

## Charles Ryder, letters 1903 – 04 & one from 1907

*These letters were written while surveying on the Tibet Frontier Commission<sup>1</sup> to Ida at Eastbourne. It was obviously challenging for him to write from remoter part of the Tsang Po (or Brahmaputra) valley which means that much of interest from there is unrecorded. The behaviour of the force towards the Tibetans was controversial if not disgraceful and Charles' attitude to this was no better than others.*

*As the input of much of this text was done with Dragon Dictate there may be words such as 'that' for 'but', 'of' for 'off', 'male' for 'mail' etc. that I have failed to correct. The photographs are mostly unlabelled and so may be wrongly placed. For ease of scanning by eye place names and those of the family are in bold type.*  
*Lisle Ryder.*

4th October 1903, Thibetan Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own darling sweetheart, Here begin my old jungle letters again. Today is the first day I've had any time to myself. On the 2nd I left Calcutta, busy up to the last moment. I left at 4 p.m. pretty hot it was too, the only a pleasant part of the journey was having dinner crossing a river in bag (?) flat bottomed steamer, which took about ½ an hour. I reached Silliguri (?) at 6 a.m. next morning, at once sat to work arranging my kit & got off by 1 (I've such a beastly nib). I couldn't get a pony, but luckily for first march 12 miles; which was out in the plains there were two tongas with bullocks going so after 4 miles I sat in one & jolly glad to do so, as it was beastly hot. The camping ground was beastly, and I slept in the tonga<sup>2</sup>, the seats all went flat & made a very comfortable bed. It was a pretty spot though just where the Teesta (**Tista**) comes out of the hills. Today I came 11 miles walking, along a cart road on the bank of the Teesta & as I got in early to the bungalow I have had a great day reorganisation (*sic*) of all my things. I have two more marches up the valley both very hot & then I climb up to Gangtok, which is the capital of Sikhim & where the political officer ordinary lives, only he is one of the Commission just now. Then from there it is 6 or 7 to Khambujong, so you see I've got a good distance to go yet. I met Major Bretherton the transport officer on the road today; he seems pleasant. He thinks we shall stay up for the winter, but didn't really know. I shall know nothing really till I get in the Commission. I've never had harder work darling than making all the preparations. I'm short of a heap of things that I would otherwise have taken, but I'm feeling very fit. I shall be happier when I'm in a slightly cooler climate. This is a small bungalow, one room was being painted & another occupied by a sea transport conductor, so I'm in the middle one & shall sleep in the verandah. This river is awfully pretty, the hills on both sides covered with jungle & the road most of today was shady.

"Oct. 5: 15 miles today up along the Teesta, crossing it by a bridge half way. I'm in a delightful little bungalow near the river, surrounded by trees. It's pretty hot, anyhow I'm enjoying a punkah (?) pulled over me as I write, however tomorrow will be my last hot day. I think of you constantly darling, I know how disappointed you will be at my not coming home, try & bear it bravely sweetheart & write me dear loving letters. I left at 6.30 & got in at 11, mules & men all in by 12, now 1. I've had my bath & shave. The boy I have with me is really I think the stupidest creature I've ever had as a servant, he seems strong though. I'm very curious to see how these men will stand the high elevations. Just before leaving Bangalore I sent you home £70 which ought to reach you by the middle of October. I am telling the Madras Bank at Bangalore to send you home another £40 and Grindlay & Co, Calcutta through whom I shall

<sup>1</sup> The Tibet Frontier Commission headed the British expedition to Tibet in 1903-4. The Commission comprised seven diplomats and army officers, led by Colonel Francis Younghusband. Despatched on the orders of Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, the Commission was intended to establish diplomatic relations with the government of Tibet and, in particular, to resolve the dispute over the border between Tibet and British-held Sikhim. The Commission was escorted by a large military force led by Brigadier-General J. R. L. Macdonald. However, the expedition was met with hostility by a Tibetan government uninterested in negotiation, and conflicts erupted, in one instance resulting in the massacre of hundreds of poorly armed and poorly trained Tibetan soldiers, which were no match for a professional army equipped with Maxim machine guns.

Captain Herbert James Walton served as Medical Officer and Naturalist to the Commission, and was able to make a comprehensive study of the flora and fauna of the southern and central areas of Tibet during the expedition's slow progress to the capital, Lhasa.

Other members of the Commission: Mr. E. C. Wilton, Chinese Consular Service (Deputy-Commissioner); Mr. J. Claude White, Political Officer of Sikhim (Deputy-Commissioner); Capt. W. F. T. O'Connor (Secretary and Interpreter); Mr. H. H. Hayden (Geologist); Mr. Vernon Magniac (Private Secretary to the Commissioner).

