

Charles Ryder letters from Yunnan 1898 - 99

Place names and family names are in bold for ease of reference.

1st December 1898, to Ida: "... I'm afraid my letters must be very short, not because I don't adore you or think of you all day, but simply because I haven't the time. We halted one day more in **Momien** & left on the 29th Davies going a different way & we shan't meet him for a month or so. Watts, Jones & I got off about 9.30, first 3 miles across the plain & then a steep climb up to 7,700, where I got onto a knoll & put up my theodolite. Then on across a plateau, on the edge of which I stayed some time sketching in the country, then a drop of over 2,000 feet to our village. I didn't get in till after dark & then I had to compute out our position. On Nov 30 we went 2 miles down to the **Shweli** (*Lung-Chu'an Chiang*) River crossing by a chain suspension bridge, then up a long pull from 4,200 to 7,800. We camped in a small village just at the top, but I had also to go up a hill about ½ mile off to observe & had a very thorny scramble. However, I observed the points I wanted & got in just at dark, then computations. So you see neither of those two days had I moment to spare. Last night it was so bitterly cold & this morning at 6.30, 3° of frost. We came right down hill to the Salween today, 11 miles all down hill. Here it is quite warm as we are only 2,400 ft up. We get into **Yung Chong** in two days. All the people in the village are pleasant enough, it is only in the towns they are objectionable; we have an escort of Chinese soldiers. Watts Jones is a very difficult chap to get on with. We are almost always having rows & today at ½ past 3 when our things came in, he wanted to go another 6 miles, which I wouldn't do as I couldn't have surveyed the distance. Davies on the other hand is a very nice chap.

"Oh! Ida, there are some funny ways here, money is one of the oddest. I have Rs 1,000 in lumps of silver of different shapes & sizes. For small change one or two of these are weighed & then the equivalent is given in Chinese cash, which is their only real coin. About 510 cash go to one rupee. They are carried on a string.

"I am feeling as well as possible. My beard is getting quite respectable, but even you would own that it was red!

"At **Momien** I did my telegraphic longitudes, asked Pirie if he had any news, but no telegram had reached **Bhamo**. I wonder if you can imagine my anxiety while the Chinese telegraph clerk was spelling out the letters. At **Yung Chong** I do hope I may hear you are going on well, because it will be a long time before I can hear again. This is a grand country, it will get much colder soon & I shall have to wear warm Chinese things. I have such a lot to tell you, my pet, & long to be with you again...

"Dec. 2. We came 14 miles today, first steady up hill & then amongst undulating hills." *He refers to problems due to continuous rain and clouds masking the higher hills and the stay in a village which saves pitching tents.* "Tomorrow we get to **Yung Chong**, a big place larger than Momien. I wonder what sort of reception we shall get. We have an escort of 4 Chinese soldiers who ought to keep the crowd back. Here it is 4,500' up & pretty cold. ... I am getting in a good lot of new country & it is all a splendid climate, no jungle except yesterday near the Salween; the hills are generally bare except a few fir trees." *He looks forward to a telegram in Yung Chong, otherwise he won't get mail until he gets to Kumlong at the end of December.* "... after that nothing till we get to Talifu in February. ... I think it is almost certain that I shall come back through Tonquin, it is the nearest way, in which case I shall send you a telegram from Hanoi, then come by Messagories to Colombo & so to Bangalore, apply at once for my leave, finish up my work & rush home to you again. I wish I had a poshteen it would be very useful. Tomorrow I am going to get Chinese kit for my Khalasis & servants, they will attract less notice. ... you darling, I often think of you in your little house. On the march today we stopped at a village, the head tax man asked in & gave us a really good tea, much nicer than the ordinary. There is no post in Yunnan, but merchants will generally take letters. ... I have your photos & the children's in my writing case; and probably by now I'm the father of a third & don't know how you are getting on. Undoubtedly exploration like this is fascinating work, but I miss you if anything more than ever. I've picked up a few Chinese words but it is very difficult. From Yungchong we got 6 marches to **Shun-ning** (*Feng-Ch'ing*). Probably I shall drop behind

Watts Jones as he wants to hurry on to where the future railway may run & I want to go slowly to triangulate. The Chinese have allowed us to survey anything anywhere so far, I hope it may continue. If only I can (*get*) a bit of news of you that you are all right. I could write ever so much more. I believe in **Yung Chong** we can get flour & a lot of other good things; there are plenty of walnuts & several sorts of fruit. After Burma & the Shora Hills this is a first rate climate. I shouldn't think I will get any fever at all. Now dearest I must desert you and get to work.

"After dinner. Owing to the mist, I could take no observations. So I have no work to do & you get the benefit." *Affectionate writing follows.* "I shall be so excited to see the baby (**Violet**). You darling, what a good little wifie you have been. We have rather a nice little room & the people not at all obtrusive... This is much pleasanter than having charge of a party in the Shan Hills. We have only pitched tents once, the first day out of **Bhomo**. Watts Jones developed some of my photos the other day, one came out awfully well... Now tomorrow & the next day I shall be very busy with my longitude observations, that is if it is a fine night & the telegraph line not interrupted; then I shall have a whole heap of computations to do. I'm getting rather a dab at them. Ewe always have a breakfast before starting or large chota hazri, porridge, poached eggs & coffee & then lunch cold on the march about 10 o'clock. I have my dozen of champagne still. I shall have some at Christmas & I shall drink your good health my pet. I wonder how old **Harry** has done in his exam.

"Dec 3. We did 18 miles today & got in about 5; I sent on my interpreter in the morning with cards for the Fuhkwanor (?) Commissioner, who sent out about a dozen police to meet us so we came in all right; a crowd mostly of boys followed us but they didn't do anything. ...We got up as high as 8,000 on the march, but here are down to 5,800, but it is pretty cold. You darling, I do feel for you, having your baby all by yourself. I dreamt last night that I had a telegram that you had twins, boy & girl. The boy & you were very well but the girl died."

He is held up from doing observations by low cloud. As well as getting Chinese kit for the Khalasis, "...Watts Jones & I are also getting some for ourselves to wear if we find it necessary. Missionaries in China must have a ghastly time."

5th December 1898, to Ida (presumably from **Yung Chong**): "Last night we went to the telegraph office & got into communication with Pirie but I couldn't observe a single star (*A time signal would be required to fix longitude from a star sight*). ... The telegraph clerk (Chinese) understands very little English but knows the English letters & sends them slowly out as the machine ticks. I feel so anxious, but I hope no news is good news. ... Last night I got onto 3 different stars but as soon as I did so they disappeared. Oh my sweetheart I do wonder how you are. Watts Jones & I read the evening service yesterday being Sunday. I read the service & he the lessons, lots of boys yelling outside most of the time. ... Watts Jones has decided to start for **Shun-ning** tomorrow as he wants to get to where the railway run (*sic*); I must wait here till I get my longitude observations & that means a clear night. ... As soon as I get started from here I shall have less time than ever as I mean to keep up a regular triangulation going & that means a lot of computations. I have bought a warm Chinese coat for about Rs 20 lined with white sheepskin, I think, with great loose sleeves, makes me feel quite warm.

"Dec. 6. Watts Jones went off today... I don't think I shall be able to observe tonight. The telegraph office is about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour's walk from here through the town & I make rather a funny procession, headed by two huge Chinese lanterns; the only thing that reconciles me to stopping here is that I may get news of you, but it's very dull work & I long to be on the march again & at work. One can get a lot of good food here, very good flour amongst other things." *He further regrets no news of her especially as there won't be another opportunity for a long time.* "I can walk about here all night without any molestation, except a small crowd of boys. I haven't the faintest notion when I can post this.

"8th Dec. At last I got fairly decent observations on the nights of the 6th & 7th. I want to do a little tonight. Anyhow I march tomorrow. I had a letter from Watts Jones yesterday saying that he had some things at his first camp out. I went out today & observed from a hill about 3 miles from here. When I got in I got out my camera & went out onto the City wall & was at once surrounded by a crowd who

were quite quiet while I was taking my photos, but when I had done followed my home hooting & throwing a few stones. I shall be glad to be on the move again as I have had enough of this place; tomorrow morning I have some work to do, which will delay me an hour or two, but I shall only do a shortish march. Pirie at **Bhamo** told me yesterday that no telegram had come from England; I can't make it out; oh! my darling I do hope you are all right. I am getting so nervous at getting no news. (*Justified as Violet had been born on the 23rd of November.*) He also told me that there had been another rising in the Swat Valley & that troops were collected in readiness at Hoti Mardan. December is getting on. I am going to carry on triangulation from here to **Shun-ning** which will be very useful. It will also give me a lot of work. I feel so awfully fit & well. Today was market day & the place was crowded." *He is downhearted because he can't expect to hear from her for another two months. ...* "& imagine the worst & that I have killed you."

"Dec. 9. I really am off tomorrow. I was out all this morning measuring my base & taking angles.

"Dec. 12. I started at about 8.30 on the 10th & marched about 10 miles also going up a hill off the road. The first 6 miles was across the plain, then through rolling downs alternately grassy & covered with pine trees. I camped at **Yan-Yin** where Watts Jones had his things stolen. I came about 13 miles over much the same sort of country. Today I only came 3½ miles, first down hill to a river which we had to ford & I waited there for the mules to come, waited & waited as they never turned up. I came on here & found they had arrived long before by a different path. It was then too late to go on; so I have an easy day & can get on with my letters. I had a letter from Watts Jones today dated the 8th in which he said that he had found that a whole mule load had been stolen in **Yan-Yin** including his uniform; the official carrying on the enquiry in **Yan-Yin** told me that they had a clue but I doubt it. My interpreter parades my unloaded revolver tied onto the front of his saddle as he says there many dacoits (*robbers*) but they never turn up. It has been steadily cloudy all along, which is an awful nuisance. I have a fine hill just ahead up which I go tomorrow; I am here 3,600 ft & it looks quite 8,000 ft. I hope to reach **Shin-ning** on the 18th and a few marches further on expect to catch up Watts Jones. I do wish I could get news of you, that is the one thing I keep longing for. I am writing now with about six Chinamen looking on. If I tell them to go away they go & come back about 2 minutes after. My two Madrassis work very well, I have put them & my 3 Khalasis into Chinese kit, a great joke to them all, but they can go about without attracting attention. It is just as cloudy today as ever. I would do anything for the sight of a star, to get my latitude. It is a very different climate to the Shan Hills. I hope as it is so cloudy here, the haze may set in later. My beard is a horrible red. Ida you wouldn't love me a bit if you saw it. I do wonder how old **Harry** has done in his exam, give him my love.

"Dec. 18. So far as letter writing is concerned I have neglected you sweetheart, but you have been most continuously in my thoughts; also my letters to you are so much longer than to anyone else. On Dec. 13 I marched from **Kagai** to **Yutien**, a stiff march anyhow, but I went by a roundabout path in order to get to the top of the hill 8,200 ft. When I got near the top it was lovely walking, all short grass with daisys (*sic*). I was amongst clouds so sat in a little hollow & eat my lunch. Then when it was clear I observed & then had along walk down hill to **Yutien**, where I was received with a good deal of boo-hooing. I had a funny upper room, half a room, the other half no floor, so very soon this lower half was filled mostly with boys. I stood their remarks for some time, then they got bolder & little stones began to drop about, so I got up suddenly & got a large bamboo & then had them on toast, because to escape they had to run under me & I gave I to them hot, after which I had absolute quiet. On the 14th I had another long day to **Sian Chan**, a small village with no inn & I had to pitch my tent in a ploughed field. There was rain that evening & next morning, so that when I got into **Mongyu** (?) on the 15th I got a sort of bronchitis & on the 16th on the march to **Shun-ning-fu** felt very bad, as weak as a cat. I think I had fever to (*sic*) now it has turned into just an ordinary heavy cold & I am all right. **Shun-ning-fu** is a walled town but small. I had a big comfortable room there in a phoongyi-chawn (*phoongyi would seem to be a Burmese Buddhist monk; chawn, possibly something to do with boasting*). From there two marches took me in here, down one valley & it was quite pleasant to be on the flat instead of climbing hills. I made a great entry here with nine Chinese soldiers, but the people seem quite pleasant. The inn yard is crowded with them, but I have them kept at a certain distance. I halt here a day as I haven't had

a halt since **Yung Chong**. This is my interpreter's old home, and he's very pleased at getting here again. I had to give triangulation as I got into a strip of country covered with jungle. I had a funny dream about you. I dreamt that we were engaged at syzabad there was a great tent pegging contest & your little Campbell & I got into the final.. He beat me & the prize was a silver bracelet, so he rode up to you & offered it to you. You said, 'Thanks very much but as you beat my champion I couldn't possibly accept it.' I was so pleased at your standing up for me that I wrote down to Calcutta & got you a gold c**b chain bangle! There's an interesting little story.

"I really don't see the slightest chance of getting news of you, after the arrival of the baby till I get to Tali-fu early in February. I have to begin observing stars in ¼ of an hour; I wonder how dear little **Chucky** is getting on. My cold has rather taken away my appetite at least for lunch, I use about 8 pactines (?) a day. I had two mule loads upset today, the path was very bad, paved but not mended for 50 years I should think. I have just shot one star to the north. Now I'm waiting for one to come up to the south, in the meantime my theodolite standing in the inn yard is an object of great curiosity. This would be an impossible country to take a lady to. Most inns have a hole in a back yard for retiring but at **Mongyu** there wasn't one so I asked my interpreter what I should do; he called one of my Chinese coolies who opened the iron door & took me out into the street & said that was the best place. I had a candle with me, so I put it down & walked 20 yards up the street & proceeded to perform. When I got to the paper part my coolie who had been sitting by my lamp, advanced & in spite of my shouts to get out politely handed me a piece of paper!

"Dec. 19. I have had a nice lazy day, but a good part of it spent paying a visit to the Cho Kiran (?) & receiving his in return. I took two photos of himself & family. I don't know how they will turn out. His son also paid me a visit & said his mother had a skin disease on her face, so I presented a piece of Pear's soap for which he was very grateful. It is all so funny, sweetheart, you can't quite realise that they are a real people, not a bit out of the 'Mikado'. The Cho was very pleasant & sent me a present of two jowls (?) & some fruit.

"Dec. 20. I had a long day. Off at 8 & first climbed a big hill, observed & then onto camp 8 miles from **Yincho**, in at (?)

"Dec. 22. My hill fortunately was right on the path so I got into camp fairly early.

"Dec. 22. I mixed these two days up; on the 21st I didn't get into camp till dusk, going up a hill over 7,000 ft high.

"Dec. 23. I halted at **Mong Lai**, which was the first Shan (*a Tai ethnic group of South-east Asia that live primarily in the Shan State of Burma*) village I had come across about here, but I spent all day up on a fine hill 4,000 ft above my camp.

"Dec. 24. Did a long march, 16 miles & into camp at dusk, small village, put up in a Chinese hut.

"Dec. 25. Christmas Day & I only had a very short march, 7½ miles to **Mong Yaung**, a small Shan town, where I am putting up in a phoongyi-chawn. There is the usual crowd, but here being Shan the women form a majority. Amongst the Chinese the women are kept in the background. I expect to meet Watts Jones tomorrow. I had a note from him today; he is finding it very difficult to find a line for his railway. Darling, I can't write much till I hear of you. I dreamt again last night that you had twins, a girl & then a boy! Dear heart I do long to have news of you & how you are. I still have my cold, but very slight; otherwise I'm feeling very fit.

"Yesterday I saw a lot of jungle fowl & had two shots but they were really out of range, then I stalked a peacock thinking I'd have him for my Chin times (?) dinner but he was too wily & wouldn't let me get nearer than about 90 yards. Directly one gets into Shan country there seems plenty of game. I shall celebrate Christmas with Watts Jones tomorrow & stand him a pint of champagne, & in five days there will be our wedding day & I wondering all the time whether you are even alive, my darling. That is why I feel I cannot write much to you, my pet. I may get a batch of letters in a few days, two fellows Turner & Ker are coming up from **Lashio** (*in Burma*) to examine the country, the former for the trade & the

latter as a mining engineer; they were to leave Lashio on the 15th. & it is 8 marches to Kumlong & 9 more on here; but I fancy they will be a bit late. My cold is reduced to a 3 pocky-a-day wallah. Those socks you knitted, Ida, rather long in the leg are so comfortable. I shouldn't mind some more but with 3 chicks to look after you must have your hands full.

“Dec. 28. I met Watts Jones on the 26th & we celebrated Christmas together then came on here 13 miles on the 27th. This is **Mong Hsa**, a small Shan town where we are in a fine big poongyi-chawn. Tomorrow we separated but may meet again for a day in 2 or 3 days. I then go by a round about way to **Yincho**, expect to reach there on the 10th January & then go slowly up to **Tali-fu** to get there early in February. I am very fit & if only I could get news of you, my darling, I should feel all right. I have had a day's holiday, spent it writing & I developed two more photos yesterday, that makes 4 decent ones I've got & about 8 complete failures, however that I expected. In fact I'm surprised that any have come out. I think I shall more (*sic*) new ground well surveyed than anyone else has ever done on this frontier, chiefly through starting so early; for instance on the **Mekong** we had only just begun work now; and by going up the hills as I do I can get in a lot of country. I shall be very busy from here to **Yincho**, as nobody has been over the road & I have to report on it for the intelligence Dept. besides my own survey work. I feel very satisfied with my work so far. I wish I could combine exploration work with being with you, my darling, but if I must be away from you this is infinitely nicer than an ordinary party. My sweetheart, if you are well you must now be up & about, don't you pity me with no news of you; I wish to goodness I could have heard at **Yungchong**; it's dreadful to think I must wait more than a month before I can get news of you after the baby's birth; fortunately I have heaps of work & very little time to get doleful.

“Dec. 29. I am up in a cold camp, a little Chinese village 7,000 ft up on a bare range, added to which it rained a good deal during the march, so it is jolly cold. I meant to pitch my tent, but everything is wet, so I went into a Chinese hut. Watts Jones went off a day's march in another direction, but we meet again for a day on the 31st at **Mong Sha**. I expect it will freeze tonight. I shall be so glad to get into the New Year, I shall feel a bit nearer you. Although it is jolly cold, the Chinese all wear cotton clothes, with the result that they are always having coughs; they blow their noses in the same way that a labourer at home does, only not so skilfully. The worst of putting up in a hut is that they are generally full of smoke; my eyes are watering like anything now. I wonder what you are doing now, my sweetheart. I long so to be with you. You might look about for some place to leave **Margaret & Enid**; so that you can come out with me, unless I am sent out on one of these jobs again, when of course it wouldn't be worth your while coming out. I don't know now when the Chatham course will come off. When the 6 months in St John's Wood are up, try & get a little house somewhere & live as economically as you can, because constant going home & coming out is rather expensive. I just been out trying to shoot stars but failed owing to the clouds. I've never wished you a happy New Year, my pet; I do with all my heart & to my \wedge^3 little chicks. Don't let them forget their father. You will be glad to get dear Bicky (?) home. Give my love to **Harry & Tommy**, dear boys both. (*Her younger brothers*) I think you had better address your letters to C/o Grindley Groom & Co, Bombay, because I can telegraph to them to forward to Singapore or wherever it may be. You needn't be a bit afraid about me being in any danger, dearest, there is really not the slightest. I really prefer being by myself to being with Watts Jones, he is such a queer chap altogether; always arguing & thinking he knows everything. Or wedding day tomorrow, sweetheart (*wasn't it on the 27th*) I shall drink your health tomorrow. I halt here & go up a hill & march back to **Mong Hsa** on the 31st. There are 4 children in this house & the eldest only looks about 4. The Chinese go in for large families, much more than the Shans; that is why the population of China is so huge. I shall go to bed early tonight, wear my sweater & socks. I long to see some newspapers again. Fancy old Charlie not seen a paper for more than 6 weeks already. Here comes dinner.

“After dinner. I can't go to bed yet, so while I am smoking I can go on writing. Most of the village dropped in to see me eat my dinner. Now as usual the inhabitants of the house are sitting by the fire watching me write. Dinner has warmed me up & I feel quite comfy. I long to have you on my shoulder again on a good winter's night in England. My bed has been mended & I slept successfully on it last night but I don't know that I don't pref a good heap of straw. There's more sown to turn (?)

about; however tomgut (?) I have put my bedding on a Chinese sort of bedstead, just planks with straw on them. Something I'm doing amuses my audience, because there is a subdued titter going on. Here (*sic*) that we have got into **Shan country** the chicken have ordinary white bones, but amongst the Chinese they have black bones; I met a few like that on the Mekong Mission. I've sent a man down towards **Kimlong** with a note to try & find Davies & also get hold of our dak & bring it along. (*Mail stops, popularly called 'Dak bungalows' served as mail delivery and pickup points. In the early days of the Raj, mail was transported by relays of people who either travelled on foot or on animals like horses. Later, bicycles were also used by the postmen to deliver mail. Dak bungalows were places where the postmen and - more importantly - their horses took a break.*) I shall have to halt a day when I do get it. The pace that I write at astonishes my audience, compared to the slow way in which each Chinese character is formed. One can get lots of food everywhere in Yunnan. I have brought a lot of unnecessary tinned stores. Another year I would bring 1 dozen of Madeira instead of ½ a dozen to drink with the most excellent walnuts one gets everywhere. The best fruit comes on later. Now there are pears very good for cooking & a few oranges. Now goodnight, my darling & God bless you.

“Dec. 30. I went out along the ridge plane tabling, clouds on all the hills above 8,000 ft, got back at 2.30; had a note from Watts Jones who has his camp about 4 miles from here asking me to come down & have a shoot, as he had got two peacock & there were a lot more, however it is too late & I have to go up a hill near here on my way back to **Mong Hsa** tomorrow. It is curious one has more difficulty about getting guides amongst the Shans than amongst the Chinese. The former are always in a funk that the Chinese authorities will jump on them if they help us too much. It wasn't cold last night but jolly cold today on the hill tops. The worst of these hill villages is that there is literally no room to pitch a tent; so one has to go into a hut; on the main roads there are always inn where one can get a room to oneself. I rather dislike getting in early as I have nothing much to do & I don't feel very much in a writing humour.

“Dec. 31. My sweetheart, this must go off now. I had such a cold day, I wish I had brought gloves, all well with me; but oh! how I long for news of you. God bless you, my sweetheart, my fondest love & heaps of kisses to your dear self & the children, ever your devoted lover & husband, Charlie. Love to Uncle William (*Ida's father's brother*) & aunt Marian.”

1st January 1899, to Ida: “My darling sweetheart, Here is the New Year & I can say that we shall meet this year. I had a short march today because there is no village beyond this which by the way is called '**Umita**' a Shan village. I've put up in a small phoongyi-chaun. I felt a little colly wobbly today & last night owing to the cold on the hill I went up; if I came here again I should bring a lot more warm clothing. I had my last china cup broken today, but I can buy them anywhere. Watts Jones shot 3 peafowl the day before yesterday. A great piece of luck my interpreter's pony was ill today, he was doctored with some dried stuff mixed into pepper & shumshu, the spirit made from rice; he also had smoking smouldering paper held under his nose & now feels better. **Mong Hsa** was 4,400 ft & this is 5,100 & tomorrow I shall be a good deal higher. My interpreter who is rather a character, said, as we were walking along that he felt sure we should get a dak today, but we are off the main road & don't get on again till we reach **Y-incho** in 10 days. I got some flour today but not so good as some I saw at **Yungchong**, which was equal to the best. I am wearing my C**]era (?) belt today. I snuggled into my bed last night, it was cold & longed for you. This letter will continue for a month. I must write as much as I can on days when I have a short march, now tomorrow I mean to make as long a march as possible in order to make up for my short one today. I may possibly come back via Burma, if we get to **Yunnan-sen** pretty early & haven't to go east of there I probably shall, taking a northern route back, all new country; by this, of course I should greatly add to the amount of survey done. We expect to meet Capt. Pottinger RA & Lieut. Hunter RE at **Yunnan-sen**, they coming up through China from Shanghai. I rather hope I shall come back through Burma, it will be more convenient in many ways & cheaper for Govt. as my mules have to be paid back to **Bhamo**. I very much wonder whether I shall get the outfit & deputation allowances I asked for; it will mean Rs 2,000 extra for the season & that means £130 which would be very useful. I'm afraid, sweetheart I haven't made a very good bundabast (*arrangement*) about sending money home for you; you see one's starting expenses into camp come to a

good lot, though one spends very little once one is in camp; however I told the bank at Bangalore to send you home £75 each month when they draw my pay, beginning on the 1st February. So you will £75 sent to Cox about the 20th of each month; when I get to Bangalore & settle up accounts I will see what else I can send; as I want to have a balance at Cox's as soon as possible; but I must keep enough to pay my passage home. Of course your expenses just now have been pretty big, and will last some time; I hope though by the end of February you will have got into some cheaper place. I strongly recommend Bedford as that is undoubtedly where your father will go & you can then really see something for (*sic*) them but if a trip to say Bournemouth would do you good you must take it, remember only be economical when you are well. It is very difficult to write or think of plans when I have no news whatever, just the time too when I should like to have news most. You darling, you are never out of my thoughts. I wonder to myself why a telegram hadn't arrived at **Bhamo** on Dec. 9. Where you very ill or where you late & then perhaps it was a boy, but I feel I wouldn't care tuppence whether it is a boy or girl, if I only knew you were well. I comfort myself in thinking you have a good doctor & a good nurse. Now it is time for my stars.

“Thank you, I shot them successfully now. I'm going to have a little brandy to warm myself, I feel so cold; in a few days I'm going to promote myself to the one thick vest I have. Between **Talli-fu** & **Yunnan-sen** 20 marches or so. I believe the road never goes below 5,000 ft & at **Tali-fu** is close on 7,000 ft, there I shall have several hours observing for longitude. I do love you so, my pet, I sometimes think the pain you have gone through is not so bad as the gnawing anxiety for you I suffer daily, nobody loves me. This is the longest time I have ever been without news of you. There are no pi-dogs here, they are all regular Chinese dogs, quite black or quite white with jolly woolly coats, and they are not curs generally, but bark furiously if you enter their village. There is no Chinese post so I can't send **Chucky** (*her young brother now aged 16 whose proper name was Stanley Thomas*) any stamps.

“Have you begun to teach **Margaret** regular reading, if you went to Bedford she might go to the kindergarten, dear little souls how I do love them, but never so much as I love you. I shall do my level best to get home for 28th June. I shall do all I can in the way of getting things ready for the fair map before I reach Bangalore; so as to be delayed as short a time as possible. I see June 27th is a Monday, well I'll be home by then; I don't quite know how much leave I shall have due to me, but something like 6 months. I already imagine our meeting! I wonder if you ever think of it. I generally wake up early when the rest of the camp do & have a lovely ½ hour before I get up thinking of you; these cold mornings I don't at all like getting out of my warm bed. How I shall revel in my dak when I do get it, but even then it won't have the news of you I want.

“Jan. 2. To-day I came about 12 miles, first fairly level but a very narrow path, then gradual ascent of 2000 ft, then drop of 1,100 & another rise of 2,000 ft finishing off at 7,500, where on a little level on the hill side I have pitched my tent. I got in at 4.15 & the mules at 5; I must say it is delightful in one's tent & away from a town or village. It is jolly cold. About 3 miles off there is a peak rising to about 9,000 ft with snow on it. To-morrow I shall have to cross the range & have a long march, but except the first climb I fancy mostly down hill. I shot my stars early, in fact before I could see them with the naked eye. It is very fine on the high hills, they are fairly bare, many of them covered with bracken, dead of course just now. I feel so private in my tent, it makes me feel as if I was more with you; our nuptial couch is going strong, but I see signs of another leg breaking, however as I got it 6 years ago, I think it has served me well. I expect you are having a cold winter as we had such a mild one last year.

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“Jan. 3. It wasn't so cold as I expected last night, the thermometer only down to 38 ; I had a stiff climb to start with to 9,600, that is the highest I've ever been this side of India, on the top on both sides of the path were banks of a flower very much like polyanythus, only a different leave (*sic*), very pretty, it was in banks like one has primroses at home. I had a fine view from the top, then had long walk down to this place, **Mong Ku**, a big village in a plain, height 3,900 so it is quite warm. It is Shan, so I've put up in the phoongyi chawn. I got in after 5, so had a long day.

“Jan. 4. An up hill march all day from 4,000 to 7,000, never very steep. I had fine views, so was able to

sketch in a lot which delayed me. I've pitched my tent between the only two small huts here, shot my stars thank you & had my dinner & then turn to my letter & my pipe. I shall have a very long march tomorrow to reach **Mienling** & may halt a day there, although I'd much sooner halt in the jungle where one can have peace & quiet. A goat followed us on the march today & is now bleating outside my tent, nobody owns it. This is not really a village but a sort of small guard house on the top of the range to mark that we have left the **Shan State** & entered China proper. I got in here at 4.30 & the mules at 5. The last three days have been rather hard ones & I shouldn't mind a bit of level going.

“Jan. 5. I had a very easy march today, slightly down hill, after 4 miles I got to a large village where I had to change guides. The headman was very polite & entertained me with a dish of eggs boiled with rice & sugar & tasting nasty. I then came on 2 miles to this place **Parskang**. Here I had to change guides again & there was so much delay that I decided to halt, going into a rather good Chinese temple outside the village. At first I had rather a crowd watching but now some counter attraction has turned up. I think my servant's cooking to-morrow. I believe I have a fairly short march to **Mienling**, the time (?) together too long for one day; I'm not sorry to have an easy day or two. I prefer a short march to a halt as the journey passes the time a bit. This is rather a jolly little valley, much better cultivated than the Shan valleys.

“Jan. 6. Had a level march of 12 miles to the small Chinese town of **Mienling**. Bad win (?) have a small room, very dark.

“Jan. 7. Halted today & have been spending the time inking up work & calling on the two officials civil & military; the former sent out to say “he had fever”, which is the usual excuse when they don't want to see you. Yesterday there was a great crowd in the inn yard, but today there is no one; as I have two soldiers at the door who keep it shut; when I paid my calls I was accompanied by about 100 boys who kept up a sort of running half cheer half groan. & when I left the military man's house I was honoured with 4 explosions of gunpowder, a sort of salute. It is curious how in some places the official is very friendly & in others barely civil. I wonder what sort of reception I shall get at **Ching Tong Ting**, my next town, 7 days march from here & pretty hilly going I fancy. I dreamt last night that I heard from you that you were very well. My sweetheart, I wish I could get news of you.

“5 o'clock, the Colonel returned my visit & brought his youngest son aged 4, so I took a photo of them & gave the little chap a piece of silver, about Rs 2, which greatly pleased the father, who promptly asked me to dinner tomorrow; but I can't stop for that. I should rather like to dine with a Chinaman to see what it was like. He talked a lot about his little boy & so I showed him **Margaret & Enid's** photo; he politely said, 'It's obvious they are the children of a great man'. The civil official has never returned my call, so I wrote him a stinker. I have had to make a lot of enquiries about my road to **Ching Tong Ting**; it is not a main road, so the officials know or pretend they know nothing about it; so I got hold of a merchant & found out all about it from him; it is reported to be very hilly, at which I am glad because I can see a lot of country from the hills, in that having to climb hills off the road; anyhow I know it crosses the **Mekong** about two marches from here. By starting so early in the season I have already got a tremendous lot of work done; and if I don't have to go beyond **Yunnan-sen**, the capital & so can return to Burma I shall have a fine lot of surveying done. I really don't know where I shall get any news of you; certainly not till I get to **Tali-fu** at the end of this month; oh! if I could only get one word that you were well, I shouldn't mind. You darling, I do love you so very very much. All this time I'm quite certain you're not alive & get very dismal; it is only the heaps of work I have to do & keeps me going & I must say I am awfully well. Everybody is enjoying the halt, as I have kept them going pretty well; especially my old surveyor Ramsbad (?).

“Jan. 8. I had a useful march, about 11 miles, started by going up 2,800 ft, a stiffish climb but had a fine view from the top & then a nice down hill into camp, where I have put up in a sort of shed. Tomorrow I see a good climb ahead of me & it is said to be a long march; if it is very long I shan't be able to do it, as I can't do more than 12 or 13 miles while surveying. **Ching Tong Ting** is said to be 7 marches from here, I've just been writing up my plane table. The two stars I shoot now come in nicely before dinner. It is jolly getting quite into new country; nobody has been here before. I have an escort

of two soldiers & I have taken on an ex-soldier as a cooly to carry my plane table. I came on a lot of yew trees on the hill side today, both small & very large, also a fine cedar. I keep wondering, you darling, how you are. I now dream of you most nights; last night it was that you were alive all right, but not well enough ever to come out to India again. Now goodnight my pet, I must to bed early, as I want to start early tomorrow.

“Jan. 9. I had a longish march today, 14 miles with a good deal of up & down mostly along hills looking down onto the **Mekong**, and in this village I've got into the best village I've been into in China. The back has a fine upper verandah with a splendid view of the Mekong about 2,500 below & heaps of big hills. This is the sort of place I should like to halt in, but no time. I saw two pheasants today & also an animal that looked very much like a leopard but he was about half a mile away. Tomorrow I go down & cross the Mekong, the crossing will take some time, so I don't fancy I shall get very far beyond. Out of the 8 marches I was told it would take to **Ching Tong**, it will take me 3 to the Mekong instead of 2. I was told at that rate it will take me longer to get to **Ching Tong** than I expected, but I don't mind as I don't want to get to **Tali-fu** before the end of the month. I got about a lb of honey from a village I passed through, it is awfully good too; there are heaps of good things in this country in the eating line, one really wants very few tinned things except milk. The Chinese are very much better cultivators than the Shans, it's wonderful what use they make of every little stream, first for a sort of see-saw arrangement for husking (?) the paddy, then along channels on the hill side to irrigate the fields & they manage to make terraces on very steep hills too.

“Jan. 10. A short march 9 miles down hill to the Mekong which I crossed in a sort of big punt, much better than the dug outs in the Shan hills, and am now in a very nice wooden house on the high bank. The headman of this place, an old man during the Panthay rebellion, caught & drowned in the river 13 Panthays, a feat which has made him quite celebrated in the country round. I saw 5 wild duck on the river but couldn't get near them. This is the lowest, 3,000 ft, I shall e for a long time. The hills are all wooded where not cultivated & it is all like the Shan hills still. My interpreter has just come in to tell me that this headman is a noted budmash (?). Ching Tong Ting is now said to be days march from here. There is the same jolly old mist in the Mekong valley here as lower down, not clearing away till 10 or 11 o'clock. I can't get out of that habit you taught me of wanting to go somewhere one thing about 3 o'clock in the morning; it is very cold going outside & if I refuse to give in I generally don't get any more sleep. I took in my belt 2 holes today, I should like to weight myself, I'm getting quite thin. You wouldn't know me in my beard; I really didn't recognise myself in the glass today. Goodnight, my darling, I love you ever so & would give anything for one word of news of you.

“Jan. 11. I'm in my tent tonight, came about 13 miles very gradual up hill & then a drop at the end; a pleasant march through pine forest. This little village has only 4 wretched huts, so I've pitched my tent but is all on the slope, so I am not very comfortable. My bed broke again yesterday while I was sitting on it, so I slept very comfortably on straw; for tonight I've patched it up & I hope it will hold me. I don't mind sleeping on straw in a house, but I don't think it's very wise on the ground. Tomorrow I see I've a good high range to climb over.

“Jan. 12. For the first 8 miles on my march today I kept fairly level, then had a steep climb of two miles onto a range where by climbing a steep hill another 400 ft higher I got a fine view, so stayed on it two hours plane tabling, & told my mules to stop at the first water they came to & I got in just at dark, total distance 11 miles. I am in a very good upper room in a small village; all the villages about here are small; at least one real village is split up into 4 or 5 parts dotted about on the hill side, so that each house can be near its owners fields. I notice two curious things in the valley I marched up at first. The straw was all stacked up in trees & the fields were terraced by stone walls. I'm really 3 miles short of the real march. I find I can't while surveying do the marches I'm told of, which really are what mule caravans do. I've had to say goodbye to my last pair of stars, s they get 4 minutes earlier every day & I now can only get a pair an hour apart which is a nuisance. I didn't have a good night, I was very cold. I was woken up as usual about 3 & couldn't get to sleep again owing to the cold, so I lay thinking about you & got so in the dumps that I found myself crying. You darling, you don't know how I adore you.

“Jan. 13. I did a longish march, but not hard because there was very little but down hill or level, the first three miles were down hill into a well cultivated long narrow valley, up which I went for about 4 miles, then slight up hill for a bit, over into another valley down which I went & now I am encamped just by the stream which is full of boulders & very noisy; I am a good deal lower & so it is warmer. Last night in bed I wore a pair of long stockings & keep (*sic*) beautifully warm & in consequence slept right through the night without a halt. This path I am coming by seems little used & is a regular across country path. Today some villagers gaily told me **Ching Tong Ting** was 7 marches off, I believe it really is 3. It is most interesting going ahead into unknown country. It is beginning to get a little hazy but not enough to interfere much, but it puts one out in judging the distance a range of hills is off. I shall halt a day at **Ching Tong**, calling on the officials & also taking a look round the place, as I have to write a report on all the towns I visit. I shall soon become quite an authority on this frontier of India, but being this frontier & not the north west it won't do me any good; however it is very jolly work if only I could get news of you, I would feel ever so much happier. Davies and I have arranged so far as possible not to go over the same roads, so as to get in double the amount of work, and we shall between us do about 6 times the amount we did on the Mekong mission, there were so many delays there, here there are none, except the 6 days I was kept at **Yung Chong-fu** owing to the clouds. Hope to goodness I shall have fine weather for my remaining three longitude stations.

