

1st Base Camp - Runger Glacier
MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION.

July 22. 1921.

My own dearest Ruth, I have had three of the sweetest letters from you to-day, the last on your tour with Marby. I can't tell you how much pleasure they have given me. It makes me very pleased that you should have liked my presents from Colombo; it brings you somehow nearer to think that you have opened the parcel & had some satisfaction from it.

I must write to you now for another reason - I have had a bitter blow. All the photos taken up here with the $\frac{1}{4}$ plate - practically all I have taken, have gone wrong. Apparently I put the plates in the wrong way round. I know nothing about plates & followed instructions given me by Herson. I have taken enormous trouble over these photos, many of them were taken at sunrise from places where neither I nor anyone else may go again - for instance those on our ascent of Mt. Kellas. However I'm determined to replace them as far as possible & if we get any clear weather I mean to go up for one night to one of our old camps & go out from there. It will mean two days spent in the most tiresome fashion - when I thought all our work in those parts was done. There! I'll say no more about it. It hurts me as much as any small thing may. Besides requiring the photos for lectures I look forward to showing them to you. And shall I get the fine moments again? The weather now

is as bad as can be. It has been raining almost incessantly these two days - no basking in the sun for our idleness; but we're lucky not to be up at one of the high camps. In our eight pound tent we are much more comfortable & (wrapping up one does not feel cold; snow has come down here at times but it is mostly a thousand feet higher.

I can't answer your letters; I feel it is no use; the events you talk of will be so distant to you by the time you get this. You ask me for more of my feelings. I'm sorry if I haven't been giving you enough. You will have seen that since we left Trigoni they have been a good deal occupied with what we have to do & the energy put into that leaves a good deal of reactionary longing for other things, for home my dear, & sometimes I must admit for comforts & for society; but not too much of that; I remain cheerful. The moments of real enjoyment are rare. I like browsing round the camp & collecting flowers from the little sock camp; but the weather has been against such peaceful pursuits & one gets down into the tent too much on off-days of cold wind & snow showers.

Picquette with B has become an institution, generally 2 or 3 games after lunch - after dinner & that is a diversion.

I greatly enjoyed our highest camp at which we spent one night before making our attempt on the west cwm - because the mountain views were as beautiful as any I have ever seen; at night before we tossed in the moonlit scene was half veiled in cloud & in the early morning the moon was still up & the peaks clearer. One mountain in particular

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on the far side of the snow-covered glacier was singularly lovely. I call it for the present Mount Chase - I hope the name will stick. Of course we have done very little climbing; a moving camp with coehis across a glacier is a slow & tiresome business which doesn't thrill me greatly.

I am so very glad to hear of your jaunt with Marby. It will be good for you to have the change - & best. How I wish I could have been in Dorsetshire again with you. You know I do miss the softer elements in country. Even this little green patch on which our tents are pitched gives me a singular pleasure from the contrast with stones & snow & gives me a longing for the softer beauties. They are rather unfriendly mountains & one doesn't come down as in the Alps to green pastures & trees. Think of it! we have hardly seen a tree in Tibet! I'm glad too to hear that you are rid of the Hodges. It was noble of you to have them & evidently they were rather troublesome. I suppose in the ultimate analysis Hodge is just not a gentleman or not finely so; & I wonder from what you say whether Pamela is quite a lady.

