

1921 8

May 17 1921

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
DARJEELING.

My dearest Ruth, I have waited until the  
eve of our setting out to write to you, hoping  
I should get a letter from you today - & I have  
received two envelopes full which give me your  
news up to April 27. One of the joys, & not the  
least of them, these letters is that I now know  
you have had mine from Port Said. It is difficult  
to reckon how long the gaps will have been for  
you after that - but I feel you are getting my  
letters & even after we leave here should not  
as a rule be longer than a fortnight without one.  
Long with I could feel that things are more comfort-  
able for you at home. News here is fragmentary  
& it is difficult to make out what is going on - but  
evidently it is a bad time. It comforts me to think  
there were & I hope still are - few mugs of coal  
in the cellar. It is as well the Hodges are not  
with you, or not so soon as you expected.  
I have read all you say with enormous pleasure.

Your letters do bring you much nearer, & I'm always  
wanting you nearer. It is very nice to feel that  
the children think of me. They'll get no more picture  
post cards or presents now for ever so long; you'll  
have to explain that such things don't exist where  
I am going. I am sending close the seeds for  
a necklace by this mail. They were sent on to me  
from Calcutta & are not so many as I hoped.

It has been a restful time here & I shall  
start very fit to-morrow, much better than  
when I came here less than a week ago. What  
I have shared the Guest House here. It is a very  
comfortable arrangement, as we have a sitting-  
room besides each our bedroom & bathroom.  
However we have not altogether escaped the pomp  
& circumstance. On my first night the Governor  
(happily there is no Governor here) gave a swaggy  
dinner party for the Expedition. It was a won-  
derful show. We assembled about 45 couples  
according to the printed list, a copy of which had  
been supplied to every one, in the grand the dining-  
room where we were very admirably manoeuvred {

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
DARJEELING.

The 2 A.D.C.s. His Excellency entered & amid complete silence made the circuit of the room & shook hands with everyone. In the dining room a small host of native servants wearing long red coats ornamented with gold & silver braid pushed our chairs in as we sat down & poured champagne into our glasses after every sip or so it seemed. Music played all the time, but not so loudly as to make conversation difficult. We all rose during dessert. ~~When~~ ~~the~~ ~~film~~ "H.E." who behaved like clock work proposed the health of the "King-Emperor"; we were silent while the band played some bars of God Save the King & I observed that most people's eyes were where they ought to be - fixed in a steady stare across the table. And so on. Every thing went with a click. And every day at luncheon & dinner it goes with a click. We foregather five minutes or so before the hour of feeding & drink an apéritif; the young


Sund; H.E. appears; we rise & he greets us.  
However it must at least be said for Government  
House that it has a good cook; it's almost worth  
being bored a little for the requirements.

Breakfast, thank God, is informal. I have more  
than once been the first to appear, whereupon  
the eight menservants stand round the table  
scuttle away in various directions & make me feel  
I must have gone off like a cracker.

We shall be as you see 2 days late in starting  
to-morrow. The delay has been caused by the  
unloading of 4 ships at Calcutta which contained  
most of our heavy stores. The various packages of  
which I had charge came up here in company  
of those which left England about 3 weeks earlier.

Wollaston, Howard King, Wheeler & myself form  
the first party; Morhead has gone on at the  
other & include one Henson who has been  
appointed to accompany the expedition of the Geodetic  
Survey. He seems a dull man. Wheeler I've  
hardly spoken to you yet - you know my complex

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
DARJEELING.

about Canadians; I shall have to swallow  
before I like him, I expect. G.D. sent me a photo.  
Merkhead is evidently a very nice man - quite  
unassuming & gentle, resembling his brothers  
a good deal - both face & manners, but considerably  
shorter than either of them. Kellas I love  
already. He is beyond description. Scoted & uncut  
in his speech - altogether uncut. He arrived at  
the great dinner party 10 minutes after we had set  
down & my dishevelled having walked in from  
a little place of miles away. His appearance would  
form a admirable model to the stage for a physical  
representation of ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> ~~alchemist~~ <sup>alchemist</sup>; he is very slight-  
built, short, thin; stooping & narrow chested; his  
head very much of this shape; -  & made  
protogone by veritable jip lamps of spectacles & a  
long pointed mustache. (William I continue  
to like as I expected). He is an absolute devoted &  
disinterested person. It is full of humor & there

my views in many respects. Howard Bury seems to be quite good at the organization; but I don't find myself particularly liking him. He is too much the land lord, with not only the prejudice, but - very highly developed sense of status & contempt for other sorts of people than his own; he makes himself very pleasant to H.E. - too pleasant I sometimes think. He & Raehorn don't get on at present & I must say Raehorn can be extremely irritating. He is very dictatorial & apt to be wrong in his facts.

But it's hard to be witty about the personnel. I have told you nothing about Darjeeling. It is a delectable place - or rather it is a wonderfully beautiful place almost miserably beset by fiends. But the journey up here in the mountain railway was lovely. They are very steep fast hills, densely wooded except where cultivated, when they present an almost even green surface though one can distinguish at close range minute tesserae & the individual low growing shrubs which are tea. There it is - complicated country presently many deep valleys & sharp edges, not unlike the Apennines in parts & one had a wonderful feeling of being in

GOVERNMENT HOUSE,  
DARJEELING.

a good hill country as the train wound among the ridges - hill sides, & continually gave us great views over the plains opening through the forest. But what most delighted me was the forest itself, the incredible touching & mysterious beauty of a tree clad hillside with all its wealth of growth & variety of greens & darkens & brightness. In one spot especially where I was walking ahead of the train I was irresistibly reminded of wooded hillsides in Chinese pictures where they are used to express some deep religious feeling.

The views of the mountains have been disappointing - or rather they have disappointed me because when they were best I was not on the lookout & when I saw early it was never really clear. But I shall see that when I come back at a clearer time of year.

My love to the Chiltons Brooks. I leave it to you as you think best about sending  
around anything I write. Over your love George

The mules are actually loading up as I write - we follow later in the day. This is only the first contingent! They had a bad time at the mule camp last night with torrents of rain, & it looks very thick to-day so I suppose we must expect to get wet. I shall start forth a rather grotesque figure with an oil-silk cover on my topie, a sack sack on my back humping out under my aching cape if it is actually raining & my sun umbrella to cover all, or at least to be a walking stick.

Well, my darling I think I must stop writing now. You'll see a notice of our start in the paper before you get this & there'll be fair frequent news I expect. It might be worth just while taking in the Geographical Journal.

I think of you with great love at this moment. I should feel rather happier about you if we had news of the coal strike. Don't wear yourself out dear with all your domestic energy and make some moments for things outside. I shall continue to think of you very often & make an image of you in my mind & of the children too. Please give