“Jan. 14. Early this morning I had a little excitement in the shape of my mules not having been tied up as they ought to have been, wandering about. One of them got mixed up with my tent ropes & brought the whole show down on the top of me; luckily nothing was broken. I used some strong language at the mulengu (?). This happened about 6 o'clock, so I got up & had breakfast early, started in a dense fog. Just after lunch I came on a small river with about 20 wild duck on it. I stalked them beautifully to about 30 yards off but they got under the bank, only one old boulder popped his head up, so I let fly, with the only result of wounding him & he got away. My boots gave way today & the last few miles I was walking on a nail. **Ching Tong Ting** takes a lot of getting to; from here it is said to be 3 marches. I am encamped this evening in my tent again on a level piece on the hill side; got in at 4.30 & the mules at 5.

“Jan. 15. Nothing particularly interesting today, marched 11 mile amongst pine trees.

“Jan. 16. Today after about 5 miles I got into the bottom end of a long cultivated valley, very pretty because there are bamboos here & there amongst the fields a fair sized river flows down the middle about 50 yards wide & up this I came 5 miles & then I saw a lot of duck amongst the paddy fields, so as it was 4 o'clock I decided to halt, went after the duck & got one duck & 3 teal & missed a snipe; there are said to be a lot of duck all the way up the valley, which I follow to **Ching Tong Ting**, said to be only one day from here, but if the duck interrupt me much, I may make two days of it. I also saw quite 10 pea-fowl earlier in the day but my gun was being (?). It is jolly getting a bit of shooting again. I have pitched my tent amongst bamboos. This plain is fairly hot for here being only about 4,000 ft. The lower end where I first struck it was only half cultivated & several villages half in ruins. The Chinese hate a hot place. There is a lot of sugar cane grown here. You dear pet, I was thinking of you nearly the whole march today.

“Jan. 17. I only did a short march 9½ miles & quite level, but I got amongst the duck & that took up a lot of time. I got 4 duck & 1 teal; then my mules had their midday meal a little off the road & didn't see me pass by, & waited for me & then came along but got in late. I believe **Ching Tong** is only 6 miles or so on. I hear there is Sahib there, I hope it is Davies, but I think it is more likely some French chap; I know they are surveying for a railway from **Tong-King**. I have pitched my tent just outside an apparently deserted temple under a huge tree. I shall have an easy march tomorrow. I don't like these plains for surveying, they are full of villages & it is a job getting their names, as generally the people are afraid to tell, one's best chance is to get hold of an old woman, who will chat away like anything, but it all takes time.

“Jan. 18. A very short march, level to **Ching Tong**, quite a small town, got a good large upper room; found two missionaries here, Australians Belonging to the China Inland Mission, Nicholls & Sanders by

name, went & called on them in their inn; found them very pleasant, so had to them to tea & dinner. They, like all the missionaries in China, wear Chinese dress, pigtailed &c & eat Chinese fashion. They were touring about, came from **Tali-fu**; they had just heard that a missionary in the next province **Hwejo** had been killed, his name was Fleming. They lead very plucky lives & I must say I respect missionaries in China immensely. The people here seem friendly enough.

“Jan. 19. Halted here & have been very busy working up police tables &c doing accounts &c.

“Jan. 20. I had the two missionaries to dinner again last night & also gave a tin of pea soup & 2 tins of Army rations as they had absolutely nothing with them & just what they got at the inns. There was a great thunderstorm last night & twice I had to take shelter on the march today. The path was very slippery from the rain so I only did a short march 8 miles & have got rather a nice room in the headman's house. I enjoyed talking with the two missionaries, they were quite young, younger than me I should think. Certainly the missionaries in China carry their lives in their hands; a great friend of theirs, Fleming, was murdered last month in **Hwejo** the next province to this & about four months ago in **Yunnan-sen** there was a plot amongst the people to rise, murder the 5 missionaries there & also loot the shops but the officials got wind of it & got all these soldiers they could together & patrolled the main street on the affected day, so nothing happened. I hope the English Govt will take good satisfaction out of the Chinese for this poor fellow's death. You needn't be a bit frightened about me, because I go about under official auspices. Today I was honoured with a flag carried by my escort. The missionaries came out 2 miles on the road with me & seemed so grateful for my hospitality. I may very likely meet them again at **Tsu-Hswing-fu**. They told a lot that was interesting about Chinese ways. I hope to get to **Tali-fu** on the 31st & oh! how I long for news of you, my pet; I don't think I ever quite realised how very very dear you are till I think I may have lost you. If you are ill when this reaches you. You must get well darling. I & the children couldn't get on without you. I am getting all the maps ready for the fair drawing in Bangalore, so that I can see them started & bolt off home. I am very keen to meet Davies to see where he has been & how his surveying has been getting on. It is very cloudy tonight so I don't think I shall be able to shoot stars, but as I've made so short a march I don't much mind.

“Jan. 21. Had another short march 9 miles. I'm in no great hurry to get along here, As I don't want to be in **Tali-fu** before the 31st. This village **Long-Kai** is in a small cultivated valley on the same small river I have been following for nearly a week; it is one of the sources of the Red River, which flows through **Tong King**. I have a very nice room in a sort of official rest house. Shot my stars before dinner & had a nice dinner but I feel sleepy & not very much inclined for writing. I got in at 2.30 so was able to do a lot of inking in, general writing names &c on the map. I am trying to get all this as well in hand as possible so that the fair maps can get well started before I go on leave. I think your best plan will be to take lodgings for a small furnished house at Bedford I am so longing to be with you; I am thankful I have heaps of work to do it keeps me from getting doleful.

“Jan. 22. Got off early 7.30 & got in at 5, doing 14 miles, a long march, while I am surveying the same valley I have been following since Jan 16 it is now getting quite small. Put up in and inn in a big village.

“Jan. 23. Today I did a short march as I saw a big hill east of here I mean to go up tomorrow, as I shall get a good view out of this valley. A good deal of uphill today & now I am in my tent at 6,500 on the hill side & jolly cold. I halt here tomorrow to give me plenty of time in case my hill proves further off than it seems; hills generally do. All the hills here are covered with cultivation and villages. Have been writing up my letter to my mother.

“Jan. 24. Climbed my hill 8,500 ft & had a splendid view still very little haze; got back by 1.30. I passed the village with a lot of sheep. I am treating for one now rather big chap for 1,800 cash, i.e. about Rs 3-4-0. I shall be glad to get a decent bit of mutton again; from here onward I am told there are heaps of sheep. It was jolly cold last night very near freezing. I was quite reluctant to get out of bed this morning. Coming down from my hill over a grassy slope, it was so steep I sat down & tobogganed down quite a long distance. You dear pet, I've been able to send in 3 letters to you, but not one word

have I received & it is 2 months & eight days since I left **Bhamo**. After dinner I feel awfully sleepy, but it is only ¼ to 8. I generally go to bed soon after 8, unless I have some work to keep me up. I hope to do a fair long march tomorrow; I believe it is 4 marches to **Meng Hwa** a big plain with a largish town & from there 3 to **Tali-fu**, so I ought to reach there on 31st January. High shall send a man on ahead with a telegram to father for news; so that I may get an answer as soon as possible. How anxious I am, my sweetheart, I can't possibly tell. I can get on without other news so long as I know you are well. Goodnight & God bless you.

“Jan. 25. My camp today is just about the same height as last camp & even colder, so I've had a fine camp fire made just in front of my tent & just had dinner (a beautifully tender fowl)& now I feel comfortable. I got my sheep yesterday & began with his kidneys this morning. It is so cold that meat will keep a long time, so one can get it tender. I get to **Nantien** tomorrow; I heard today that Watts Jones left there 3 days ago for **Tali-fu**, in which case I shall probably meet him there, but I want to get my dak, that is what I want. As there was no decent house in the village I pitched my tent. The polar star is one of my stars now, but I shoot him when it is about mid day with you.

“Jan. 26. By Jove, it was cold last night, hard frost, water frozen, my beard again broke but I had a splendid night on straw, which is ever so much warmer than a bed. I came about 11 miles today & in an inn in **Nan-tien**, a big village. The little plain about two miles long is green with beans; the fields are now are crowded with beans, peas & opium; I don't want to the latter, but the two former in about a month will be fine. Had a leg of mutton, tender & very round, one that would have rejoiced your housekeeping heart very little bone & plenty of meat. I heard that Watts Jones passed through here 8 days ago & went to **Meng Hwa** by a round about way; it will take me two longish marches. I've got my men into fine form for an early start, always get off before 8; but then I arrange if possible for a halt about 1 o'clock some place where I want to put up my plane table & where there is water; the mules are unloaded, fires lit & everyone cooks their rice & vegetables; I've had my dinner, shot my stars, written up my diary & also before dark got another plane table board ready, to the great enjoyment of a crowd of Chinamen; just before dinner as they had been staring hard at me for over two hours I told them through my interpreter that they had a good look at me & now I should be glad if they would let me alone & to my surprise they all agreed & vanished. It is not warmer here, as I came down some 2,000 feet in the March & I don't want my sheepskin coat. I am going to address to c/o Cox & co as I don't know where you will be when this reaches you.

“Jan. 27. This is getting a longish letter; today I came 11 miles with a climb to begin with & then fairly level. I am in an official rest house, not a bad place.

“Jan. 28. A long march, 16 miles to reach **Meng Hwa** which is a big place; plain 20 miles x 3 & the walled city containing about 10,000 inhabitants. I was followed by a great crowd as I came in that they were quite quiet. Put up in a good inn & decide to halt a day.

“Jan. 29. It's lucky I did because it has been raining steadily all the morning. I've been busy writing up reports & lists of village names; I have to write a report for the Intelligence Dept. on the roads & also a separate one on each biggish place I come through. No news here of Davies or Watts Jones. Smoked my last cheroot yesterday, but I have my pipe & tobacco & one can get tobacco of a sort about here. This rain has one good effect in keeping the people away. There isn't a soul in the inn yard, so I have quiet. But I hope to goodness it will clear for my observations at **Tali-fu**. After dinner: it cleared up about midday but the streets were so muddy I didn't go & call on the Ting-Kwan, had plenty to do. My sweetheart I think of nothing but you all day; I almost dread getting to **Tali-fu** for fear of getting bad news; I have a longish march tomorrow up to the end of this plain and lots of villages, which are a nuisance, getting their names. I cannot write freely, sweetheart, till I get news of you. Unfortunately Father (?) will be in camp somewhere, so it will take some time for me to get an answer to my telegram; but Pirie may repeat on some telegrams from Mandalay. In order to occupy the time till the dak reaches **Tali-fu** (the one that has been sent from Bhamo on Jan. 20 & should reach Tali on Feb 12). I mean to make a trip northwards to try and see two important towns north of **Tali-fu**; I calculate this will take me 22 days. I hope to reach the **Yang-tse-Kiang** River; I hope you haven't forgotten your geography

so much as not to remember it. I should like to say that I have seen it. I expect I shall find the two daks waiting for me when I get back to Tali-fu. I shall then have enough reading last me a long time; if I had anything to read I might sit up later, but not having anything & generally being pretty tired, I go to bed almost always before 8.30. I leave letters behind me for Davies, I hope he will get some of them.

“Jan. 15. (?) Had a long march, 15 miles up the **Meng Hwa** plain, full of big villages, & put up in a very fine house.

“Jan. 16.(?) Got in after 5, had to climb to 8,700 & had a fine view of the **Tali-fu lake**, it was lovely, it looks about 25 miles long & 5 miles wide, hills on the west go up to 14,000 feet & are covered with snow; between their foot & the lake is the cultivated plain about 1½ miles wide. I am at **Hsia-Kwan** at the southwest corner of the lake, several other hills had snow on them & there was a little snow on my path under the bushes & in the shade, all the puddles were frozen at midday. It was jolly cold up on my hill. What a grand hill station this would make; you could sail about on the lake all day; the height is about 6,700 much the (*same?*) height of **Naim-Tal**. Tomorrow I have a very short march 8 miles to Tali-fu, and then I shall get news of you. It was quite clear this morning not a cloud but now it is very cloudy; so I can't shoot any stars. I am in a dirty little inn, but there are better ones I'm pretty sure as this is the sort of business suburb of Tali-fu, where all the merchants live.

“Feb. 2. Got into **Tali-fu** yesterday. My description of it must wait till next letter; I've telegraphed to **Wilfred** for news, knowing that father would be in camp, but no answer yet. Did my observations with Pirie at **Bhamo** & then asked him for home news; he said “Mr Smith reports all while.” Line was then interrupted; his message is Greek to me. You darling, I must close this. My most fondest love & heaps of cases to you or do herself & to the 3 chicks, for ever very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.

“Feb. 3. Just starting but have got a telegram from **Wilfred**, “wife & daughter doing well.” Oh! You darling, I am so very very happy to know that you are all right. I do feel a wee bit disappointed at its not being a boy, we evidently don't know the trick, but that is nothing to the great joy I have in knowing you are safe & well. God bless you darling; my very fondest love to you & a kiss to my dear little girlie. I am as fit as possible & don't be a bit nervous about me.”

9th February 1899, to Ida: “we have had to halt for the next two days owing to the Chinese New Year, when nobody does any work, so I have time to get my writing up to date. First my darling, I must talk a bit about our dear little No. 3. I don't know her name or her birthday, and I do so want to know what she is like, is she like **Margaret** or **Enid**; and can you feed her? I'm afraid you will have been disappointed in its not being a son, but I shall be very happy in our 3 girls. Your father & mother have got much more pleasure out of their 3 girls than their 3 boys; I have been too miserable & anxious about you all this time ever to want you to have any more. I love you more than 10 sons. You have been a dear good little wife & have had more bare your share of babies, now you can have a good time. God bless you my darling. We left **Tali-fu** on the 3rd towards the north marching 13 miles up the lake & camping in a temple on the shore; it was lovely. The lake is huge, 25 miles long & varying from 3 to 7 miles wide with plenty of creeks; the heels to the east are low & bare, but the west above Tali they go up to 14,000 feet & were covered with snow. I bought some Tube (?) coloured marble & also a few small silver things, but not worth much. The missionaries in Tali-fu, but Mr & Mrs Grahame, Miss Read & Miss Simpson were all very pleasant, the latter came from Bedford. I had a great reception from the old general at **Tali-fu**; he commands all the troops in Yunnan. I walked up his long courtyard between two lines of soldiers all got ready for my benefit. Well on the 4th we got out of the top of the Tali plain into a smaller one, getting 3 duck & 2 teal on the way, a longish march; so on the fifth we halted. On the 6th we did 15 miles & on the 7th 20 miles not getting in till dark, all good going over 7,000 feet & mostly up plains. Yesterday we came 16 miles & are in a good village in a plane 7500 feet high just on the watershed between the Mekong & Yangtze. We had a lot of duck shooting one day I got 2 geese & Watts Jones 1 & we each got a duck.

“Feb. 16. My darling girlie, the reaction after my great anxiety about you has made me enjoy this trip northwards immensely & I have heaps to tell you. The code has been so great, 14° below freezing one

night that I have just done my necessary writing & got into bed, but my thoughts all day have been with you my pet & as soon as I get time, I will get my letter and up to date. You darling, how I do love you & adore you. I am afraid the disappointment who must have felt a little no. 3 being a girl must have been very great. I just feel, really, no disappointment at all, but just great joy that you are all right. I don't get to **Tsu-Hsiung-fu** for at least another three weeks & that is the first place I have any chance of meeting a dak & today it is three months since I left Bhamo & not a line of your dear writing have I seen. We halted the 9th & 10th for the Chinese New Year, as one can't get any work out of Chinamen those two days; on the 11th we came 15 miles down to the **Yangtze**, here called the **Chiusha** which means golden sand, because there is a good deal of gold in the sand; towards evening we got in amongst a lot of pheasants & I got two cock & Watts Jones one. Oh! Ida, they were so lovely, we had skinned & you will see if they aren't the most beautiful birds you've ever seen. Then we lost our way in the dark & didn't get in to 7 o'clock. Next day we only did a short march, 8 miles along the river; in the morning we went to see an extraordinary hollow stone put up some hundreds of years ago in the shape of a drum. On the 13th we had an uphill march to **Lo-Chiang-fu**, a small town in a big plain & at the northern end rises in a huge snow mountain over 18,000 ft high. The next day, the 14th we halted. The people were not over friendly & when we went up onto a hill to take photos, a crowd of 300 or so followed & chucked a stone or two on our way down. Then we went & called on the officials; the head, the Fu-Kwan sent out to say that he asked to be excused from receiving us; however I sent back that I thought he didn't quite understand that we were English officers paying an official visit, which altered his tone. However the stinker never returned our call. Watts Jones & I separated, he going south & I east. I had to cross a range going up to 10,500 ft, the highest I have been. Today I had a steep down hill to the **Chiusha** which I crossed by a very rickety iron chain bridge & then a long up hill again. The river here was much narrower & going through very rocky gorges. Sweetheart I have heaps to tell you, but always feel so tired. It has been grand weather, cold & bright & I feel as fit as possible. My next big place is **Yungpe** two days from here & I can't go much further east as it is near the borders of **Sechuan Province**, where there is a rebellion going on. I mean to go a bit east though & then turn south to **Tsu-Hsiung-fu**.

"Feb. 19. I have halted a day & have been writing all day but must get on with my letter. On the 17th I had a very long day, as in addition to the march which was 14 miles, I went off to a hill 3 miles off the road, so did 20 miles & got in at 7. When I got in I found my interpreter with a long face. My head mule man had had a row with a man on the road, the latter began it but it ended by my man catching the other a frightful whack on the head with a big stone & he was reported nearly dead, his friends had gone off vowing vengeance; they were employed in some copper mines 3 miles off. The little inn was not exactly a good place for defence, and my mule men knowing the attack if it came would be mainly directed on them, cleared out & slept out in the jungle somewhere. I heard the door barricaded; however nothing came off. Next day I decided to keep with the mules & we made a fast march in here, **Yungpe-ting**, the head of the district, avoiding at the desire of my escort of one, a big village in which it was bazaar day & where he thought the injured man & friends might have collected. On my way in we met two of the latter & by their very mild demeanour guessed rightly that their report to the official here had not met with a good reception. The people here were quite friendly & I sent my interpreter to the Ting Kwan to find out what report had been made. The Ting-Kwan was very polite and said he had told the men he would wait till I came in & if in the meantime I was given any trouble he would be down on the whole of them; so the case was settled, he leaving any punishment on my man in my hands; so I have fined him. If the Ting-Kwan had been any anti-foreigner the whole thing might have been awkward. Today I called on him & on the head of the police, both very polite. The latter had a bad cough so I sent him some cough pills & in return he sent me some rice & pork & the Ting Kwan two ducks & a fowl in lieu of inviting me to dinner, so they were exceptionally polite. This evening I've just come in from a walk round the town; it is walled but like all the walled towns only about half the space inside is occupied by houses, the rest is vegetable fields. I have also found out about my road for tomorrow; got the whole of my reports and inking in up to date, so feel satisfied. This place is much warmer than I've been having, as it is lower and also alas, the winter is coming to an end. You darling, I often wonder where you are, the house was only taken two about now. I do so long to hear from you

my pet; I can't tell you how I miss your letters. Luckily I am at work from morning till I go to bed. I want to know if you are really quite well & how your old enemy the dysentery is. Mind you thank uncle William from me for all his care of you; as soon as I get news of you I will write to him. I love & adore you more than ever my pet & hope when I get home to bring something you will like with me; what it is will depend on our balance at Cox's. I wonder whether the bank at Bangalore are sending how the £75 a month all right; I hope so; don't spend it all. One thing I want to do is to give you 10 days town when you are quite well. About next season's work I don't know, I must find out about the Chatham course, whether there is one coming off next year or not; if any survey officer is required up here I should ask to be sent; if not for the party in India; but I don't want someone else to step in here & reap the benefit of my hard work. If we take Yunnan which is quite possible in the next two or three years I ought to be sent up with the force as survey officer & get something out of it all; anyhow it is a grand climate & lovely work. Don't let on to anyone but I have a scheme in my head if I am sent up here of trying to come back to India around through **Thibet** & be the first Englishman to visit **Hlassa** (sic), the capital, and make myself famous that way. I am thinking out the details every day & they include, don't laugh, a letter & photograph from the Emperor of China, Prince of Wales & Viceroy to the Grand Llama the head of Thibet; I daresay it will all end in smoke. You see Thibet adjoins Yunnan & so is quite close here, though **Hlassa** is perhaps 2 or 3 months march from here. I shall begin by broaching the subject to General Strahan & asked him to suggest it to Lord Curzon & then while I am at home I shall go to the Foreign Office about it. We shall see. Bother you, writing away I've missed my star, now I must find out another.

“Feb. 20. I had an interesting march today, first down the plain for 4 miles & then down a very narrow valley & only did 12 miles no chance of seeing much country, so I got in about 3 o'clock. I wore Chinese grass sandals as my boots had given out found them very comfortable, also wore Chinese calico loose quilted stockings; so my kit is becoming a bit mixed; I've put up in a half finished house; it is clean but a bit airy; but I have come down a bit so it is not so cold.

“Feb. 21. The stages are very badly arranged on this road today, I only came 8 miles & had to halt as there was no place for the wrong; tomorrow & the next day I've got to do something like 16 miles & 20 each day and that means a very long day when I have to survey en route. Here I am at higher again 7,800 in a small village of a new tribe, I took down about 100 words of their language for comparison with others & found it very like the hill tribes round **Meng Hwa** but this is the only village of the sort about here. I hate short marches, I like to have the whole day well occupied; when I so get a dak now I shall revel in it; this is the longest time I've ever been without a letter from you, you darling; I've only got that one short telegram to go on; and you can imagine how I shall revel in my newspapers, fancy old Charlie will have been 4 months without a newspaper & I used to fidget about in England if the Standard was ½ an hour late. I bother myself a good deal wondering if you are all right as regards money. Mind & let me know No 3's birthday as I have to inform the pension fund people. I had my hair cut yesterday & jolly short too, the last cut lasted exactly two months. I may get this sent in through **Yunnan-sen** by the mission dak, but even then it will take a long time to get home. I've got altogether 4 letters sent in to you, I wonder if you have got them. By the bye at **Tali-fu** I got a wire from Pirie that it looked like a revolution case over the Dreyfus case. I wonder what has happened. My next telegraph station is **Tsu-Hsiung-fu** others I get about the 10th March; now for my stars.

“Feb. 23. I had to sleep last night in an inn without any kit, I was taken a wrong path & all my things were 3 miles ahead; however I had a very jolly march, most of it 9,800 ft or thereabouts. I made my dinner of 3 boiled eggs & some rice & breakfast this morning the same, slept on a heap of straw but not very well, so I am jolly tired. I came on to my camp had another meal & then did 10 miles more, all down hill & this is the lowest camp I've had for a month under 5,000 & quite warm. You dear pet I'm too dead tired to write any more so goodnight.

“March 4. I must bring all my writing up to date because I want to devote myself at **Tsu-Hsiung** to reading my dak which I fondly hope to find there on Feb. 22. I had a fine march climbing up a steep hill side to nearly 10,000 ft & keep near that height for a good part of the day, then came down at 7,800

to a solitary inn, having come 14 miles, then I waited for my mules who never turned up. I sent out men to look for them, but got no news so spent the night on a heap of straw in the inn stable, had dinner of 3 boiled eggs & some rice & the same for breakfast the next morning. About 8 o'clock two men turned up who said my mules were 3 miles on in another inn, so on I went, found them all right & had another breakfast. They had taken another road & had only got in at 7 the previous night. The man who fared worst was my surveyor, a Brahman, not being able to eat the inn food, he had to go to bed supperless. I then went on another 10 miles down hill & was jolly fagged when I got in. On the 24th I marched to **Chin-ya-pin**, down to 4,000 ft, hills bare & the march very hot. I found all the villages burning coal, so I got a block as a specimen; the houses had chimneys the first I've seen in China. It was a large village & the crowd very objectionable, a great crowd in the inn yard, which I didn't mind, but some boys found out my only window at the back & began to throw a few stones till I blocked it up with some planks; then they had to content themselves with shouts of 'Yang Kwe', which is not polite, it means foreign devil. On the 25th I marched 12 miles to Sing Kai, put up in a very smelly inn, which made me think of your dear nose, and the next day having only come 8 miles, found two French Roman Catholic priests coming out of a small village to greet me, they could speak no English so we're delighted to find I could speak French and it, they insisted on my stopping with them, were very pleasant & we talked as hard as possible for the rest of the day. I found myself quite close to the **Chiusha** River. They gave me some French newspapers up to Nov. 27 & telegrams to Dec. 27, quite recent news on the 27th I had a very hot march, not an atom of shade, in the valley of the river to a small village **Hsin-chuan**, 11 miles & dirty inn with several mosquitoes who however didn't bite. On the 28th I did 11 miles crossing the river en route this taking a long time, as the current was very strong & my men were afraid to swim the mules, so they were brought over 3 at a time in about, which they strongly objected to, camped at **Jenhokai** quite a plain. On the 1st I marched up this plain, saw some teal but they were too mild, at the end of the march I came up hill onto a small plateau & in the village found another French priest who put me up, he was also very pleasant. He told me that at **Chin-ya-pin** where the crowd were so unpleasant, 14 years ago the French priest there & about 70 native Christians were murdered by the Chinese. My friend wanted me to halt a day with him but I hadn't the time. However I didn't get away till 10 the next morning & came 13 miles up hill & down again but not hot. Yesterday I had a short march only 9 miles & today 12. I don't know why but this morning it was bitterly cold, this cleared the air & I had a fine view; the haze is nothing like what it is in the Shan Hills one can see as far as one wants to for plane tabling. You dear old girlie, you are all day long in my thoughts and no one knows how I long for news of you; our little girlie must be 3 months old & I don't know her name. On the next half sheet the first ½ page was really to my mother that I went on on it to you by mistake. I see I have written up to March 4 & today is March 8, so I have four days to write up."

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"Busy all the afternoon writing up reports &c. I believe it is 7 days march to **Tsu-Hsiung** & I hope to get my dak there, if so I shall give myself a day's holiday & revel in letters & newspapers. I saw some French newspapers with the missionaries up to Nov. 27 & telegrams up to Dec. 27; the latter were mostly about 4 railways that have been sanctioned for Ton Kin; they have one little piece of which they are very proud & were very excited over this new scheme. It is about time they did build more railways there. If they took over the country before we took upper **Bwoma** & have made not 1/10th the progress we have. This is a very poor part of the country, the soil very poor & many of the people in rags; it is near **Szechwan** which I believe is very much over populated & very poor.

"March 4. A 12 mile march most of the way on a bare plateau & on March 5 an up & down hill march, 14 miles, a very bad inn, but I have had a good dinner & do I felt a bit collywobbly before am all right now. I am at nearly 6000 ft so it has turned cold & I've taken to my sheep skin coat again. This is not very interesting country, thinly populated hills bare & dry. I regularly hunger for news of you, my pet. You will have learnt to get on all right without me. I should feel happier if I knew you were all right for money I didn't make a good "bundobast" (*arrangement*) about that. I shall wire to father from **Tsu-Hsiung** for news of you.

“All Yunnan is a splendid country for Europeans, I haven't had a day's illness in 4 months except for an occasional cold & those due to my not having brought enough warm clothes. The Chinese crowds would make it quite impossible for you to come with me, and one is not private enough in the Inns for a lady, but the food throughout is excellent. Now goodnight, my sweetheart; I adore you more than ever.

“March 5. An up & down hill march, so I started early i.e. 7.15 first up about 1000 feet then down to a small river & up the other side 1300 ft. Just as I got to the top a squall of rain & wind came on, however I sheltered in a house so I was all right; then had two hours level up to a valley to camp 12 miles in all.

“March 6. I marched to **Ta Yao Hsien** a small town a small walled town, usual crowd but not objectionable. I had a long march 17 miles the last ten up a big plain with a big walled town at the top **Yao Cho**, crowd big but good. Today I had a short march 8 miles, have pitched my tent inside the walls of a ruined house and just after doing so down came heavy rain, but only for ½ an hour or so. I forgot to say yesterday it rained all the way up that plain, no shelter, so we'll got wet. I shot a teal yesterday & another today.”

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“March 13. On the 9th at the end of my march to a small town **Chenancho** as I was coming round a small bare hill whom should I see below me but Davies, Watts Jones & Kerr a mining engineer, very lucky meeting them, then I got a dak with your letters just a week before our little girlie came. On the 11th we all got in here **Tsu-Hsiung** & I found another dak with your letters to Dec. 23 & you so well & able to get about again. My darling, how I do thank God for his mercy in bringing you safely through troubles but no more babies old girlie, I've had too anxious a time, it isn't worth it. I like the names very much, **Violet** Constance. I am glad you made **Mary** Godmother, it shows you have a forgiving spirit. I have such heaps to write about and not my own news but I am so happy to know you are all right & your dysentery gone, that is lovely. Yes, dear, to move to some more economical place, but I can't advise you as my letters take so long to reach you. But I am sure you will manage all beautifully, my darling. I will love my little girlie just as much as if she were a boy, and I don't mind a bit it's not being a boy. God bless you my dearest, I am so longing to be with you again & do adore you more than ever. My very fondest love & heaps of kisses to your dear self & the chicks, for ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.

“My darling, I've finished all my letters & now I can write a little love letter to you. I long to see my little no. 3. I'm sure she is a dear & pretty but none of them will ever be so pretty as their sweet mother; oh my darling, I do adore & worship you more than ever, I do so long to give you a real good hug. God bless you, my pet. You've been a very dear good little wife heaps of kisses to you & to **Margaret, Enid & Violet**. I like your choice of names very much.”

19th March 1899, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I had to stop in **Tsu Hsiung** till the 17th as Davies & I had a lot of work to do together, had to correct the spelling of over 1000 names for one thing; then on the 17th we started, he going down the main road to **Yunnan Sen** & I buy a roundabout road. A lot of my men got ill in **Tsu Hsiung**, stomach aches & headaches. I believe it was from eating bad fish & they haven't got well and yet, one mule man has dropped behind somewhere & another I had to mount on my pony. I've sent my surveyor off with Kerr, so I'm doing my own surveying & find I get over the march much quicker. I fancy I shall meet Davies again on the 23rd one march before the capital; but I may be late, as I didn't do a long march yesterday & a still shorter one today, owing to my men being ill. It is of course getting warm & very hazy, but it is a pleasant country about here, very few villages. Today we were all nearly caught by a jungle fire, the biggest I've seen; the famous were reaching 30 ft high & bounding about, however it was very narrow. I don't mind a short march now I have some newspapers to read. Thank you, my sweet, so much for sending me the two cakes and the plum pudding; the plum cake was grand but a sad to relate the iced cake had all gone melted & sour, a great blow. I'm reserving the pudding, don't want to eat up all my good things at once; it was a bit late for

Christmas. You haven't noticed, Ida, that **Violet** was born on our engagement day. You dear little mother of 3! As soon as I've done with **Yunnan-sen** off comes my beard, it is getting too hot. I am coming down through **Tong King**, you know the French colony, but I shall not go by the direct road, but by a roundabout way visiting as many of the towns as possible, so that this letter will get a bit ahead of me. Go on writing to C/o Grindlay & Co till I let you know. I hope there will be no hitch about my leave that would be a blow. I've got all your letters in a bundle in their right order & I don't know how many times I've read them. It is lovely to think you are so well again. In your last letter of Dec 23 you had just been for your little walk. As I am not coming back through Burma I can't get that silver bowl for Uncle William & you know Bangalore is a rotten place for getting things so I am rather puzzled to know what to do. I shall try & find out in **Yunnan-sen** how the steamers run from **Hai-phong** the French port at the mouth of the Red River. There will be a choice of two ways, one via Saigon to Singapore, the shortest if the steamers fit, the other north to Hong Kong & then of course big steamers go to Singapore. It is lucky I know a bit of French, I shall have to act as interpreter for all my men. You dear old girlie how lovely it will be being at home again with you. I wonder where you are. I shall not get my next dak for some time, it left **Bhamo** on the 10th & will not reach **Yunnan-sen** till after I've left; so I shall leave directions to have it forwarded Mongtze, a telegraph station near the **Tong King** border. Then I am having letters sent to Singapore & after that I shall find the rest in Bangalore. I shall have a rough passage home as I shall be coming against the monsoon. Oh! Ida, you don't know how I hate the voyage by myself. I shall try & get off by the steamer leaving Bombay on June 9 or at latest the one following June 16, but my leave has got to be sanctioned & I can't leave till I've seen the fair mapping well started. My luggage that I left in **Bhamo** is being sent to meet me at Singapore; until I get it I shall be distinctly short of things, in fact I shall have to buy a few French things in **Hanoi**. It is lovely to think that in about three months I shall be kissing you again. If those spots have really disappeared, although I shan't believe it till I see you, you will be lovelier than ever. Dear old girlie, I adore you more than ever. I am longing to hear what **Harry** (*Ida's brother*) did in his exam; I am glad Father will be home to run him for his next. I shall be able to send you home a letter from Colombo. I've enjoyed this trip immensely, but I should be glad of rest; and I can't say I shall get this till I get home I shall certainly come via Marseilles, it is much the best way. I am so delighted you can feed **Violet** & I expect you are very proud of it. My dear Mother on "Punch" the newspaper would amuse you "It has got into Roman Catholic hands & doesn't represent public opinion as it needs to." I am bringing home a pheasant for the Jou (?), if they like to have it; it is called "Stories Pheasant" but I don't know its Latin name. I should like to have got a hen; I don't know how he will like the Red Sea. Oh! That beastly Red Sea. Davies proposed to me that next season if we are sent out here again to end up by getting back to India exploring the sources of the Irrawaddy, which nobody has ever done; we would reach India through Assam. We would take with us 12 Gurkha sepoy's nominally servants as long as we were in China, but as we should have to skirt Thibet & go amongst unknown tribes who might be friendly and might not we should have to go armed. He is going to propose for a doctor to accompany us & thinks of your friend Dr Manifold who he says is a capital chap & a good man in a tight place. What I shall do is to apply for the full amount of leave due to me, and then chuck up the end of it if this comes off, but not otherwise. I had a letter from Chancellor in my dak, no gossip except that Miss Best is engaged to a Tommy in the IVth Hussars. I haven't heard that **Blanchie** (*Ida's sister*) is engaged but there was a Mr Pearson out in the camp with them, an RE who was mentioned a good deal, to do a girl wrote me two letters for which I was very grateful, but had no time to answer. I've just finished my Pioneers & have still got all my standards & graphics. I've just found out my marches 4 in number to **Auning-cho** (?), which will just hit off Davies there.

"21st. Yesterday I did a short march, as several of my men are still ill, one muleman dropped behind altogether & another has to be carried in a dhooly (?). Today I had a long day marching 13 ½ miles, but I was delayed by dynamiting a stream, one of my coolies who couldn't swim quite out of his depth & was jolly nearly drowned. I had my coat off in a moment & was just going in (he was the opposite side of a pool about 30 yards wide) when a Chinaman held out a bamboo to him & he pulled himself in; then finding no one except to this Chinaman could swim I stripped & swam about picking up the fish myself, none very big, but I had one for dinner & it was excellent. My interpreter prophesied fever for

me, but I am none the worse. However this delayed us so much I didn't get in till 5.30. Shall I tell you how I like thinking of you only don't blush; I think if you in your chemise sitting on my knee & you know your chemise has a very pretty way of slipping off your shoulder & I expect your figure is very pretty just now! I'm sorry you are such a confirmed old maid. It's getting distinctly warm, but it will be much worse on my way down to **Tong-King**. I wish I was going straight home to you, you darling, however I shall be very busy in Bangalore & hope to be only there about a fortnight. Oh! how I long for our meeting, by the time this reaches you, it won't be so long off. Live as economically as you can comfortably, old girlie; but take care of yourself; it will be grand if you are really rid of your old enemy & you are not going to have any more babies, so you can enjoy yourself; goodnight sweetheart.

“March 27. I met Davies & Watts Jones on the 23rd & we got in here, **Yunnan-sen** the next day, my last two marches being 22 & 19 miles so I was a bit fagged. This is a big place 150,000 people or so in a large plain. It was cloudy the first two nights & yesterday the telegraph line to **Bhamo** was broken, so I may have to stay here several days, but on coming back to the inn to my great delight I found a dak had come in but with only two English mails for me, yours of Dec 30 & Jan 6. You were very busy, I am so vexed with myself that you should have found my letters not so loving, darling, but to tell you the honest truth I had got infected by your dismal ideas & had quite made up my mind that you wouldn't get through your confinement & I felt I couldn't write. Don't talk such rot about your being enough to make anyone tired of you. You're enough to make your husband grow more in love with you every year. If you were to see how small room full of ourselves, beds, maps, newspapers &c you would realise how difficult it is to write. I hope my letters have been getting to you all right. I expect you have settled down in Bedford. I'm afraid during these separations you must run the show by yourself; it is quite impossible for me to give any advice. I shall not getting any more letters till I get to Singapore in about 8 weeks from now. You go on addressing to C/o Grindlay, Bombay. By the bye they are d-d fools about that £1 for the telegram, I arranged it all with the Bombay people, but I suppose they forgot to tell the local agents (?). Repay uncle W. There is absolutely nothing to buy here worth giving him. You darling, you must have been worked off your legs. It is a great comfort to me to know that you seem to be so well again; if you really have got rid of your dysentery it will be graced; it's all owing to me putting you in the family way. I am longing to get home to you, my pet; towards the end of a camping season one gets very tired of it. I only hope the Madras Bank, Bangalore have been sending the £75 home regularly, if not I will shoot home a lot when I get to Bangalore. Dearest, I adore you, don't you ever for one moment think otherwise. Now darling I must work.