July 28. What changes since I wrote this! On the 23rd we woke to find 8 ins of snow on the ground at our base camp, still wetish snow such as my fall in England towards the end of winter, & the clouds low down all round us. But the

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weather cleared from the north in the morning. At 12.30
 I gave orders to move & we set off early in the afternoon with
 six coolies & 2 summer tents. Everest cleared completely
 before evening & by going up about 3000ft from the base
 camp I got some lovely views & then raced down to join
 B. as just as it was dark in a camp $\frac{1}{2}$ an hour short of
 our 2nd advanced camp, a soft sandy windless spot between
 the glacier & the moraine. There we passed a comfortable night
 though it was freezing hard, & did not wake till 3.0 a.m. as
 the alarm which failed to go off - & an hour later set out in
 the moonlight, B with 2 coolies up into the north cwm & I
 with two others to the little Island peak. It was a dreadful
 morning. A blanket of cloud a few hundred feet above our
 heads hid everything. I sat on the moraine at sunrise to
 see hopes of a clear day. It looked a very grey world, depress-
 ingly grey: & yet there were signs that the clouds were
 thin - I went on. About halfway up the peak I had a clear
 view for about 30 seconds of Mount Clark & there I stayed
~~for~~ ~~the~~ ~~morning~~ - we moved up a bit further - from 6.45
 to 1.15 - patiently? I can't say: but with indescribable
 excitement as I watched the movements of the clouds &
 speculated when if ever I should obtain a clear view of
 Everest & the great west cwm. In the short intervals when
 the peaks were clear I took ten photos, & some of Everest which

should turn out well, not less from the aesthetic than from the topographical point of view. I had two plates left waiting for a clear view of the whole cone with the West Peak as we call it - & I waited two hours to expose them, but the chance never came. On the whole I was immensely pleased, and still pleased. I felt that I have repaired a good deal of the damage. And then there is such triumphant satisfaction in seizing - using the fine moment.

Before we were back in the base camp that evening (29th) the weather had changed again for the worse. B. who was in later than me after a completely successful day only just-escaped a wetting in a thunderstorm & during the night the snow came down very much thicker than we had seen it before; it was melting too fast to lie deep round us, but a few hundred higher there was a real heavy snowfall - This decided me to abandon our plan of crossing the hills to Kharta. Very rapidly everything was packed up. Dui jaks, very opportunely had come up the night before with supplies, & helped to carry our stores etc to Chho. B & I, after a lovely halt in a good green spot by the stream reached Chho about 9.0 found Harvard Burg's party from Tinfri dribbling in. He had been there himself for an hour or two & was very glad to see us - to hear we were going on with him.

Wheler turned up Bates the same evening. He has been making his photographic survey to the west - doing much

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what I did on that last day, but doing it alone! A dxay job in this broken weather. However he had had some rest at Tingsi & seemed fit & cheerful. And we was now going up the valley we had just come down. It seems rather a silly business that he couldn't have joined forces with us up there. But we were able to tell him a good deal to help him.

And now we are at Kharta after 3 days' trekking - the new Expedition Base Camp. And what am I to tell you of my sensations? I have been half the time in ecstasy. My first thought on coming down to Chobo was that the world was green again. A month had made all the difference to the appearance of the hillsides; Below about 10000 ft they were no longer the old unfriendly grey or red, but quite definitely greenish; - not with the thick velvet green of English pasture land, but still green, & soft to the eyes. And ever as we have come down lower, & nearer to the Arun Valley, the appearance of greenness has steadily increased. We have crossed two passes on the way, we have slept near two clear bubbling streams & all that we have seen of snow mountains has been full of interest - but none of that counts with me. To see things grow again as they liked growing, enjoying rain & sun - that has been the real joy. An hour or so down the valley from Chobo we saw meadows

