000 ft I believe & I've adapted but socks - no longer proud! Last night was very cold & the ground was like iron this morning. A good lot of snow had fallen previously but all melted here yesterday though we met plenty on the glaciers. The views from this camp of peaks to the W. of Everest are glorious. We're on a good shelf above the N. bank of the tributary glacier which comes in from the W. (see map) - I ought to have told you that before. I've taken some ~~at~~ photos which should be glorious - in the clearing light last evening.

I'm not going to make this a long letter as I want it to start on its way to Tengri to-morrow morning - and I don't feel there's very much to tell you. Our first night here

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was pretty miserable. We weren't properly moving camp & had only two Mummy tents & no cook to look after us. I had an awful wobble with two Primus stoves without success & we fell back on a substance called Kampite with which happily our high-climbing stoveboxes are provided each has enough for six hours. With ~~an~~ <sup>the</sup> excellent tinned food called 'Davis Oxford Sausages' & 'Sliced Bacon' we ~~at last~~ <sup>ultimately</sup> produced a fry for dinner & for breakfast in the morning I had a great success producing beautiful porridge & another fry with the remains & some potatoes which greatly cheered us against the snow outside. Now we have organised things properly we again have our cook who in spite of his dirty hands is rather a treasure & does wonderfully well in adverse circumstances.

I don't find myself very keen about early starts up here - one hasn't the comfort of an alpine hut & though an early start is well enough once in a way it strikes as a practice. The coolies respond fairly well to my efforts to get them up. But we've never been earlier than 4.15 a.m. To-morrow I shall wake them at 2.30. Only a selected 4 of the sidar are coming & I think that fact may help. You mustn't think of me shuddering & tossing restlessly about at night on the hard ground; one does turn over more often than in

a bed, but I make myself comfortable enough - with my bed socks.

I can't tell you my dear how much my thoughts turn about you, & particularly when bad weather forces us to remain inactive. I want you near me so very much & you are so very far away; & my thoughts sometimes fly to the moment when we shall be trekking back towards Durpelung again & I shall have set my face homeward. I'm appalled sometimes by the mere length of this undertaking & wish it could only be shorter.

August will have come to an end I suppose, or very nearly so before you get this letter. And will you then be back at the Holt again? or where will you be? Be happy wherever you are. It won't be so very long now before you read in the Times that we have started back. And what else will you read I wonder!

Good bye darling; for the present. My love to the children & more to yourself than I can express.

Your loving George.