“March 30. If you please it has been snowing all the afternoon & oh so cold. Watts Jones went off in the morning & now 6 o'clock Davies & I are sitting writing with a fire on each side; one of the missionaries Mr Stephenson was here most of the afternoon. I am patiently waiting for the telegraph line to be amended and I don't know when that will be, and every night has been cloudy anyhow. I am in a hurry to get off & get home to you. My next dak I am wiring to Burma to send to meet me on the French frontier. I want something to read as I go down the Red River where it will be very hot & rather monotonous. One can walk about the streets here without anyone taking the least notice which is a blessing; and we have a very nice little house in the garden which we have rented while we are here. Nothing much happens here, we generally see the missionaries once or twice a day all very pleasant, as usual. My darling I do so long to have news of you & I long still more to give you a good long kiss, it seems ages since I left you. I expect you will be pretty than ever & I shall come looking very jungly & then you would love me, Ida. This is a grand climb it I wish we could bag it for England & be stationed here. The fish from the lake are excellent & splendid vegetables. We are too early for the fruit. You see the whole country for hundreds of miles in every direction is a hill station or has a climate of one. My pet, I love you more & more, who is soon your letters will get longer when you have more time, but I expect you had an awful job getting into a new house & clearing out of the old one. I wish you were coming out to India instead of me going home; I feel so very fit, not in the least in the want of a change home; the only thing I want is my dear “little mother of 3!” & my 3! I want especially to see **Violet**; it seems so odd to think that she is more than 4 months old & I have never seen her. I shall let you know as soon as possible my steamer & then you must time your letters to catch me at Aden &

Port Said. I shall come via Marseilles. I can't say when it will be, because I don't know how long it would take me to get to Bangalore; I am in a funk that my leave may be refused; but I don't think Gen. Strahan can be such a stinker!

“March 31. Dak closes today; a great blow. Your plum pudding when opened had also gone quite bad. Many thanks for sending out the Standards & Graphic. Give my love to everyone. I don't know where you are, dearest, but wherever you are & whatever you are doing you may be quite sure I am continually thinking of you & love you more than ever. God bless you my darling, kiss the dear girlies for me & you may have one for yourself, you don't care for more I know. Ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

3rd April from Yunnan-sen, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, here I still am & getting rather sick of halting. The telegraph line is sufficiently mended for messages to come through from one station to another but not enough to signal right through to here. Davies left today; Watts Jones having left on the 30th so now I am alone. I like Davies exceedingly, but I'm not sorry to be alone so that I can scribble away to you. The only advantage of my staying here is that I can get another letter off to you, as the missionaries send a mail off every 10 days; but while I'm halted I don't feel as if I was getting any nearer, although it really makes no difference as I shall get onto the Red River the same day anyhow & if I'm delayed here I shall have to cut my journey eastwards short. The only piece of news I have is that today I cut off my beard & now I'm clean shaven & respectable. I wasn't jehoted (?) with my beard on. I knew you wouldn't like it; the truth is it's getting to warm for beards. I've been finding out all I can about my journey by sea; as far as I can see, it will take me till June 7 to reach Bangalore. Then I must wait for my leave to be sanctioned and I don't see how I can get off before the steamer leaving Bombay on June 23; you may be quite certain I will do my very best to get off as soon as possible; you see even that will only give 14 days in Bangalore. I think you had better write your letters to the different ports accordingly. That will bring me home about July 7. I am so sorry not to be home for our birthday, but don't see any way to manage it. Your photo & the children's are in front of me.

“April 4. Mr Stephenson & Dr Savin (?), two of the missionaries came in so I had to stop writing. Mrs Stephenson is “expecting” & Dr Savin who is a missionary doctor has come down to attend her. This morning Mr Jensen the head of the telegraphs, a Dane, came & sat for some time; he is a very pleasant little man & has been here for 13 years so knows a good deal about the province. D**n this telegraph line; it is not mended yet; it's in a rotten state. Apparently it is never really hot here anyhow last night I found three blankets hardly enough. I am so longing to see my dear little **Violet**, I want more description of her but that perhaps is difficult till she is a little older. Anyhow she can't help being pretty with so pretty a mother. My standards are coming in very usefully; you see I have made a long halt here, 11 days already & I've done up all my maps as far as I can, so I have no work to do. I shall be jolly glad to be on the move again. You darling, I do adore you. I wonder if you will give me a real good hug when we meet, say three months hence. I can't make up my mind about my leave or rather the end of it. You see (?) have due to me really about 8 months; but if another party are sent out here I shall be probably wanted to go with them (*sic*) & that would give me only 3 months in England; of course it is quite impossible for you to come out then. I must also find out when the next Chatham Course comes on. I imagine you are living in Bedford, but of course I don't know that; it certainly seems to be the best plan, then you will see all your people and you won't miss me. Dearest you don't know how I miss you & you haven't the very smallest notion of how anxious I have been about you. I believe you have girls because you don't want to have babies! I wonder how much money we forgot, I haven't the faintest notion; however we'll square up things when I get home.

“April 7. Time is passing distinctly slowly. Yesterday we got as far as Mauwyne, the telegraph station this side of **Bhamo**, but couldn't get Bhamo & so it goes on. I pass the time reading & have been exploring the town with Jensen or the missionaries. Yesterday I spent most of the day with the latter & went & saw a fine Temple & Chinese Theatre (empty) & also fed some sacred fish in the tank.

“April 8. Whenever I sit down to write to you I'm interrupted. I've taken the opportunity of this long halt here to finish up all my longitude computations & I shall arrive in Bangalore with everything

complete. The telegraph line has now broken down between here & **Tsu-Hsiung** & yesterday there was a thunderstorm which has cleared the air & made it quite cold. This is a place where you could wear English clothes all the year round. Father & mother & the girls must just about have got home by now. How you must enjoy seeing them again, give them all my love. If I have to stay here much longer, I shall have to give up my trip east of here & go straight down to the French frontier; my waiting here won't really delay me because anyhow I mean to get a boat on the **Red River** on May 11. I'm in a very nice little house, have it all to myself and it has quite a pretty garden & quite quiet so I couldn't have a better place to a halt in, only I long for you so, my pet; however I can say now that in less than 3 months I will be with you; fancy **Violet** will be more than 7 months old when I see her and I suppose taking her food from an uninteresting bottle instead of from her pretty little mother! Sweetheart you have been a dear sweet little wife to me. I continually think of our meeting, it will be lovely. How many meetings we've had & I look forward to this one more than ever. What I particularly want to get your letters for is to know that you have really got rid of your dysentery; then you can enjoy life again.

“April 9. The post closed today. Yesterday I went out into the town with Stephenson one of the missionaries & he doing the bargaining for me I spent a lot of money. I bought a rug made of foxes skins, a rather good tiger skin, along Chinese man's cloak lined with a very nice fur. I thought it could be made into a rug or something for you, also some embroidery in silk, which I think you will admire. If you don't do it to some other girl. It has been raining off & on yesterday & today. The telegraph line is broken again. I don't think I have any news, I've started ticking off the days to our meeting. My darling I am simply longing to kiss your dear face again, only no more looking babies into my eyes; God bless you, sweetheart. Kisses & heaps of them to your pretty self & party chicks (you are getting on towards the 6 you said you wanted to have). For ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.”

9th April from Yunnan-sen, to Ida: “My dearest sweetheart, a letter has gone after you today, at least it starts tomorrow 10th April. I should like you to note exactly the day it reaches you. I want to see how long it takes. I woke up so early this morning 5 a.m. & couldn't get to sleep again which made me very sleepy this afternoon, so went & did two hours solid sleep, very foolish, but it was very cold & I felt so comfy, cuddled under my blankets. The beastly telegraph line still broken; I've been through all my stores & any I don't want I'm giving to the people here; I've also discharged my mules as it was no use paying them for doing nothing. I only wish I had done so before; it is very easy to get fresh mules here. I wish I knew for certain that the bank at Bangalore are really drawing my pay & sending it home to you. I dreamt of you last night; you looked so pretty in the old tailor made. I have a picture in Black & White fashion plate so like you & only you would get conceited if I showed it to you; today is Sunday, so I am going to read the evening service, I do whenever I remember. I don't believe you miss me one bit now you've got Bichu (?) with you. It is very cute of you not having any red haired babies, Ida, it shows you have more to do with having them than I do. I'm sorry you are still an old maid, but I suppose I must make the best of it. Anyhow you have had 3 babies before you were 6 years married which isn't bad for an old maid. I have your dear photo in front of me & in that you certainly don't look like an old maid – oh! my darling I adore you; there's a very sweet little division in the photo, just below your necklace to put it politely, just enough to make one long to see more, and I can't see more from another 3 months. Don't blush but love me when we meet. I suppose you have your dear little waist back again, all the same I love you most when you are in the family way although old girlie your temper is something awful.

“April 11. Yesterday I went out shopping again & bought some bronze things I think you would admire, a pair of curious candlesticks for one thing. In the afternoon one of the French Engineers, on his way back to Tong King came & cold, a captain Bourguignon. He was very jolly & cheerful & we talked away. Then add telegram came from Pottinger saying he had been attacked, driven off the Chinese, killing one & taking 3 prisoners; the surveyor with him slightly wounded. He is still near **Pichieh** 250 miles from here & by his coming along so slowly has spoiled everybody else's plans. I have not the least doubt he has only himself to blame for being attacked. Today it has been raining off & on most of the day.

“April 12. Yesterday I got into communication with Pottinger at **Pichi**, they had great opposition from the inhabitants and had to fight one day killing one Chinaman & taking 3 prisoners; Tucker, the 3rd of their party, a mining engineer had had to go back sick & died on the Yangtze somewhere. Today I've begun regularly learning Chinese, borrowed some books from the missionaries, here's a specimen of the language, one sound (this is written in a very grave sober book) is pronounced like if you began to pronounce lock but then they got as far as lo & then had a hiccup! It is certainly a very difficult language. What shall I write about one day is much like another. Today is a bright windy day with clouds knocking about. Ida; if I have time at Hong Kong (I may have to wait a day or two there for my steamer) I will run up to Canton, it is only 6 hours up river by steamer & buy you some more curios, some real Chinese China if I can get it cheap; but Chinese are great hands at a bargain. I wonder where you are living, whether you are in lodgings or in a furnished house or where. I should like to go down to the seaside somewhere in the summer. Somewhere quiet & cheap, where I could teach you to swim. I wish I hadn't brought my bike out with me, now I've just got to bring it back again; so long as we have this continual running home & out again we can't save anything that's certain. I wish your Aunt Marian would leave you something.

“April 15. I have had no time to write the last day or two as I have heard a lot of observing to do with Capt Pottinger at **Bichiah** & Davies at **Shuniver** (?); unfortunately the **Bhamo** line is still broken, as soon as it is mended in one place it breaks in another & I despair of getting my observations done at all. A mail comes in here every ten days from Tong King; if I had only known have this I could have been revelling in your letters all this time, but I shall have a grand lot when I do get them. One thing that bothers me is that you should have thought my letters not loving; my pet I am so sorry because you know quite well I adore you and it was careless of me to write in such a way. I wouldn't for worlds have you ever for one moment think anything but that my love for you grows stronger & stronger & I feel more & more convinced that I have been very lucky fellow to have such a dear loving pretty little wife. Perhaps you've noticed that when I have no news you get a love letter. I am so longing to see my new baby, it is so long since I had one that I'd quite forgotten their ways, and I don't suppose we shall have any more?? I must leave here about the 25th anyhow, so that my next letter will certainly be posted at Colombo. Don't expect anything very long while I am on board ship, you know how difficult it is to write. I should so like to make a voyage with you. I have always been by myself & I hate it. Now I have to go over to the telegraph office to wire the result of my observations to Pottinger & Davies.

“April 16. How are you getting on all right. I count the days now first to when I reach **Mongtze**, a mail then to a meeting; but halting here the days go very slowly. Yesterday I had tea with one of the missionaries there are two lots the China Inland Mission & the Bible Christian Mission, I think they are all Methodists. Today Pottinger & Davies have both left their respective telegraph stations, so I shall not have to go to the telegraph station so often. Such a strong wind begins every day about 9 & lose all day & as my room is all window without any glass it blows all my papers. I should like you here to tidy my table. There is an open space just behind my house is always a lot of Chinamen & boys flying kites; such curious shaped ones too, some of them. I wonder where you are & what you are doing.

“April 17. Dear old girlie I made an ass of myself yesterday looking at your photo made me howl for a long time. I love that photo of you now, only I think you are prettier then it makes you; oh! sweetheart I long for the days to pass. As soon as I leave here I shall feel as if I were really coming home to you. God bless you, my darling.

“19th April. I've decided to give up trying the longitudes with Bhamo, so am arranging to leave on the 21st; having been here so long I have quite a lot of arranging & packing to do. I am quite excited sweetheart at the thought of being once more on the march & towards you. I had out all your letters again this morning & read them through. I see you say you will sit on my knees & let me love you. I want you to sit on my knees & love me, won't you do that. If you are going to be an old maid I shall be an old bachelor & then we should be quits. God bless you my darling & dear trio, give them heaps of kisses & don't let them forget their Father. I have hopes that dear **Margaret** will get very excited when I come home. I count the days to July 9 & adore you all day & every day. Your photo is always under

my pillow at night. I know I shall find you prettier than ever; take great care of yourself & love me as much as I love you. Ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.”

21st April, Yunnan to Ida: “My dearest sweetheart, I didn't start today as I intended, I wanted to see Scott who ought to have come in yesterday; I hope he will today; then this morning I got a telegram from Bhamo saying the line was in better working order; so I spent the morning at the telegraph office trying to get a message through direct but could only get as far as **Yungchang**; however that is something & I am going to try again this afternoon. It was raining yesterday & so cold; this morning I had all my warm things on again & a fire. I bought one or two ivory things yesterday, a pair of ivory chopsticks & metal water pipe with Chinese figures on it, also a little box that will do as a stamp box. I shall feel nervous as I produce different things I've bought for you to look at lest you shouldn't like them. My only chance of getting anything good will be in Canton, if I have time to go there from Hong Kong; but I shall take the first steamer that leaves there for Colombo, and I hope it will leave the very day I get there; the sooner I get to Bangalore the more chance there will be of my getting my leave sanctioned in time to leave Bombay on June 23. I can't tell you how much I am longing for my dak; I want to know more about dear little **Violet**. How much you reduced the housekeeping bills after I left, sweetheart; I only hope you had all who wanted; but unfortunately housekeeping bills are such a small proportion of one's whole expenses in the year. We must think about a nursery governess; but if you are in Bedford I hope you will send **Margaret** at least to the kindergarten; she is 5 ½ now & it will do her good to be with other children; but I always feel that you will do what is best & that is a great compliment & a great comfort to me when I am away. God bless you, my sweetheart, your always my very dear wife & a great source of happiness to me.

“22nd. Hurray old girlie I'm off; however I could only come 10 miles because my stinker of a surveyor stayed behind, drinking judging from his appearance and I had to halt here & send men back to hunt for him; so tomorrow I shall have over 20 miles to do; but it is delightful to be on the march again & now I can feel I am getting steadily nearer you. Dear little **Violet** is 5 months old today. You never remembered that she was born on our engagement day; but I suppose you've forgotten all that sort of thing!

“I've just been giving my surveyor a jolly good slating; you should have heard old Charlie really roused. It has got distinctly hotter now and this inn room like most is rather stuffy. My march was quite level across the **Yunnan-sen** plain, nothing exciting. While I think of it, Ida, buy on the quiet some presents for the chicks from me, on my arrival I shall come right through in such a hurry to get to you that I shall not have time to do anything but hurry across from Charing Cross to St Pancras, because I suppose you are in Bedford. I enjoy fairly well the voyage home to you because I know I am getting nearer you, but oh! how I loathe the voyage away from you. I think I shall only really enjoy a voyage when I'm with you.

“April 25. I have two days to write up; yesterday I came 23 miles & pretty well tired. However it was mostly flat; I passed a fine lake on the way, about 8 miles long by a couple wide with hills all around. Camped at **Thiang-hsien** (?) a small town, had some difficulty in getting a room, as all the inns were full so I waited, drinking tea in the military mandarin's house while a hunt was being made for a room. Finally I got a sort of loft; then just as I was going to have dinner I had a call from the civil official who having been in **Shanghai** shook hands and then talked steadily on for an hour, finally gave me his photo and a fowl, then I had dinner at about eight & the military man came & called & gave me a picture more curious than beautiful, however it is genuinely Chinese. Today I came 16 miles to another small town **Lunan-Cho**. I am doing with a regular Chinese stages which are pretty long; just take 2 rhubarb pills as I want moving. The French I fancy have been surveying about here but it is all new to our English maps; it is lovely to think that in a fortnight I shall get some news with you. I am dead fagged, old girlie, so can't write more.

“26th April. The prettiest part of yesterday's march was when the path that lead through a large pomegranate orchard, you remember **Margaret's** “mugs”. Today I came 15 miles mostly over a dry plateau with rocks standing up just like Stonehenge; only passed one village of 2 huts all day.

"2nd May. I have been doing some very long marches, so you who've been neglected but I think if you all day on the march. On the 27th I came 13 miles to a small walled town **Mi-lai-hsien** was boo-hoed at a bit (*sic*) by a lot of boys. Then on the 28th I had a long 18 miles, for several miles between hedges of Banksias all in flower, one mass of white. I pitched my tent that night. On the 29th I did 23 miles and didn't get in till 7 to a wretched little inn. On the 30th I did 20 miles and yesterday only 12, so I took the opportunity of getting all my work up to date. Today I did 21 miles so you see dearest, I have been at it pretty hard. I've changed my route and are making straight for **Mongtsu** where I hope to reach tomorrow, but it is a jolly long march said to be 25 miles, hope to get a dak of there. Then I go 4 days to **Kai-hua** and the 5 more to the **Red River** at Lao-kai the French frontier. It has been cloudy all the time since leaving **Yunnan-sen**, a good deal of rain & on the 30th just after I got in a tremendous hailstorm, the Stones beat our Kangra friends; this was the size O. The mules were in it and simply fled in every direction, chucking loads all over the place. I have a nasty cough, not a real one, you know, but my sort; disturbs my nights, and as I start every morning now before 6 I feel fairly fagged out by the evening; luckily the path has been very good. I've been coming gradually lower here it is 3500 ft so I sit in my shirt sleeves, and have no blankets on at night. The musketeers (*sic*) our bad, luckily I have curtains. After dinner I generally use a Chinese pipe, about 2 feet long in the bowl of which is a little cheroot of very nasty Chinese tobacco rolled by my interpreter. I am in an empty "yamen" that is an official's residence without 4 courtyards leading from one to another so I am quite quiet, but the people about here have seen a good many of the French so I'm not very curious. I do so wonder if I shall get a dak tomorrow or not. With your last letter dated Jan 6. you can imagine how keen I am to get some more news of you. Uncle William said you were very plucky over your confinement. I was so pleased, you are a dear brave little wife. I hope now, my darling, you are going to have a good time without any illness to trouble you. I am sure **Violet** will be very pretty, but then I expect pretty daughters with so pretty wife. I wonder how dear old **Harry** did in his exam. I dreamt one night he made 1863 that's awfully little! I love to think of our meeting, of how pretty you'll look and what you will be wearing. I shall probably get to Bedford sometime in the afternoon. Of course I don't think of anything for the evening because you're still an old maid & I'm an old bachelor so will kiss and say goodnight. I feel pretty sure **Margaret** will be delighted to see me, but I wonder if **Enid** has forgotten me. I will try & bring nurse something Chinese. Now goodnight, my pet.

"May 10. Bless my soul I've got a lot of days to write up. On the 3rd I did my longest march 27 miles to **Mengtze**, got in about 6 and my mules at 7; sent around a note to the customs office to see if there was any dak for me, but alas! But a very pleasant note from Mr Spinney the Commissioner of Customs saying he wouldn't disturb me so late, but I was to come over first thing in the morning and stay with them; so I did and very pleasant I found it; he and his wife at Americans, their assistant, Oldham, an Englishman also very pleasant. There is a French Consul, whom I called on & ten French officers on their way up into Yunnan to go on with their railway survey will also there. On two evenings we had tennis. I waited there 3 days as a mail was expected in, but it had nothing for me; so on the 7th I started & today I've reached **Kai-hua-fu** (?). On the 7th I did 19 miles & heard much difficulty in finding room in an inn, finally I pitched the inner fly of my tent in a stable. I occupied the centre partition, on the left where pigs, on the right ponies, so you could imagine I didn't have a very good night. On the 8th I did only 10 miles, but it was raining all the time and rained all the rest of the day. I thought this was the beginning of the rains but the last two days have been quite fine. I came 20 miles yesterday & 16 today. This is a walled town, and I am in a very fair inn, 4,100 ft, so not hot yet. Now I have 5 days two south to the **Red River** at **Lao-kai** on the French frontier. I telegraphed to there from **Mengtze** telling them to keep my dak, so I really hope I shall get something there. **Enid** is nearly 4, dear little girlie. I am so keen to see them, but keenest of all to see their dear little mother. I suppose you will be expecting another 9 months after our meeting, but you must make up your mind to wait a bit. I dreamt last night I was washing your feet. My darling sweetheart I adore you so had to think of you all day, but when I get in I'm so fagged, I can't write.

"May 18. I marched from **Kai-hua** to **Lao-Kai** in 5 days, not interesting, and had asked 3 marches in drenching rain. Finally I got down from the high country into the regular tropical country, paths very

narrow and bad, the streams I had to wade many up to my waist. Finally I reached **Lao-Kai** on the 15th. M Bocher, a Frenchman of the Chinese customs put me up and next day I started down river with him in a Chinese boat. Got here yesterday the 17th and here, **Yenbai**, I have to wait till the 20th for the steamer. The French officers here have been most polite. The Colonel was away but left directions with his ADC to look after me, and the commandant of the battalion here sent his ADC down to meet me, a very nice little chap, Lieutenant Mercier (?) and he is placed at my disposal while I am here. All their quarters were full but they got me a room in a sort of hotel. Last night I dined with the commandant, he talks a little English but soon dropped it when he found I could talk French. He told me 10 years ago he was in India as ADC to the French Governor at Pondicherry and was engaged to an English girl, "but she married the other chap" he said. They've telegraphed to **Vietn** and **Hanoi** for me to be hospitably received. M le Commandant asked me if I was married, and I said yes, so after dinner he proposed my health "et celle de Madame Ryder et God save the Queen."

"May 26. On board ship. On the 19th I went out shooting with one of the French officers missed a fine jungle cock, left on the 20th in a small river steamer and going down fast with the current reached **Vietn** at 3 same day, put up in a small sort of hotel and felt very hot, left next day at 2 and reached **Hanoi** at 6 a very clean large town; went to the big hotel very good, and next day at 5 pm left by steamer for **Haiphong** getting there next morning. There I found one steamer leaving the same day at 12 for Saigon & Singapore and one going on the 24th i.e. next day for **Hong Kong**. I chose the latter, left about 1 o'clock & on the 25th reached **Hoi-lou** (?) a port in the island of **Hainan** (see your geography) there we stopped all last night taking a cargo, 850 live pigs and 4000 live fowls all yelling blue murder at the tops of their voices, and the smell! Oh & whiffs! We get to **Hong Kong** tomorrow morning & P & O leaves midday so I shall just catch it. I wish I could have had a few days there to go & see **Canton** and buy curios. In **Hanoi** I got you a wooden tray inlaid with mother-of-pearl, cheap but I think very pretty. I got a bad headache for several days coming down the (*river?*) chiefly I think owing to the ghastly hours at which the French have their meals, Chota hazri, a small cup of café noir and all that you have the last till 11 then a big breakfast and last longer and still 7 dinner. I was continually feeling sick from emptiness. This isn't a bad little boat there are only 3 other passengers, French and I have a cabin to myself, spend most of my time thinking of you and wondering whether you love me less than you used to that is when I'm feeling very empty and for a meal. My dear the ship is beginning to roll so as (?).

"May 31. I got to Hong Kong on the 27th at 8 am & the P & O left at 12, so I hadn't much time. We reach **Singapore** tomorrow, had fair weather, not sick, but headachy. I'll tell you all about my voyage & when we meet, darling, I adore you, but cannot write; it is very hot and the ship is very shaking. I can't tell you how much I long to be with you again, my pet. Mind you love me very much. I hope to get letters tomorrow at Singapore, the ship is very empty.

"June 4. You can imagine my delight on reaching Singapore to find your letters from Jan 13 to March 31 and such sweet and loving letters. I feel as if I had proposed to you about 6 months ago & then had to wait till now and for an answer. I love your letters, because you tell me you love me in them, and you never say so when we are together. I think you have managed capitally, darling. You were quite right to stay at Curzon Street. You have been doing the grand. Fancy you, you didn't mind how many babies you had, you quite make me blush; but you are not going to have any more against your will, you dear. Kitty Ottley's death was a great shock to me and made me realise how good God has been to me to spare my darling. Everyone who writes, aunt **Mina**, aunt **Clara** & **Harry** said you were looking very well. Aunt **Clara** said you looked 18. Your darling I shall simply kiss you right away when we meet. I am sure **Violet** is a duck. I'm so glad you got the Brussels lace only take care of it. My pet, I wish you could have all the nice things under the sun. We got to Singapore on the 1st, stayed there a night, then reached **Penang** on the 3rd, not allowed to land their going to plague rules, so I couldn't send off a wire to Ted as I meant, but I don't want to stop in Colombo, or anywhere. I want to go straight home to you. No fear of my relaxing into a humdrum husband, but you must kiss me sometimes of your own accord. I am getting in such a funk that my leave won't be sanctioned or that there will be some hitch. God bless you my pet, I'm simply wild to be with you and long to have you in my arms & to feel my dear little

wife's figure under the nightgown!

"June 8. We reach Colombo this morning, I had meant to send a wire to Ted from **Penang** to meet me, but couldn't land owing to plague regulations; so I shall not stop, but leave this afternoon by steamer for **Tuticorin** (?), about 12 hours & then by train to Bangalore, reach there evening* of 10th. I shall one from **Tuticorin** about my leave & it is quite possible but is not likely that I may get off by the mail of 17th June from Bombay that is the next to this, but I hardly think it possible, and of course my leave may be refused altogether my pet. You don't know how much I long to give you a real good kiss and make love to you all over again. You darling, I adore you; you have been a darling sweet wife to me & managed everything splendidly. God bless you darling & kiss my chicks for me. Heaps of kisses to you, from the top of your head to your feet, from your own very devoted husband & lover, Charlie."

** This text below was placed at the top of a page with that following the* following.*

"Can you imagine C H D with an ADC at his disposal who addresses me as "Mon Capitaine". They tell me I shall just catch the mail of May 27 at Hong Kong which is what I am most anxious to do. They all seem to think I've made a great journey from **Burma** to **Ton King**. It is a bit sweaty here, but not so bad as Madras say I am feeling as well as possible and love you more than ever you dear.

"6 o'clock. I am going over to the officers club shortly. My ADC was very nice today & got a good shed for my men to put up in. Tomorrow I believe I'm going out shooting jungle fowl with one of the officers and this evening dining at the Cardinal's house; all together they have been extremely polite. When it's hot here I wish I hadn't to stop, I like to feel I am making way towards you."

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12th June, Bangalore to Ida: My own darling pet, here and I am and my leave is sanctioned all right, hurray! the only little hitch which I think will be settled all right is that my leave could only be sanctioned from 25th June, going to more than 20 per cent of the department being away till that day and I want to leave **Bombay** on the 24th but then my leave doesn't begin to count till I reach England so I think it will be all right, anyhow I've telegraphed to General Strahan about it. I reached here on the 10th after retiring railway journey and was delighted to get your letters up to May 12 & then today the mail came in & I got two more up to May 24. So now I feel I know all about it. You darling, your letters make me feel as happy as possible, such dear loving letters, dear, dear, I wish you would love me like that when we are together. You may plan out all the defences you can think of, you will want them all, and they would be of any use! Sweetheart, I do adore you, I also go off to sleep thinking about our meeting. My steamer is the Himalaya, at least from Aden onwards because as far as Aden I have to go in a smaller boat & change there. It will be very rough monsoon & I shall shoot the cat & come home looking a jungly worm. I go via Marseilles, so will post you a letter at Port Said which going via Brindisi will reach you 24 hours sooner. I should love you to come up & meet me, so nice to have a dear little wife waiting for me. I will wire to you from Marseilles as soon as I get there, you darling I am so excited about our meeting. I have 8 months & 19 days leave sanctioned only doubtful point is if I am wanted again for Yunnan. I must come out again in October, but I think that is not likely. You are a dear to live so cheaply in Bedford. I like your idea that when I come home we will begin to save in earnest, just the other way on my idea. I want to have a bit of a bust. Please, sweetheart don't have rows with your Father, just remain 'chiefs' (?). Capt Renny-Tailyour is here & I in the Club. I've been busy doing up all my accounts today but don't know how I stand yet, however £82,000 went home last mail or this. I must go round shopping tomorrow I've no boots & no decent hat! I hope my letter telling you my probable dates got home soon enough to enable you to write to Aden & Port Said. I shall meet Davies at Aden, which will be pleasant. I am longing to see three little girlies; whenever I see a boy I always am so glad my chicks are girls, boys always are so blobly (?) & pimply & beastly. Fancy old de Lotbiniere is out here again under the Mysore Govt, but I have seen nobody so far. Dined at the Sapper Mess last night, very uninteresting, all grumbling against Col Suene Grant. Chancellor looked dismal, but they have just got another medal for Egypt so he has 4! & I haven't got a damned one. I am dining tonight with the Hussars (?). I think I shall come home 1st class because I hope to bring you out with me at the

end of my leave. Oh! how I long for the good hug, I also, don't be shocked, want to see you undress! Have a good sleep the night before I come, because we shall have such a lot – to talk about! I'm as fit as possible weigh 12 stone 12 & since leaving Hong Kong I've been working at my nails & moustache & generally titivating myself to do your credit.

“June 15. Oh! Damn! Damn! I can't get away till a mail later, isn't it sickening. I telegraphed to Strahan about it but no “you can't leave till 25th or later date”. So I must kick my heels here till the “Caledonia” goes on 1st July. The only consolation will be having the big fast boat & no change at Aden, but if I had gone the mail before I should have gone home from Aden with Davies which I wanted to do. I am writing to Aden & Port Said to keep letters there for me. You must find out from the P & O my probable dates at Port Said & Marseilles. Oh you darling, there is such a lot I want to say to you which I can't write. I am sorry your figure is flat again, you must fatten up, but so long as you have work to do you will keep thin. Last night I thought of you & our meeting as usual before going to sleep. I imagined you wanted a baby very much & I wouldn't agree. I'm not going to do anything about PCs, I don't know what you mean. You can get them from your own... (?); If I find you haven't got them, when we meet, I shall take that to mean that you want a baby! You darling, I love & adore you some; it's a great blow having to postpone our meeting a week. I'm getting impatient to have my little wife in my arms again & kiss her all over. Is it improper to long to have you sitting on my knees & you with only your chemise on because that is what I often think of & my arms round you under the chemise. Now I mustn't write any more, my pet, but God bless you, many thousands of kisses to yourself & the children from their Father. For ever, your very devoted husband & lover, Charlie.”

18th June, Bangalore to Ida: My own sweet darling, Today is Sunday & the mail in so I can get a good start with my letter. How I wish I were going this week with his letter; I've a wild craving to be with you, darling, especially as your letter wasn't cheerful. You had had trouble with your nurse, and got back Ada March, she will be all right, Ida, if you will not make such a friend of her, keep her in her place & she won't get uppish. If you have gone to **Murhill**, you must come up to London & meet me there so that we can have our meeting to ourselves. My idea is to stay about a fortnight at **Murhill**, not longer & then wander off, first to the seaside; so you find out about what place you would like to go to. I'm so sorry you seemed disappointed about your people, it always does happen when one is separated for several years, they never seem quite the same. I never thought of suggesting your coming out, because I thought you would like to be with them a bit; and besides I wanted you to get really well, as you now seem to be. When I come out I will bring you with me & **Violet** & we must find some place to leave **Margaret & Enid**. Don't you worry yourself over things, darling, I shall be with you in a week, and we will settle everything together & we will have some lovely love-making, quite a honeymoon again. Everything is definitely settled about my leave and I go to the “Caledonia” leaving Bombay on July 1. I am coming 1st class because I mean to bring you out 1st and nothing is gained by going home 2nd & out 1st. You must write to the P & O company & ask them when they expect passengers leaving the “Caledonia” at Marseilles to reach London. I shall telegraph you from Marseilles like this “Reach London 4 pm Friday” or whatever date it is...” *He continues with detailed description of his arrangements to meet her, to spend a night at the Windsor Hotel and then to go to the seaside.* “I'm sure **Violet** is a darling, but I'm sorry she is a redhead. In spite of everything, Ida, I don't know, but what I'm not fonder of your father than of any of your family. He is the only one who has written to me since they've been home & wrote so affectionately of you & the children. He seems to know how one longs to hear of one's family when separated from them & it never strikes your mother.

“22nd June. Hurray! The time of our happy meeting is getting near; and my darling I have never wished you many happy returns of your birthday, but we will celebrate it when we meet. Now after writing out all my directions very carefully it is struck me that I shall arrive in London probably on a Sunday when Cox will be closed, so unless I get a letter from you at Marseilles telling me where you will go & what you will do I will telegraph to you at the Windsor Hotel. So you had better write there direct them what to do.” *Further revised directions.* “Don't go & worry yourself about anything I will settle things up when I come. How I long for a site of your dear pretty face. I shall howl a bit with happiness when we meet. Kiss our little darlings from me. God bless you, my darling, heaps & heaps of love & kisses, for ever

your adoring husband & lover, Charlie.”

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12th November, Myit Kyima, to Ida¹: My own dearest pet, It was such an intense pleasure to get your dear letter ending 20th October, the mail after I left. Everything seemed well with you, so I can go out happy. I shall do everything I can to send in letters whenever I can & you will be much better off in that way than I shall. I left **Rangoon** on the evening of the 8th & met Davies near **Mandalay**. We got here on the evening of the 10th. The line is only just open, and there were no refreshment rooms after Nablia at 6 am on the 10th; we only casually found this out, so bought a tongue & a loaf of bread & off that we picnicked. The country was very jungly & hardly a village in it. Here then is a nice open plain, but no villages, after since (*sic*) the railway has opened there is an improvement. We are putting up in the circuit house, a very nice bungalow & it is jolly cold at nights. My mules not having turned up, I am going down tomorrow by steamer to **Bhamo**, and shall start in from there; I am not sorry, as I shall see the defile on the river which is said to be finer than the one by below **Bhamo**. This is the headquarters of the district & about a dozen fellows here & a battalion of military police. Major Manifold won't be over here till December however we shall meet later on.

“Nov. 15. Here I am at **Bhamo** again. I couldn't get my mules at **Myit Kyima** so had to come down by steamer, mooring up for one night en route; it was very jolly; now I've seen both defiles on the river & they are very fine. I got here last night & have hopes of getting away tomorrow; but I don't know. All this change of plans has given me a lot of work to do, and I shall have no spare time till I get away. About your coming out next year, Ida, make up your mind whether you would like to come or not, then when I reach the first telegraph office in Assam I will wire you come or don't. It will a great deal depends on what I hear from you. A mail will leave here Feb.8 & it takes about 22 days to reach here from England, that will be the last I shall get until I reach Assam. I am very well darling, but oh! I long for you more & more; perhaps I shall be better when I'm on the march. I love & adore you like anything.

“11 am. You darling, just had breakfast, now I am waiting to see a man about my mules; so I can get on with this. Just after leaving **Myit Kyima** I found a bag was missing, containing some survey instruments, for which I've had to wire to **Mandalay** for more, and my kettle & frying pan, which I've got new here, but most unfortunately to right foot boots, leaving me only one pair complete. So I am asking Manifold to bring me up a pair. I shall meet him at the end of March. In correction about your sending me letters please remember carefully, address your letters & newspapers up & including to the mail you send on Jan. 19 to C/o Deputy Commissioner, Bhamo. After that date to C/o Political Officer, Sadiya, Assam, to await arrival up to the beginning of June them to C/o Grindlay, Grooms & Co to await instructions. Tell Kitty not to forget that island on the Brahmaputra, but anyhow I shall go up to **Shillong** to compare my survey with that of the Assam frontier, so I hope to see her there.

“3 o'clock. I've got everything ready except my mules, so I shall start the day after tomorrow & do a very long march, which I don't like the first day, as nothing has settled down into its place; however I don't want to miss Davies; my instruments left **Mandalay** today; so I hope will reach here tomorrow. I wish you were here, it is so jolly & cool all this northern part of **Burma** except the daytime in the sun, when it is hot. I miss you all day & also all night, that you may be surprised at, but I sleep well; I'm so sorry you don't; you often seem not to when I'm away; when I'm with you you are a little hog.