Further background: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British\\_expedition\\_to\\_Tibet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_expedition_to_Tibet)

<sup>2</sup> A small horse drawn carriage.

draw my pay £20; then from the beginning of November i.e. when they draw my October pay I have told them to send you home £70 a month. Now, darling, do be a dear & try & save out of this. I want you to pay my tailors bill, Messrs. Daniels & Co, Military Tailors, Artillery Place, Woolwich. I can't lay my hands on the bill just now, but write & ask them to send it; it's £43 or £44 or something like that. I do want that wiped out, then when we owe nothing we shall know so much better how we stand. We shall be able to save something, this cold weather if I get the outfit & reputation allowances; unluckily at the end of this month I revert from the 1440 grade to the 1140. I haven't had much appetite so far it's been too hot. I feel as if I could drink the whole river only it's very muddy. This river is much like our old friend the Sutlej, fems (?) in heaps.

“Oct. 6: My black ink has gone bad (*continuing in purple*). It started raining last night that 6 & just after a man turned up in the bungalow wet through, so I gave him tea & dinner. He was a missionary & knew several missionaries I had met in China. Today I marched 11 miles still along the Teesta, ringing the whole time & lots of little landslips along the road. Today is my last in this valley, I hope I shall get out of it without fever either for myself or my men. I'm having a distribution of quinine today. It's a great thing having bungalows at the stages. I got a room here though most of the bungalow is occupied by commissariat conductors & bags of rations. I shall post this tomorrow at Gangtok. I pick up bits of information as I come along. Today I met a man of the name of Harrison, 32nd Pioneers I think. He says 300 of the 32nd with the commission at Khambujong & 200, 30 miles with this side at Tangu. But Everton told me that if there is to be an advance it will not be from Khambujong but east from Gangtok & the 23rd Pioneers are going there to improve that road. 800 Gurkha coolies are being formed into a Coolie Corps under a Major Beynon to bring things across the pass to us at Khambujong if we went there. I wonder if this will turn into a campaign with a medal; you say that you won't love me any more but I sure love myself more if I get another medal & possibly a C.I.E who knows. My having already been recommended for one will then come in useful. If we must be separated it may as well be for something that brings honour & glory & not just ordinary charge of a survey party doing regular work.

“4 p.m. I've had plenty to do a very afternoon writing & doing up my accounts so that once I get to Khambujong I can devote myself to work. I was rather pleased with my accounts, only Rs.3 out, after spending Rs.2,400. I wish I could get some clear evenings to practice star observations, I'm probably rather rusty in them. You darling now I'm longing for letters from you, I shall find them waiting at Khambujong I expect. I must try & send you a map from Calcutta, I have a mean one with me here, but this Teesta valley is just east of Darjiling, and I follow its street or on to its source & then that is the frontier. Khambujong is about 10 miles further on. I was glad to find my back doesn't interfere with my walking though it is still a little stiff. I am anxious to see what it will be like in the cold. Will you sweetheart make me up a little parcel of 1 warm vest, 1 warm pair of drawers, the latter I know I left behind in the spare room & knit me socks & send them out as they are ready. I shall want 3 pairs this winter. I think you have given me more babies than socks since we were married. I brought up very few tinned stores with me, as there is a Commission mess, which I shall of course join. I don't suppose it will be very expensive I imagine 300/- or 400/- a month is the utmost I shall spend, so I shall be able to send you home your £70 and still save Rs.300 a month comfortably. Then I shall do my best to pass in Thibetan (*sic*), something to do during the winter. When this show is over, Ida; if I have to stay any time in India finishing off maps you must come out to me & we will postpone my leave for a year or two.

“Oct. 7: Reached Gangtok, raining all day, several of my mules broke down & Mike it didn't get in until 6. There are 4 of us in the bungalow in two rooms. I found Harvey Kelly of the 4th Pioneers here are attached to see 32nd Pioneers, he is going to Khambujong so we do together. This is quite a little hill station, a company of the 10th Jats. I am dining at their mess, Major Wright who commands was at Cheltenham with me. I have had a tiring day, old girlie, God bless you, sweetheart. I simply adore you more & more. Love & kisses to our dear 4, but much more to their pretty mother. All my things are wet & it's cold, but I love to think of you darling, forever Your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

8th October, Thibetan Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, I left Gangtok this morning. Harvey Kelly with me. A very tiring march 14 miles. We didn't start till 10, as my mules got no grass at night & so were left out for a feed. We had about 5 miles slightly up hill, gang o'clock being about 6,000 ft & then steadily down hill

the rest of the way to this place Riatdong, a bungalow on the Teesta, night 2,300 ft so quite warm again. It rained twice during the march, so we've got a bit wet. We were in at 3.30 & our mules all in an hour later. The river is making such a noise, I shall be glad to get away from it but that's not for some days yet. I think your last letters have passed. I wired to Tangu, 4 marches from here, where there is a post to stop them there. Harvey Kelly is a very nice boy, so it's a pleasant having him with me. My back still gets stiff if I sit writing or bending forward for any time, otherwise I'm very well. It's lucky there are these bungalows on the road, as with all this rain the whole place is very damp. There are wonderful lots of ferns growing in this valley. There is a company of Madras Sappers making a road from where I left the Teesta to go up to Gangtok to here following the river, so I've missed seeing them. One of the things I want you to send me out is a pair of bed socks or sleeping socks or stockings better still, they are more like bags than stockings, knitted & with no shape to the foot, see if you can get them darling will you. Another thing I want is a pair of warm gloves with her inside, regular warm ones, 8¼ is what I take in ordinary gloves, told the shop people & C perhaps these ought to be a little bigger. I must go & have my bath now, sweetheart, I adore you.