of barley & mustard flourishing as in England. In the afternoon
we were in a sweet mountain valley & camped in the valley head;
there besides a variety of common wild flowers, monkshood, lady's
garlic & nettle the commonest, were two clematis, a black or dark
purple & a delicate yellow one, trailing luxuriantly over the stones.
And we pitched our tents on ~~glac~~-eroded fine green grass. The
following day we pursued our way up a clear stream in a thin
valley; I felt I might have been in the Highlands & our shaggy jacks
with their half-wondering, half-bewildered ~~eyes~~ looks were curious
like Highland cattle. We came up to a remarkable pass between two
ranges of snow mountains - not a high pass, only about 17000 ft.
There the ground was a wilderness of flowers, rock plants & nettles;
under the big flat stones; most beautiful fall the blue poppy &
a little pink ~~many~~ saxifrage growing almost like a cushion flower; &
there was a fine gentian & many littler flowers all as happy
as they could be. The big valley on the other side of the pass came
right down to the Arun. Again a clear stream with granite
boulders & ever as we came down I watched the bushes, juniper
willow, then cotoneaster, cussant, & finally roses, more finer &
more profuse & the flowers more abundant. We camped again
in a lovely spot by the stream & before dark I collected in a beautiful
glen a lovely bunch of wild flowers; the commonest were a pink
geranium & a yellow potentilla & a little flower that looked from
the world like a violet but turned out from its leaf to be something
quite different; & there was grass of Parnassus which I saw here
& in places a carpet of a little butter flower, a brilliant pink,
which I think must belong to the garlic tribe; but most of all
I was delighted to find kingcups - a delicate variety rather smaller

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than was at home, but somehow especially reminding me of you - I write of writing Jeff through them in the first letter I had from you in Rome.

Well, my dearest Ruth, you imagine how lovely all this has been after the stern hard world of glaciers - moraines. And here we are in the Anam Valley, perched a little above its wide flat basin before it goes down in a narrow - fearsome gorge to Nepal - to India, the valley of the monsoon, up which the soft winds blow bringing plenty. I hope it won't rain too much during the four clear days' rest I intend to spend here - the weather is better now; it favoured our trekking; at least we may expect fine mornings. This is a good spot; Bury has chosen well. Our tents are half-hutted among the willows in a little rough compound which calls itself a garden, & the house this time instead of being a thatched a dirty, busy dwelling, merely provides a store-room & dark-room.

July 31. The mail arrived last night (no English mail, but a Manchester Guardian Weekly turned up & I was very glad to see it) - consequently goes out to-day. I'm busy printing photos. I had hoped to get some prints off to you by this mail, but I fear all the more interesting & more recent ones will have to wait. However you'll be glad to hear that the results of my last photographic expedition are highly successful. I have some really beautiful photos which will also be valuable from the topographical point of view.

A few soldier snags enclosed.
Often showing country to follow.
Get Marky to tone the mountain views.

Wish your being
George.

Take very good care of myself.

I can't tell you how much I am enjoying these days of pause - & at the same time looking forward to our next stage of reconnaissance. We shall start the day after to-morrow, following up a big glacier stream which joins the Arun just below us & presumably comes from Everest. The great question now is the approach to the North col from this side. We are convinced that the way up from there is not difficult & is the only feasible line of attack; but for any chance of success we must be able to get our camps onto this col without too great difficulty; it is possible to reach it from the other side; I'm hoping to find it easier from this. We shall be much more happily situated in this time, so much closer to the base & such a much more agreeable one than Tingri. If the weather turns bad one may feel inclined to come down here for a spell & we shall be able to keep in touch more easily & get up things we want. And I hope some of the others will join up with us more or less after 2 or 3 weeks at all events. It has been rather disappointing to see so little of Wollaston & Morshart. Bullock though a very nice fellow is not a lively companion. We're expecting WoM here any day. They should be here / Aug. 1. Wollaston will probably find much to occupy him near here; but Morshart may move up in our direction. They have been together recently to a district west of Tingri. Poor Wollaston has had a bad time altogether. He reached ~~at~~ Tingri the night before we left after seeing Raeburn safely into Szechim & delivering him into other medical hands - almost at once he had two cases of typhoid to attend at Tingri, a place he disliked as much as I did. Of Raeburn we have no further news & I shall be much surprised if we see him again in Tibet. If he had meant to come on he would have kept in touch.

I feel that I am being very dull amidst the printing of photos - so I shall stop. A thousand blessings on your head & ten thousand loving thoughts to you. Be not anxious. I've got the hang of this game & shall