“Nov 16. I'm bothered about my mules, however I've got them now, I think, but it has been a lot of bother. The big mule contractor wanted 17/- a month each, however I've got them for 15/8 each, and on a better agreement; but I shall have a succession of long marches to make up time; got to get to **Momien** in 8 marches & we took 10 last year. However this year, as far as that, there is no surveying to be done. I've bought a mule for myself for Rs 120. They are much better than ponies for riding over bad ground, and it is more classy in the eyes of the Chinese to ride a mule than a pony. My darling, I think so much of you; I miss you dreadfully this time. I shall not hear from you till I get to **Yunnan-fu**

1 They would have been together July to October.

about the 31st Dec. I've got a great deal more warm clothing this year & we shall want it; I know of one pass I have to go over 14,000 feet. I'm feeling very fit and I don't suppose I shall have anything the matter with me except colds. There is a little club here, when I see the papers. I am taking all your photos out with me, the big ones travel in my account book.

“2 o'clock. When I've nothing to do between whiles I write to you, so gradually you get a respectable letter. I hunger for more news of you, but I shall have to remain hungry for a good long time. I adore you, dearest, how I would love to have the kiss space & more than a kiss; don't you want to be loved; you would be if you came out in June or July. I see, of course, it would be the most sensible thing to stay at home, but I grudge unnecessary time away from you. We could set up house in Bangalore very quickly & not bring out all our things. God bless you darling; I often wonder what I should do, if I hadn't a letter to keep going to you, and you & the children think about. The Yunnan Company talked rot about that a map, I showed the letter to Davies & he was very angry with them for writing in that way; & gave a good snorter back. Yes, I think Renny-Tailyour was a little stuffy about my having got to leave, but I only went to Yunnan on condition that I should have my leave after it; however there's nothing to worry about, he will go on leave next year & I will do its work & we will be quits; but I don't think I should get leave next October. So if you decide not to come out, it means our being separated till March 1901. Another interruption. I have nothing to add about money arrangements, Ida. The Madras Bank Bangalore will send you £120, this mail or next, and £70 will leave India about the middle of February & every succeeding month; of course when I am in Bangalore I can't send as much as that home, and darling, then spend it because it's there; you shouldn't want more than £40 a month; so I hope you will save largely, put some into the Savings Bank if you like. It is now 4.30 & my mules have not turned up, but my interpreter vows they will, I devoutly hope so. I wish I was with you in your dear little house. Sweetheart darling, don't get accustomed to being away from me; I am so afraid my constant absence will make you grow to love me less & then I should be truly miserable. You're all the sunshine in my life, dear, and I love you more & more. More interruptions.

“7 o'clock. Mules have arrived & everything that can be packed has been; so I think we shall get off fairly early, a long march & the next I well remember is an awfully hilly march to the frontier at **Nampaning**, where there is a police post, and I shall send a telegram in from there & if possible a letter, which may come next mail or the mail after; it just depends if there happens to be anyone coming in. Nobody loves me. I've got a new nib this page & then I can write much more easily. I have 17 mules altogether, but a good many of them are for my men. I haven't got so many stores as last year, when I had an unnecessary lot; as so many things can be got in China. Don't be anxious darling when you don't hear. I will send in letters whenever I can & anyhow when I am in **Yunnan-fu** at the end of December, a letter will go down through **Tonkin**, which you will get at the end of February. I am so glad the one that I've had from you, you seemed quite well & the children too. Darling, do take my advice & and have your cup of Horlick or whatever you fancy at 11 & when you go to bed; then you will get a fine chest & no ribs showing, & above all don't worry about things. If you would think to yourself “what is Charlie doing?” You may be pretty certain I'm thinking of you. Don't forget the new moon & pray, as I do for our happy meeting to come soon. You've been a dear good little wife to me for 7 years, my pet. You've done me no end of good & made me very happy. God bless & protect you & the darling children. Give them my love & a special kiss whenever my letters arrive. My darling, heaps of love & kisses to your dear self. Forever, you're very devoted husband & lover, Charlie.

“Love to all at Ouselea. Tell them my news. I've really so little time. I do hope **Harry** is in the militia; this is such a good opportunity.”

15th November, Bhamo, to his mother (Julia): *This covers similar news to the above.* “... My camp will consist of 1 one Chinese interpreter, 1 Chinese servant, 1 surveyor & his cook, 1 Madrasi cook, 1 Chinese servant, 1 Khalasi, 5 Chinese coolies, three Gurkha sepoy, 18 mules & 5 drivers. ... I hope to meet Davies at Kang-ai for a day. We have a British Consul at **Momien** now; so I shall see someone there; my next European will be Mr Grahame, missionary at Tali-fu or near their. ... Much love to you all, ever your loving son, Charles Ryder.”

16th November, Bhamo, to Una (*his older sister*): *Again covering similar news, but concerning his missing boots:*
“& two right boots stolen, so I am now left with one complete pair & two extra left. I shall have to walk energetically with my left & very carefully with the right. I shall wear Chinese grass sandals as soon as we get away from the towns, but being usually worn by coolies it would be infra dig to enter a town wearing them; they are however very light & comfortable. ... Much love to you all. Ever your loving brother, Charles Ryder.”

17th November, camp, to Ida: “My own sweetest darling, Here I am again at the old game of writing to you from camp. First I describe my day but you don't much care about, then I make love a bit & then have dinner. I got away just before nine & we all started with the mules, having got 2 miles out on one road, (which afterwards turned out to be the right one) everybody said we were wrong, so we got on to a road that circled on to the one we went out by last year at mile 2 & then all went well to we came to a village at mile 10; here there was a bridge clean washed away & 10 ft of water going like a mill race, however a villager kindly directed us and we headed into the jungle for ½ hour or so, when the path came to an end, so back we came & caught on to another & finally caught on to our original first wrote a good Govt one at its 16th mile & here we camped in some small fields in the jungle. All the march was level in the **Bhamo** plain & hot decidedly. I reckon we did 20 miles, pretty good for the first day. Evidently the old road has been washed away last rains; but I enquired in the District Engineers Office to make quite certain & they declared it was all right. I shall not often have to pitch my tent; but I do like the quiet; it's a lovely evening & I feel as if I was nearer you. I'm about 6½ hours later than you, so you must be having lunch; I hope you jump on **Enid** well & don't leave it for me to do when I come. We shall have **Violet** at the table then too & another one expected! My mule is a great success, very sure footed, with very long ears & nice & kind. How I should love to have you out in camp with me, camping in a good time it is so jolly. I think I've a good lot of Chinamen this time, my servant is a great success; he didn't know anything when he came, but he quickly picks up & is excellent in the way of telling me to the Chinese for things. I'm very vague as to my whereabouts, but the general opinion is we shall make **Myothit** tomorrow all right.

“I just broke off to do up my accounts; soon we shall get into this beastly weighing of silver & strings of cash. I shall soon come down in weight; at Bangalore I weighed 13 stone 12 lbs. My camp bed is a great success it is up in a minute, I only miss you! Though I doubt it's bearing you, unless you kept very quiet in my arms! I suppose you never think at night that you would like to be in my arms; you might let me know if you do. I'm afraid the next time you are, you will feel the effects for 9 months after. Now shut up, & don't talk such nonsense. Goodnight, my sweet.

“After dinner. It's ¼ past 7 & I'm quite ready for bed; I think my cock was tired with his first march. Certainly my dinner was no great shakes soup, very uninteresting, ditto chicken stew & beef very tough & no pudding; so I had him up & explained matters to him a bit. Of course that year I had two Madrassis & they could help each other; however I've no doubt he will do all right. The names of my different men are curious, I will give them to you as soon as I've got them all right. You mustn't expect as much as this every day, because you see I haven't begun survey yet. I have a very young surveyor with me so I shall have to do a good lot myself. I'm a bit tired about the legs, I only rode about 5 out of 20 miles. I often think to myself how well I could arrange for you now for rough camping; you see just after we were married I was new to what a lady wanted & you were not well, so I'm afraid you had a very rough time; then the only time since you've been camping with me was for those two months round Bangalore, when it was rather hot. Dearest, goodnight again; I shall think of you as I go to sleep & as soon as I wake up again; it is curious, but I hardly ever dream of you.

“Nov 18. I hadn't a goodnight on account of mosquitoes; got up at 6.15 & was off at 7; had only a short march 7½ miles to **Myothit** where I had to cross the **Taeping**, much more water in its than last year. You've a photo of the place. Here I'm in a bungalow. My things got in about 12.30, taking some little time crossing. There is a military police post here of 50 men under a native officer; but it will be given up soon, when the new road is finished. The mulemen are all very busy shoeing the mules to prepare for the stony Chinese paths. Now I've got the whole afternoon before me, but to have plenty

of writing to do. It's 4 o'clock, and I've been busy up to now, & just ordered tea. I had a catastrophe, a little hut in the corner of the compound with a big hole under. I shall have to try & get a sepoy's belt. You will laugh, so would **Chucky**, to say nothing of Bichu, but it is my only belt & I don't know how many years I've had it; I suppose some Chinaman will fish it out & think how very funnily foreign devils go when they have trots. I've started my beard, now two days old, & looking very tasty. There is the same old white patch on the right & the rest red. My name has three characters this year Li-Ta-erh; the Chinese will think it very funny that I should have changed my name. You darling, I do love you. One thing I like is that I am marching towards your letters, although I have a good long distance to go yet. The flannel shirt I have on has no buttons on the sleeves & one instead (of) 3 in front; poor Charlie, nobody takes care of him. I haven't got my cold weather appetite yet, still I eat enough. This is still much the same level as **Bhamo**, so pretty warm.

"6 o'clock. Just written to my mother & **Wilfred**. I do wish I could see him when he meets the children! You darling, I'm so longing to hear from you again; but I'm thankful I'm not so anxious about you, as I was last year. You will never know how anxious I was, dearest; because it made me quite unable to write & then you thought I didn't think of you or miss you. You must never think that, darling my every thought almost is of you & what you are doing & how you are getting on. Now I'm going to sit & think awhile.

"After dinner. It is rather fun learning Chinese; my servant just as he was taking away dinner made at a long remark of which I could make out nothing; so he went at it word by word with the help of signs & I made out he couldn't eat his food & felt giddy. I didn't know how to express my regret. My menu tonight was peace soup, stewed beef (yesterday's tough) potatoes & French beans, devilled beef & blancmange without any taste. I have the necessary things all right, but my cook hasn't found them yet. It was a meal that necessitated a free use of a toothpick, after it; then I ended up with some coffee. I hope your servants are giving you no trouble & that you have got a new cook; the charwoman was only a moderate cook, so you haven't lost much. What I am most anxious about is know that nurse is happy & staying on. My darling this will reach you somewhere near Christmas. I wish you a happy, a very happy one; I can't say mine will be happy without you; but you will, I expect, have a very jolly one with all the brothers & sisters; don't forget me, I will be drinking your health in Madeira. I am so glad you felt stronger, that was a great thing getting the wax out of your ears. Now I want to meet a stout little wife; so mind you fatten up. You get much more letters when I am by myself; now I ask you its 20 to 8. I'm very tired & sleepy; if I read I should drop off to sleep, what can I do but go to bed early. I wish you were here to keep me company. I long to pay you attention again; but I am very good & don't think of it. God bless you, dearest & goodnight.

"Nov 19. Today I came 12½ miles up & down hill to **Nampaning**; the stream that forms one frontier is roaring along just in front of my tent. As a little bungalow we were in last year is now the telegraph office. Two of my Gurkhas dropped behind today & caught in an hour off the everyone else, so I had them up & gave them a good stern talking to. I arranged with the telegraph master at **Bhamo** to send me out any news, so today I heard that me 5th division has left England. There is a man going in the day after tomorrow, so he will take this to **Bhamo**. The march was half so stiff today, as it seemed last year; one thing is that I always get started before 7; while Davies & Watts Jones went for the later start. I like to break the back of my march early in the day. You dear, you must expect now to be two weeks without letters; because I can see no chance of sending anything in till I reach **Momien**. As I was having my tea just now, I was thinking how sweet it would be if you were sitting opposite. Then I don't know quite how you would do some of the marches. I should never forgive myself if you didn't like it. Tomorrow there is a good up hill from 1000 ft to near 5,000 ft but I feel very fit. I walked all the way today except just crossing some streams on my mule. Vice (?) my belt left in the rear yesterday, I have a rug strap goes twice round just nicely; but it is not so graceful as my dear old belt. As I went to bed last night at 8 & to sleep at once, I woke up at 5 & had a nice cosy think about you & what a darling you are. I feel much more comfortable without sheets in camp & I'm sure it's more healthy. The sun has just gone off my tent; so it is much cooler. Thank goodness I've seen the last of that tough bit of beef. Fortunately I have no toothache going. Did I ask you to ask Cox & Co whether they have credited me

with £31 odd for pay which was refunded last March by mistake. I've just been up to the telegraph office, but no more news. Ida, I've just thought of a plan. I shall be at **Yunnan-fu** on 31st Dec for four days & at **Tsu-hsiung** on Jan 21 for 4 days. Could you write out to Grindlay, Groome & Co, Bombay & ask them to send me a wire. You write it out for them, the charges 14 annas a word & tell them the message goes via **Bhamo**; you calculate out; your letter will reach them 15 days after you post it & you must allow 3 more days for the telegram to reach me. A letter written by you to catch the mail leaving London on Dec 29, would reach Bombay on Jan 13 & that would just catch me at **TSU HSIUNG** prints the word to them & explain that it is in **Yunnan Province** of China & that "Ryder" is all the address necessary. That will be capital & I shall get the latest news of you; just give me personal news of yourself & children, because war news I shall get out from **Bhamo**. I'm so pleased with my idea; I don't forget, tell them to charge to my account; now, I must shut this up, fondest love & heaps of kisses all over you. God bless you, dearest forever, your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie."

20th November, Camp, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, It is jolly cold this evening & I've changed into warm things. I came 11½ miles straight uphill from about half way very steep & then level amongst the hills & have pitched my tent in the village, half Kachin & half Chinese, height 5,000 ft. I got in by 1 & my mules about an hour later. I've quite got my marching appetite & feel very fit, perspired like a pig going up hill. There is a small Chinese stockade nearby & the soldiers are standing opposite my tent door looking at me; the villagers, I am glad to say don't take much interest in me. My 3 Gurkha sepoy make themselves very useful; so long as they don't get into rows with the Chinese, which is very likely. I am reading the Abbé Hue's Travels in Thibet, the one Mother gave me, it is in French, so will last me a long time. I should like to have you to cuddle, it is so cold. The first cold always seems worst, because one has just come up from the heat of the plains. I shall pass through **Man-yuen** tomorrow where there is a Chinese telegraph office. I shall go & have a talk with **Bhamo** & try & get some news. This morning I was awake before 5 & pulled on another blanket & then thought of you. You are no fun in the mornings. I love to love in the morning & you like sleeping. I should have loved to have had a nice cold winter with you; I wonder whether you will have it cold & whether you will have some skating; get skates it will make you so warm & give you such an appetite. My boy generally gives me dinner at 6; & I think it's a good plan, when I have no work to do; it enables everybody to go to bed early & so get up early. You will get letters too long this time, I'm afraid & then you won't read them through more than once. I expect you read all of the war news in the papers but perhaps you would like me to be there to explain. You mustn't be an old maid when we meet, you were perfect little darling this time; I already often picture our meeting, do you? I've opened my first bottle of Madeira for tonight. I have 6. I hope you are keeping up your claret. You know beer is fattening, so is stout, and I advise them for the winter & the claret for the summer. Perhaps it does seem a pity to break up house & leave the children to come out to me for only 9 months; the long separation will be very hard to bear, dear, but perhaps it may be best; however I shall go on missing you more & more, that I know. You see, anyhow, as I don't know when I shall be back in India, your time of coming out would be very vague.

"Nov 21. Marched 13 miles, first downhill & then along the **Man-yuen** plain. Ending by crossing the **Taeping** River 300 yards wide; passing through **Man-yuen**. I went to the telegraph office & got a long telegram about the war, nothing much except that another armoured train seems to have been captured. I pitched my tent on the banks of river, had several unsuccessful crawls after Kulen, about the river, but they were too shy. It took some time getting everything across the river in two shaky dugouts. I'm afraid after this I shall have to stay in village inns for a bit. I've been very lucky so far in avoiding them & sticking to my tent. It is much warmer here, last night it was very cold, thermometer down to 38° & I slept comfortably under 4 blankets & my sweater on. I've just finished my bread; so I have to get out some flour & other things. I've got everyone in excellent form in the way of early starting; my mulemen are much better than last year; very willing hard working chaps. Tomorrow I meet Davies, so shan't get on with this letter quite so much. I've just been fiddling with my candlestick & set it to rights, getting quite useful in my old age. I wish I could get long telegrams from you; the one I got today was over 100 words all very kindly sent for nothing. Davies will be glad to get it when we meet tomorrow. Darling, I do love you.

“Nov 22. I had a long march 24 miles to keep my tryst with Davies; got in at 4 & as I knew my mules were long way behind, I sent a note over to see if Davies had arrived, as the place we agreed to meet is across the river; but no sign of him. My mules were not in till 7.30 & now everything has just settled down & I'm waiting for dinner; not that I feel very hungry because I had a large tea, cooked in the inn teapot & some chapatis. This place is very different to last year, when we were shoved into a stable in the outside yard & a crowd watched us. Today the house is empty, I had my choice of rooms & hardly a dozen people all told came to look at me. They are, I suppose, getting accustomed to Europeans. The Tsawbwa (?) who lives across the river centre man over to look after me, so I am going to see him tomorrow, having decided to halt one day for Davies, not more. I don't know why he is late; he started from **Myit Kyina** two days before I left **Bhamo**. The Tswabwa here is an old friend, it was in returning from a call on him that I fell into a stream. My Madrasi cook is a funny chap; I should think he has not been in the jungles much. Yesterday I said I wanted some curry for dinner "no table rice got it", I said that didn't matter, long rice would do & then "got no coconut", I said that didn't matter, & then for dinner a most excellent curry turned up. Now tonight, as everything was so late I said to him, "make only one dish, chicken stew or anything" & then about 10 minutes after, I found him busily plucking a fowl he had just killed, not telling me that he had nothing ready, when I would have got out a tin of army rations. I feel I've done my duty in being up here to time; I can't think why Davies isn't. There's one thing I'm always to be depended upon, is to be at a place on the date I said I would, if it can be possibly done. I was every time last year. I walked 21 out of the 24 miles, but don't feel very tired. It was a flat march up the plain all way; the villages, you don't see a house outside, hidden in clumps of bamboos & it is very jolly getting out of the hot sun into the dense shade in the villages. You darling, I wonder often & much how you are & how our darling chicks are. A happy & merry Xmas to you all. Don't forget me in all your excitements. I wonder when **Kitty's** wedding is to be, she's a dear girl & I hope she'll be very happy; she will make a very good wife I expect, but no one could come up to my dearest. I must be looking lovely, very sunburnt & 6 days growth of beard; you would simply adore me, I expect.

“Nov 23. Our engagement day & **Violet** a year old, now don't say I forgot it, which are many happy returns of the day from me & also many brothers & sisters. I am halting here today, but I haven't much to do. I had a good sleep, but woke early. I've been rearranging stores & things; also having my tents spread out to dry.

“Evening. Just as I got so far Davies turned up, having halted about 1½ miles back (*In a letter to his mother he mentions Davies had been held up trying to find ford across the river*); so we decided to march on & came on 11½ miles, the same march we did last year; we are in a rotten little hut; have a lot to talk about & arrange; so darling, forgive my not writing more.

“24th. After 7 miles this morning to a large village **Nantien**, we decided to halt, but directly after a man arrived with a note from Jamieson, our consul at **Momien**, saying he was there at **Momien** & hoped to see us, so Davies decided to come on there; & we marched on another 6 miles to a village we put up at last year, a level path all the way. Tomorrow we get into **Momien**, & I shall be able to send this off. It was not an interesting march, so I haven't much news. It seems ages since I heard from you, dearest; I keep thinking to myself how I wish we were together. I think it's very likely I shall not be sent into camp next cold weather, but remain at Bangalore finishing up maps; this would be an additional reason for your coming out to me; but you have plenty of time to decide. It is very cloudy tonight, but I hope it won't rain. My Chinese servant, Ma-chong-yin has just broken one of my candle globes; last year when they were broken I had to subsist on the globes of opium lamps. I don't fancy we shall have any now in **Momien** this year, as we have a consul there now.

“Nov 26. Yesterday we came into **Momien**, 16 miles. Jamieson met us just outside the town & we rode in with our men & mules all together through the crowded bazaar, but all absolutely peaceable, no one even followed us, a great change from last year. We went to Jamieson's house & talked with him for some time & then we went to our inn & settled down; dined with Jamieson. It was awfully cold last night; I had to get up about 5 & pull on another blanket & a pair of socks. Today we are busy writing &

arranging things as Davies & I go off in opposite directions & we don't meet till the middle of January. I am sending you a wire via Grindlay; you may expect these wires now & again. I am very well & fit, so don't bother yourself about me."

This page was displaced, but I think it belongs here to conclude this letter: "I am longing to hear from you & love you, my dearest, with my whole heart, & so do you me, I suppose. You will I'm afraid now have to wait some time for my next letter, on Dec 12. I shall be at **Shang-Kuan** just north of **Tali** & will send letters into **Tali** for Chinese merchants to bring down to **Bhamo**, but you will not get that till the beginning of February; then my next will be from Yunnan through **Tong King** & that will reach you the end of February. It is the best I can do, dearest, I might meet her merchant at **Yun-lung-chon**, who would take letters down but I doubt it. My heart is always yours, darling & my thoughts are continually of you & the dear children. Tell **Margaret**, I hope she will soon learn had letters to write to me. My fondest love, darling. I must stop from a bit. After lunch we went & called on the Ting & then to the telegraph office where I sent off several telegrams, now I have come back to finish off things. You darling, do keep loving me all ways, you are all the world to be & I don't love anybody but you & never shall. You dear sweet darling, don't let the children forget me; I shall be unknown after today, so can write more. Heaps of kisses, dearest & fondest love, for ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie."

26th November, Momien, to Julia (his mother): *He covers much the same material as in the foregoing.* Jamieson "read us out a letter he had from Mr Spinney with whom I stayed at **Mengtzin** (?). About a month after I left, he & his wife had to bolt in the night, the rioters firing at them, but luckily missing. Their house was burned down & they lost everything. There have also been riots in Yunnan. Directed against the French, who have made themselves very much disliked by the Chinese by their want of tact."

27th November, Camp, to Ida: "My own dearest pet, This is the first day of what will prove to be a good long letter, as I am by myself. I sent you in a letter from **Momien**, at least I left it with Jamieson, who were sending in a man in a few days. I didn't get off to 9 o'clock, going to say goodbye to Jamieson & then to the telegraph office; then Davies & I separated in the middle of the town & we won't meet for nearly 2 months. I came along over the plain for 4 miles; then up small valleys gradually rising to a ridge at 6,500 ft & then down a little of this small village, it was a short March 11³/₄ miles, but the first from a town has always to be short, as things are rather late & disorganised. I have put up in a rather nice temple & just had tea; it is jolly cold; that you will hear me say pretty often, as except just crossing the three rivers in front of me, the **Thweli, Salween & Mekong**, I shall be high up all the time. I've had one or two losses, first my India rubber bath has disappeared, so I shall have to make use of a pail; then my filter has been smashed to bits, but that doesn't much matter. I only had it to please you & the water is nearly always very good. My room is very airy, but no matter. I have to begin observing stars tonight & most nights now; no joke in the cold, I can tell you. All up this way is hilly & jungly & very few villages, just the sort of country I like. Rupees have been accepted up to **Momien**, now it is the old game of silver & cash. I must just go out & find a good place for my theodolite before it gets dark. I've put my mittens on, but they are not very convenient for writing. Nobody loves me, I wonder if I shall ever get some letters all right in Yunnan, that is what I am looking forward to. I feel just as fit as possible. My boy had fever the two days we were in **Momien**, but he is all right now; my Chinamen between them can cook a bit though. My dear girl, this cold is not conducive to letter writing; I feel more inclined to wrap myself up in a rug & read; I have another French book that Davies lent me, "Waterloo" by Erchman (?) Chatnan (?) which isn't bad. It seems ages since we parted darling, but the time passes quicker than last year; because I haven't that anxiety about you. I am so glad you were sensible & wouldn't be put in the family way.

"Nov 28. Came 14 1/2 miles, mostly level, then I had a climb at the end & am in a hut in a small village at 7,600 ft right under a big range. I have to cross tomorrow; last night it rained a lot & today there were occasional drizzles, heavy clouds on the big range, but I could see snow all along the range. I shot a teal today; I'm rather pleased because I came 4 miles beyond the supposed camping place & so have broken a bit off the climb for tomorrow; I should think, it would be over 10,000 ft. Some mulemen we

passed who had just come over, said there was a lot of snow on the road & that if it snowed again tonight the path would be impassable. It will be down to freezing point tonight, but I'm not so cold as I was last night, my hat is not so draughty. I've now begun surveying & have done all my writing up to date; it was too cloudy to observe last night & I fancy the same tonight. The place 4 miles back is **Chiang-tso**, an inch or two N E of **Momien** on the map, now you won't find any more names till one march short of **Yun-lung-chon**.

“Nov 29. Jolly stiff march, though only 10 miles long, first up hill steep, getting into snow at 9,000 ft & reaching the top at 11,100 ft, one foot of snow, but unluckily there was a slightly trodden path; at the top there was a temple inhabited by two old men, who, as a work of merit supplied everybody with two cups of hot key & a warm by the fire for nothing; they were originally four, but the other two had died, one of these latter supplied a free feed of rice & the other free grass shoes. They would take nothing; certainly they must be a boon to many travellers. Luckily there was no wind, but it was bitterly cold, huge icicles hung about two feet or more in length. We were very glad to hurry down the other side, down to this small village only 4 huts. I am in a shed you would scorn to put the car, but very comfortable, at height 6,900 ft. Last night the temperature 2° below freezing & I hadn't a good night. The mules had a very rough time crossing the pass & didn't get in till 4.30; they were continually falling down. That is I think, the highest I've ever been, got no view from the top, as we were in clouds.

“After dinner. My darling pet, I envy you your nice little house & a fire, well I have a sort of pigstye, there is no place to pitch my tent. The only place I seem to be warm in is in bed. My Gurkhas turn in about ½ past 6. I've got plenty enough on; there's a barking deer nearby. I'm now in the **Salween** valley, there are always some there. I don't think I have a hard march tomorrow, mostly down hill & I shall camp not far from the river & find it quite warm. I wish now I had brought gloves. I have my mittens on now, but they leave the fingers cold. There are two kinds of pears in Yunnan, one which I often have, very juicy, but no taste & hard but it is refreshing & also makes very good stew, but the other which is very much fancied by the Chinese as half rotten; my Chinese servant brought me one at dinner & tried hard to persuade me to eat it, but no thank you. I really don't know when I shall have a halt, not that I care for one, I always find it dull, as I always wake early & that makes the day long. Dearest, goodnight. You shall have more of a love letter tomorrow if it's warmer but anyhow I always adore you.

“Nov 30. I had some excitement today in the way of sport. Just as I was going to start one of the sepoys pointed me out two barking deer on the opposite hill side. A gentleman & lady doing what they oughtn't to do, as I could see with my field glasses. I had two shots at them which fell short but interrupted their lovemaking, then high wounded a third group turned up sent a sepoy to hunt for it, however he couldn't find it but shot another, of which I have the horns, they are however very small; then we had down hill march into the **Salween** valley & up a bit, in all in all 12½ miles; most of the villages here on Shans. I've just had a fine hot bath out of a bucket; don't be horrified it has been too cold the last two days so I haven't had one. Here the height is only 2,800 ft so it is nice & warm. I sent my interpreter ahead to see where I could put up & I found him in the village suggesting I should pitch my tent in the main street; however I came on ½ a mile & found an excellent place near a big stream; everyone is happy with their venison, however mine must keep two days at least. I cross the river tomorrow 2 or 3 miles from here, & then have some up hill climbing to get from this valley into the Mekong. If you like to look at the map, I am just an inch, i.e. 16 miles below **Mung-ku**, where Davies crossed last year. I was at work this morning at a 4 o'clock & didn't go to sleep again, thinking of you all the time. The cause of my awaking was rather funny; I heard the voice of my surveyor's Khalasi waking up one of the others; he had found that a mule had drunk the bucket of water he had put aside to cook the surveyor's breakfast & the water was led to the village from a stream several hundred yards off, by means of bamboos, one of which leaked somewhere & he couldn't get any more water; so the other man got up & off they went together. Now, I must introduce my camper to you. Haroon my interpreter, the same I had last year, Anthony, my Madrasi cook, Ma-chong-yin Chinese servant, Kali Khalasi (he was with me last year), Kesha Jadu, surveyor & Sital his Khalasi & cook; then I have 5 Chinese coolies, one of whom by the bye has dropped behind, two riding mules, 18 baggage mules &

four drivers, Chinese. Then there are my three Gurkhas, Lance-naik, Maiden Singh & sepoy Rangbir Thapa (?) & Shannan Lama, all three good men. There you are, now you know them all. I also have with me two Chinese soldiers & a funny old chap in charge of them, who has to see me safe through to **Yun-lung-chon**; he talks all day at the top of his voice. Now I suppose you are tired of all this, so I can make love in a bit. I am very well provided this year with your photographs; I should like one of you in winter day dress someday & also, don't be shocked, one in your chemise, because that is the costume I like to have you in, sitting on my knee; I could dispense with even the chemise, but that wouldn't be proper, would it? You know best. I never come out to see you in your bath nowadays. I wonder whether you would like to feel yourself securely "in my arms" again; I know I long to have you there; but longing is not much use. If you decide not to come out, Ida, we shall have to reconsider the question of your having another baby 9 months after we meet; because the Chatham course is only 8 months long and I would have to come out again then. Mrs Hume arrived in Bangalore this year early in June, with a baby born at home, April 23; so it could only have been a month old when she started; of course, I know, you may not find it possible, because of the children; but I hope against hope; for I love you very very dearly and want to be separated as little as possible.

"This very pleasant climate is certainly conducive to writing; when it's cold, I just want dinner as soon as possible & to jump into bed; now I feel quite (beg pardon, interrupted here for dinner) comfortable. I've also just had to write down some information about branch roads I've been getting for Manifold & then my interpreter brought his accounts. Tomorrow I begin a new month; my sweetheart. I do look forward to our meeting so much. I hope it won't be too long, I sometimes feel as if I was rather mean putting the decision to come out or not on you, but you will know darling that I shall quite understand should you think it best not to come; to myself, I know I shall want you badly, but I can't say, away from all letters, as I am, that you distinctly ought or ought not to come, so much may have happened that I do not know of. Now goodnight & God bless you, my pet.

"Dec 1. I marched level for 7½ miles to a ferry over the Salween, one big boat like a punt, took me & my mules &c over in three trips; but this delayed us a lot, so I only got 3 miles further on but all up hill, crossed the river at 2,500 ft & here I am 4,200 ft in a hut in a Shan village. There were a lot of Kulen in the valley, also has some green pigeon, but I couldn't get near anything. I'm not sleeping very well just now; I think I go to bed too early; it has been cloudy nearly every night, so I've not been able to take any observations & that keeps me up. It isn't cold here, so far; I haven't had dinner. I've had some difficulty about getting fowls about here; so I am having a nice little tinned dinner, hotch potch soup, sausage & egg curry. I've done all my writing, so I can devote myself to you till dinner; the owners of the house are sitting on the floor watching me; I shall have to request the ladies to retire when I want to go to bed. My letters will get too long this time & you won't care to read them. I fancy I've a good deal of up hill tomorrow. It was hot doing this last bit up from the river today. My snowy range is just opposite across the valley, but there are clouds over it. I love my old sweater, I sleep in it, where it whenever I'm cold, and always have it carried with me, in case I'm cold when I get in which is usually the case; so far I haven't had a cold. Davies had a bad one, when they met at Kiang-ai. I shall cross Davies' road tomorrow somewhere; the one from **Mung-ku** to **Yung-chang-fu**. I'm making enquiries about my marches on from here, at the same time as I write this, which is rather difficult. My darling I long for just one sweet kiss.

"Dec 2. 12 mile, up 2,200 ft, then down again, then at 1,400 ft; am in a good house in a largish village. Put up a pheasant but when I spotted where he settled and walked him up, he got up with a tree between us so I couldn't get a shot. My interpreter is more or less drunk tonight, however he has gone to sleep, and will have a fine head tomorrow. I was jolly hungry when my kit came in at 4; as my boy suddenly only gave me one sausage as my lunch; he does these sort of erratic things without warning. I am going to send this letter back with my talkative old soldier from **Yun-lung-chon**; so you will get it quicker than I said, unless he loses it by the way; so after dinner, I shall have to start my letter to my mother. It would take me in a day longer to get to this town **Yun-lung-chon** than I expected. It is very difficult to make long marches over an unknown country as one is rather in the hands of one's interpreter & guide. I think, even you wouldn't mind this house, I have two rooms, ordinarily used as a

grain godown (?); so I daresay I shall hear rats tonight. It is well & not drafty; so I feel quite comfy & warm.

“Dec 3. In my tent, marched 14 miles, down 2,000 ft gradually in one valley, then up another. I got in at 3 & mules an hour later. One of the sepoys as fever otherwise all well; no rice to be got here, much to everyone's grief, only Indian corn, which is not popular. I met a lot of coolies yesterday & today, men, women & children or carrying salt from the walls beyond **Yun-lung-chong**; no adventures at all today; at last I have a clear night & I shall be able to observe. My tent is always warmer than a drafty house, and I love the quiet. I'm in some terraced fields, near a stream which makes a lot of noise. In one village I passed through, my long stockings were much admired, they are my oldest ones with a big diamond check; one man, who evidently knew everything, said “they are made of the skin of a big snake”. We had one funny scene, my old talkative Chinaman, who is taking me along, insisted in one place, that the right hand path of two was the right one, I & everyone else from its size & direction were equally positive that the left was the one; so we took it & after all the old man was right & we had to scramble back down the hill side to get onto his path; then the old man, simply leapt (*sic*) with joy, slapped his thighs & jumped with excitement. I've never seen a Chinaman so happy; we all laughed. Jamieson at **Momien** rather put his foot in it, when we dined with him, he proposed “sweethearts & wives” with Davies there! You're my sweetheart & my wife & a darling in both capacities. I've 27 days yet before I get to **Yunnan** & even then I may get there before your letters; but I shall have them sent after me. My dearest, I do love you, mind you always write me very loving letters; I'm like you, I like to be told over & over again that you love me.

“After dinner. I finished all my necessary writing; it consists every day of my diary, my road report & village names, three things; but it isn't 8 o'clock yet & I try my very hardest to get to bed as late as possible; if you were here, I shouldn't want to set up on the contrary, my love! You darling, I do miss you very much all day, but most of all night; nobody to cuddle & I love talking in bed, especially with a dear soft little darling like you. Oh! Ida, did I ask you to do this; I want you to look in my dispatch box for a list of instruments, sort of foolscap size & send it to me in Bangalore in June. Now you won't forget, with your dear.

“Dec 4. I had a short march 8½ miles but mostly uphill & no rights could be got in last night's camp; so I had to halt for nearly two hours while everyone had a feed in a big village I passed through; then I climbed up & up till 1 o'clock, when I found a house & a temple at 9,900 ft; mules in at 4; it is as you can imagine fairly cold at this height, but I've pitched my lower fly of my tent in a very good shed & am really quite warm. I hadn't a good night last night; so I'm going to be dissipated & sit up late. I've got on my sweater & cardigan jacket & Norfolk jacket & have my feet wrapped up in a blanket & just had dinner & hot whiskey & water, so I ought to be fairly warm. I'd like to have used sitting on my knee. I feel awfully sleepy. I've got about an hour's climb to get over this range tomorrow; there is some snow on it but none on the path; so it is said. Forgive me darling for writing so stupidly today; I love you & adore you just as much or more than ever.

“Dec 6. Couldn't write to you last night, my sweet, because I had a night out. It was cold on the night of the 4th thermometer 11° below freezing; one of my Chinese soldiers groaning with colly wobbles in the morning so I gave him a dose of chlorodyne. Then we started & crossed the range at 11,800 feet, jolly cold, plenty of snow about, but not much on the path; then down hill very steep to the Mekong Valley, came down 7,000 feet; after coming 12 miles I found a fine big house half deserted, had been a big Panthay's house once; but no mules. They had taken the wrong path, although they had myson (?) called guide & two others with them & were benighted, curiously enough only a mile from where I was; but they had wandered off the main road & so the men I sent to hunt for them missed them; they turned up at 7 this morning. I had dinner of some rice & 3 hard-boiled eggs & slept very badly on some straw & my interpreters blankets over me. I was jolly glad to get breakfast in morning, then started about 9, a bit up the **Mekong valley** to a chain suspension bridge you will find on the map **Feling-chiao** & then had 5 miles up hill to this small village. I reach **Yun-lung-chon** tomorrow. At last I got observations tonight, which has enabled me to sit up late, and I am getting all my writing up to

date, as I must close this tomorrow. I'm in a good room in a hut, it is surely cold outside. My darling, I love to get a day over & think I'm a bit nearer seeing you. Whenever I'm in a comfortable place like tonight I wish you were here. I long to kiss & etcetera you, you dear, good night. Mind you write me long loving letters. I'm getting quite to look forward to my hour or so awake in bed in the morning thinking of you.