Oct.9: I have a Madras Sapper with me to take photographs, so I hope to have a good collection at the end. We came along the Teesta for some miles, then gradually up the side of the valley, altogether 11 miles to Tinghik (?) where there is a half built bungalow. Luckily two rooms were roofed, so we are all right. I bought a sheep, so we shall be all right for food. There is said to be a very fine view of Kinchinjunga (*or Kanchenjunga*) from here, but unluckily it is cloudy although it didn't rain. Late in the afternoon O'Connor RA, the Intelligence Officer with the mission came in on his way down to meet Col Macdonald RE who is to command the troops. I had a long talk with him, he seems pleasant, talks Thibetan fluently. He said we were not going to winter at Khambujong, but anyhow we should be a month there. I couldn't get much out of him, however he said as I met Col Younghusband I should hear all of the news. I'm longing to get to the end of my marching & get your letters. There is a daily post up to & down from Khambujong & a telegraph office so we are very civilised. We are 4,800 ft up here, so it is quite pleasant. From now we go steadily up hill each day. The pass on the frontier is said to be over 17,000 ft. Dear heart, you don't know how I'm longing to be with you. I'll let you know as soon as I know how long this show is going to last, I hope not long.

Oct.10: 14 miles today, at first along the side of the hill, then down to bridge across the Teester which is now a much smaller. There was a great big rock in the river & two small bridges on each side. We got in about 2, a very nice bungalow, raining heavily & steadily; however we have a fire & all our things are drying. One of my mules broke down & we had to send back & fetch the things in. Here the height 5,800 so we are gradually going up. There are lovely views but all this cloud & rain rather spoils things. I had about 3 hours work this afternoon preparing my plain tables plotting all the points already fixed, including Mt Everest & Kinchinjunga. Tomorrow I shall have the same job with my surveyor's board. This is a Thibetan house turned into a bungalow, curious beams about in the ceiling. How glad I am we have a bungalow over our heads, but the road will be bad after this rain. I got a big insect in my eye, it did hurt so my eye is still a bit sore. Harvey Kelly got it out for me. I've been using my sleeping bag & every night as I get in, I bless you for it.

Oct. 16: I have such a lot to tell you, but I haven't had their moment to spare. Well on Oct 11 we had a long uphill march, still up the same valley to Lamteng a small Thibetan village with a bungalow. My mules broke down & the last load was not in till 3 the next morning, & on the 12th we had 14 miles steady up the valley. Luckily I got 9 coolies to help with my things. This brought us to Tangu where the reserve is caught is, 12,950 ft above sea level & jolly cold. However they had made themselves very comfortable & it was jolly having a civilised food again. From here we had yaks as transport & next day did 8½ miles to a small sheltered place where we had to pitch our camps. Then on the 14th we rode 23 miles in here to Khambujong, our kit coming in next day. We had to cross a pass at over 17,000 ft & here we are in a broad open valley 15,500 feet with a fine view of all the snows, Kinchinjunga, Mt Everest & others. The least exertion at this height makes one breathless & it is very hard work surveying. The air is most wonderfully clear & one can see immense distances, so I shall have grand opportunities of surveying. Our camp is very neat & compact with thick turf walls all round. The escort consists of 300 32nd Pioneers with 2 masari... (?) under Capt. Bethune (who was in the East Lancashire at Sitapur with me). Lieut Harvey Kelly, Mitchell & one other. Capt Walton is the doctor, but he has fever so I've only seen him once. Then of the Commission itself the only one left is Wilton who is a consul in China & who put us up at Tchang as we came down the Yangtze in 1900. Hayden a

Geologist completes the party. We have a nice mess tent & are done very comfortably. Now all the future plans I can find out is that we are not going to winter here, but in about 3 weeks move eastwards across Thibet to meet another party who come up the Chumbi valley. The wind is dry & cold, with very painful results on our lips, everyone is the same, lips swollen & cracked. I am starting a beard, shaving is out of the question when I have to be out in the wind so much. My dear, even writing makes one breathless & I can hardly smoke at all. In the sun it is quite warm, but bitter in the print & at night we have 11° of frost. I shall be most awfully busy from tomorrow onwards.

