

Chiblung

April 19, 1924.

My dearest Ruth,

I don't know whether you will ever find this place on the map. We have come north from Tunkye, avoiding unpleasant customs at Chushar and Gyanku Namfu & this valley is divided from that in which Pong Kong lies by a low range of hills - we are encamped just at the corner of the Chiblung Chu; Sanku Ri the ridge where Somerville & I climbed in 1922 is our view to the west.

Today - at last - an English mail has reached us. I have had a very nice long letter from you and also a picture of the children enclosed with the photos from my American friend Schwab illustrating his expedition to Mt. Clemenceau (did you notice the one of Mt. Jassar & Mt. Malloy?). I'm very glad to have the children's picture but you don't send one of yourself, naughty girl. Nor do you send me any cutting this mail, nor the Nation which I hoped you would be sending - though really European affairs are so far away & news is so old that I've not much enthusiasm about them.

10/0/04
Kasim Paul who brought our mail also brought news of the General, whom he left in Phari; he must be pretty ill still as he was unable to walk & was to be carried down to Chumbi; Hingston will accompany him to Gantok & should rejoin us at the B.C. about the middle of May. Meanwhile Beetham gets on slowly & can't be said to have got rid of dysentery yet let alone picking up after it - however I think he's on the mend.

I heard from May to-day with news of the weather in Colombo & it looks as if the earliest breath of the monsoon is a fortnight early! But that doesn't necessarily mean much. The bad sign is the weather here which is distinctly more unsettled than in 52 & the last two nights have been unhealthily warm. To-day we have been in a regular storm and though no rain or snow has actually fallen here.

April 29. at Shekar Dzong.

I've left it rather late to go on with this letter - that is partly because one way or another I have been spending a good many spare moments on the elaboration of our plans. The difficult work of allotting tasks to men has now been done - N. & I consulted the

made a general announcement after dinner 2 days²
ago. The question as to which of the first two parties
should be led by Somersell & which } me was decided
on two grounds (1) on the assumption that the oxygen
party would be less exhausted & be in the position of
helping the other it seemed best that I should use
oxygen & be responsible for the descent (2) it seemed
more likely on his last year's performance that Somersell
would recover after a rather attempt to be useful
again later. It was obvious that either Irvine
or Odell should come with me in the first gas party
Odell is in charge of the gas, but Irvine has been the
engineer at work on the apparatus - what was provided
was full of leaks & faults & he has practically ~~re~~invented
a new instrument using up only a few of the old parts
& cutting out much that was useless & likely to cause trouble,
moreover the remaining parties had to be considered and
it wouldn't do to make Irvine the partner of Jeffery
Bruce as they would lack mountaineering experience;
so Irvine will come with me. He will be an extra-
ordinarily stout companion, very capable with the gas &
with cooking apparatus; the only doubt is to what extent

his lack of mountaineering experience will be a handicap; I hope the ground will be sufficiently easy.

Norton if he is fit enough will go with Somervell or, if he seems clearly a better goer at the moment, Stager. Beetham is counted out, though he's getting fitter. Odell & Geoffry Bruce will have the important task of fixing Camp V at 25500.

The whole difficulty of fitting people in so that they take a part in the assault according to their desire or ambition is so great that I can't feel distressed about the part that falls to me. The greater part has the better adventure, and as it has always been my pet plan to climb the mountain greater with two camps above the Chang la it is naturally a bit disappointing that I shall be with the other party. Still the conquest of the mountain is the great thing, & the whole plan is mine & my part will be a sufficiently interesting one & will give me perhaps the best chance of all of getting to the top. It is almost unthinkable with this plan that I shouldn't get to the top; I can't see myself coming down defeated. And I have very good hopes that the greater party will get up; I want all of us to get there, & I believe it can be done. We shall be starting } moonlight if the morning is calm & should

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have the manna climbed if we're lucky before the wind
is dangerous.

This evening 4 of us have been testing the oxygen
apparatus, and comparing the new arrangements with the
old. Irvine has managed to save weight, 4 or 5 lbs, beside
making a much more certain as well as more convenient
instrument. I was glad to find I could easily carry it up the
hill even without using the gas, or better of course with it.
On steep ground where one has to climb more or less the
load is a great handicap & at this elevation a man is
better without it. The weight is about 30 lbs, rather less.
There is nothing in front of one's body to hinder climbing &
the general impression I have is that it is a perfectly manage-
able load. My plan will be to carry as little as possible, &
fast & rush the summit. Arch - Bruce tried carrying
too many cylinders.

I'm still very fit & happy. Tibet is giving us many
beautiful moments. With these abnormal weather conditions
it is much warmer than in '22 & the whole journey is
more comfortable. It is nice having one's own pony -
mine is a nice beast to ride, but he's not in good
condition, & to-day has had a nasty attack of colic; however

he'll have a long holiday to come soon & I hope he'll fatten
up & arrive fit & well in Darjeeling where I shall sell
him. Out of marches, starting to-morrow morning,
to the Ranpuk monastery! We're getting very near
now. On May 3 four of us will leave the Base Camp
& begin the upward track & on May 17 or thereabouts we
should reach the summit. I'm eager for the great events
to begin.

Now dearest I must say Good Night to you & turn
into my cosy sleeping bag, where I shall have a clean
nose sheet to-night, one of the two you made to fix with
patent fasteners. Considering how much grease my face
requires & sets that device has been very useful.

Great love to you always.

The telegram announcing our success if we succeed
will precede this letter I suppose: but it will mention
no names. How you will hope that I was one of the
conquerors! And I don't think you'll be disappointed.

Ever your loving,
George.