“Dec 7. Uphill for 2,000 feet & then down hill to this place **Yun-lung-chon**, where I was received with eclat (?) 12 soldiers & two gongs beating, heading (*si*) by a small boy with a leather thong or whip, the son of a public flogger to clear the way; it is a wretched little place & only exists by reason of there being salt wells here. One of my sepoy has fever & is shivering away in the next room. I am sending this by my old guide to **Momien** then to be sent on by a merchant. I hope it will reach all right. You dear sweet darling; I hope you are well & enjoying life & the children too. **Violet** will be talking & walking when I see her, that will seem so funny. God bless you, my own dearest; take care of your dear self; kiss the chicks from their father & take heaps & heaps for yourself with my very fondest love, you dear. For ever, your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.”

8th December 1899, Camp, to his mother, Julia: *Another letter overlapping most of the foregoing.* “My dearest mother, I sent you in her letter today, describing my journey from **Momien** to **Yun-lung-chon**, 11 days; I hope it will reach all right, the bearer as far as **Momien** was an old man, who was my guide & from there on, the merchants have a sort of post every 10 days. Today I cross a small river by a wooden bridge with a roof to it, 40 yards span & then kept up the right bank for 6 miles, turned up a side nullah (*a steep narrow valley with water course*) passing a succession of 4 salt wells each about a mile apart; the broad dry nullah seemed to form the street of each village & the banks were lined with spectators to see us pass. I went in & saw one of the wells; the salt water is pumped up, taken by a wooden channel to the village & there boiled down. My escort wanted me badly to stop in one of the salt of villages, but I had done so short of March; and so on I went up hill; no village anywhere, except write up above on the hills; so I pitched a tent in an old field, height 6,900 ft, march 13^½ miles.

“Dec 10 (*or 9?*). The greater part of my escort; at least 8 of them went on last night to a village 4 miles on, not liking the idea of sleeping out, & I'm not surprised as the thermometer fell to 20°; I had a time of 1,000 ft & then down a small family to a village at mile 4; then up a narrow valley for 9 miles more, getting on to a ridge just under 9,000 ft; then I had a steep climb down; in all 17 miles. I got in myself at 6 & my mules at 7; luckily there was a moon; everyone very tired, myself included. The village only boasts of one house, an inn, with the appropriate name of Travellers Haven, & so it is; because that isn't a village for miles.

“Dec 10. Temp. 19° last night, my coldest so far this year. 10 miles down one family to a small river which I crossed by a chain suspension bridge & then up on to the lower slopes of a high range which I have to cross tomorrow. Saw 3 pheasants today but didn't get a shot.

“Dec 11. Up hill for 5 miles to 10,000 feet, where I had a really magnificent view, hills in all directions with snow on them. The **Lichiang** snow peak, which we were near last year, stood up well; it was 75 miles off; but looked much nearer; then down I came to a nice little plain with 20 villages in it; well cultivated & am in a large village, where supplies are abundant & everyone very happy.

“Dec 14. Yesterday I marched in 10 miles to **Teng-chouan-chon**, met Mr Grahame about 4 miles out & we came in together... Now, he has gone out to preach in one of the tea houses & leaves me to finish up my letters, which he will take into Tali for me & get one of the merchants there descended into Bhamo by next caravan. I enjoyed my days shooting but feel a bit tired. Much love to you all. My journey from here is via **Pin-chuan-chon**, **Tayas-hsien** & **Lotzu-hsien** to **Yunnan-fu**, where I expect to reach on Dec 30 & where I shall spend my New Year's day. My Christmas will be a lonely one, a happy, happy New Year to you all, ever your loving son, Charles Ryder.”

4th December, to Ida: “My own dearest sweetheart, I made a short march today, mostly along the shore of the **Tali Lake**; I ought to have gone further having done 10^½ miles before 1 o'clock, but I found a good house with the lake washing the walls and my window looks right across the lake; so I have had a

lazy afternoon; and actually been reading; but I fancy I shall have to make up for it tomorrow. Grahame went back to Tali, along the other side of the lake; now I have 16 days march to **Yunnan-fu** by myself. You score when I am by myself, because I can write more. There has been a Chinese wedding going on the opposite side of the street, everyone in their best clothes, and tom tomming &c. but it seems to have shut up now. I picked up some shells on the lake beach; the Chinese eat the shellfish inside & there were heaps of empty shells lying about. This lake is really very lovely, prettier this side, because one looks across the lake at the big range. I think I've done with big ranges now; as there are no big hills between here and **Yunnan-fu**. You darling I would love to have you here, you could sit & paint of the lake, while I interrupted you by kissing you!

“After dinner. I find the house I'm in is a theatre; there is a sort of square open verandah in which the performances take place. I've stuffed up an open window & now it is fairly warm, only $\frac{1}{2}$ past 7; but I've done all my work. I wonder what you are doing, you dear & whether you are well and all is going well with you. My nose is very sore from the cold and sunburn, the skin is peeling off & makes it rather uncomfy. I long to see **Violet**, she is such a little darling; I must say you have given me three dear little girlies, but none so pretty as yourself. My dinner tonight was roast teal, curried eggs & blancmange; and I eat a lot, thank you. Now I've a long march ahead, dearest, so goodnight. Sleep well, sweetheart. Do you ever long to be in my arms? Now answer please.

“Dec 15. My dearest, I get hold of my letter to you at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9. I had a very long march 20 miles, but fairly level, along the lake shore then up over low bare hills & down t'other side. I got in at 5 & mules at 6. It is quite warm here & thanks to a fire in the room underneath I feel quite hot; as if I shouldn't want my sweater in bed. I've had a lot of odds & ends of work to do & had to shoot a star in the middle of dinner. I feel satisfied with my long march. There was a place about 5 miles back I should like to have halted at, a small plain with a marsh in the middle crowded with duck. I had three shots but missed them all, too far off. My feet are a bit bruised, as the path was very stoney & my boots are getting rather thin. One of my Gurkhas was very seedy, so he had my mule. I'm in a fine big room, usually used for grinding corn & keeping big baskets of paddy; but it is clean, generally these sort of lofts are. My darling pet, I must to bed. Goodnight, you dear.

“Dec 16. 16 miles today quite level, but really slow going down, because here I am only at 5,300 ft & it is quite balmy. Today I am at **Pin-chuan-chon**, a small walled town but very few people in it. My interpreter met a leopard outside the walls, so he says; I fancy it was a wolf. I wore grass sandals for the first time this year today space & my feet feel very bruised, but my one precious pair of boots must be taken care of; now I am going for **Pe-yen-tsing** about 3 inches northwest of here on the map, 3 marches & I fancy fairly stiff ones; I've just completed my first month out from Bhamo and done 364 miles, only two halts; now I've got to get to **Yunnan-fu** in 14 days. In consequence of staying up till nearly 10 last night I slept comfortably till 6; instead of having to get up at 4 for purposes of nature, as I generally have to. No adventures today; and therefore no news. I've a fine large room in an inn; no crowd, as Grahame comes here pretty often, so they are accustomed to foreigners. I hope you say your prayers regularly. I'm much better now it's warmer, but, Ida some of those cold nights I just nipped into bed & said them there. I'm keeping a list this year showing exactly how long a tin of anything lasts; it will be very useful for future occasions; I often think how I should love to have you in camp with me; I would try & arrange everything so comfy for you; will you come? I wonder, so if you are coming out to India in June or not; that is what I think of most. If you do, we shan't quite enjoy setting up house with the idea that it is for so short a time; but anything to shorten our separation. My neck is rather sore today, something in the collar of my flannel shirt has rubbed it. I have gone back to my thin khaki breaches & coat; and put away mittens & suchlike, for some time to come. I passed through a lot of spear grass today & enjoyed it thoroughly. Sweetheart don't forget me; love me as much as I love you. You darling, goodnight & God bless you.

“Dec 17. Today I had a long march 18 miles, across a lot of deserted fields in the **Pin-chuan** plain, over a ridge into another plain, a climb of 1,500 ft into a cultivated valley. At the top of the last ridge I went another 500 ft up & had a fine view; I could see into five small plains with hills in between exactly

shewing what the country hereabouts is like; I got in at 6; a few minutes after the mules. My Gurkha Naik frightfully excited because on the march is saw a deer with big horns; I saw a few dark but couldn't get near them. Arriving late everything is late & I've just finished dinner at 9 o'clock. I'm getting into the long marches & my feet were all right today. I thought I should never get to the end of the march today; as it was getting dusk, we could see in the plain the white wall across the entrance to the village to keep the evil spirits are out; it looked quite near, but took nearly an hour to get there. I'm told it is two marches more to **Péyen-tsing**; I should like to go to **Ta-yao-hsien** straight; but what the Chinese official likes is to pass one on to the next nearest official; so there is said to be no direct road to **Ta-yao-hsien**: as a matter of fact I am certain there is; but it is difficult to find out. I'm a bit higher today 6,900 feet so it is colder; but I have a good room in an inn, so I'm not too cold, I shot my stars this evening outside the inn in an empty space in the middle of the village, surrounded by a crowd, but a quiet respectful one; so far I've not had the least bother from the people, that makes me wish you were here; the only thing &c stumps me is how on earth you would do 1 or 2 things if you wanted to; I must find out what the lady missionaries do.

“Dec 18. A dull march down one narrow valley all day, 15 miles, path rather bad in parts & mules not in till 5.30. My escort & interpreter wanted me badly to stop at a village 3 miles back & so take an extra day to reach **Pétsing**; but I wouldn't. Here there is only one house, a poor inn; so I pitched my tent in a field just above & am very comfortable; all the Chinese very shirty at my not stopping further back; can't get rice here, they say. One sepoy still seedy; something mysterious inside; my Chinese servant down with high fever, where on earth he got it, goodness only knows; however Kali my Khalassi has come to the rescue; he is a splendid chap, very useful all-round; so he is going to wait at table. Tomorrow by all accounts I've the dickens of a long march; jolly for those who are seedy. I myself am as fit as possible; I can't imagine anyone getting ill in this climate. In consequence of the above dinner is going to be late, as it is nearly 8 now. I feel as if I should sleep well; I was awoke about 4 by one of my Chinamen awaiting another, instead of shaking him, he kept shouting at him; till I had to yell at no 1 to shut up; however I didn't get to sleep again, but lay awake thinking of you; very comfy except nose; I wish I had a nose bag; the sun in the day takes off the skin & at night the cold tickles it up & I wake every morning with an icy cold nose; I should like to hide it behind old **Harry's** ear; tell him. I would very much like to know what he is doing; whether he really is in the militia yet; and how **Chucky** (*Ida's brother*) is getting on. Mind you give them all my love. It froze hard last night, ice all along the path this morning. Tonight I have come down a bit. After tomorrow I shall have to do some short marches, or else everyone will get knocked up; but I know **Ta-yao-hsien** is too easy marches, really 1½ days. In 12 days I shall get to Yunnan; how I do hope I shall find a letter from you, dear old girlie, here comes dinner; so wait a bit.

“Last night I was interrupted in my letter to you by my interpreter coming in with some information about roads &c, but tonight I hope to be quiet. Thank you; just had a nice little dinner; soup, very good stewed chicken & egg curry, with my usual hot whiskey & water, very grateful and comforting. I often think, you dear, you must find my letters very dull; one of my days is so like another, and the fact that I love you is the same day after day. I think my days better might be shortened into long march, tired. I love you. I eat a rice sweetmeat today on the road looked like a lump of lime, no taste, but first rate stick jaw. I think next time I'm home, I shall have my sweet head removed; by the bye, how is your goitre; the people about here are very much inclined that way. My friend Kali is sleeping in the bathroom of my tent, to keep watch & guard; now darling once more good night.

“Dec 20. I am doing an in voluntary halt at **Pétsing**. Yesterday I came 18 miles, mules not in till 8.30 & the surveyors old Khalasi not in at all; so this morning I sent out to hunt for him & he was brought in about 11 o'clock; having had fever he stopped in a little hut on a hill some 4 miles back; I thought of doing a short march but decided to halt & do a long march tomorrow to **Tayao-hsien**, so I have an idle day before me. This is a salt well place; a very dirty crowded town jammed into a narrow valley, quite the dirtiest smelliest place I've been in and not a place I would choose for a halt; however I have good big room, so it might be worse. It has been jolly cold all this morning; I feel as if I should like to bask in the sun a bit. I've been doing very long marches, so that a days halt while do nobody any harm.

I've been rather constipated lately, so I am going in for mustard leaves as a vegetable à la spinach; it is an excellent thing for regulating the inside. I had quite a climb yesterday from 5,100 ft to 8,000 ft & down again and it was somewhere on the top that the old Khalasi stayed the night so you must have had it pretty cold. I've got to write up my mother's letter for the last week and odds and ends of things to do. When I am tired of them, I returned to you, my darling. Just done one piece of work, putting latitude & longitude lines on my plane table. I've bought a Chinese pipe to smoke the fag ends of my cheroots in, but it doesn't draw very well. I must say I don't care about a halt, miss you then more than ever & feel as if I was getting no nearer the letter I hope to get at **Yunnan-fu**; looking at the maps I see I shall have to step out to reach Yunnan on the 30th. If I can get a direct road from **Ta-yao-hsien** it will be all right. I am going to open a bottle of Madeira for the 27th (*their wedding anniversary*) to drink your health, my sweetheart; how I wish we were together, but don't love me less because I am away. Bother, I've got to go & call on the salt commissioner as he came last night to call on me, but I was not at home going to my things not having arrived. After that I shall go and see how they extract the salt; it will pass the afternoon. I paid my call & then saw the salt wells; after which my call was returned; the official very pleasant; then he sent me a leg of pork & a tin of I think tea. I regaled him with neat whiskey & a cheroot; he gave me the usual cups of tea & a small bowl of very savoury mess of sorts; seeing I didn't make much progress with the chopsticks, he had a spoon brought in for me; he came from Peking, so knew something about foreigners. After my late night yesterday it was 11 when I got to bed; I shall go to bed early, especially as I have a long march ahead. I reckon you will get this the end of February; you darling, you have long to wait for the letter but not so long as I have; for letter from you will give my writing a new start. I have your one dear precious letter with me, and often read it. When I get back to India I shall have one or two presents due to you, so you can guess what they would be, give you something to think about.

“Dec 22. You see by the day I didn't write yesterday. I did a thumping long march 21½ miles to **Ta-yao-hsien**, a place I came through last year, a climb of 1,600 feet out of the salt valley & then pretty level. I got in at 6 & the mules not at all that night; so I had a night out, had dinner of a bowl of rice and three hard-boiled eggs and slept on a fine bed of clean straw with my interpreter's blanket over me and slept excellently. The mules came in at 8.30 having stopped 4 miles back in the dark; my friend the moon not being available; very glad to get breakfast and got off at 10.30, did 10 ½ miles, up narrow cultivated valley, came on a good village, looked in at several houses; but finding them not suitable, went to the temple, however there was very vehement opposition to our putting up there, it being a vegetarian Temple, so came on a bit and put up in a good house, after a lot of objections from two old women of the house, who however quieted down when they found that they could sell us wood, fowls &c at a good profit. I have come due south from **Ta-yao-hsien** and tomorrow I'm afraid I shall get on to the road from **Yao-chon** to **Ting-yuen-hsien** which has already been surveyed last year, which I'm sorry for as my time long it will be wasted. There was an alternative of going via **Yuen-mon-hsien** due east of **Ta-yao**, but I was afraid it would take longer, however from **Ting-yuen** I get a new road to **Lo-tsu-hsien** & then to **Fu-min-hsien** which is one long day from **Yunnan-fu**, but I shall have to leg it to reach the capital on the 30th. There are two funny little boys in the house who are standing watching me. I am going to trying to make an early start; what delays me is the time the mulemen take packing up in the mornings; they are very slow at it, and there is a good deal to do certainly. I felt beastly seedy yesterday morning, sort I generally all overish; so that my 21 miles was pretty good, as I walked all the way mounting my surveyor's Khalasi on my mule. I'm all right now. My room is rather smoky, otherwise very nice; it is as usual the house granary. I dreamt last night that I came into China and again but with you this time and everything went splendidly. By the bye Ida; I want you to think of a plan I'm thinking of. Govt. give on a year's leave on full pay I believe to go to **Peking** to study Chinese; one has to pass a preliminary first in Rangoon but that is very easy. There are plenty of English people in Peking, which is very cold in winter, but rather hot in summer; you remember Mrs Mockler in Eastbourne, her son went there with his wife & two small children; how would you like it? But it would be better to leave the children in England; this wouldn't be till after the Chatham course; but I should like to know what you think of it. I should like to work it, so as to have leave to England, after it; and go home through Canada. I've had dinner & it's ½ past 7. I certainly shouldn't dream of going to Peking without you; so

if you don't fancy the idea I'll drop it. Living is of course quite civilised in Pekin; but I'm not going to go wandering about again without you; you should have a chair carried by 4 coolies and a mule; so you would go very comfortably, as all sorts of odd is & ends go in a chair; I should be awfully proud of you, if you came. You darling; I like to think of these things, even if they don't come off; then I'd make you write a book. Now goodnight my pet. God bless and protect you & our darling chicks.

“Dec 23. Another good long march, 18 miles & I've got onto an old road; but shall be offered again tomorrow; I'm at a place **P'U-TSI-CHIAO**, which you will find on the map if you will look up the map. I got in at 4 & the mules at 6 & then, my dear, you would have seen old Charlie ramping round in fine style; because I found that the mulemen had stopped to feed themselves half way. Now, I sometimes allow it, but today it was exactly against my orders; so I let them have half English & half Hindustani; my Chinese servant got it hottest because he has charge of the mules on the march. Now in order that they may have a good time, I have to wait for my dinner; and my room is horribly smoky so I'm very cross and everyone avoids me. The march was a very easy one really quite level amongst a lot of little cultivated valleys, all day over 7,000 feet. It has turned cold again. I must shut up I can't stand the smoke any longer.

“Dec 24. I get hold of this letter at the respectable rate of ¼ to 9. I only came in a short march to the small walled town of **Ting-yuen-hsien** marked on the map, am in a nice inn; some Chinamen took me off to a tank, said to be crowded with duck, only got one shot, which I missed; there were very few took there, this was to pass the afternoon; as I did the 12 mile march by 2 o'clock. Now I'm going due east from here to **Lo-tsu-hsien**, and I must do it in four days. I had a bath today, the first for several days; it takes about an hour to wash oneself bit by bit in a bucket, head first then downwards ending with my feet, but I wash my feet every day; as they are the part of one that gets really dirty. Last night I had dinner in the sort of verandah of the house, the smoke was so bad; but it gradually died away & I slept all right. The thermometer went down to 18° that's 14° of frost, my coldest so far this year, and by Jove! It was cold for the first hour of the march until the sun got well up. I should like to weigh myself; I expect I've come down a bit, but am feeling as fit as possible. You darling, I haven't made love to you for several days in this letter, but I do to myself every day till I go to sleep, and when I wake in the morning; those are the two times I think of you and nothing but you; I long for a kiss, my pet; I do so miss you, but perhaps you wouldn't like this life; the stinks and dirt in some villages are appalling even to my blunt nose; but all the same I'm selfish enough to wish I had you with me. These cold nights we could cuddle so beautifully, except that I suppose we should have to have separate camp beds for the look of the thing. I'm gradually getting colder dearest, so must go to bed, alas! alone. Goodnight sweetheart.

“Dec 25. A merry Christmas my sweetheart, I can imagine the chicks happiness over all the presents and excitement. I've had a quiet restful day; an 18 mile march, including a climb of 2,000 feet, up at 6.30, in here at 5.30. This is a salt well place; the inns were so crowded & dirty that my interpreter put me up in a fine big temple. My room is 30 yards or more long but open on one side; however I've rigged up my water proof sheet on one side so I think I'm all right and it's not a cold place. There is an official here & the usual bother; he wants me to go on to **Lu-feng-hsien**. I've twice had deputations this evening of his clerks with Chinese lanterns to come & say that it was impossible for me to go direct to **Lotzu-hsien**, however I have found out about the road; so it will be all right. I passed through another salt village en route, had lunch in a very nice inn. I shan't be sorry of a few days rest at Yunnan, especially if I have a letter from you awaiting me. I'm in deep valley; so shall have a big climb tomorrow to get out of it, however we all think nothing of the hills here, after the big ones we've had. There is a great sameness about my meals each day. Breakfast, porridge, two eggs either fried or boiled; lunch, cold chicken in some shape or form, generally stew; dinner, chicken soup, chicken stew or roast or curry, and milky pudding; but I feel so fit I could eat anything; my appetite does not want tempting with tasty dishes. Sweetheart, my heart is very much with you today. I expect you will have your Christmas dinner at Ouselea & have a very happy time; you darling how I long for you, you are such a dear bright little person; it seems such ages since I heard from you. Goodnight darling.

“Dec 26. Started with a stiff climb to 8,300 ft and level along ridge from whence I had a fine view & did a lot of work, then dropped down into a valley, to a large village, saw a pheasant and one of the sepoys still very bad; there is a missionary doctor in Yunnan and I shall get him to have a look at the man. This will give you an idea of what a useful man my Madrasi cook is for the Jungle: “What making for Masters dinner?” “Well boy, what have you got?” “Nothing Sir.” This at 6.30 pm & quite true, he had no fowls; so I fined him 1/- & rowed my interpreter well, made my dinner of sausages & curried eggs. I have two more marches to get to **Lotzu-hsien**, very up & down hill they say; that is rather a grind, but better for one's surveying; the local Lulu has just scooted through my room & is miaowing on the tiles. Last night was not cold and I had a fine sleep. The central figure in the temple was a huge image of a very angry coffee coloured gentlemen with skulls around his waist & a man's head on a spear in his hand, he was about 15 feet high. He is a sort of evil genius who has to be propitiated by offerings, but no one paid any attention to him while I was there. Marched 17 miles today & wore out my grass sandals. I emptied two of store boxes today so as to have a spare mule for sick men; as I have two of the latter now. I am so wondering whether I shall find a letter from you at Yunnan. Goodnight, you darling, tomorrow is the 27th.

“Dec 27. And here it is. I had a short march 11 miles, but the hilly one; very satisfactory as I got in a lot of work. Just had dinner ending with my medley of & drinking your health, my darling, has made me howl a bit; I wish we could be together; I wonder so much whether you have remembered the day. I'm in dirty little inn, and you in 5 Merton (?) Road very far apart, darling, but my heart is always with you; and my letter darling, to you is always a great pleasure to me; sometimes I sit & smoke & look at it, because I haven't much to write about, I shall feel more writeable when I hear from you again. “Your good health & happiness my pet & may we be spared for many a long year to have a long happy married life” my darling, you have been a dear good sweet little wife to me for 7 years, you dear, God bless you.

“Dec 28. A 20 mile march, which I will describe minutely because it will shew you exactly how I pass the day. Woke about 6, shouted for my hot water, and while I was dressing my bedding & bed all rolled up, then I have Chota hazri of a plate of porridge; a couple of eggs & two cups of coffee; then I am ready to start at 7. We are accompanied by 4 villagers armed with guns & spears, crew change had each village we pass through. Up hill for a couple of miles over a ridge at 6,400 feet back over a small plateau then down the stony path into a small cultivated valley, up it & then up a steep hill onto a pine clad ridge 6,800 ft, along which we go for some time, and I found a good place about mile 9 where I stuck up my plane table & had my lunch of cold chicken stew with a sausage in it, and cold tea; down we go then for a bit into another en (?) Ctwatered (?) valley along with the mules who have then caught us up; mulemen very anxious to halt for a midday meal, but I knew the march would be too long; up bare slopes and amongst small fir clad hills for the rest of the march, at mile 16; I stuck up my plane table again as the mules were behind & then got in with them at 6, in the dark. This is a large village, but apparently the inns are either crowded or very poor, as I could only find a stable in one to put up in; as soon as my things were unpacked I have tea, then shoot my stars and sit down to my writing; shortly I shall have my wash, hands, face & feet. I hope to have rather a shorter march tomorrow to get to **Fumin-hsien**, when I shall get all my writing up to date. I have about a fortnight of my letter to my mother to write. I fancy I shall have to wait some time for dinner, as it is 8 o'clock already. This village is at the south end of the **Lotzu-hsien** plain, it's being out of my way to go there. My sandals have finally worn out today, so I must wear my precious pair of boots; by the bye they had an adventure the other day which I forgot to tell you.

“Jan 1 (1900). I had to shut up suddenly on the night of the 28th; just as I was telling about my boots; they were being carried on my saddle I leant (*sic*) my mule to a sick Khalasi to ride; the boots dropped off without his noticing & I had to send back to look for them; some little boys had got them & hit them & it wasn't till they were threatened that they produced them. Well on the 29th I did 18 miles to **Fu-min-hsien**, a nice little town & on the 30th 22 miles into Yunnan; first went to the telegraph office to tell Davies at **Puerh** that I had arrived; then to our old house but found it occupied; so I went on to these Stevensons; I had wired to him from **Tali**; he had arranged for us to have the Jensen's empty

house; but as my mules didn't turn up they very kindly put me up for the night & it was rather nice to sleep in clean sheets & have a real bath again. Yesterday morning my mules having come, I came over here & am settled very comfortably. I have tried each night to get **Puerh** direct on the telegraph line; but failed so far; one more try tonight, and Davies leaves **Puerh** tomorrow. If we don't get into connection tonight, I shall probably wait here 5 days more today comes up to the next telegraph station. I was awfully disappointed to find that all my mail consisted of one Globe (?) of Oct 26 that mother had sent; but another mail is expected tomorrow & letters come up in rather than an irregular manner here; so I hope to get something before I leave. I am having tea with the Stevensons this evening but must come back to shoot stars after a very happy New Year, my pet, to you & the darling children; I am away from you, dearest & my heart & all my thoughts are always with you. The telegraph Chinese manager is coming to call today & I shall have alas to go & see the French, 13 I think. The only other missionaries here now are Dr & Mrs Savin. You will very likely get one more letter sent off from here; a post goes every 10 days, one going tomorrow; so I have had a lot of writing to do. I have received no message from Bhamo but have wired twice for news of the war.

“Jan 2. This must go off, darling. I've been busy all day working out my star observations. I may have to stay here till Jan 8. God bless you, my darling; my very fondest love & heaps of kisses to your dear self & the chicks. For ever your very devoted husband & lover, Charlie.”

From 14th December, Camp Yunnan, to his mother (Julia): A parallel letter to be foregoing. “I also went to see the salt wells. The salt water is brought up in a large skin, hauled up by a vertical windlass worked by two men, it then runs into two huge reservoirs, about 30 feet deep, like big tubs sunk in the ground; from there it is taken as wanted & boiled; I saw 23 big iron basins on one and I couldn't get near them. ...

“Dec 16. I practically level March 16 miles down the same valley to **Pin-ch'uan-chon**, a small walled town in a fair sized plain, but it lacks water so many of the fields are deserted; and most of the inhabitants of the town have moved higher up the valley; through the town wasn't much more than the walls. ...

“Dec 24. An easy march 12 miles to **Ting-yuen-hsien** a small walled town; I had intended going on another 5 miles but the official sent a man to meet me with a polite message that he hoped I would stop in the town a night, then the cyclometer of my measuring wheel broke, so that decided me, & finding a good inn, I halted. ...

“Dec 29. 18½ miles to **Fu-min-hsien** up over a broad ridge, where I had a fine view & a fine view means stopping an hour or so sketching in the country; then down one long narrow valley to the plain. Passed through the walled town, crossed a small river, the water flows from the **Yunnan-fu** Lake, by a very fine bridge roofed & highly ornamented, the sides used as market stalls; put up in a good inn in the suburb on the south side of the river. ...

“Jan 1. (**1900**)... I slept this morning till 8 o'clock with the delightful feeling of not being obliged to be up early. I have to change my mules here as my present men are very lazy & say I am much too fast of them. The French are very much in evidence here, they have rented a big house, 13 of them & I've got a consul here I believe; if so we shall have one too.

“Jan 2. I have been writing out my observations all day. Thanks so much for the Globe of Oct 26 it was the only bit of mail I got. Much love to all, ever your loving son, Charles Ryder.”

There is a letter dated 3rd January 1900 from Peking! Would it be a different year?

4th January 1900, Yunnan-fu, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, you can imagine my delight at getting three letters from you yesterday. Oct 27, Nov 30, Nov 10, that is all I was to expect here. My darling your letters are not very happy ones; first you had the children with influenza & just at the end of your last, **Enid** has chickenpox; I know the latter is not dangerous but it means a lot of trouble & nursing to you, my pet and probably **Margaret & Violet** will follow suit. How I wish I were with you to help you my sweet; not that I could be of much use but I could comfort you. It is very hard on her; I

shall not know that the chicks are well again till Manifold meets us early in April, 3 months hence. The news from the Transvaal is very bad; even with the Army Corps we don't seem able to make headway. So altogether my news was not very cheerful. The only thing I am delighted at is that you really do seem to miss me badly; and so I hope you will come out to me, because indeed my darling, I miss you badly enough now in all conscience; but it would be too beastly in Bangalore by myself; however if so be it must be. I can get through that time somehow; but it would be 9 months sort of unnecessary separation. So **Kitty** (*Ida's younger sister*) is already married & out in India by now; you mustn't be jealous about her having a bigger wedding than you; you couldn't have had a bigger one in a small station like Sitapur, and then as to dresses &c you had a pretty good outfit & your people had all the younger ones at school &c; anyhow I adore you always so here's a kiss & shut up. You darling, your letters make me long more than ever to be with you. I won't again go out of my way to go on exploration work, dear; but I couldn't have not gone on this without looking as if I was very little keen on my work. I think very much of you darling; you will I expect be very worn out with your nursing. I am so glad you liked the lace; gradually you will have a nice lot of things. I wonder whether you will have another infant; do you want to have one, because if you do, it is just possible you may have one; however if you do come out to me it will not take place at once; we will postpone it a few months. Dearest; if you decide that you will come out, I should do this; ask your mother point blank if she would take the children; if she says no; then ask Mrs Barns; if she says no; then write to the Army & Navy Auxiliary for lists of people who take in children whose parents are in India and consider them; but what do you say to asking aunt **Mina**; little children like ours would be well brought up there, and it would only be for 9 months; but above all ask your mother first. I strongly advise this, dear; or else, she might be hurt that you preferred leaving them elsewhere. I can't say exactly when I shall be back in India but I think if you made arrangements to leave about the middle of June you would be all right. Come 1st class P & O single, going a cross by train to Marseilles; it costs no more; your only extra expense will be £2.15.0 for a sleeping car ticket which I strongly advise you to take. When I wrote before my only doubts about your coming out, were, whether you really missed me so much that you would go to all the bother of coming out for only 9 months, but from your letters I'd judge you are as anxious to be with me as I am to have you; so provided you can arrange for the children all right, come along. As soon as I reach India I will telegraph to you probably just one word "safe"; that will mean all well &c; it will take me a fortnight or more to get to Bangalore after that; but you reply by telegram to the place from which my telegram comes either "no" that means you have decided not to come; but if you have decided to come then wire out the date your ship arrives at Bombay; just simply the date like "June 30" then I shall know what that means. Now the only difficulty I can see is what amount of time you require for getting ready, but if you have made preliminary arrangements, that is arranged about the children & about your clothes; you won't need very long. You will get this by the end of February, so you will have plenty of time to decide about your dresses; but darling remember this; you will only be coming out for 9 months; we shall want to live a bit quietly to save some money for the Chatham course; and addresses you bring out to India you probably will not care to wear the following year at Chatham so get what you like but don't get unnecessary quantity of things. You will, I think, have enough money, because you had about £160 when I left. I sent home and other £120, I think it was, when I was in Bangalore, and £70 goes home out of play drawn on Feb 1, March 1, April 1, May, June 1, that is five times, viz the last might arrive after you had left about £160 + £120 + 5 times £70 comes to £630; out of which you will have had to live for 8½ months St 9 months at £40 = £360, my subscriptions insurance say £40 that makes £400, and you would have £230 left, of which £55 is your ticket, take £20 in sovereigns with you (& don't get them stolen on board) that leaves you still £150; now out of that get your dresses and leave the rest at Cox. I shall have a little money in hand out here for setting up house. I wouldn't bring out a new dinner service, our old one would do very well, nor any glass, but house linen you must bring out what you've got; all our house ornaments, silver &c bring them out as much as you like leaving behind anything you think we could do without. If you send out one of the big boxes as goods are not as passenger luggage you save a lot of money; and also all your heavy luggage must go onto the steamer in London. You can find out all about it from the P & O Office; in making arrangements you won't be far wrong if you settle on a steamer leaving Marseilles middle of June; you are a good sailor,

so it will be better for you to come out in the monsoon than in the hot weather. I will of course meet you at Bombay. I am quite certain I couldn't get leave to go home this year; so that if you don't come we can't meet till March next year. Thinking it over I should feel inclined after asking your mother & she says she can't have the children ask Aunt **Mina** next. I don't think it would be the best place for older children; but a very good place for small children.

“Jan 7. It was snowing a little yesterday & again today; so cold I can hardly hold my pen. Did I ask you to send me out parcel post to **Sadiya, Assam** a pair of brown boots size 10 & fairly broad costing about 18/- as I shall have no respectable boots to wear. Get them, dearest, broad, I don't want any more corns. My dearest, I haven't written much about the chickenpox, I don't feel very anxious about the children but I wish, my darling, I could be with you to share in all the trouble. May God bless you & keep you all safe & well. I start tomorrow & must close all my letters now. I meet Davies about Jan 18 & will hand him over letters to bring in here, so you may expect to hear a fortnight after this. My fondest love & heaps of kisses to you, dear and the chicks. I can quite imagine **Violet** is a little sweet. For ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.”

7th January, Yunnan-fu, to his mother (Julia): *He has received letters from her but doesn't reveal any news from her apart from the children's ailments. He comments on losses in the war in Transvaal and wonders whether his brother Wilfred may be sent out there.*

8th January, Camp, Yunnan, to Ida: “My own sweetest darling, Here I am on the march again. I didn't get away till late, it's being $\frac{1}{4}$ to 11, went (*sic*) I said goodbye to the Stevensons; but I got in here at 5.15, having come a long very fast, $19\frac{3}{4}$ miles; mules getting in at the same time although they started only $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour before me, which shows how much better they are than my old ones. I had no work to do en route, as this is the road we came in by last year. This is **Anning-chou** and I go to **Kun-yang-hsien** at the south end of the Yunnan lake two days from here; so now you know all about it. I was thinking about you a lot today; about your coming out. Of course it all depends on how much you want to be with me; because I don't want you to come out in the spirit that your mother came out last time grousing the whole time. I know all the trouble and bundobast (?) will fall on you; but then I've made a good many journeys in my time to see you. One can think of any number of objections; leaving the children; the trouble, expense &c and long journey for only 9 months in India. Any outsider would say oh! what nonsense to go out there so short a time; but then nobody knows how much we like to be with each other. You remember Aunt **Mary** at Eastbourne never could understand it. Of course leaving 5 Merton Road before the lease is up is a pity; it means losing £11 a month, or $3\frac{1}{2}$ months if you leave middle of June; you might of course sub-let it. Sometimes when I think of all the objections, even I think is it worthwhile? I wish I had two wives, one that is you to be always with me & the other to have the babies & look after them; though you are rather good at that too. It was bitterly cold all day even walking; I kept my mittens & all my warm things on; but I have a nice charcoal fire in my room; so I'm nice & warm. I turn it out before I go to bed. I got no more news of the war from Bhamo; but should a telegram come for me it will be sent after me. UDF, I hope the chickenpox is over all right. I expect Margaret would be more trouble than **Enid** to nurse; and I wonder if dear little **Violet** had it. Don't say she is getting like me; I want them to be like their dear sweet pretty mother. I need Davies on the 18th so that is not very long, then he takes this into Yunnan with him. I wonder if you got my letter suggesting you're sending a telegram through Grindlay to **Tsu-hsiung**. I hope so, because I shall have to wait a ghastly long time for news. I'm so glad their mistresses at the Kindergarten have noticed Margaret's drawing & **Enid's** work; it shows that it wasn't our parental pride, my darling; it is a great deal of trouble on your young shoulders.

“Jan 9. A long day & here I am at 11 pm writing to you. I first followed up the lake outlet to the lake, 12 miles. Here everyone wanted to halt; but I wouldn't, then we got onto a ridge looking down onto the lake, & had a lovely view, really very pretty; I sent my interpreter on to a village I saw; but he didn't like the look of a lot of men collected there; so on we came to **Kwei-yang-hsien** at the south end of the lake; brought in after dark; every inn full; so we went to the hsien's office & my interpreter wanted to force ourselves in there. But I had to stop that & we were shown to a good temple; everything of

course very late; but my mules are very satisfactory; now I think I need not do such long marches; but I'm dead tired & as you say of me "you're not worth sitting up five minutes longer for, but I adore you always my darling, God bless you; I have a funny habit; as I get into bed & cuddle the blankets I say to myself, "you darling," meaning you; I wish you were here to cuddle &c.