“Oct. 19: My darling I have been so busy but I've been so successful in my work so far. I'm not going out today, but I'm going to devote myself to compute in out some of my triangulation. Your dear letter of Sept 18 came yesterday. In happy anticipation of our meeting, I had to take it away to my tent, my eyes grew dim as I read it you darling, how I do adore you. Bear up my pet. I do feel most miserable over this separation, only I have so much work to do. I haven't the time to think over it, God bless you darling, I know how miserable you must feel. I know it's little consolation to you but this is the greatest survey show that has been on the years & years and I can't help feeling proud I was selected to go on it. I think you understand my feelings, darling, success in life is a very great thing to a man, and though, as you know, I love you very very dearly (you know, you are the one person in the world who engrosses all my thoughts), I should feel miserable in after years if I thought back & thought I had missed such a great opportunity as this. Any success I may win is doubly dear to be, in the thought of sharing it with you. I know you dear, you think highly of me, but still I can't help being ambitious. All I know about our plans are that in about 3 weeks we shall march east about 10 marches, 300 of the 32nd Pioneers will be with us & about two marches off, 200 more meet us. Then later on the 23rd Pioneers come up by a different route & meet us. The general idea is that this move will bring the Thibetans to their senses, if not we went up that this other place and wait developments. Now goodbye my darling. God bless you ever Your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

23rd October, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I must start your letter but for a few days still I really have little or no time. I am out almost every day & all day, & when I don't go out I have my computations to do; then after sunset it gets so bitterly cold writing of any sort is out of the question. Three of the officers from Tangu brought a football team over & played yesterday. You can imagine how I would have liked to have played but my back is still stiff at times so I thought it wiser not. This camp which is in a wide open plain is 15,100 ft high, so one feels the height. I sleep better now, but at first I could hardly sleep at all & the slightest exertion even like turning in bed at night makes one pant. Yesterday I had a long day out, I went about 8 up a long narrow valley behind the camp making for a hill, gradually rising, after 4 hours I was within ½ an hour off the top & about 18,000 ft. I felt the elevation a good deal, unluckily I was told the Hill was 2 hours from camp & I had brought no lunch, & as my Khalassies were ½ hour behind I gave it up & came back, in at 3 pretty hungry. The hot sun & the cold wind are rather painful, chapped hands, split lips & faces all peeling. I have started a beard along with Bethune & Hayden. The other chap in the escort is Bailey, I stopped with in Edinburgh. The evenings are the worst part, once in bed I am warm enough but from 6 till dinner it's very cold. The air is wonderfully clear & all to the south of us is the snow range with fine views of Kinchinjunga & Mt Everest. Your dear letter of Sept. 25 came yesterday. Alas! I dread the unhappy one I shall get next week. I am so unhappy darling at your weight & that people think you looking unwell. Do take care of yourself. You're all the world to be, you know. Well played, old girlie, how splendidly you must have played tennis tickets so far in the tournament.

“Oct. 25: Yesterday & today I haven't been out as I had a lot of computations to do, but I shall have a long day tomorrow. I am so pleased with my work, darling it is coming out so well. It gets colder each day, though. My hands are so rough & chapped. I am growing a beard, it is impossible to shave with comfort when I have to be out so much. We shall be here another 3 weeks & then we march eastwards about 20 miles to meet the 23rd Pioneers coming up by another route. Wilton told me that a mountain battery and possibly a Gurkha regiment are coming up, the more the merrier & if the Thibetans show fight we may get a medal. We then halt a short time at the meeting place, Kalatso & then march to Gyantse. Then it isn't known whether we stay the rest of the winter there will go straight on for Lhasa. I hope the latter then the snow will be over all the sooner. If I find after the expedition is over that I am likely to be detained any time doing the fair maps then you shall come out to me. My back still feels stiff at times, but it is much better. I have about a week's more work then I shall have some spare time to devote to writing, darling. You

can understand my wish to do my work as well as possible as this is the first expedition I've been in charge of the survey. Cheer up, my darling pet, I will come home as soon as ever I can or you shall come out to me. I'm afraid No.5 must be postponed at any rate. You don't know how much I long for a sight of your dear pretty face. I can't help feeling that this is the best chance I've had of distinguishing myself. It evidently is going to be a very important expedition.

“Now and for the little description of this place. Our camp which is about 100 yards each way is surrounded by thick turf walls, about 4 ft high & We have two maxims (*guns*) pointing towards the nearest hills which are quite close. About 1000 yards away there is an old Tibetan fort on a hill. The other side is all plain for miles with rolling downs & then the snow range beyond. The camp is very nicely laid out. I have a much larger tent than my own & the tent is surrounded on 3 sides by a turf wall 2 ft high to keep the wind out. We have a good sized mess tent & are just trying to start us to, but it's mostly smokes. We have got some would now, but usually we burn a small scrub called wormwood as we are above tree level, and there are no trees in sight except two miserable looking specimens alongside the little village under the fort. Whenever any of us go out a Tibetan soldier unarmed follows & watches what we are doing, but they are rather giving this up, having found Hayden, the Geologist, hopeless in his ways. The time passes rather slowly. I shall be glad to be on the move, although it will be bitterly cold work marching in the middle of November. Col Younghusband the Commissioner who has gone off to Simla to consult with the Viceroy is expected to be back here on Nov 10 & we to march on Nov 12, but I daresay it will be later. Oh! dear heart, in the Pioneer yesterday I saw the list of passengers going home in what ought to have been my boat on Oct 17. Mowbray tells me in a letter that Uncle Mowbray<sup>3</sup> is going to allow Ethel more than the £40, is that so?