"Jan 10. After my long day yesterday I didn't get off till 9 o'clock. Skirted around the south end of the lake, 12 miles to **Tsing-ning-chou**, another small town. I had one shot at some teal & got 3 & another wounded one got away, a lucky shot; everyone very happy with such a short march & tomorrow will not be a long one either; I was sleepy this morning, could have gone on sleeping the ages; as I didn't get into bed till 11.30; then had one of my coughing fits, in spite of a lot of clothes under my pillow to keep my head high. I'm in a nice inn, had a nice dinner & feel just ready to go to bed as soon as I've finished my cheroot. I had a great afternoon with official writing; one of the lists I keep filled up is the distance I go each day & the total distance from Bhamo. I'm getting to understand Chinese more, today and understood several whole sentences that my Chinese escort & my Chinese syce (?) said, "Is his Excellency (that's me) a kind man?" "Yes very kind, but yesterday he got angry." "What is the interpreter like?" "Oh, he is kind too accept when his ill." This tickled me, because it was a polite way of saying when he's been drinking. Did I tell you one of the men who carries my theodolite now came first with me as a Chinese escort, a soldier from **Ta-yao-hsien** for 3 stages then he met his brother, so he sent him with his uniform to take his place as a soldier and then came on with me to carry my theodolite; the enlistment rules seemed to sit lightly on them. I had another lovely view of the lake today. I got onto a sort of cliff overlooking it, a bare hill side, the Chinese graveyard, but up my plane table there. I could see right up the lake to near **Yunnan**. There was a fine bold rocky promontory on the other side standing up very fine; it really is a lovely country, wish you were here, love. I feel just as much your lover as when we were engaged; you sort of occupy all my thoughts; I always keep thinking what would Ida say or how would she like this & so on. I have a sort of red quilt over my saddle bought by my interpreter to increase my importance I think, to counteract the painful (to him) sight of me always walking. Now dearest it is 8 o'clock so I must be off to bed as soon as I've seen to one or two things. You darling, I do long to have you in my arms, it's no use saying I oughtn't to.

"Jan 11. I was told today's march was 30 li, li being an hour's march; it turned out to be 50 li or 15½ miles. We had to climb over a range just 8,000 ft and were enveloped in mist, hoarfrost on the ground, by Jove it was cold, bitterly cold & very glad we were to get down into this plain; then it cleared & I had a fine view down the lake. This place is **Ch'eng-chiang-fu** a small walled town about 4 miles of plain between it and the lake, down the east side of which I go tomorrow making for **Ning-chon** in two long marches. Today is the first time this year I heard "foreign devil" shouted after us, after we had passed through a village in the plain. I'm in a most comfortable inn; mules in before me today. Now this is just the sort of room I should like to have if you were here, you darling; I had another coughing night last night, for an hour or so which woke me up well, so I didn't do much in the sleeping line. It made me think of you, how horribly unsympathetic you are about it only shirty is being woken up yourself. "I'm certain it's a stomach cough," you always say. Mr Stevenson was going to send out a man with a war telegram if it arrived; but I'm here today sooner than I said; so I may miss him. Now goodnight dearest pet, I'll have a nice think about you before I go to sleep; I'm so glad you seem quite well, mind you keep so; I hope to find you quite stout when we meet, a fine chest! Like the fat creature at the Gaiety.

"Jan 12. I did 19½ miles today, first down the plain for 3 miles to the lake; then along the shore to mile 10; it was really lovely, high hills on the opposite shore; then I climbed 1,300 ft over a ridge down into a valley, up t'other side 1,000 ft & then down into this valley; in at 5.30 & the mules directly afterwards. Shot my stars; had tea & have been writing since; it is now 7.30 & I hope to get dinner fairly soon. This is only 5,700 ft, lower than I've been for some time & so warmer, so I'm not sorry, but even today I wore my cardigan jacket & two coats all day. We have another long march tomorrow to **Ning-chon**; but said to be level or nearly so. I longed for you as I was going along by the lake; it reminded me rather of the shore near Boulogne, sort of bare rolling downs. I agreed to meet Davies at **I-men-hsien** on the 18th & I have my work cut out to do it; and shall have earned a days halt.

“Jan 14. Bless my soul, if I didn't forget all about you last night. I did a 20½ mile march, uninteresting bare hills to **Mingchon**; got in just at dusk, and didn't get to bed till quite late, nearly 11; so today I wasn't sorry to only do 13½ miles to **Tung-hai**; here there is another lake but not so pretty; but the plain is very prosperous & well populated. There is a telegraph office here on the way down to **Tonkin**; so I went to its and wired to Yunnan hoping to hear that I war telegram had come from Bhamo, but now there was nothing; only a long telegram that Davies sent off from **Puerh** on the 2nd Jan, sending me all his observations & I have begun working them out today. He also mentioned that Manifold would leave Bhamo on 1st February; so he has been evidently delayed a lot. I bought a funny pair of a sort of bill hook that the Chinese soldiers about here wear; they are very common looking; but odd in shape. Now I turn towards **Sin-hsing-chou**, 2 marches. Oh! I nearly forgot to tell you a great piece of news; I took my beard off and I feel so comfortable without and; I also had my head nearly shaved by Gurkha Naik; now I feel quite lightheaded! My darling I do love you but this is one of the places where it would be difficult to put you up; as my room has no door and opens into a room full of Chinamen. Perhaps you are better off at 5 Merton Road, all the same I do long to kiss & cuddle you a bit; and have a nice long talk after we are in bed; don't you think that is one of the nicest bits of being married. I dreamt last night you presented me with 3 sons just one year between each; will you? Goodnight sweetheart, I adore you.

“Jan 15. I had another short march, 13 miles; through the small town of **Hosi** and a bit beyond, all in one plain. Tomorrow I reach **Sin-hsing-chou**. I felt slightly today so rode the last 3 miles; my inn is a very poor one, and I'm just above all the mules; so I expect they will disturb me a bit, if they start kicking and biting; and half the floor is full of big holes; so altogether you wouldn't fancy this place. I could imagine you in one of these inns, “Charlie, I absolutely refuse to stay one moment in such a place; it is positively filthy & most unhealthy!” You darling; I got in at 1.30 & the mules at 3; so I've finished working out Davies' observations.

“Jan 16. I came 16 miles today over hills into a plain and up it to **Sin-hsing-chou**, another small town. Getting rather tired of towns and plains. New news, I've been getting all my writing reports &c up to date to hand over to Davies when we meet. Just being a great row between my mulemen and the landlady, because the latter wouldn't give the mules are enough grass. The woman made such a row that I had to threaten to turn her out into the street and then she collapsed and peace reigned. I think we have two jolly long marches ahead of us. You are my dear sweet darling. Goodnight dearest heaps of kisses & more!

“Jan 20. I had two very long marches 21½ and 26¼ miles to **I-men-hsien**. Davies arrived the day before and we have had two days halt; we separate tomorrow he going to Yunnan & will take this with him and I to **Tsu-hsiung**; we have arranged to meet again near **Wu-ting-chou** in 10 days; but I shall have to do some long marches to do so. Davies will bring me out the latest news. We have been very busy correcting names &c and everyone enjoying the rest. My darling pet, you are continually in my thoughts & I long oh! So much to be with you. God bless you dearest, my fondest love, sweetheart, and heaps of kisses. Kiss the chicks for me & don't let them forget their father. For other your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.”

th
Undated letter to his mother, but evidently started around 7 January. It covers the same itinerary, additional material:

“Jan 12. 20 miles today, down to the edge of the lake, then along it sure for 10 miles, up and down a bit into a narrow cultivated valley where we camped. This lake is finer than the Yunnan lake, as big hills come right down to the water's edge on both sides. Tradition says it was once all a plain; but was filled with water in one night and that sometimes the old town walls can be seen deep under water in the centre of the lake.

“Jan 15. ... the French railway will come up this valley (*by Sin-hsing-chou*); they expect to have the line finished in 6 years, it will be longer than that, but it is good country they pass through and the line should pay well.

“Jan 17. ... This morning I had difficulty which often occurs. A Chinese official is responsible for me until he has handed me on to the next official; therefore their natural idea is to get rid of me as quickly as possible. The man at **Sin-hsing-chou** therefore said there was no direct road to **I-men-hsien**, I must first go to **Kwei-yang-hsien**, and the men he sent as escort rowed, under instruction, that there was no direct road; luckily a man in my inn was returning to **I-men-hsien** and volunteered to show us the way for the consideration, so we came along followed by the escort, who, in as soon as we got well onto the right road owned up to having known it all along.

“Jan 18. ... The 31st is the Chinese New Year's Day & we shall have to make a halt then. ... Much love to you all, ever your loving son, Charles Ryder.”

21st January to 9th February, Camp Yunnan, to his mother: A letter written in parallel with it one to Ida (see below). “My dearest mother, Davies took my last letter with him from **I-men-hsien** to **Yunnan**; now this letter takes me on to **Tong-chuan**, where the missionaries have a mail into **Yunnan**.

“Jan 21. A steady climb 3,000 ft onto a broad ridge a sort of downs. Here we lost our way, showing my escort did not know the road for very far, however we got onto the road again & then had a very steep descent, 4,000 feet down into a narrow rocky valley, with a small river which we had to afford and pitch my tent in the middle of a small village. The roofs here are all flat, and the whole population spent a pleasant evening squatting on the tops of their houses watching me. This is a copper mining village, of mine a mile or two off, the smelting near the village.

“Jan 22. I only came 12½ miles myself but just after starting the path was so bad the mules had to make a detour of 4 miles; altogether the pass very bad; mules in by torchlight, 3 dead lame. I put up in a sort of official rest house much like the ordinary inn. I passed the copper smelting place & got specimens of the stone.

“Jan 23. The result of my mules going lame was seen today by my friend they going 12 miles & then it was nearly dusk before they got in. Not an interesting part of the country this; no very big hills but a succession of ups & downs; you just climb at ridge only to descend into a valley & up the other side.

“Jan 27. ... I met an official in one village enquiring into a dispute about a field, as my interpreter remarked, “very profitable for the official but expensive for the parties in the suit.”

22nd January, Camp Yunnan, to Ida: Parallel text to the above.

“Jan 24. My dear love I'm making very slow progress with this letter; yesterday I could only come 12½ miles & the mules not until 5, 3 mules very lame, & today I came 14 miles to **Nan-an-chon** & tomorrow it is an easy march to **Tsu-hsiung**. I was at this place last year, it is a very poor little town; but I'm in a good house half temple half inn. Davies will be expecting to signal with me tonight on the telegraph line, as we had worked out that I could get to **Tsu-hsiung** today; but it was quite impossible, the path much too bad. I'm hoping when I get there to get the telegram I asked you to send. I do hope you have been able to send it, otherwise I shall have more than two months to wait for news.” *Various endearments follow.* “I opened a bottle of Madeira today to back me up a bit & I also want to lighten my loads as much as possible so I'm diving into my store is a bit. My next halt will be when I meet Davies on the 31st. That by the bye is Chinese New Year's Day & I don't know whether I can get escort &c to march on that day as it is their great day. Goodnight sweetheart.

“Jan 26. I had a very long day yesterday, marched to **Tsu-hsiung**, 14 miles; then at 3 I went to the telegraph office, shot the sun for about an hour, signalled with Davies, back to my inn snatched some dinner & then was that the telegraph office till 11 o'clock; but everything turned out all right; so today I marched 19½ miles to **Kuang-tung-hsien**, a small town. This road has been surveyed, so I came along pretty fast & cuisine by 3.30; just outside the town I met the crowd watching the magistrate inspecting the body of a murdered man, & then I met the murderer being led along with a chain round his neck. I shall hear all about it tomorrow from my interpreter. You are having an unwonted honour paid to you today as I am writing to you for any of my other writing. I was awfully disappointed not to get any telegram from you, but sent one off. I also got a war telegram from Bhamo dated the 16th that the

words are so mixed up &c I can make very little out of it; it says however that General French defeated the Boers & captured Colesburg, then there is something about 4 companies and a night of March that looks like a disaster & also that Ladysmith was attacked on the eighth but the Boers driven back. Not getting a telegram from you has given me the fidgets. You see my last news of you is that **Enid** had chickenpox and I suppose that means that Margaret & perhaps **Violet** will have it too; anyhow it will mean a lot of anxiety & tiring nursing for you. My pet, I wish I was with you to comfort you; help, I'm afraid I shouldn't be much use for I have a heap to do, all yesterday's observations to work out.

“Jan 20. Quite late last night sitting up working out my observations; they came out very well, so I was pleased with myself. Today I only did a short march 13 miles to **She-tsu** still on the main Yunnan road, but I branch off it tomorrow after 10 miles; then I begin work again. It is bazaar day in this village, which was one reason why I halted, as my men can buy rice &c so much cheaper; then that most of this afternoon I've been reading a French book about the war with Germany in 1870.

“Jan 28. 15³/₄ miles, along the main road for 10 miles, then a bit across country; I didn't get as far as I wanted but my mules have slowed down a lot, and the headman is going into **Yunnan** tomorrow to bring out 3 fresh ones to join me at **Wuting-chon** (?); I hope he & they will turn up all right. I pitched my tent in some dry fields; the first time for many days & I enjoy the perfect quiet which one certainly does not get in and inn. My darling, I so often think about your coming out whether they would really be wisest or not; the real truth is I want you very much but I don't want to be selfish, as all the trouble & bother will fall on you; sometimes I think I will try & and get 4 months or so special leave in November but then I don't know; altogether I'm very undecided & I shall quite understand, darling. Remember this, that if you think it best not to come, although I shall miss you very very badly, I can imagine you dearest finding it very difficult to decide. I was in a bad temper today, you really should have seen me cursing my interpreter; he really wants cursing about once a week. You dear; I hope when I meet Davies he may have some letters for me but I'm afraid not; anyhow I shall have some newspapers; sweetheart, I adore you & I do so long for news of you. I shall meet Manifold in just about two months & he will I hope bring me up a fine batch of letters.

“Jan 29. 21 miles & the mules in that 7.30; I got in at 6 to **Lo-tzu-hsien**, a small town, a very poor little place, no adventures; in one place I found a lovely spot where I thought I should like to build a house & live happily with you. The inns here are very poor so finally we got a good temple; but I had to send my interpreter to the official, while I was waiting outside the usual crowd collected, amongst them two prisoners who mixed with the rest of the people, but they each had a huge heavy iron crowbar tied by chains around their necks & ankles. Now it's ¹/₄ to 9, but I don't think I shall get my dinner for another hour. Tomorrow we hope to make **Wuting-chou** & meet Davies; but it is the last day of the old year & all doors are shut at dusk & not opened till next morning; so we shall have two hurry as I know it is a long march, however next day at least will be a halt.

“Jan 30. A 20³/₄ miles March but we started early, very soon after 6 & so got in at 4, to **Wuting-chou**, found Davies hadn't arrived.

“Jan 31. Halted at **Wuting** & Davies came in in the afternoon, he had waited at Yunnan to get the latest news of the war that Buller had crossed the Tugala & a big fight was going on in which we seem it to be getting the best; should another telegram come it is to be sent to meet me at Tong-chuan then on Feb 1 we halted & today Feb 2 we came 17 miles together and our roads separate probably tomorrow. Davies is asking questions about the road while I write. You darling, when I'm in I never get onto my letter without perpetual interruptions. This is Feb 4. Yesterday became 5 miles together & then had to ferry across a small river which took us a long time, then Davies went down the river & I had a nice little climb of 3,000 feet & then down a bit; parting in the village head man's house; height 7,500 feet but not cold. My room was thickly laid with pine needles, something to do with the New Year. Today I came 16 miles, and all the last half was piercingly cold, as it is now. I thought we were in for a row in one village, they refused to supply us with a guide & were very abusive; my Chinamen abused back & although about 200 of the villagers nothing further happened. I'm in a nice room all hung with Indian corn drying. My darling I feel I've cheated you badly over this letter; it's short and no lovemaking in it;

but I do love you very dearly, my sweet, long for a look at your pretty face. I've gone back to all my warm things & would dearly love to have you to cuddle. I get to **Tung-chan-fu** in 4 days; there our missionaries there, so this can go off & then only 6 days to **Chao-tung**, where I can send off another. You are better off than I am; I have to wait till I meet Manifold & I do, at times, feel such a longing to know that you & the chicks are safely through the chickenpox.

"Feb 5. My pet this is the coldest day I've had; bitterly cold all day, a quite level march along a narrow cultivated valley, clouds on all the hills which are high, as my valley was 7,000 ft & I expect it is snowing above. We had a little scene when my mules came in. I had given very distinct orders that they were not halt for a midday meal as they usually do, as I knew the march was easy; in spite of that they halted about a mile short of the camp; when they got in, I had them each four whacked, 3 each for the stout bamboo and I don't think they will disobey orders again; however I'm having watched tonight in case they bolt with the mules, at 4 o'clock it was 3° below freezing point. I'm in my tent, which is pretty warm, but I can tell you I didn't enjoy the march, it was too cold. I've often wanted to dream of you and I did last night; I went down to Bombay to meet you & you turned up dressed exactly like a coster girl, short skirt and a long feather 3½ feet long in your hat; this is all really prove, Ida; you had a very bad stye in your right eye & were looking positively plain. I suggested kissing you, but you would only shake hands & then while I was looking for your luggage, you went off to a hotel with a very greasy looking vet, you had met on the voyage, then fortunately I woke up, a sweet dream, wasn't it. Nobody loves me! It is too cold for bright, dearest, although I adore you.

"Feb 7. Yesterday we had a festive march, nearly all day snowing & jolly cold; so I wasn't sorry that it wasn't a long march; today it was beautifully clear, so I went back a bit involving a 2,000 ft climb & got a fine view of some big snow hills, about 13,000 ft high & got in a jolly lot of work. Really, my dear, I dislike writing to anyone but you; now I haven't even begun my letter to my mother & we reach **Tungchuan** the day after tomorrow & don't make a halt, for this reason it will be a Friday, so if I halted I should have to march from there on Sunday, which I always try to avoid doing where there are missionaries. Oh! I shot a teal today & missed another. I'm quite low down 4200 ft on an affluent of the **Yangtze**. I've put up in a fine big temple, which it has been explained to me is not a regular temple, but the residence of the ancestors of some big official whose home is here but who is away in some other province. There is a big copper mine near here which fact will doubtless interest you very much. It is possible that a telegram may be sent out from **Yunnan** to meet me at **Tungch'uan** with more war news; but what I should like to get would be one from you saying you were all well again. I've got you on the brain just now; because last night I dreamt you presented me with a son, and we were both delighted. Will you have another try? I completed my 1,000 miles the other day. I shall have travelled 2,000 miles quite before reaching India. I have many other longings to be in your arms! But alas I must wait. I wonder if you've had a cold winter. **Violet** will be walking & talking by now I suppose. I wonder what she is like. Now I must attend to my duties, heaps of kisses sweetheart all over you!

"Feb 8. A certain amount of excitement today, first 10 miles good going, then we came to a place, my dear, it was bad, the mules had to be unloaded & their loads carried along a narrow path on the face of a cliff; I really was in a funk as I went across, took off my shoes & went across in socks & was jolly glad when it was over, then we turned up a side valley, hillsides miles up above us very steep, both sides landslips all along & showers of stones came unpleasantly near us. Altogether we did 17½ miles & very glad to find an empty house in a small village. Very windy; tomorrow we get to **Tungchuan** & this goes off. My pet this is one of the stupidest letters I've written. I have great anxiety about the chicks, darling & that unsettles me. I hope & pray you all got through the illness all right because perhaps you got it too. Darling, I do want a kiss, one of your best hugs. It is a long time to wait for news the end of next month. Now dearest, goodnight, I hope I may have a nice dream about you; anyhow I always have a good think about you in the morning as the noise of the camp wakes me before I need get up myself.

"Feb 9. I had an easy march to **Tung-ch'uan** but oh! so bitterly cold; I went to the missionaries' house, found Mrs Thorne there whom I had met in Yunnan. Mrs Grist where's English clothes, she is pleasant but really death. Now telegrams have come for me; I had hoped, but no luck. I enjoyed a warm lunch &

also have a charcoal fire in my room. It was freezing hard on the march, huge icicles all about the place. Darling I am very well, but feel homesick, want you & I want to know how you all are. God bless you my dearest pet, heaps of kisses & heaps of love, for ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.

“My next letter will be posted from **Chao-tung** in about a week; but you will get it about a fortnight after this.”

11th February, Camp, to Ida:“My own dearest sweetheart, I send you off a letter at **Tong-chuan** & then I had to halt a day owing to the snow, not that the fall was very heavy but it hid all the hills & I couldn't have done any surveying if I had marched. Today I came 17³/₄ miles on the way to **Chao-tung**; you will find this place marked on the map **Hung-shih-ai**, it means red stone rock, it certainly is very rocky all about. I could have had some shots at teal, there's a man with my ammunition was behind.”

Endearments follow, he is home sick.

“I make **Chao-tung** in 5 days; but they will be long marches; so I haven't got very long to work up a letter. Today was quite decently warm & beautifully clear; the last few days have been too cold; freezing even at midday is more than one bargains for. The missionaries kindly gave me some bread & biscuits & also a sort of bean, which I have not seen before, but which is very good. I gave them some quinine and phenacetine & the latter did Mr Grist a lot of good, and he was much better than I left. I can't think why they get fever hereabouts, it is well above fever limit. I enjoyed my stay with them very much; but got no news; all their newspapers were very old. Now I can only look ahead to the end of March for news of you; your letters that Manifold will bring up should give me news of you to the beginning of January. What a budget I shall have when I get back to India. Don't forget to date your letters on the outside so that I can read them in order.

“Feb 12. I didn't get to bed till 11 last night waiting up for some stars & today I marched 20 miles with some hills; so I'm pretty well fagged & so get onto your letter as soon as possible. This is the main trade route & not many villages except just at the regular halting places, so I have to do to do long marches; about 14 miles is the best distance but I generally do more than that. I want to be at **A-ten-tzu** up to my date March 28; and also there'll be news from you there,so that is a great inducement to hurry up. I wonder what you are doing now, having lunch. I hope you are making the chicks feed nicely.

Margaret's lower lip when she drinks distresses me; it is so ugly. My aneroid barometer that is for giving the heights has gone wrong, so I have to boil the thermometer about 3 times on the march, a performance which puzzles everyone. It was a really beautiful day, bright & quite cold enough for all my warm things. The Earth is all red here like Devonshire and the light green of the fir trees on the red earth looks lovely, no “detail beauty” here. I hope you won't forget to send my boots as I asked you, brown laced boots for choice, size ten and comfortably broad; also would you do this for me; buy a silver watch, of the cheap strong reliable order, not more than £2 certainly, and no chain; and pack it up and address it to Mr Chiang, Telegraph Clark, C/o O Stevenson Esq, China Inland Mission, Yunnan, via Hanoi and Lao-kai. Take it to the Post Office yourself & pay all its travelling expenses. It is present to the telegraph clerk in Yunnan who did his best to help me in my longitude observations. I am making Govt pay for it, as I have it sanctioned; so let me know the total cost. I am feeling very fit but every few days I get a go of piles; more blood than I've ever seen but it doesn't hurt nor interfere with me in any way.

“Feb 13.I shall not be sorry when I can do shorter marches. Today I came 17 miles including a hill & then a long down hill path very stony to a small river which I crossed by a shaky chain suspension bridge. I've just heard that two missionaries have arrived going the other way, so I shall go over & see them soon. Coal is used here which one doesn't often come across; it is now down 4,400 feet so quite warm & tomorrow I've a thumping climb before me. I've just been sitting in my easy chair & nearly dropped off to sleep. I think one of the missionaries is a Mr Dymond who was expected with his wife & 3 small boys; I don't know who the other is. I bought a curious sort of green stone for 10 cash today (500 go to a rupee), it is polished & I think used when opium smoking; I were shown to a place where they were dug out.” *Endearments follow.*

"Feb 14. The missionaries came over to see me yesterday evening. Mr Pollard from **Chao-tung** was the other; he is especially pleasant; he was going to help nurse Mr Grist at **Tung-ch'uan**; I shall see his wife tomorrow. Well I had a long pull up nearly 4000 feet rise but I got a fine view so didn't mind; then I came onto a sort of downs to this place, 15 miles, mules & myself in at 4, so I took the opportunity of writing Colonel quite a long letter. This letter I leave tomorrow at **Chao-tung** and shall not have another opportunity of sending in anything we send off most of Amen & baggage from **A-tentzu** at the end of March & they will reach Bhamo in about 5 weeks, so that you should get my next letter about 10th June, just about the time you will get the telegram from Sadiya or wherever we reach civilisation. I shall not halt at **Chao-tung** or in fact till I get to **Hui-li-chon**; how long it will take me to get there I don't know; the road is said to be very bad, barely passable for laden mules. The people here say it is 7 days. Mr Pollard said 12." *Endearments follow.*

"Feb 15. I had a nasty march today, it was snowing all day night & the path was half snow half slush, 17 miles of it was quite enough. When I got to **Chaoting** I wandered all over the town looking for my mules who would also wondering looking for inn, finally I found them in a small inn. I went & had tea at Mrs Pollard's. She wanted me to put up there; but I thought it better to stay with my men. Last year Watts Jones put up at the Mission house with his Portuguese cook & a rumour spread that the latter had a baby for dinner every night; so after Watts Jones had left a mob came to search for the baby's bones & the place & the Pollard's were only saved by the Mandarin sending down soldiers. I leave tomorrow & march to (?) **Su-tien-ting**. The direct road to **Chiao-chin-ting** is said to be so bad after that place that I'm afraid I shall have to go back 2 or 3 stages towards **Tung-ch'uan** which is a bother & a waste of time; that is more or less what Pollard told me when I met him. My darling girlie nobody can imagine how much I want news of you. It is dreary waiting. I think I shall give up exploration after this; my love for you conquers my love of travel. Heaps of love & kisses to yourself, dear little mother of 3 & to our three chicks. How I long to see you & them. God bless you dearest, my fondest love, for ever your very devoted husband & lover, Charlie."

Undated at start to his mother, from **Tung-ch'uan-fu** to **Chao-tung-fu**: *A parallel text again, but he adds his prospective itinerary.*

"Feb 13. ... I shall have no opportunity of sending in another letter till we send back our men & baggage from **A-tentzu** (this is pronounced A-ten-dze) at the end of March to Bhamo and that will not reach you till early in June about the time when we expect to reach civilisation. I shall send Ida a telegram, which she will send you on; but if you get now news, don't be anxious, we are not going to be foolhardy & try and force our way through hostile tribes; so if we find the Aloss (?) or Mishun's (?) hostile we shall just back out & try another way through, this will delay us. There will be 3 of us, 10 Gurkhas & 1 servant, all well armed, so stry bands of robbers &c will not have much to gain by attacking us. From **Chao-tung** I go via **Chiao-chia-ting** & the **Yangtze** cross there & go to **Hui-li-chou**, then north-west to **Yungning**, sout-west to **Chungtien**, and north-west again to **Atentzu**, where I hope to be on March 28, unless delayed by snow. **Atentzu** itself is over 11,000, and the pass just before reaching it is 14,000 & more; what the country is like before that we none of us know. Anyhow I am very fit & well & have no doubt we shall get through all right."

16th February, Camp Yunnan, to Ida: "My own darling sweetheart, This is the beginning of what should be a long letter; but I hear there is French priest at **Hui-li-chon** were I get in 10 or 12 days so I may be able to send it in from there to **Yunnan**. I felt rather seedy today aching all over like fever and the most extraordinary part of it was that the whole of my mouth every 200 yards or so was chock full of saliva & I had to spit; reminded me of Mrs Badgley. I came 16 miles today to **Lu-tien-ting** & now I'm afraid I must go 3 marches back towards **Tung-chuan** to get a road to **Chiao-chia-ting**; there is a road from here, but only passable for coolies; I got hold of an old mule driver & he said he once tried to get mules down but had to come back, the path runs along the face of a precipice for several miles; not good enough my dear. The innkeeper has just come in with a dish of rice & other things for me & to tell me that there is a road, which I have decided to go by; it will go on to my old road from a bit, but it will be mostly new. I'm still a little headachy. When I got into day as soon as my bed was ready I got under the blankets for about an hour, it made me smile to think if you'd been there you would have got

quite angry with me for lying down. You darling, but I do love to look at you when I'm seedy; the only thing I'm in a perpetual funk of is that you will be wanting to tidy me up. Goodnight, dearest, I wish you were going to be in my arms tonight!

“Feb 17. We came 17 miles today, very cloudy & very cold, fortunately we were going down a valley most of the day, no villages of more than about 3 houses; the one I'm in has only two; so I pitched my tent & am very comfortable, except for a go of 'influenza', otherwise a cold in the nose of about four handkerchief power. My mulemen are sad because there is no inn; they will be sadder still later on, if we get in places where rice is not to be got. The hills are very rocky and Khuds abound that the past didn't go in any bad places. It is said to be 5 days to **Chiao-chia-ting** from here where I cross the **Yangtze**. I have to make a long round because the footpath is only two. I am so looking forward to hearing from you again dearest; but I feel nervous about the chickenpox although I know it is not generally serious. It is cold, my dear & I shall be glad of dinner. I hope the clouds were cleared tomorrow; there are big hills all about & I want to survey them. Nobody loves me. I expect I shall have about 6 week's letters of yours at **A-ten-tzu**. Manifold will be very welcome. I hope he won't be late. Unless the snow delays me I think I shall be there by my date March 28. I've just been washing my face, hands & feet which does as a bath on cold nights; I don't care what you think, I absolutely refuse to undress completely for the bath on many of these nights. I'm afraid we shall have to send back one of my Gurkhas from **A-ten-tzu**, he has been ill practically the whole time, something quite beyond my simple medicines; but Manifold may be able to doctor him up; he has a very bad continuous cough amongst other things. He says himself it is his liver. I have let my beard grow again; it has got quite respectable in a month. Now for dinner.

“Feb 19. Yesterday & today I did two short marches, 9 miles each. I had a good room yesterday & made myself comfortable with a charcoal fire; today ditto. Yesterday I had first a steep descent to the small river. I crossed going from **Tung-chuan** to **Chaotung**; crossed by a small suspension bridge 25 yards long & about 150 ft above the water, then had a long climb, which rather tired me, as I was feeling the effects of my cold. Today we were all ready with an early start to do a long march; but when we got here, it began to snow so I decided to halt. I've put up in a funny place, the ground floor of a tower with 4 stories, about 20 ft each way, I (?) spholed; it is the place of refuge if the village should be attacked by dacoits (*robbers*), & is surrounded by a nice little grove of trees on a mound a bit away from the village so I have quiet. I hope to reach **Chiao-chia-ting** in two days from here, but the country is so hilly, it is difficult to get along fast. It has been snowing all the afternoon, not lying down here, but the hills will be covered tomorrow. I only wish it would come down heavy & then clear up. Rice is very expensive about here; so my men will be very glad to get through this bit. My room is very dark no windows so I have had candles. I much prefer long marches I must say; it occupies the day much better. I've been interrupted continually over this letter & now I must write up my reports. My boy came in and said, “those cholam birds very good making curry, Sir,” pointing to a lot of birds rather like big star links; so I went out & got 15 in 3 shots & then one of my Gurkhas got 10 more in two & wanted to go on, but I said that was enough; now we shall see what they are like. It is still snowing steadily & now beginning to lie down here. It will make tomorrow's march very hard; what we'd do if you were here, I don't know, halt, I expect. I should love halts with you, but I dislike them when by myself. My coal fire has made my room very nice & warm; then I can write comfortably to you dearest; but when I'm cold, darling, you must forgive me. My cold is running its course, rather better today; thank you. I'm so private & quiet here, I should love for you to be here; really the more jungly part of the camping is what would suit you best; the dirty inns & crowds you wouldn't enjoy any more than I do. Oh! How I wonder & wonder whether you are coming out. When I'm out in the wilds; I sort of feel resigned, knowing you couldn't possibly come with me; but how I shall loathe Bangalore by myself. I could say lots more but I don't want to over persuade you. Now it's dinner time.

“Feb 20. I was very sick when I woke up this morning to find snow about 6 inches deep & still snowing; as my march from here is steady up hill, I have had to halt & have been passing a dull day, arranging my store boxes &c & also reading a French book Davies lent me about Algeria; altogether after my two short marches I haven't enjoyed my halt; cold still running its course; my nose lovely. I cut

about an inch off my moustaches today for want of something better. During the day the snow all melted to about ½ a mile above me; but all the hills are under clouds so I dare say it is still snowing up there. I was two days ahead of my time as far as **Chao-ting**, now I've footled one away, I've to take two days grain for the mules, as none is said to be obtainable. You darling, I miss you awfully today; we would have been so cosy here. I feel dull & dispirited, very cold & in 3 days I shall be down on the **Yangtze** at 1,700 ft & probably grumbling at the heat. I wonder so much how you and the chicks are. Oh dear oh dear how I long for news; it is 1½ months since I got your letters.

“Feb 21. I had a long up hill today, at first through snow & fog, then the sun came out and the snow turned into slush. Finally I got up to 10,700 ft & had a lovely view, all the big hills round covered with snow, then I came down a bit to little village where I pitched my tent. My feet were bitterly cold, as my old boots leaked like a sieve, however it is not so very cold here, although I'm 9,500 feet up and bathing them in hot water & two pairs of socks have set them all right; the soles however are in a wonderful condition, rather like a hard sponge. If you come out; I hope we shall have some days to get them presentable again. There is a wind springing up worse luck and the sky is getting cloudy and again. I have to send a man back to last night's village for my almanac out of which I work out star observations. My ass of a Khalasi, I told him to throw away the one of 1899, showed it to him carefully; and he went & chucked away the one for 1900. I've made a great fuss & I hope I shall get it again. I haven't told them that I could make the 1899 one do very well with a little trouble. This is very mountainous country; I have a still higher range to cross before I get to **Chiao-chia-ting**. The cold is coming on now a bit; it is only 5° above freezing point in my tent now. I never feel cold in the evenings except in my hands. The road up to **Hinli-chou** is a main mule road, so things will be more comfortable; one has to think of one's mules more than anything, whether grass & grain is obtainable for them. I have one mule with a regular rat's tail & bleary eyes who is said to be 50 years old. He certainly looks ancient; at any rate he is said to have belonged to a well-known during the Panthay rebellion, more than 25 years ago! After dinner some egg curry & hot whiskey & water warmed me up, but I retract my remark that it wasn't cold, it is very much so. There is a sort of mist or too (?), a cloud I suppose. You darling, I do love you more & more as the years go by; you're a dear sweet pretty darling little wifey! This is all because I'm in my tent & cosy; just had the door laced up, to keep out the wind; when I'm in my tent I always can think more of you; there is plenty of room for you; it is just one of those cuddly nights when I miss you more than ever. As soon as I've let ½ an hour pass after dinner I shall pop into bed. I also wonder whether you will have any more babies; do you want any more, that is the main point, because the rest is easy! My cold is very much better thank you. I've wrapped up my feet in a pair of breaches and they are nice & warm. Another thing you wouldn't like in this sort of camping is the washing of clothes. I have a great washing each halt, but nothing ever comes white. I bought in Yunnan a box of 200 small cheroots, they will just last me to **Hin-li-chou** where I hope to get some Chinese ones. I've got 35 days more before I get news of you; but if the country is difficult I may be longer than I think. We have all three arranged that we will wait till 15th April for anyone who is late, but I hope nobody will be, as that will land us nicely in the rains in Assam. I shall soon buy myself a Thibetan felt blanket as my 4 are hardly enough. I only came 13 miles but then it was nearly all up hill, so it was quite enough & I think as it is now 9.30 I can go to bed, goodnight darling. When I have dinner late as tonight I'm always disturbed during the night & have to go outside!

“Feb 22. Came 12 miles today up 700 ft onto downs then down 1,800 ft up another 600 ft & then down 1,500 ft, a nice day; I should have liked to have gone on, but this is a fairly large village & the mules can get supplies. My room is not very classy, a sort of loft open on one side. There was 8° of frost & I felt sort of cold all night; at intervals a man came & howled near my tent to warn away robbers & that set all the dogs barking, so my sleep was rather interrupted. I was shown a place on the path where 4 years ago 4 men died in the snow, it was so deep; then we had an excitement as we were climbing a hill out of a valley with scattered hamlets in it; suddenly we heard all the villagers shouting like anything & then we saw a wolf scooting along pursued by everybody; suddenly 5 dogs rushed out a house & nearly got him & then we lost sight of him round a corner with the dogs after him, quite a bit of sport. My boy came in shivering with ague, which is lively. I was in quite early as it is only just 4

o'clock now. I am hoping to get a sheep here. We passed heaps on the hill side. I shall enjoy the liver, kidneys & my friend the sheep's head; I keep one leg & distribute the rest. You are being quite well treated in this letter, quite a long one, so I shall leave you alone for a bit. The man who is dividing up the sheep just brought me up the liver, kidneys & heart on a dish, looking very handsome. I rejected the heart; I don't think you would know them if you saw them raw. You darling, I wish you were here, you are such a dear companion to me. The people below have just put the lights in front of the family altar, there is one in nearly every house with scrolls up about their ancestors, **Una** would like that!