“Oct. 27: I had a long day yesterday, going up a long valley with a steep hill at the top. I fancy it was 18,000 ft & it was such hard work, the last few hundred feet every few steps I had to stop to get my breath, however I did a fine lot of work & had a fine view. Starting at 8, I got back at 5. One effect of the elevation was that I couldn't eat any lunch. I fancy that is the first step towards mountain sickness. It is getting colder each day, 11° last night i.e. 21° below freezing. I fancy our march when we start will be very severe. I'm getting in such a grand lot of work, sweetheart, all the same I wish I was with you. We have another 3 weeks here. I have only 2 or 3 hills more to visit for my triangulation, then I may do some plane tabling. I have a sore on my foot that won't heal, I suppose going to the cold; all our hands, lips & noses are the same, split & chapped.

“Oct. 28: I was up on a hill near here this morning starting at 8 & getting back at 1, there was no wind, so it was lovely. I think I shall send this off today. Darling sweetheart, you must forgive short letters. My tent was so cold 4 pm I came into the mess tent, where we now have a stove. We are above tree level, & the only firewood is a little shrub that burns very quickly, now however about 30 yak loads of would have come up from the other side of the pass & we can revel in a warm tent. My beard is growing, you mustn't mind to this, as I have to be out of doors so much, it would be cruelty to shave. I have only got two days outing more to finish my triangulation & I shall then have fixed points 30 miles or so in the direction we shall march. Dearest, you don't know how homesick I feel all the time, however I look steadily forward to our meeting next year. I am sending you £70 a month darling & you really ought to be able to save out of that, to try, it takes away  $\frac{3}{4}$  Of my pleasure at home if I know we are living beyond our means. Did I tell you I brought up a Madras Supper with me to develop photos? I have taken 9 already & they have come out well. My foot is still small just on the instep, however the hospital assistant comes daily and binds it up. I do hope this will be a short show, and that the Tibetans will show just enough fight for us to get a medal, but all about here is quite peaceable. I think of you so much my pet, I know what a bitter disappointment my not coming home is to you, as it also is to me, though I have the excitement of this expedition to occupy my thoughts. Much love, my darling. God bless you & my darling four . Kisses many many to you all but more especially to you. You darling forever Your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

29th October, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I sent you off a letter yesterday, and in the evening received yours ending Oct 2. What a dear sweet letter it is too, you had heard of my going off here, but

<sup>3</sup> Mowbray Thomson (b. 10th September 1860), son of Julia's sister Mary (b. 4th August 1835) and Mowbray Thompson (b. 1st April 1832). Ethel (b. 16th November 1861) was his sister.

you are a little darling to have written so sweetly about it. It consoles me a lot to know that you understand my feelings. I've asked you to send me out several things that could you send me out a warm waistcoat, warm but not too good or expensive, because it will have rough wear. I shall expected about Christmas. My surveyor who has just come in after being out 5 days with Hayden has brought in a good lot of work. They were stopped by the Tibetans and had to come back. I think I've told you all about the other fellows in camp. It has clouded over a today & is I think going to snow, which is a nuisance because I want particularly to visit one more hill and then I shall have fixed points 4 marches or so ahead. I have a good lot of warm things & by Jove one wants them. Of course winter has hardly begun. I am asking the Calcutta Office to send you a couple of maps which will tell you of our whereabouts. We shall have a bitterly cold march when we do start, that is why I want to fix points as far as possible ahead. Thanks so much for sending me the photo of Violet, she is lovely, Ida & no mistake. I am so proud of our children & so very very grateful to you, my very dear wife, for giving them to me. I'm longing to see them all, but not so much as I am to see you. The stove in the mess tent is a great improvement and I am sitting there now. I am keeping very well, my back is just stiff now & again & I rubbed it with Elliman's & it gets all right; but I don't quite like to play football yet; I wish I could because it is so warming. Although I'm really very unhappy about my not getting home, I can't help realising that this is a grand trance I've got going on this expedition; because next to the political the survey is the most important work, and I'm very lucky to have gone; then after this I'm not at all likely to go on anything else for a long time, and we can be together; then I shall be able to take longer leave, being better able to afford it. I hope Col Longe will succeed Col Gore in February because it was he who recommended me for a CIE before. You needn't be in the least nervous about me, sweetheart; if the Tibetans do oppose our advance, they are such poor fighters and have no guns that fire more than 400 yards, so that there is very little likelihood of a bullet even going near me. I have my revolver in my tent & it shall be (?) take out & put in a handy place, but really there is no danger. I am much safer than I was travelling by myself in China. I'm glad you've seen Mrs Johnson. I thought Mrs Traile was on the job again, as I never saw her all the time I was in Bangalore. If it wasn't that I was married to you I shouldn't wish for honour & glory half as much, but sharing it with you double is the pleasure. This sort of expedition is a much better one for me than going to Somaliland. Dear pet, how hard I adore you for your letter; it is such a comfort to me; you don't know how when I have very difficult work to do a letter like this one of yours cheers me up. I will always writes you just as long letters as ever I have time to in this cold though writing is not so easy. Tell Margaret & Enid that from my tent I can see the two highest mountains in the world Mt Everest and Kinchinjunga, but I wish when I wake up I could see my dear little girlies instead. Much love my dearest sweetheart, God bless you, and keep you safe & Sound. Do take care of yourself, fondest love & heaps of kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

30th October, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own darling sweetheart, You are in luck this week; last night it began to snow lightly & all this morning but it doesn't lie yet except at nights, however surveying is out of the question as one can only see a mile or so; so we have all been spending a lazy morning in the mess tent & I have finished all the computations I can do just now. I hope it will clear because I have one hill I must go & visit. Would you do this for me? Last November I got a pair of boots made at that bootmaker low down on the left hand side Terminus Road, a name like Pine, they have my measure. I want them to make me a pair of boots just like the others, with nails. I also want a pair of slippers, a leather sole but warm uppers more like a boot if they have warm cloth uppers that just strap across that would be the best sort. Look is not of the slightest importance, we all wear anything. I have a pair of long sheepskin boots up to the knees, very loose, I want something smaller. Don't send me out a plum pudding, we have ordered five for the mess I have no more news to tell you. Any parcels should go out parcel post. It has just stopped snowing but is still dull. I am so happy with your dear letter, darling, it is such a comfort to me, in my work when you write lovingly. I am of course delighted to have been chosen to go on this expedition, but I am all the same hoping it may be short. I have asked Col Gore to have another RE in the survey junior to me ready if it extends beyond next spring, not to take my place of cause because I must see it out, but really between ourselves, so that he could look after the fair mapping when the expedition is over, I didn't mention this, I put it down to the importance of the work. Col Younghusband comes back about the 10th November then we shall probably have some news. My beard is getting quite a respectable length. If we winter at Gyantse I hope we shall get into houses, tents all the winter would be too much. The snow has made it a bit warmer today. You darling, how I love you, for your

dear am selfish letter, because I can see how you are hiding your disappointment. Thanks for your cheques for September. You ought to be able to save comfortably on your £70 a month; and pay my tailor's bill, Messrs Daniel & Co. 1 Artillery Place, Woolwich. Write & ask them what is something between £40 & £45, don't pay any interest if they charge any. You see you had £8 with Cox, then I have sent you home £134 since then & by about next mail another £70 will go home; but mind darling, I am trusting you once more to save for me. Much love my darling sweetheart. God bless you, ever Your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

31st October, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, It was useless my going out today as though it was beautifully fine, there were still clouds on the hills, but I did a lot of computations in the morning & then after lunch had my bath, it is almost impossible to have one after sundown. Then as it is the last day of the month, I did up my accounts, and now I have ½ an hour or so quiet in the mess tent, while most of the fellows are playing football. My foot is still bad. I have it bound up every day by the hospital assistant but he says it will take 5 or 6 days to heal. I rubbed it just over the tendon on the instep, so naturally it won't remain quiet. It was so cold last night, I slept very little. I finally pulled on my sheepskin long boots & then I was all right. I shall be glad when I get my letters direct here, as everyone got their mail yesterday. I am going out for very long day tomorrow to a hill 10 miles from here. It is not difficult for myself that I have to get my Khalassies of early. We can't move from here till 500 yaks come up from Nepal, and no one knows where they are. I revert back from Rs 1,440 two Rs 1,140 pay about as Burrand & Lennox Conyngham are due back about now. I've done up all my accounts & I have about Rs 1,200 in hand after drawing might pay for October & sending you home £70 of it. I think going to my having government transport free, I only draw Rs 150 a month for travelling allowance; this is what I draw.

"Pay	Rs 1,140.0	Send home	£70	Rs 1,050
Exchange compensation	72.4	Mess bill about		120
Deputation allowance	<u>228.0</u>	Other expenses say		103
	1,440.4	Servants		57
Less funds	41.4	Saving each month		<u>182</u>
Income tax	<u>37.0</u>			1512
	1362.0			
Travelling all	<u>150.0</u>			
	1512.0			

"So you see my dear, I don't leave myself much margin; however I think I shall save Rs 200 a month and you must do the rest. Out of your £70 I think you ought to save quite £10 a month.