"Feb 23. I first had a climb onto a ridge 10,000 feet. Luckily it was a beautiful day & I had a fine view, even today it was quite cold enough. The Yangtze in a deep gorge right down below me & big hills on t'other side; then the rest of the march I came steadily down till I came to a big village after 14½ miles, so halted 5,000 ft high. Tomorrow I go down through **Chiao-chia-ting** & cross the river at 1,700 ft when it will be pretty hot. This evening it is just pleasant & my bath has made me not want my extra coat. I enjoyed the kidneys this morning for breakfast very much. I had a loss by my minimum thermometer being stolen; it was put out for the night in the backyard (it records the lowest temperature during the night), in a place where only the people of the house could have got at it; so I'm going to reports them tomorrow to the official at **Chiao-chia** but of course I shan't see it again. It is a thing which is of course absolutely of no use or value to the man who has stolen it. My boy is all right & did his march all right, about halfway today near the top of the hill I passed through the village where the bazaar day was just beginning, mostly Lolos (?) from the neighbouring hill villages. The women were long quilted petticoats & long cloaks, another black puggies (?) are built up something like a poke bonnet shape; my interpreter said, "bilkul mem-sahib kemuafik", which was quite true. One woman was sitting down & to show off her costume, the interpreter asked her to stand up & all the Chinese women in the place said, "yes, stand up and show his Excellency your beautiful clothes"; but she only blushed turned away her face & said, "I don't know what you mean," which is a remark I have heard you make & it made me chuckle for a long time. I had my hair cut, but only at the back today; feel very comfortable; I like stroking the back of my head when the hair is short.

"Feb 24. It was quite hot today. I came down to **Chiao-chia** and stopped there an hour or so in a little hole of an inn, where I had lunch, then came down to the river and crossed it; this took some time, as the current was very strong and the boat had to be towed upstream a long way before getting started for a crossing; so I stopped here **Wa-wn** which is marked on the map. The products of this place are ghur and chilies it is only 2,000 ft above the sea; now I have a nice little sweat to climb out of this valley. I am here are the exact day we worked out; I hope to gain one day between here & **Hui-li-chou**. I dreamt last night I saw you sitting up in bed feeding a baby boy! It was rather vague dream, but I remember you looked very pretty & had a very fine figure! The people here are more curious than I have come across some time, I have them driven away from my door every 10 minutes, they come round like flies. There has been a general demand for money here has everything is very cheap compared to what we have been having lately. The Yangtze is rather interesting here, but below and above the hills close in & form very fine gorges. Nobody loves me! I should like some standards just now very much & still more some news of you & the chicks my darling; the days seem to crawl when I do short marches. I like to have a good long march & that fills the day. I had liver last night for dinner & today for lunch; tonight I have my leg of mutton. I am telling the bank at Bangalore to send you home usual £70 out of May's pay drawn on 1st June; after that you will either come out or I shall stop sending for a bit as you must be well on the right side. You dear I wonder so much what to have decided to do.

"Feb 25. I got off at 6 & was some way up the hill before the sun got onto me. I had a very long climb first from 2 to 6,000 ft, then down to 5,300 ft into a small cultivated valley, then up again to 8,100 feet, from where I had a fine review; I lay on the hilltop for some time watching the most lovely view; I can't describe it, but you may imagine anything you like. Then I came down hill to this small village, where the room offered me in the inn being too smoky, I have pitched my tent; the mules and didn't tell 6, it was really a very trying march for them. Now I am enjoying my tent, my march was 14 miles but a very stiff one. The hateful haze is coming on, a sort of blue haze over everything, one snowy range looked

as if it was a cloud floating in the air till I looked at it through my field glasses. It is not a bit cold here; although today on the hill it was cold owing to a very strong wind one could hardly stand against. I feel satisfied with my march today, now I think I shall have no difficulty in reaching **Hui-li-chou** on the 28th. It is 8 o'clock now, but dinner will be late, so I mean to set up till 10 o'clock for the star, one of the Big Bear ones I want to catch. You will be glad to hear that I think after two seasons in Yunnan I've had enough of it, there would be no new places to see, so I won't come again unless I bring you. I hope to find a letter from Davies at **Hui-li-chou** telling me his news up to their; you darling, I long for the case; give me a dear good hug when we meet.

“Feb 26. I did a 16 miles today, but couldn't quite reach the place I wanted to **Che-la**, it was continuous up or down hill all day, and I got in with the mules at 6, I should have got to **Che-la** all right but my ass off on escort took us by a wrong path which ended in a steep hill side and jungle & no way on, then he said he didn't know the road, which was fairly obvious without his telling us. My cold won't go away, you know how my colds are long ones; then on the march my nose bled, 76 drops I counted. I think that will do me good. I again had fine views all day. No adventures, but I am jolly fagged. I think I shall probably do a fairly short march tomorrow and then a long one into **Hui-li-chou** where I mean to halt a day; my only reason for a halt is to have some sandals made; my boots are just completely worn out, but I shall have them resoled à la Chinese too. My feet are so hard & tough now that I never get sore feet; if there is a nail in my boot it just bores a bit of a hole in my hoof and nothing more.

“Feb 27. Had rather a wretched march; at first very pleasant then we had about two hours in driving wind and rain & got drenched, interpreter wanted to stop in a wretched little village, but I waited there for a bit as I saw it was going to clear, then we came on to **Chiang-chou**, quite a little town, with a very garrulous innkeeper; but I have a nice room. We did 16 ½ miles, so I am quite satisfied, but we have a long march tomorrow, but fairly level I think. Great squabbles going on over the division of a goat, my men have bought. This wetting won't improve my cold, luckily I had my rough tweed coat on so my upper part didn't get wet, but my legs clad in a thin khaki were dripping, however the sun came out and I was nearly dry before I got in. I am disturbed in my writing by my mulemen chopping straw just underneath me, very noisy process. Now for dinner.

“Feb 28. I came into **Hui-li-chou**, 21 miles today, nearly level; I was in at 5, mules at 6.30; I had tea at 7.30 & dinner at 9.30; now I've just observed my stars & am having a cup of cocoa & smoke before going to bed. this is quite a large town; I came right through it, more than a mile long. I have a nice room, and I'm going to halt tomorrow, to call on the French priest & see if he can send in letters for me. I found a letter from Davies waiting for me; he got here on the 14th he was all right but had had a lot of snow; he didn't have it as cold as I did. If I find he hasn't sent letters in from here I shall send his letter on to his father. The people here didn't take much notice of me as I wrote through the crowded street. Oh! I had an adventure today; I saw three dark on a small river, quite different to any I have seen so I stalked them & shot two; then there was a frightful hullabaloo from the neighbouring fields & men came rushing with stones & sticks in their hands; it turned out they were village duck (don't tell anyone), so the first thing I did was to tell the men to throw away their sticks & stones & then I paid for the dark. Chalks for the sportsman! However I've got the duck; the mistake was rather excusable, as they were crested ducks not nearly village & two men near said they were wild duck I hope they will taste good. I am going to lay in supplies of sugar, flour & potatoes here. I should like to have a good Europe morning tomorrow; but I know the noises of the inn will wake me. I was up at 5 this morning so I am pretty tired. I shall have plenty to do tomorrow writing letters and generally settling up things; so I am not at all sorry for a halt especially as I have a room which is quite private.”

1st March, Hui-li-chou, to Ida: “My dearest pet, I have finished my letter to you, but I am writing this extra one about your coming out. I do so want you to do what you would prefer; you know I shall be delighted if you do come & I shall want you very much, but that is only my side of the question. You got to think which you would rather do yourself. You must remember that if you come, you will leave the children, and that you will come out when it is pretty hot; that what you gain by being with me, you will lose by parting with the chicks. I gain a lot, you gain nothing. I don't see that anything will

interfere with my coming home in March next year. If you ask outsiders they will say it would be a foolish coming out for only 9 months but then they don't realise how much we love being together. Of course it will also be expensive coming out, but I'm ready to stand that & a good deal more to be together. I can't argue out the thing myself properly, because I'm selfish and have everything to gain & nothing to lose. When I am away on a thing like this, it often so uncomfortable that I am glad you are not here almost; but in Bangalore of course it is different. Then again I have made quite a number of journeys to and fro from England to India but it seems an easy thing, and of course it is easier for a man, much; but whatever you decide, darling, I shall look on as the best, and if you decide not to come (I see many reasons why it would be the wisest) I shall have to content myself with longing for March next; don't let this long separation, dearest, make any difference in your love for me, don't grow sort of indifferent but always love me like the dear good little wife you are. God bless you darling & guide you right. Nothing I can write can give you any idea how much I love you, forever your devoted Charlie."

1st March, Hui-li-chou, to his mother: *This covers his journey from Chao-tung and is again in parallel to his letters to Ida.* "Feb 23. ... Stopped at a dirty little inn for lunch, the whole place smelling of ghur in which a large trade is done as it supplies the whole of the higher country where sugar cane is not grown

"Feb 25. ... (*Wa-wm*) crowds of sheep on the hills; the people here use the wool to make blankets mostly which is not done in Yunnan, (since crossing the river I have come into the next province **Ssueh'uan**, pronounced Sich-wan).

"Feb 27. A very unpleasant day. A steep drop down to **Chela**, then up a little plain to a big village where I was to change escort, fair being a small official here. I was urgently requested to stop here, and not go on, couldn't possibly get to **Hui-li-chou** next day &c however on I went & then it began to rain, we all got drenched... We found a very good inn & a very garrulous innkeeper, however he'd busied himself in making as comfortable, all the time repeating, "This is a wretched house for your great excellency to put up in," which is Chinese politeness to run down everything of your own & cry up the other man.

"Feb 28. ... Davies... arrived here on the 14th & left next day for **Yuê-hsi-t'ing** due north. ... I leave tomorrow first to **Yen-yuen-hsien**, a small town north-west of here & then to **Yung-ning, Chung-tien**, and **A-ten-tzŭ** where I hope to be on the 28th and will send in another letter from their with our men we send back to Burma from there. I shall get news there too as Manifold left Bhamo on Feb 1 and he ought to have a fine heap of letters & papers for me. It is beautiful fine weather now & I expect it will remain so for a bit. Much love to you all, ever your loving son, Charles Ryder."

2nd March, to Ida: My dearest sweetheart, it is nice to feel oneself in a new month. I feel a little nearer you. I came 16½ miles today, out of the **Hui-li-chou** plain over a ridge at 8,600 ft then down hill for the rest of the day to quite a large village and warm as I am only 4,200 ft. early this morning the message came from the Chou Kuan's office to say I couldn't go by this road as there was a rebellion, which the Chou had gone out to put down with 200 soldiers; this is quite true as the French priest told me so; but it is probably all over by now, anyhow I wasn't going to be turned off my road for that, so on we came. I am now heading north-west of **Yung-ning** where I hope to get in about a fortnight; however there is a Chinese time on the way **Yen-yuen-tsien** which is not marked on the map. I was wearing a new sort of sandal today made of leather instead of grass, rather comfortable, except that it bent up my left big toe a bit, which is aching in consequence.

"March 3. I had a short March only 10 miles and level. Then I had to cross the river by ferry, a large village on this side with supplies, inn &c & nothing on the other side for 8 miles, so although it was only 1 o'clock I stopped; it is pretty warm here as I am still in the valley; so I had a cold bath after shaving off my beard & that has greatly refreshed me. My great interest is thinking when shall I get to **A-ten-tzu** that is why I hate being obliged to do a short march and as crossing the river will take a long time I shall now probably only have another short march tomorrow. I ought to do about 14 or 15 miles a day to reach **A-ten-tzu** up to my date March 28; you see I get letters from you my darling, there, as

that is a great inducement to me to march fast. It is 81° in my room today, only a few days ago it was freezing all day. I have been making my surveyor shed tears, he is very hard-working keen chap, only 25; but he has a failing & that is about once a month he drinks too much; he did so about 3 days ago & gave him a good jawing; but today looking back at his work I found he had inked in a mllah (?) quite wrong although it was alongside our road. Finally he said he would make a vow never to drink again but I don't suppose he will keep to it. He comes other family who drink as he has 3 brothers who drink & he has been so far the bright exception. My left big toe is decidedly painful that is more than "comfortably" or "pleasantly". I have 5 pipes today that is not too much is it. I am driving at reducing it to 4, that is one after each meal, the fifth comes in generally about 10 or 11, when I put up my plane table. I had two of my current plates or dishes rather stolen at **Hui-li-chou**. I believe one of my Chinamen is at the bottom of these thefts, I licked two of them today; I can tell you the Chinese are spoiling my sweet temper. The Chou Kuan of Hui-li is about 12 miles from here putting down his little rebellion, but not on or near my road. Davies has a good deal shorter distance to go that I have. I reckon he is that **Mien-ning-hsien** today, you will find that due north of **Hui-li-chou** a little of the road that is marked going due north. He has 182 miles to go as the crow flies. I have 224 miles via **Yung-ning & Chung-tien**. I generally make rather larger marches than he does but those extra 42 miles in a direct line mean about 70 by road. Our original timing was for him to arrive at **Atentzŭ** 2 days before me on March 26; but I think he will arrive about 4 days before I do, unless he is stopped by snow, he is further north so will generally have it colder. I don't think we shall either of us cross ranges sufficiently high to be blocked by snow except a day or two after a storm; so I hope we may have fine weather. I am sitting in my shirt sleeves today & a couple of blankets will be ample tonight I expect. It was unlucky that the last letter I got from you should have been the one announcing the chickenpox. I pray I may hear that you are all well again; but I get very jumpy at times; however it's no use letting my thoughts dwell on what may have happened.

"March 4. I feel very satisfied with my day's work, crossed the river which took a much shorter time than I expected, only one hour, the mules, loads & all; then up one long cultivated valley, gradually rising on to a ridge at 7,000 ft then dropped down into this valley, quite a large village 100 houses or so. Just behind me from the hills came a little army of about 100 Chinese soldiers firing off their guns every now & then; they have been putting down the rebellion. I saw a pheasant today while I went off the path to follow nature's commands. It was nearly 6 when I got in & the mules about ½ an hour later, so I am pretty tired as I was up before 6. There is a curious smell, like a very new bread which I have just found out is some Indian corn fermenting for liquor in the next room. I can see the valley of the **Yalung** river ahead. I think I reached it tomorrow, and there look to be pretty big hills the other side. It is much pleasanter here than yesterday as I am 2,000 ft higher, it is not at all cold though, just pleasant.

"March 5. I came 12 miles but quite satisfied. The path which is really only used by coolies and not by mules is very narrow, so the mules came on very slowly. We came down along the valley to mile 9 then I waited in an inn for lunch and for the mules who arrived at 1.30, then we had a long pull up hill & then down to this village. I got in after the mules as I stopped on the hill surveying. I am in a half built temple, which wouldn't be bad only it is quite open on the sunny side & so it is hot. I've had my water proof sheets put up to keep the sun off. The big river, the **Yalung** it's about a mile below us, we cross tomorrow & I think get to **Yen-yuen-hsien** in 4 days from here. The whole village has been standing along the open side of the temple watching me, so I've had to postpone my bath till the evening. We shall have a hot march tomorrow crossing the river & then I fancy we shall do steadily into higher country. I am anxious for this month to hurry up so that I can get my letters 23 days more to wait & a lot of hard marching to do. You darling, I love talking to you about my plans; I'm afraid it is not very interesting, but it is what I'm thinking about. I wonder how Davies is getting on; and more than all do I wonder what your news will be; I hope it may be good; chickenpox is not supposed to be dangerous.

"March 6. I have had a long day, so I only came 10 miles. First I went down to the big river, 3 miles off, the **Yalung**, crossed it by a ferry & saw all my things across, not getting started again till 11.30, then we had a stiff climb of over 2,000 feet & then fairly level to the regular halting place that is for the coolies from the salt wells, but they carry very heavy loads & do very short marches; I came on down very

steep to nearly the level of the river again, saw my mules having to make a long detour on the hillside to avoid a bad bit in the path, so I decided to halt; mules in at 5.30, found a good house in charge of 4 small children, the eldest about 8, who, I was told cooked for the four, the father & mother having gone off for two days to sell some things. I shall not be sorry when I've done with this small path; it is a nuisance having to do these short marches, but one can't do more. Everyone is discontented at having come beyond the regular halting place, no rice, no vegetables at first, however everything turned up in time. You darling, I do adore you, you are a sweet dear, only 22 days more to wait for letters.

“March 7. Again only 10 miles up one nullah (*a steep narrow valley with water course*) but the path awfully difficult for mules. I got to this little village about 1 & waited to see how the mules would come along, they arrived at 4; so I pitched my tent & am very comfortable just alongside a fine little roaring river. I went & had a good bath in the river, first swim & then a good soaping all over, even to the small of my back! Then I had to rearrange my stores as one box was smashed, damages were 1 precious bottle of Madeira (but I saved half), 1 marmalade and 1 baking powder; so altogether I've been busy. I've got rather a nasty sore throat from smoking Chinese tobacco, it will go away in a day or two. I meant to have kept that bottle of Madeira for **A-ten-tzu** but now I must drink it up. I am only 16 miles or thereabouts from **Yen-yuen-hsien**, but it will take me two days, following this stream all the time. Tomorrow we have to unload the mules in several places. I had allowed myself 8 days for this bit, so I shall just be up to date. The hills are towering above me in every direction more or less Khuds (?). I excite great interest has no European has been a long year before.

“March 8. Up to the same old nullah all day & only did 7 ½ miles but the path was very bad. I came along with the mules & we had to unload them perpetually to pass bad bits. We started at 7 & got in at 4. We have risen considerably it being 8,000 feet. Tomorrow we go on following the same nullah to **Yen-yuen-hsien** which must therefore be at a good height; but from here the path is said to be all right. There was no flat place for my tent, so I'm in a dirty little inn; I should think the W C must be very close to me judging from the stink. It is rather nice being up in the cold again, wearing my warm coat & mittens; my sandals gave out today, but only some stitching which I can have mended. I expect to excite great curiosity in **Yen-yuen-hsien**, there's only one other European has been there. Mr Hosie 15 years ago. I had a very nice dinner last night, a sausage, curried egg & tinned peach & then went to bed too soon after & got a sort of indigestion & couldn't go to sleep & woke very early this morning; I expect I shall make up for it tonight.

“After dinner. I've got a new nib today, so I can write comfortably; I've had dinner & shop my stars & it's not ½ past 8 yet, so you shall have a little time. It is rather exciting is going into quite a new country, or what it will be like & all about it. I wish you were here to cuddle me tonight. I should like to get into my little shell; feeling that I shall have my sweater & four blankets. Everything has gone swimmingly this evening; on the march today I gave my interpreter a good cursing & he has brightened up, this will last for a week. You darling, I long for the sight of your dear pretty face, only 20 days to wait for news. I am very excited to know how many days march it is to **Yungning**. I expect pretty soon to be getting into the big hills. God bless you, darling, I should loathe camp if I couldn't have my little talk with you every evening; goodnight sweetheart, heaps of love.

“March 9. Here I am at **Yen-yuen-hsien**. I hadn't a long march 10 miles; but I also climbed a big hill off the road to get a view. I first came up my same old nullah onto the ridge at 10,700 ft, then climbed a hill to 12,700 ft; that is the highest I've ever been, it was a stiff climb & jolly cold at the top, only a little snow in shady spots. Very soon after leaving camp we met a sort of April shower of snow, which didn't last long; then I had an easy walk in to **Yen-yuen-hsien**, not a bad little town amongst a lot of cultivated downs, height 8,800 feet and that is the highest town I've been in. Now I'm told there is a regular mule path to **Yungning**, 4 stages, which is good news, if true. One of my mules died today; but as I am a load lighter of stores than when I left **Tungch'uan** I can go on all right. I had a grand view today; for the haze doesn't seem to come up here at any rate yet. I could see a hill near **Hinli-chou** which must have been quite 50 miles away. It is lovely weather for marching at this height just right.

“March 11. I haven't made much progress as I halted yesterday & only came 9 miles today; but I had a

series of illnesses (1) a sick headache, (2) fever, (3) tonsillitis. I am glad today that (1) & (2) have gone. I lay in bed all yesterday & oh! how I did long for you, my darling; my tonsillitis is progressing, it will last a week or so, and will not be improved by marching every day. I wasn't sorry to do only half a march today; and that quite level & I rode all the way. I was very vexed at losing a day at **Yen-yuen-hsien**. The sick headache I a tribute to just beginning to eat some tinned kippers & finding it rather smelly, I had it chucked away; my fever may perhaps have been due to that bathe in the stream, anyhow I won't do it again. Why I should have gone & got tonsillitis I don't know; maybe it was climbing the big hill on the 9th. Anyhow, old girlie, I can tell you I had a very poor time yesterday; then to improve matters last night, not having slept all the night before, I went off to sleep about 11 & was woken up half an hour later by a violent row between my mulemen & some other mulemen they had been negotiating with to take me on, as they were (*sic*) wouldn't stop when I shouted at them, I got up & outside met my Gurkha Naik & I told him to turn them out; it was fine to see the way he went in at them although they all had sticks; he threw them all out, knocking one man senseless into the pigs' tub. It was very funny afterwards to hear him bringing the man to with water, speaking broken Chinese, good water, good good drink, to the Chinaman & in Hindustani to himself, the equivalent of you damned stinker, rascal, scoundrel. (*From the letter to his mother*: "You scoundrel, you come here & make a row & disturb my sahib when he's ill; I'll break your head next time." Then again, "Drink water, good, good," & so on.) Then I went to sleep. This morning my surveyor came & said his prismatic compass had disappeared; on enquiry I found that he was drunk the previous night & about 1 o'clock at night had gone to the rear in the stables, a Chinese rear is a big hole, generally paved or plastered sides, about 6 or 7 feet deep. Well he fell in & I believe his compass went into. He would probably have been suffocated, luckily the innkeeper came to look to a sick pony & found him & hauled him out. I've promised him a sound flogging the next time which I shall certainly give him although I've no right to. It was beautifully fine this morning, but now it has turned a sort of half haze or cloud. I hope to goodness it doesn't mean snow. I mean to try & get to **Yung-ning** in 4 days from here, that way I shall catch up my lost day.

"March 12. It was quite cold last night done to 36° in my room, which was rather drafty. I did a good march today 19 miles, very pleased with myself, it was level going all day, so we all got in by 4. I passed a coal place, the whole valley filled with little borings & such heaps of mules going into the salt place with their coal. This place was looted by Thibetan robbers (*to his mother by Lolos*) 3 days ago; so there has been a general issue of arms to my men. You will be glad to hear I wear my revolver from tomorrow & have it under my bed tonight. We muster altogether 4 rifles, 2 revolvers, 1 shot gun; and then 6 villagers are to escort us armed with the usual funny collection of weapons. I had one chap today dressed in a goatskin, looked like Robinson Crusoe, tell **Margaret**. He was armed with a gun of a type which I would much rather have fired at me than I have to fire of myself (*sic*). I've pitched my tent today & enjoy the quiet & chat with you. My 3 Gurkhas have their tent just opposite with the mule loads between us. My throat is much the same, no worse at any rate; you know swollen tonsils unless very bad don't bother one much except when you want to swallow; the knowledge of this fact makes one want to swallow all the more; you have had experience of tonsils, although "never so bad as I have." There are no big villages about here, each farm house is separate in its own fields; I suggested that this was rather a bad arrangement if they were likely to be attacked by dacoits (*Hindi term for robbers*); but I was told no! that the first farm house would have had a bad time certainly, but it would give the other people time to run away, whereas if they were collected into a village the dacoits would surround it & then nobody could run away! One good thing my throat has done is that it has stopped my smoking, at least I only have 2½ pipes a day; so my tobacco is being economised. We met a good many Thibetans today that the villages are still Chinese. I'm feeling so much better generally today; I walked most of march, not all; I think the open air treatment is good. I should love to have you here tonight; really jungle camping is by far the nicest. I expect to thoroughly enjoy the last part when we are three together; you must darling expect to be a little neglected, because I shall be doing all the surveying myself & the inking in will take up all my evenings & I fancy we shall do pretty long marches in order to get to India before the rains begin.

"March 13. I had a stiff day, first a long climb for 7 miles up to 13,000 feet; then I went up 400 feet

higher onto a hill to survey; then I had a long steep down hill to a tiny village at mile 12 ½, 9,400 feet where I've pitched my tent on about the only flat place, a ruined house. I had a bad night with my throat, and it is much worse very painful, oh! my darling, how I wish you were here to cheer me up. You've never seen me with this beastly tonsillitis, or you would feel sorry for me. One good thing is that the worst swelling is on the left side, it began on the right which is much better; it always goes like that. If it wasn't for this I should be enjoying myself so much, the country grand, climate lovely &c. There is a small river down below me which I have to cross tomorrow, it is right away down, then I shall have a climb up t'other side; crossing rivers is always a nuisance it takes so long and delays one. The water to drink here is very red, not dirt, you know, neither is it manure, just earthy. I coughed up a thick flem (I think it's spelt phlegm) today with blood in it, this is not from the lungs but simply that my poor old throat is so sore, it bleeds. Poor old Charlie boy. Nobody to love him, nobody to cuddle him, nobody to smooth his pillow & make nice little cold water bandages, oh! dear, oh! dear, how I miss you, my pet. I expect this will last about 3 or 4 days more, so you may expect another page at least of Charlie sympathising with himself.

“March 14. Had a poor night, throat much worse, but as it has to get worse before it gets better that is nothing to be wondered at. I was a bit off my chump last night, I was quite certain you were in the tent nursing me & when I woke at about 12, I found myself making remarks to you. We came about 3 miles down to the river & then were delayed rather at the crossing; however got away at 11.30 & went up a side valley for 5 miles when we came on this tiny village of 2 houses, where I halted as I was feeling pretty bad & besides they were said to be no place on ahead where grain could be got for the mules; I should have shoved on and trusted to luck to find a place, if I had been fit as the march of 8 miles doesn't help on all very far towards **A-ten-tzu**; now tomorrow we've got to climb a big range & then it is said to be good going. There are still Chinese along the route with Lolos in the hills but **Yungning** it's a Thibetan state, there will be Chinese though there too. I intend to try & make a long march tomorrow, luckily I was able to ride up from the river today although the path was not first class my mule seems able to climb anywhere. This morning I had omelet for breakfast which I had hard work to get down, couldn't touch my lunch, so for tea I've just had a cup of arrowroot with 2¾ teaspoonfuls you know what I mean of brandy; that has bucked me up, so I thought I had better get on with my letter while the effect lasted. I shouldn't so much mind my tonsillitis although it is really very painful, no mistake; but I hate being delayed; especially when there are my letters waiting for me at the other end. I'm in my tent, there are a good many flies about, although I am 8,400 feet up. I hope the path tomorrow is such that I can ride. It was rather funny at the river, my mule has always objected to getting into a boat; it generally takes four men about ½ an hour with endless ropes and cursing to get him in. Today the boat was too small & they were to swim, two men in a boat, I holding the reins of the interpreter's pony who is very docile, the other holding the reins of my mule but whack and curse him as much as they liked, he would not go into the water. So I said all right let the pony go across & my mule can go with the others when they arrive, so he was let go; no sooner was he let go than he walked into the water and swam across by himself so as not to be separated from the pony to whom he is devoted; another peculiarity of his is that he must have one of my Chinamen just in front; if he sees no one in front whom he knows nothing will induce him to go on; all this will interest **Margaret**. After a long time without letters I always funk the first sight of them, for fear of anything having happened to you or the chicks. I've a cold water bandage round my throat which is the only thing I can do for it. You are getting a lot of letter today, but I want your sympathy. I couldn't talk to you much if you were here, but nonetheless how I would love to have you here.

“March 15. I am indeed in sorry case. I was so badly bitten last night, I think by bugs as to drive me nearly wild. I was kept awake from 12 by them; this morning the whole of my body was so red hot I thought I had some skin (*disease*) finally about halfway I took off my shirt and a vest & made Haroon hunt, he caught two bugs, then I had off my socks but they could find none there, nor in my breeches, when I got in I changed everything & had an extra good bath & they do not itch quite so much. I have them on my forehead to; I'm not certain yet it is not some horrible skin disease. In spite (...) and my tonsillitis. I did over 18 miles, climbed a pass at 11,500 ft then had a good path down hill and then level.

I don't know whether I shall reach **Yunglin** tomorrow. Haroon has fever & is sweating it out so I can't find out yet. You must be tired of my complaints darling, but I have several more, my lips are very sore, as is my nose, and I am having repeated cramps in both hands as I write. This is my highest camp so far, 9,700 ft but not particularly cold. I have too issue repeated and stringent orders to myself not to scratch. I shall probably (*be*) quite fit again when I meet Manifold, but I wouldn't mind meeting the doctor now.

“After dinner. I had a committee on my arms consisting of my cooli, Chinese servant & Khalasi & they all said it isn't bites, and I agree with them. Kali the Khalasi (*says*) they often have it in his country, comes from getting suddenly cold after being hot. I am writing with sleeves tucked up & my arms covered with lard & Kali is coming when I go to bed to rub lard into my whole body & legs. I was able to make a better dinner tonight & goats liver. I wish I had Vaseline but my bottle leaked, it is a way they have, and it soon all went however this lard seems rather a success, as my arms are a bit easier. I have put up in a rather good house, the owner has just told me it is 80 lis to **Yunglin**, 10 lis about equal 2½ miles, so it will (*be*) 20 miles, but he says the road is good & level, and that makes a great difference.

“March 16. I'm feeling so much better, my darling; I can now swallow almost without an effort; the same each time, it goes down in one night. It is a sort of itch I've got, I had to get up twice last night first to cover up my hands with lard then my feet, they were so swollen, a white swelling; now this evening it is all much better only my head itching a bit; so I can give a good account of myself. I am halting here tomorrow as I came 20 miles today & I want to provision up the men &c. It was such a lovely long march today, several miles of it round the shore of as pretty a lake as I've seen, hills right down to the water's edge, all wooded & we got going over promontories & into bays. I found in several places where I should have liked to have halted a week with you. **Yungning** it's quite a small place not 100 houses but there is a Thibetan raja here who will I hope give me a guide. There is a big Lama monastery the other side of the plain, which is a fair size. Here I'm still about the same height 9,500 feet, delightful weather, only wants you to make everything perfect. I'm so pleased at being better, you see this is only the 7th day, usually it has lasted 10. The mules were not Intel 7 o'clock; so it is getting on towards 10 now. You really would enjoy camping in this country, I keep saying to myself, how I don't would enjoy this! Now from here to **A-ten-tzú** (don't forget it is pronounced A-ten-ze) I don't mean to halt, and I think with luck I shall do it in 13 days and arrive only 2 days late that is on the 30th. There is a general smell & the sound of cooking as the raja (or tu-ssu as he is called here) sent me over a goat which I distributed amongst my men. I have put up in a Chinese temple, you did and think I'm lonely, I've 16 little people in the temple with me, god's & goddesses I suppose, figures about 3 or 4 feet high, mostly very ferocious, then outside on each side of the front gate are two horses with the groom to each, nearly full size, on which the principal God goes out for a ride at nights to deliver death round about the place.

“March 17. I had a decent sleep last night only interrupted once about 1 o'clock when I had to get up & rub lard into myself for 10 minutes, but my itch is better, and my throat ever so much better & I quite enjoyed my breakfast. They prime minister a Thibetan & the Chinese sort of interpreter to the chief have just paid me a long visit, the former a very good sort with a round cheery face, told me a lot about the country. A French traveller came through here about 5 years ago, so I'm not the first, he came from **Chungtien** and went up towards **Ta-tien-lu**. I'm rather enjoying my idle day, writing & fiddling about.

“March 18. I have done a satisfactory March 15½ miles, first we had to climb a range up to 7,300 ft & then down for the rest of the way; pitched my tent near a small village. I have a Lama guide, the Lamas you know are the Thibetan priests, he is a very nice chap speaks a little Chinese & is very willing to do anything. Tomorrow we have a river to cross which is a nuisance; I always hate these rivers they delay one a lot; there is a magnificent snow clad range the other side over 17,000 ft I should think, but I think I see a fairly low part where we shall cross. This is a Chinese village I'm at though most of the villages, and there are very few, are Thibetan. I think I may report myself now has quite myself again, though I still ride most of the up hill. My halt yesterday did me a lot of good & also enabled me to get all my

writing up to date, so I feel I have nothing on hand. I'm getting quite close to the news of you my darling, 12 days more I reckon. My path and Manifold's meet at **Pung-dze-lan** almost 2 inches south of **A-ten-tzú** & 3 days short of that place, what would be nice would be to meet him there, then I should have plenty of time to read all your letters & answer them before getting to **A-ten-tzú**; we shall see; at present I've got to get to **Chungtien**; the village ahead I was advised to stop that is rather too short a march, so I am taking on grain for the mules, in case I want to go further on. The weather is perfect, one can walk all day without getting hot & it is not cold. Tomorrow it will be warmer though down by this river. You darling, you really would enjoy this part, real wild country & no crowds or dirty inns, it is lovely after the Chinese part. I am getting ragged in the clothes line, for the last month I've been walking in socks with practically no soles left; I have a couple of good pairs left the term keeping them in reserve in case we meet with snow. I am disappointed at getting no shooting along here; in such wild uninhabited country one would think there would be heaps to shoot; I saw a doe deer two days ago quite close & 3 or 4 pheasants on an opposite hill one day when I was much too seedy to go after them, otherwise nothing.

“March 19. The river said to be an hour away turned out to be 4; & then if you please it was my old friend the **Yangtze**, about 40 miles further north than anyone imagined. I knew it made a big bend but had no idea it was as far as this. I had to cross a rather large affluent; & to do this took us a long time as the boat was on the Yangtze & had to cross that river then be towed up ¼ mile & then recross above the mouth of the affluent; then I had a climb, so I was quite satisfied with 13 miles & the mules in at 5; I have pitched my tent in some fields near a Thibetan village & have just given Haroon a good rowing for not coming when he was called. I am rather curious to see how long this rowing will have a good effect, as I said if I had to speak to him again for being slack, I should have him dismissed when we got back. He has quite gone off this year & is nothing like so good as last year. I've still got my cold, which has lasted me for nearly a month, it is not bad, 2 pocket handkerchiefs a day, but will not go clear away. It is quite balmy today, I was down to 5,400 ft & am only 1,000 feet higher now; it was cloudy all day, I hope it doesn't mean snow on the high hills. Tomorrow we've got up hill going all day I fancy. I think I shall get to **Chungtien** in 3 days all right. I have marched 1,540 miles since leaving **Bhamo**, not bad going that. It is just about what I did the whole of last season. You darling, how long & long for you, but what's the good; you may be quite sure I miss you most awfully & wish we were together again, here or anywhere.

“March 20. Haroon has brightened up wonderfully; we had a great long climb first of all. I was like a young kid, climbed 4,700 feet in 2 hours 10 minutes & then had to wait ½ an hour for the first of my men to arrive; the rest of the march was down hill; we got to this village 11 miles at 3 and I was thinking of going on but a thunderstorm came on & we were glad to stay where we were; it cleared just as the mules arrived & I am very cosy in my tent; the thunderstorm has made his second appearance & I suppose it will come a third time like our friends in the Himalayas; but it makes a lot of fuss & there is little rain; it will clear the air. Although I am still low-down 7,500 feet, there are thumping big hills all round, snow clad chaps going up to 16 & 17,000 feet or more. I am still going to have a try to get to **Chungtien** in the 2 days but they will be long ones. I don't care I'm getting near news of you, you darling & that is what I most want. The people are bound here are very friendly, and not a bit curious so one has quiet. Rice is to be got here greatly to everyone's delight. I'm feeling quite fit & will again, my only complaint now is my cold which has made my nose very sore. Perhaps in 10 days I shall be having news of you. If I hear at **Pung-dze-la** that Manifold has passed through I shall put a few necessaries onto my mule & ride through in a couple of days stopping the night anywhere, but there is a big pass to cross, so I shall want my blankets. Not a word of love have I had for months from you; your last letter was dated Nov 17, more than 4 months ago. What has happened to you all in the meanwhile, I pray to God, dear, you are all well & happy.

“March 21.” (*To his mother*: “Up the same valley all day passed several places where they were washing for gold.”) “15½ miles today up one valley steadily rising to here I am at 9,400 ft, couldn't go any further as there is a big hill in front which I have to climb tomorrow & thanks to it I'm afraid I can't get to **Chungtien** tomorrow. Just as the mules got in at 4, it began to rain so I had to pitch my tent quick;

however I'm very cosy. The owner of the one house here says it takes 3 hours to get to the top of the hill & that we shall only get to within about 8 miles of **Chungtien** in the plain, which seems to be a rather big one. Most of the few small hamlets I passed today were Chinese. Not much news today, my darling, I'm getting more & more fidgety as I get near news of you. A family of 15 pigs are being fed just outside my tent; they are eating very untidily & the little ones will get right in the trough & are then snouted out by the big ones. You can imagine too how excited I am to get some war news from Manifold & also to get some of my dear old Standards.

“March 22. Did 20 miles today first a stiff climb to 13,200 ft then very gradually up a grassy valley to ridge at 13,900 ft, then down into another grassy valley which I followed down for the rest of the day, camped at 12,400 ft, my highest camp so far. Met not a soul all day till we got to this place which is a little plain, saw herds of tame yak, rather like bison, long hair & great shaggy tails. The people here are a different tribe of Tibetans & very uncivil; it was bitterly cold & sleeting all day, I tried at 3 houses to be allowed to stop & wait for the mules but was told to go, finally we found a house without anyone in & plenty of wood, lit a fire in the stable & made ourselves comfortable, presently the owner turned out and said go. However, I now refused to budge & presently we made him understand we would pay for the wood & then he went away. The mules didn't get in till 7, one broke down & was left behind, two of the mulemen carrying in his load. Silver won't pass here; the villagers said they wanted salt or cloth, however we found they would take rupees so that was settled all right. I'm in my tent & waiting for dinner; I don't know when it will appear. We shall get to **Chungtien** all right tomorrow an easy march, I expect. I can tell you it was no fun trudging along in the cold & sleet & half melted snow.