"I shall be glad when I have finished my triangulation then for two or three days I shall have to sit tight and work it all out, then I shall have a fairly easy time for a bit. My poshteen<sup>4</sup> was stupidly sent to Bangalore instead of to Calcutta; I shall be glad when it arrives. My darling how I am longing to be with you again, you are the very dearest little wife and me; you don't know how your dear sweet letter has comforted me. I should have been nearing Marseilles now, but never mind, darling; at least cheer up.

"Nov.3. I've been able to do nothing the last two days, so seedy with tonsillitis, not only the discomfort & pain of the difficulty of swallowing, but also the general feeling of seediness. My tonsils are still pretty bad, but I'm otherwise feeling better, so I seize the chance of getting on with this letter. How I have longed for you more than ever these last two days. A telegram has come from Col Younghusband from Simla, saying he will not be able to rejoin us till the



<sup>4</sup> A sheepskin or goatskin coat made with the fleece on the inside and the soft suede-like leather on the outside. It is a development of the traditional overcoat of the Afghani tribes, called the posteen or poshteen, which could be anywhere from jacket- to ankle-length, with full or partial sleeves.

end of November, but that definite orders will be issued in about a week or 10 days, so I shall have time to finish my work if I can get well soon. In the meantime it gets colder every night, but the days are lovely. No one wears topies & we set sheltered from the wind basking in the sun. I've just had some Brand's essence of mutton, cold like jelly, it is very good & cheering. I'm altogether rather a cripple because my back is still stiff if I want to bend down. Now darling I must stop & rest, I feel pretty weak.

“3 pm. I'm feeling much more cheerful, darling, but you don't know how I miss you more than ever when I'm not very fit. I really think I'm on the mend. There is a strong wind blowing, so we are mostly congregated in the mess tent where the stove is. Walton, they doctor is a nice chap he paints my throat twice a day & I gargle about 6 times. Your dear letter of Oct 9 arrived two days ago. I had it under my pillow that couldn't answer it till now. It is unfortunate that the one thing I have made a sort of reputation in, i.e. exploring should be a thing that should keep us apart, of course from the point of view of honours & rewards, darling, everyone looks on me as very lucky to have got on this expedition so soon after China, but, dear heart, my real happiness lies in being with you, don't you ever believe anything else, only you will understand that as a man one can't like others getting on & not oneself. I tend to like counting on things but this is such a chance for a CIE; if only I can keep fit I have been able to smoke two cheroots today which shows I am better. I have got a lot of triangulation to work out, not of immediate hurry, but I want it all done by the time I get back to India, whenever that may be, so that I can get my leave soon. I'm so sorry for Aunt Clara<sup>5</sup>. I was afraid that Uncle Frank wouldn't last long. Yes, I will write to her. I love to hear all you can tell me about the children, dearest, you never tell me half enough. You don't know how proud I am of them. I am so sorry about Mrs de Lotbinière, I hope she will get all right.

“I am glad to think of you, darling, in a house of our own, it gives you so much more occupation. I wish you could lend me a little bit of it though, tents in this cold are not the ideal place for living in. If you haven't done so already, go at once to Mrs Carr & ask her to paint your miniature, it is a thing I've been longing for. £4.4.0 is dirt cheap. Thanks so much for sending the Standards, they are very welcome not only to me, but also to all the other fellows in the mess. We have a lot of picture papers but no daily newspaper. I can't make up my mind about Mr Chamberlain, but it is such a question of figures & statistics that I don't think one can make up one's mind, it is better to blindly agree to a clever man like him. No, darling, don't regret not staying at Chatham, Eastbourne<sup>6</sup> is a much healthier place. I must take care of myself for another two or three days & then I should be able to go out & finish off my work. Fortunately my surveyor is an excellent chap & works away & now we have plenty of time to finish all work that can be done from here. It is very nice getting your letters regularly, not like in Yunnan and on these political shows we are really done pretty comfortably, so don't you worry about me, but pray as I do that it may be a short show & I may soon be home again. All the time I do look forward to our meeting so very very much. The wind is still whistling round the camp, but there is a bright sun. Now *au revoir*, sweetheart.

“Nov 6. I was so much better yesterday, I did a lot of indoor work, but today my throat on the left side is bad again, a good deal worse than before & it makes me so seedy. It's not only when I swallow now, but it hurts all the time. I should have loved a cheery loving letter instead of which yesterday I got one of your grumbly ones. Darling, don't write like that, they always reach me at unsuitable times. I'm feeling altogether out of sorts; I adore you my sweetheart, God bless you that I cannot set up any longer, for ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

8th November, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, I must get started with my letter although I still feel very seedy, one side of the tonsils is a good deal better, the other bad. The result is by eating only slops for the last 5 days & very little of them; so you can imagine I feel pretty weak. However I did have a better night last night & slept off & on quite a long (*sic*), the night before I never slept at all. Isn't it unlucky I should get seedy like this, fortunately I have done enough triangulation to carry on with, so two more days would have done me still better. How I long for you, my darling, I will send you a telegram on Thursday to catch the mail, so that you needn't be anxious. Everyone more or less has coughs & colds, but then they can eat which I can't. The sore on my instep will

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<sup>5</sup> It is not clear who Clara and Frank are.