“March 23. When I woke up this morning there was 6 inches of snow on the ground & we started with it snowing & bitterly cold. However it gradually got better & as it was quite a level we got to **Chungtien** very soon, 11 miles altogether.” (*to his mother*: “... about half Chinese & the end of the house & neighbouring roofs were crowded with people the whole afternoon.”) “It is quite a little town, 2 or 300 houses & my inn has been crammed the whole afternoon with spectators, Chinese & Kūdsong, that is the Tibetan of these parts. The road to **A-tun-tzŭ** seems pretty well known which is a good thing, as it shows it is used; I'm here 12,300 feet so still high enough. The sun is out shining bright & quickly melts the snow & dries the path. There is a big Lamasery (that is a monastery) across the plain built quite like a big fort & must contain quite 1000 Lamas. It is rather nice to feel that tomorrow I begin the last stage of my journey to **A-tun-tzŭ**. I'm told it is 7 marches, but I reckon I shall take 8 & so arrive on the 31st or 3 days late. This is the most persistently curious crowd I have met with this year, quite harmless; I've driven the whole lot down the staircase twice, but they gradually come back. I hope now after this bout of snow we may have some fine weather as I fancy I have at least one big ranged to cross. My room window opens onto a sort of flat roof which is crammed with spectators, I shall sally out shortly, & drive them off. Nobody loves me, but I adore you.

“It's nearly 6 now. I've finished my writing & the crowd has gone away. Worse luck it has clouded over again, I hope to goodness it doesn't mean more snow but I'm afraid it does. There are said to be small Chinese posts at each stage where rice can be got; this I'm glad to hear, because it will make everyone keen to do the full stage, & may be I can reach **A-tun-tzŭ** in 7 days; it isn't much longer to wait for your letters, darling, when I've already been 2½ months waiting. I'm not in a very writing mood; it's very cold, I sent out for some charcoal but none has turned up yet. Everyone is busy buying food &c for themselves.

“March 24. I was delighted to hear that **Pon-du-la** where I cross **Yangtze** was only 3 marches instead of 5, as I expected. I had a very pleasant march, 17 miles, level in grassy valleys for 8 miles, then over a very easy pass & a good path down this valley where I am a bit lower 10,500 ft. It's tried to snow several times & there was 2 feet of snow on the pass only luckily the path was a bit trodden hard. My surveyor suffering from the effects of drink dropped behind so I did the survey myself; now I have suspended him, which means that he gets no pay until his case has been settled by the Surveyor General, which won't be for another 3 months yet, so that will be a pretty heavy punishment. I had a very good mind to give him a good thrashing as I had promised him. I'm in a nice big empty house in a

Thibetan village. I'm so pleased at the idea that I may be only a 5 days more from **A-tun-tzŭ**; tomorrow I've rather a long march but mostly down hill to get to the **Yangtze**. I can see a fine snowy range the other side which I have to cross, at over 14,000 feet, so I hope it won't snow many more, but it has been cloudy more or less all day. I think of nothing all day but getting news of you; I do hope Manifold is up to date; he may be delayed as he doesn't know much about exploring work. How delighted I should be if I met him at **Pung-tsa-la**, only two days more, but that would be too much luck. It's half past 8; but I mustn't go to bed yet; last night I went to bed too early, and had to get up about 3 & get rid of superfluous liquid, and then didn't get to sleep again. All my Chinamen are in the next room discussing prices, just like natives of India. I shall shut them up when I want to go to sleep. I've taken down about 300 words of the Mosso language & now each day take down the same words in Kudsong & they are quite different, although both are Thibetan.

“March 25. Did a nice march $17\frac{3}{4}$ miles mostly down hill & now I'm in a valley at 7,600 feet & quite balmy; I've pitched my tent in such a pretty spot, a little stream lined with with those; there is a Thibetan village just above. I'm told it's an easy march to **Pung-tsa-la** but then I have to cross the old **Yangtze** again, which will take some time. All well, thank you, only my nose has not quite recovered yet. The only 4 days more to **A-ten-tzŭ**. I'm getting so excited at the thought of getting some of your dear letters. It will be 3 tough days up from the river, which is probably about 6,600 feet, and the pass I have to cross is 14,600 ft. The reputation of the pass has already reached us; a lot of snow on it and maybe we can't cross; but we shall (*be*) all right although it will be very cold, especially if there is any wind. Tomorrow I shall know if Manifold has passed through; I don't think he can get to **A-ten-tzŭ** without passing through **Pung-tsa-la**; then I wonder if Davies will be up to date. We calculated he would reach **A-ten-tzŭ** on the 26th but he may have had higher passes to cross than I have, as he was further north, and had more snow. I hadn't much sleep last night, as my Chinese coolies woke about 4, and that woke me. This is just the sort of marching I'd like, the path is good & the mules got in by 4; now it's not quite 6, and I've had my wash & tea. A dog has just been brought down from the village for sale, as far as I could gather for eating; he was a nice looking dog with long curly hair, so I was glad when nobody would buy him. The stream is making so much noise it will drown the row of the camp waking tomorrow; so I look forward to a good sleep. I feel almost as if I was going to meet you in 4 days; it seems such ages since I heard from you, darling, I long for your letters.

“After dinner. Having no horrid little wife with me to say, “Charlie, I can't think what you want to go to sleep for at this time of day,” I just lay down on my bed & had a good hour's sleep before dinner & Machongyin had great difficulty in waking me. It was just what I wanted & I feel much refreshed, enjoyed my dinner of chicken pillao, you know with rice, raisins & egg. What I should like would be for Manifold to turn up with your letters and Davies be a day or two late; but anyhow we shall have 2 or 3 days halt before we start again. With a lot of your sweet letters before me, you may expect some love letter in return; but oh! my darling, I get so nervous, fearing I may get bad news. Goodnight, sweetheart.

“March 26. 12 miles to **Poung-dze-la**; but no signs of Davies or Manifold, however there are said to be different roads that each of them might get to **A-ten-tzŭ** without coming here. I crossed the **Yangtze** again, this being the 6th time I've met the old river, so I know him well; we crossed by a fine big punt. The chief of this place, a Thibetan speaking Chinese most affable & we are all lodged in this big house. Great reports about the road being impassable on ahead; but if it keeps fine tomorrow, I think we shall be all right; if all goes well it's 3 days to **A-ten-tzŭ**; but owing to the snow we may take 4, if we get through; anyhow I'm making everyone take 4 days provisions, & that is a thing one has to see to oneself; otherwise after 2 days after the men must say they have nothing to eat. This is quite a big place, 100 houses or more, all Thibetan. Down at the river while we were crossing a lot of Thibetans who were washing for gold in the sand came & watched us & were highly amused, roars of laughter all round. I had a sort of hope I might meet Manifold here with your letters. I believe he will come by this road only that he is late. It is the road joining mine here that Captain Gill took in 1877. A Chinese official on a visit of inspection from **Wei-si** which is south of here, came as far as this & then went back 3 days ago because of the snow, but Chinese officials travel in a more dignified manner than we

do. The old chief advises strongly to wait here & send a man to examine the pass but that is not good enough, and as Haroon does not seem alarmed at the prospect of the snow, I suspect the difficulties will not be so very great.

“March 27. I came only 11 miles today, but I want to give the snow time to melt; it has been a beautiful bright day. We had a hot climb up to 9,800 ft & then small ups & downs. Just above me is a very big monastery; I took a photo of it with snow's behind. We could see our pass from the path today; it looked covered with deep snow. There are several small traders here waiting for the snow to melt & I was congratulated on the fine weather I'd brought with me. My plan is with 3 days provisions for men & mules to go up the valley, till we are stopped by the snow & then camp; the local weather prophets say we shall have fine weather now & that the snow will have melted enough by the day after tomorrow if not tomorrow; but it will take me 3 days from here to **A-ten-tzū**; but then as I'm pretty sure Manifold is behind me; I'm in no great hurry. I'm in a very nice Chinese house, my window at which I'm sitting now looks across terraced wheat fields & up to the monastery. Clearly these Lamaserys are extraordinary, this one is like a large fort, houses all joined into one with a gold topped sort of pagoda at the top; I suppose there are some 500 Lamas there. I bought two nice fresh fish at the river yesterday & told my cook I would have one for dinner & breakfast; the other he was to boil & pickle so gave him the vinegar; well he put it in the vinegar but without boiling it; now I asked him how he was going to cook it, “Making cutlets, Sir.” Old fool; spoilt my nice fish. I was in by 1 & the mules ½ an hour after, so I have an idle afternoon; and it's only ½ past 3 now; but I've had tea. I wonder whether you have got all my letters; I took every opportunity of sending you in one. I can't tell you how lovely it is marching & camping here, darling, it only wants you to make it perfect. I'm 9,800 ft up here, and it's quite cold; it will be decidedly fresh on the pass at over 14,000 ft. I've just bought a sheep, you never heard anything like the disputing that Chinese go through over the price, finally it was bought for the equivalent of Rs2.12 which was considered a very high price. I should like a photo of **Violet** very much, sweetheart, don't get a lot, nobody wants them except ourselves. And Ida darling, I do wish you would write to Lady Ellis, she was so kind in Simla & it is a great pity to drop friendships. I've asked you a lot of times to write, now do there's a dear. I shall think you don't love me if you don't, so there. I felt a bit chilly so had a charcoal fire lit, now I'm all right; is still beautifully clear. I hope I shall find Davies at **A-ten-tzū**, I want somebody to talk to. When I found our march hard I had to march to keep to my dates, I was afraid Manifold might be late. We evidently couldn't have got here any earlier on account of the snow, but what hurries us is the fear of being caught by the rains when nearing Assam in low-lying country, beastly hot & beastly feverish. I'm now very fit again thank you, my feet will have a poor time going through the snow in sandals; but they are pretty hard & horny.

“March 28. Only managed 6 miles today; at first all went well, we came up the valley, no snow to a solitary house at mile 4½, 12,400 ft, where I waited for the mules & then came on. Then the snow began on the path & deepened rapidly, till there were several places 3 feet deep. I put all the men together to trample down a path but it was 3 o'clock when we had done 6 miles and I found a small opening in the forest not flat by any means but the sun had got onto it & it was clear of snow, of course there was plenty of time to go on; but the d—d fool of a Gurkha who speaks Thibetan had dropped behind with fever & hasn't come in yet, so we couldn't make out from our Thibetan guide whether there was any camping place ahead, all he did was to make signs that there were several places where the snow would be up to our necks, which was cheerful. Now I've had to send back 2 men to hunt up the missing Gurkha. When I got to this clearing my feet were so cold, I had to whip off my sandals & socks & rub them hard. Height here is 13,600 feet my highest camp, and there is such a beautiful snow range just across the narrow valley, over 18,000 feet. I took a photo of it & I hope it will come out well. I don't know at all about tomorrow, I shall try to go on, it has (*been*) beautifully bright all day, so a lot of snow must have melted; but we shall have a very rough time. It's rather annoying to be stuck so near **A-ten-tzū**, but what can do. I haven't much up hill to do, and if only the path will keep on open ground it will be all right; it is in the forest like here where the snow collects. The most I expect to do tomorrow is to get to some valley where there is grass, for there is none here, for the mules. I've sent 4 men back to buy grass at the solitary house 1½ miles back if they can; and two men

on in front to examine the path ahead. I know what would be the best thing but it is not easy to do with Chinese & that is start as soon as it is daylight & get along some way while the snow is frozen over. It is difficult work this, but interesting as it's my first try at snow passes. Not a soul has been along the path for days. Luckily it is a good one & broad. You darling, oh! how I would love to have even a kiss! May be Manifold may catch me up with your letters. This is the day I ought to have reached **A-ten-tzū**, I hope I shall get there in two days. Haroon was very funny as everybody came in very miserable, he shouted out, "Here's a fine inn, here inn cook, get a good dinner ready for everybody;" and the joke that this was a good inn amused & cheered up everybody. I shall be glad when I've got the sick Gurkha in, he is the most obstinate little chap I've met, again & again I've told him if he can't come along to let me know, but no! he just drops behind, feels bad & he's down & waits for somebody to come & pick him up. What would be very awkward would be if it came on to snow again, but it doesn't look at all likely. Tonight for dinner I have soup, chicken stew & egg curry; the latter will warm me up. I have only the inner fly of my tent pitched as there was no room for more, luckily there is no wind.

"I think I'm making this too long, you won't read it through. An old Thibetan has just turned up & my guide by signs said he wanted to go back & the old chap would show us the way, however I said no. it's getting decidedly cold now the sun is off us. Thank you, I think I should like to camp not quite so high up, but tomorrow at least will be just as high. I'm just having some hot whiskey & water. I finally decided not to send anyone on ahead, as I thought they would come back with alarmist reports of the amount of the snow and frighten everyone. I have two pairs of socks on & a blanket wrapped round my legs, & now I'm more comfortable; it's only 20 to 6, but I mean to have dinner early, and get into bed. I wish you were here to keep me company. These short marches make me write you long letters about nothing; but I have no one to talk to, dear, only writing to you as much as I can seems like talking to you.

"March 29. Here's a pretty kettle of fish, my march today was 2 miles. I was awake at 2; but didn't get started till 6, one hour after daylight instead of at daylight, with the result that we came on very nicely for 2 miles, then we got onto melted snow 3 or 4 feet deep & the mules stuck absolutely. I then went on about a mile, but it got no better & the surveyor I sent on about 2 miles further on to the top of the pass 16,000 feet, I came back & settled that Haroon & the mules were to go back to the village 8 miles down hill & bring back 3 days more provisions for men & animals, surveyor to stop here in charge of the camp & I to make a dash for **A-ten-tzū**, starting very early as I should think it was quite 25 miles; I may not reach there tomorrow, so I'm taking a couple of cold fowls, some army ration, a saucepan & two blankets; I hope to find Davies there; then I have to hire yaks to bring my camp in as laden mules cannot possibly get through. It's the only thing to do; but it will be very hard day; having got to the top of the pass worse luck, I have two other ridges to cross. Any how it will be quite 4 days before I get my camp in, and I shall not be very comfortable until I do, and less I find Davies at **A-ten-tzū**, he may have been stopped by the snow too; but I think his pass is lower. This is not the regular winter snow, as the pass was open 10 days ago. It's my tent pitched in a clear spot at about this angle (*line drawn 1 in 3*), surrounded by snow. Unfortunately instead of the bright sunshine of the last two days it has been dull all day, and even snowed a little, so that not much has been done in the thawing line; it froze pretty hard last night but it is quite warm in the day time. I'm at 14,400 feet here. Oh! how I have missed you more than ever these last two or three days; now, if you were only here, I should just wait for the snow to melt & spend the time making love to you; I shall be away from my writing things for several days, so this letter will not get any fourader (?). I wonder whether Manifold has heard of this pass being blocked & got round some other way; but I don't think so, I think he has just been delayed somewhere, may be only a day behind, maybe a week.

"April 5. Now I've got a lot to write about.

30th March. I started at 5 am with a Thibetan guide, Chinese coolie, mule & a Gurkha, after going ½ a mile the mule stuck hopelessly & I had to send it back with the Gurkha & come on with only 2 blankets, one of which I carried myself & a tiffin tin. We got over the 1st pass at 7, then down into the

valley all snow, up over a 2nd pass, again into a valley & up over a 3rd pass & then down & got out of the snow at 1.30. My dear, I never had such hard work in my life, most of the snow was 3 or 4 feet deep, in places much more, & we sank up to our knees again & again, the exertion at that height was very great, I had difficulty in breathing & my heart was going like anything. Well, we got to **A-ten-tzú** at 6.30, 22 miles, & then found Davies hadn't arrived, you can imagine how jolly I felt; then found the French missionary away. Luckily I got into a small inn, where the people half Chinese, half Thibetan, were very pleasant & soon I was enjoying a big fire & a dinner of fried eggs chicken **ye great wheat meal chupatties ½ an inch thick & as big as a straw hat. There was a plank bed & I got some straw & with my 2 blankets & my topi as a pillow slept fairly well.

“Next day, March 31, I was too done to march, & so were my two companions, the Chinaman's eyes very bad from the snow, so I halted & passed a dull day, smoking & making some very excellent soup, which I boiled all day. The people were very friendly, someone dropped in every now & then for a chat, & sit by my fire. The only thing for me to do was to go back to my camp, as neither Davies nor Manifold had arrived there was no great hurry, but I didn't relish the idea of facing those passes again.

“April 1. I decided to go back in two days, got a man from the Chinese official & my innkeeper who wanted to go through on his own account said he would come with me; we started late & went about 10 miles to just below the snow, it was a fine day & I found a nice place to sleep in under the big rock, covered it over with branches & made a pile of leaves & moss, but I didn't sleep much; my watch unluckily stopped & I was called for food at about 2, eat it, and then judged by the stars what time it was & slept by my big fire till about 4 when we started gripping our way up in the dark, crossed the 1st pass before sunrise, the going was now beautiful, the snow hard frozen & we went over it very quickly, our feet hardly making a mark on it; this was very different to our first journey. The sun rising turning all the snow to a sort of pink was really, dear, the most heavenly site I've ever seen. I crossed the other two passes easily & then passed on Thibetan mule caravan of about 60 mules who had trodden a good hard path in the snow & reached my camp about 10, enjoyed a bath & good breakfast & then there was a shout that devious was coming up the hill & soon he'd turned up & jolly glad to meet we were. He had a very rough time, big hills, not been delayed by the snow but simply by big hills & difficulty in finding a path; he hadn't halted for a month. Well, as those Thibetans had gone on we decided to cross the pass next day; so on April 3 we started but not till 7. however we found the path well trodden down & my mules got through to a camp near where I slept the night out very well, not so Davies who was thoroughly worn out. I stopped behind with him helping them on, however we could not get them over the 3rd pass, 4 of his mules had gone on with mine, so we left the others with 8 men behind on a little dry place & came on to wear my camp was pitched.

“April 4. As Davies' mules didn't turn up, he went up with 6 of my men to help them & got in about 2; he found they had a wretched time, one mule died & the men too tired to hunt about for firewood, had had a still poorer time, he sent down a note to say he was coming in all rights, so I struck tents loaded up & we came in here, **A-ten-tzū** by 6 o'clock. It was a beastly day snowing & raining. Just as we got in a man turned up with a note from Manifold we had been stopped by the snow further back & had crossed through **Wei-si** into the **Mekong** valley & was coming up that; his note was from a place 7 days from here dated 31st March, so we expect him in on the 7th, in the meantime we have plenty to do, arranging things, as we send back all surveyors, Khalasis & Chinese &c. from here. Beastly, snowing all night, drizzling all day. This means that passes ahead will be closed & we shall have no end of difficulties.

“April 8. Manifold came in on the 6th with our letters 10 for new, the first ending 17th Nov & the last 12th Jan. The chickenpox was over, but you had had many troubles, my darling, real influenza repeatedly, troubles with servants &c. My poor darling, I wish I were with you to help you. You dear, I sat up till 2 reading your letters and did enjoy them, so full of love & that you want so much to come out to me makes me very very happy. I don't know when this will reach you, it goes down with our superfluous men, mules & baggage & I think will reach **Bhamo** about May 25, Sue would reach you about 20th June. Now it is quite possible we may get to **Sadiya** in **Assam** by the end of May ourselves; in actual

distance we could easily do it, that we may have difficulties with snow or hostile tribes to be avoided. Now, and dearest, whatever you do, don't be nervous about me. There are 3 of us, 8 Gurkhas, all armed with rifles, we also have 10 mules, 2 servants & 2 mule drivers. We are not going to fight our way through, but a show of force will very likely to get through where otherwise we couldn't. It is very jolly being 3 together & Manifold seems a very good chap. Now that is enough about me.

“You darling, I feel so deeply in love with you, your letters are lovely. Whether you come out or not, dearest, to know you want so much to be with you (*sic*) is so sweet to me, and I want to be with you just as much. I think you're coming will depend rather on when I get back to India; you see it is quite possible we may be stopped a week from here & may have to go back to Burma, I cannot say really when we shall reach India. I will telegraph to you & then you must judge for yourself. You know how long it will take to get ready. There are so few passengers at that time that you needn't bother about getting a berth beforehand. When you get my telegram which will simply be “Sadiya, well” address your letters to C/o Grindlay, Groome & Co, Bombay. Whatever you do about the children darling, you may be quite sure will have my full approval. I see advantages & disadvantages in each of the plans. You darling, I do adore you, for all your love for me & all the troubles & illness you have had to contend against. God bless you, darling, my dear little wife, my love for you grows more & more. Mind, should you not come out, I shall quite understand, although I shall miss you very much. Heaps of love & kisses to yourself & the darling children, for another, you're very devoted lover & husband, Charlie.

17th March, Yung-ning, to his mother: *Included below are a few additional passages to supplement the letter to Ida covering the same period.*

“March 2. ... Came 16½ miles along the road Ker came by last year, up a bit over a ridge & then down very steep to Hsiao-pa, it was a cloudy day otherwise it would have been hot, as we were down to 4,000 feet. We met quite 100 coolies carrying huge loads up the hill of avoiding the main road & sugar cane and vegetables, peas and beans mostly.

“March 3. ... up the **Anning** river valley to a big village, 150 houses on the river bank, only a 10 mile march.

“March 4. ... finally we got over the ridge at 7,000 feet, then followed a little valley down to the big village of **P'u-ti-chou** where there was a Lolo chief, however he was siding with the Chinese in the rebellion (*see letter to Ida*) & his army of 100 men which had been collected up the valley came into the village just behind me in single file with a couple of big red & yellow flags at their head. They fired off their guns every now & again as they marched along to keep up their spirits and frighten away any enemy who might be near.

“March 5. ... Find my interpreter getting very useless, throws all sorts of obstacles in the way of going on; when we had come 9 miles we found a village where he thought he would like to stop; this was where the road narrowed; he said we couldn't go on, we had better halt here & make enquiries. I said go & make enquiries now & if you can't find anyone who knows a way round, we'll go & hunt for one ourselves. Presently he came back to say there was only one man in the village who knew the mule path & he was away in the fields. All right, I said, then we start in 5 minutes, & so we did & the Haroon produced the guide finding it useless to hope to stop there. All this is rather annoying.

“March 6. ... found a big house in charge of 4 small children the eldest about 8; he said yes we might stop there; rather a nice little chap. His Father & Mother had gone off to bring back their eldest boy who had been away some distance learning to read, & in the evening they all arrived. I was in the room with their ancestral tablets, so the eldest boy having been away some time was brought by his father to worship; they put a tiny little cup of rice & another of liquor in front of the tablets, bowed a lot of times & then burnt cash paper, each paper burnt, just bits of paper with a few characters punched in them credits the ancestors with 10 cash & supplies them with money.

“March 7. ... passed through one large village which was half burnt by Lolos last year, and looked rather desolate.

“March 11. I made a short level march, riding my mule & feeling very so so, only did 9 miles to some salt wells, quite a big town. Haroon very sympathetic; I heard him explaining to my cook that I had toothache & I must have soft things to eat; he had had just such a toothache a few days ago; so when he came in I told him I hadn't got a toothache it was my throat; he promptly said yes, yes, a few days ago my throat was just like that, but I took a pill & it got quite well. I wished I could cure mine as easily.

“March 16.” *He has a disturbed night with rashes.* “... Today I've halted, chiefly for my own sake as I wanted a rest & I shall be all right tomorrow. I also have to re-provision my men for 5 days to Chung-tien. The people here are mostly Thibetans, though an improvement on them, much cleaner, they call themselves Mossos, but to all intents & purposes it is Thibetan country. There are some Chinese too & I was shewn (*sic*) to a Chinese temple where I put up. There is a fine plain 6 or 8 miles long. Yesterday some 10 miles of the march was round a lovely lake, 9,800 ft high, sides well wooded & we passed a succession of promontories & bays; I thought this was a place I should have like to have stayed a week at. The people here are very pleasant & it is rather nice to get away from the Chinese. A very high Lama is coming through tomorrow & the path I came along was outlined on each side by small white stones for about 5 miles, this is to represent a crowd of men to welcome him but there only being a few men here stones are put to take their place, it must have taken days to do.

“March 25. 18 miles generally down hill, passed several fair sized Thibetan villages & camped near a stream amongst a lot of willows just below a Lamasery, & a lot of Lamas came & stared at us & thought us great joke.

“April 1. (*duplicates much of the above*) Started back reinforced by an innkeeper & a man from the Chinese official, we got up to just under the snow, & I made myself fairly comfortable under a big rock, with their bed of leaves & a sort of long lichen that hangs on the trees. I didn't sleep much, but what turned out to be 2 o'clock I was called for my food then, my watch having stopped I guessed about what time it was by the stars lay down by the fire & had an hour's sleep & about 4 we started in the dark, got over the 1st pass before sunrise, in fact the sun didn't get on to us till over the 2nd pass & the going was splendid, with a view magnificent & I thoroughly enjoyed myself; not sinking in the snow made all the difference, then I found a path trodden down in the snow & just past the last pass found a large Thibetan mule caravan, 60 mules or so, who had been treading down the snow & hoped to cross the passes next day, reached my camp at 10 & didn't I enjoyed a bath & good breakfast & then an hour later there was a shout that Davies was coming up the hill & presently he turned up. He had had a very rough time, delayed by snow, hunting for a path &c. We talked most of the rest of the day & decided to try the pass next day.

“April 3. My mules got through the snow all right thanks to the path trodden down, but Davies got stuck repeatedly & we stayed behind to help them through, very hard work & finally at 4 o'clock we had to leave them on a bare bit of ground & go on getting in at 6.

“Next day at 10 as his mules hadn't turned up, Davies took back 6 of my men & found his mules & men had had a very rough night, one mule died, the men too tired to get firewood had got so cold in the morning that the men wouldn't start till one of his Gurkhas struck the tent on top of them & got them started; finally they got in at 2 & we all started off here, **A-ten-tzū**, raining lower down and snowing on the hills, arrived at 6 & yesterday it was a wretched day. Just as we got in a note came from Manifold, he had been stopped by the snow further back & had to cross into the **Mekong** valley & hoped to reach here on the 7th, tomorrow, so today I sent out 6 of my mules to help him in. Davies & I have been busy getting information about three country in front; we have decided to take mules on from here & not coolies as the latter would probably desert. I expect we shall start about the 11th.

“April 8. Manifold came in on the 6th & his mules yesterday. He had a very rough time especially at **Momien** where the people have become unruly again owing to some row on the frontier. He brought with him heaps of letters; but about half our newspapers had tumbled into the river, however I have to thank you for a lot of Globes & local papers also 9 letters, the last one of Jan 11. **Wiffs** (*Wilfred, his brother*) expecting to go off to the Transvaal any day. It will be a great thing for him; and I hope there

may be no more reverses. Our latest news was that Buller had had to retreat back across the Tugela that was advancing again. Very many thanks, Mother dear, they are always welcome & never more so than now. This goes down with all our spare baggage & men. We hope to get off on the 10th with 8 Gurkhas, us three, 10 mules, 2 servants & 2 new drivers & 10 mules the latter we have, but the 2 mule drivers so far we have not got, they are afraid of the Lamas; the first state we have to get through is **Tsa-rong**, and everybody here says we are certain to be stopped; this may be only talk, however to put them off they are going south for a couple of days to the **Mekong** valley & then up that avoiding the main road & doing a long marches hope to slip through. Very much love to you all. If we meet with no difficulties it is quite possible for us to reach India in 1½ months from here, but snow and objectionable tribes may delay us, so please don't be a bit anxious if you don't hear of us for a long time, ever in your loving son, Charles Ryder.”

29th March 1900, Camp at **A-ten-tzū**, to **Wilfred** his brother: “My dear Wiffs, I'm in camp in a very beautiful spot, 14,400 feet, snow all round & just across the narrow valley a snowy range running up to over 18,000 ft ... What has disappointed me is the total absence of game of any sort, in a month I have seen 2 pheasants & 1 doe deer of sorts, musk deer, I think & this in a country very thinly populated & one would think ought to be full of game. ... The people about here heart Thibetans, at least they are called Kudsong, and are rather big I'm an then Thibetans that in the matter of dirt they are the same. ... one of my Gurkhas, who is really a Bhootia is proving useful just now as he can speak Thibetan enough to make himself understood; my guide is a funny old chap, we communicate mostly by signs. ... My old guide has just been to impress upon me that if we wish to sleep at **A-ten-tzū** & there is no village between we must start at daybreak & walk fast, that looks like a good long march, here comes a snow shower with sun shining at the same time. If it comes down heavy all night as it looks likely to do it may stop my going.

“10th April. We start tomorrow & are most awfully busy, buying mules, saddles, persuading them to come with us, arranging loads &c. I hope you have got off to the Cape all right, & will come home with another brevet. Good luck to you, old chap, many thanks for your letters, ever your loving brother, Charles Ryder.

8th (date not clear) July 1900, Coming down the Yangtze, to **Ida**: “My own darling sweetheart, I have a lot of letter writing to make up it has been quite impossible to keep a letter going so I just wrote up my diary as I could & that I hardly had time to do. We've had real hard marching & a rough time & now I'm afraid you will be anxious till you know we are safely at Shanghai & my last letters from you are still of Jan 12, 6 months ago. You darling I'm longing to be with you again, but when that will be goodness only knows; as soon as I can I will write you out my diary.

“July 15. I couldn't go on writing as the boat shook too much. Now I'm in a steamer & quite comfortable. I sent you in a short letter from **Batang**, we left there on May 12 & went back to **Yerkalo** to make our try to get into Thibet, got there on the 19th & went onto the rope bridge over the **Mekong** 2 miles higher up. As we passed through the village of **Gönra** be asked for the things to cross the road rage right a sort of pulley (*sic*) to run on the rope, and thongs to tie one up; but the villagers said they had none, that they were down at the bridge, but that we should not be able to cross, as the water was too high. When we got down to the bridge we found that the only house was on the further side & although we shouted across they wouldn't send the thongs across, so here we were checkmated, so we turned back meaning to sleep at the village it struck Manifold to hide behind the rocks & as soon as we turned away a boy on the other side sent to the *liao-bangs* as they are called spinning down the rope for two Lamas who wanted to cross, & Manifold promptly collared them; then he & the Gurkha crossed & sent us back two more *liao-bangs*, unfortunately there were none of the bigger sort used for crossing mules so we crossed ourselves, 2 servants, 3 Gurkhas & about half our baggage when it got dark, so we left the other 4 Gurkhas on the further side to guard the mules; about 8 o'clock there was a shout from the other side that the rope was cut, so we ran right out into about 20 lamas collected on the path, who promptly began to throw big rocks at us, hitting one of the Gurkhas in the forehead, a really dangerous wound, & they fired of a gun, hit the same man slightly in the mouth, then we've fired 3 shots, but they

had run off by then. Well, we then settled to keep watch, so I took the first two hours & about 11 o'clock I could hear a lot of men coming down the path, so I called up the others; we had an A 1 position for defence as they were about 100 large bags of salt, 60 lbs or so each & we had arranged these as a sort of breakfast; however these men didn't come any other than 100 yards or so & stayed there all night. Next morning we began to cross the rest of the baggage, but it was a very slow job as we only had the one rope left, slipping up towards us. About 9 o'clock or so we saw on the hill side above us & the ridge in front lined with men, who began firing at us, 40 or 50 shots, only 2 or 3 came anywhere near; however we had to decide to pocket our pride & retreats; our wounded man couldn't walk & we couldn't cross our mules, so we had no choice; we could have picked off a lot of the Thibetans & the rest would have run away, but we decided not to on account of the French missionary living near, on whom, they would have retaliated after our departure. So back we went & slept that night at **Yerkalo**, then returned two marches on the road towards **Batang**, turned off north east up to **Litang** & so to **Ta-tsien-lu**, our only adventure was the loss of several mules from cold & crossing high passes & the loss of one of our Gurkhas drowned crossing the **Litang** river, which we were fording, he was swept off his legs & drowned. Manifolds & I ran down the bank & saw his body caught on a snag in a shallow & waded across to it only just managed to get there as the current was so strong, the poor chap must have been dead when we got to him, we couldn't carry him to land, Sue made a rope of Manifolds *puggri* and belt to haul him ashore, but the latter broke & his body was swept down; then we had the utmost difficulty in getting to the bank again, I really thought we were gone several times. From **Ta-tsien-lu** we sent off telegrams; we were so short of money that Davies and I sent a joint one. 6 days hard marching brought us down to **Ya-chou**, where we first heard about those rows in the north of China. We then went down 2 days in a raft 60 miles to **Chia-ting-fu**, where we got a small boat & did 350 miles in 3 days to **Chung-King** dancing down rapids most of the way. On our arrival there we found everyone in a great state and the English Consul asked us to stop there a little and escort all the ladies & children whom he had advised to leave; we stopped 3 days, but after changing their minds good many times, most decided not to go, however we brought down Mr & Mrs James of the China Inland Mission & their numeral five children & the wife of the French doctor & his two children, we came down in 4 days to **I-chang**, had to wait there 2 days for a steamer & left this morning, we reach **Hankow** tomorrow, change steamer there & reach **Shanghai** on the 19th. At **I-chang** we heard that an Indian contingent was being sent, so I wired to be sent as Survey Officer. It will be an awful swindle if they don't send me & my great disappointment, anyhow I shall go up to **Tientsin** which is about 4 days from Shanghai & try and join the force in any capacity. I am feeling as fit as possible, oh! how I do hope I may at last get on service. I'm afraid, darling, that you will have been anxious all this time, but I will send you a telegram in **Shanghai**. Our letters are coming round from India but will not have had time to reach **Shanghai**, so I don't know when I shall hear from you, and my darling I'm simply longing for news of you & the children, my last letter from you is dated January 12, sweetheart, more than 6 months ago. I saw a "Times" that Uncle William had died at the Cape, I am really sorry indeed he has been so kind to us. You mustn't expect very long letters darling, but I will write all I can. I love you more than ever darling; don't you be frightened about me if I go on service, sweetheart, I hope I may have the luck to do something to make you proud of me.

"July 16. We got into a tremendous storm yesterday afternoon & the wind got so strong that we had to anchor & wait 5 hours or so till it passed over. However we reached **Hankow** about 5 this afternoon & the other steamer we change into leaves about 9. I can't tell you darling what a trial it is to be to be without news of you. Let us take just a month from London to Shanghai. You darling I have had your photo with me all along & I'm longing for a kiss; I'm afraid **Violet** will be a good deal older than her brother! I wonder whether Uncle William left you anything, but I hope he left a lot to Father. I see **Lord Harrowby** instead & also one of Hugh Wake's brothers in West Africa. I'm going to telegraph to you from Shanghai & ask you to telegraph news. I've had no words of love for oh such a long time.

"17th. We reached **Hankow** yesterday & stop to their 5 us changing our steamer, it is quite a big place, the huge Chinese town & the foreign settlement has 600 people, they had raised 100 volunteers & HMS Pique, a 2nd class cruiser was anchored there, also a Japanese cruiser; we went ashore & saw the Consul

& left about 10; now we are of **Kin-Kiang**, another open court; & have been waiting for a couple of miles or more. A 3rd class cruiser the Linnet is here, in fact each port has a man of war to protect the foreigners. This is a very good shape clean &c. We are longing to be pushing on to get quick to **Shanghai** & up to the fighting as quick as possible. You can imagine darling how excited I am for my telegram at Shanghai saying whether I am appointed Survey Officer or not.

“**Shanghai**, 19th. Awful hurry, got in here about 1, & found a telegram from Gen. Gaselee ordering me to report myself to him at his headquarters; well, as he left **Hong Kong** yesterday, I'm going off tomorrow morning early by steamer for **Taku**; been shopping but have only got half what I want. You must address to **Tientsin**, North China, awfully delighted at getting a service, my fondest love my darling, heaps of kisses to your dear sweet self & the chicks, for ever your very devoted lover & husband, Charlie. My pet, don't be anxious about me, I adore you.”

16th July, to his mother: “My dearest mother, For the last three months ...” *He describes the same adventures and the failure to march through Tibet to Assam.* “... slept the night at **Yerkalo**. We were in Chinese territory all the time, so hope that on the matter being reported some satisfaction may be got out of the Thibetans at **Lhassa**.” *He describes the drowning of the Gburkba.* “... he was one of the men who had been with me all along.” *Then follows the reference to the uprising to the north at Peking and the proposed evacuation of foreigners from Chung King.* “We took 4 days going down to **I-chang**, the last day through most wonderful gorges & rapids & whirlpools. We avoided stopping at the towns & kept a good watch at night's that had no adventures.

“July 19. We reached Shanghai today and found the instructions here. Davies to remain on special duty here, much to his disgust, Manifold & I to report ourselves to Gen. Gaselee's headquarters, I the survey duty which was exactly what I wanted. I rushed round to buying things, but haven't half the things I want, our steamer leaves tomorrow at 7, so I have absolutely no time for anything. Please address **Tientsin**, North China. Much love to you all; I'm delighted at getting a service at last, feeling very fit & well, every your loving son, Charles Ryder. I hope before reaching **Taku** to finish off my diary & send it to you.”