<sup>6</sup> The family had moved to Prideaux Road Eastbourne.

not heal, I've had it for 3 weeks now. I believe the column going up the Chumbi valley start on the 18th but we shall not start for another 10 days after that.

"I am so sorry to hear of Uncle Frank's death. I will write to Aunt Clara as soon as I can, but I can't possibly write to anyone but you just now; and I really feel as if I should like to be lying down. My tent faces due East, so from about 6:30 am a beautiful warm sun comes shining in. It is so welcome. Hayden & Bailey went out for 3 days, back one march, so I sent my surveyor with them. They got back yesterday. I must write & tell Margaret about the dogs in camp, but you must explain I can't just now. I've been leading a fairly dull existence the last few days, so I hope your next letter will be along & loving. Dear heart I don't think you quite realise that for the last four months I haven't been feeling really fit.

"3:30. I am in the mess tent & everyone is out on different jobs, 4 playing football & 2 out shooting. My throat is I think a little less painful today. It will be so long before I get any sympathy for you. Oh! how I long to be well again. It is too cold here, unless one is quite fit, 24° of frost last night. You can imagine that everything in one's tent is frozen, all my medicines have to be taken out & warmed, and a little cold custard pudding they kept over from last night was as hard as a stone this morning. Colonel Younghusband reaches Darjiling on the 11th & here on the 18th or 20th; the latter date I expect. The general idea is that we shall go as far as Gyantse & then get into houses, it is quite a big town. I have my throat painted twice & gargle 4 times a day & how I do hate it.

"Oct (Nov) 9. I was much better last night but this morning my right tonsil got swollen again. However I am feeling a bit better all the same, and I was able this morning to get all my official writing up to date. This afternoon is very windy. Generally a wind springs up about 1 or 2 o'clock, after which it is better to stay indoors. Funnily enough although I've eaten nothing but soup, arrowroot & that sort of thing, I don't feel at all hungry for meat. In a "Field" I saw an account of the Eastbourne tournament with you figuring in the handicap singles. Our gramophone has got out of order, so we can't have any more tunes. My darling old girlie, how I do miss you, and I will write you as long letters as ever I can, but when I'm feeling so seedy, it is so difficult, I couldn't write to anyone else. I hope by Thursday I shall be much better, so that I can send you a cheerful telegram to Bombay. Walton says I mustn't smoke for several days yet, at present I have no wish to.

"Nov 12. My darling, I was so glad yesterday evening when my throat, after being very bad suddenly got better. I had a good night and good breakfast this morning and now I am just taking care of myself for a day or two. I have just aware that I have a throat when I swallow. Oh! it is such a relief, sweetheart; and now I can write comfortably to you. I had such a nice letter from Col Hobday, which I have just answered. He told me that he was not going to be Surveyor General, but Col Longe was. I have a lot of work to do, now to make up for lost time. I am sending you a wire to Bombay as I know you will be anxious about my throat. Nobody wears uniform, we all wear Norfolk jackets & breeches & long stockings with puti (?) hats. I am having a puttoo<sup>7</sup> Norfolk jacket & trousers made by the regimental durzie (?). All the time I have had my throat & couldn't eat I didn't feel weak, but now it is over I feel very weak, fortunately we have port & Champagne so I shall do myself very well. I had to stop here to see to the weighing of all my things, as it is possible we may have to travel light when we move. There are difficulties about getting enough transport. Of course there are (a) certain amount of things one can send back, such as thin clothes, not the slightest use to one. Just had my throat painted. Walton says my throat is much better, but tonsils still swollen, so I must take care & not catch a cold on them, and that is not a very easy thing to do in camp. Today is Thursday, so I can safely post tomorrow, but I have two telegraph today. I am sending you 3 photos, large ones of scenes round here taken by one of the fellows; also a map. When you receive the ones from Calcutta, send one on to Una & Mary<sup>8</sup> will you.

"Nov 13. I sent you of a telegram to catch the mail at Bombay telling you my throat was all right again. Today I went out onto the maidan<sup>9</sup> and took some observations for an hour or two. I do some star observations tonight &

<sup>7</sup> A homespun woollen full buttoned coats, known in modern India as a Nehru jacket.

<sup>8</sup> His older sisters.

<sup>9</sup> Defined as an open area or space in or near a town, often used as a marketplace or parade ground.

tomorrow I go off to a hill for a longish day. I want to finish off my observations as quickly as possible, as it gets colder every day. It is so lovely being well again & I only hope I shall keep so. Hayden is the invalid now & most of the fellows have colds or coughs. Last mail I got a letter from Cox dated Oct 14 saying I was £74 overdrawn; as you had told me on Sept 31 (*only 30 days in September!*) you still had £8, this was rather a blow; however I've sent home £134 since & £70 goes home early in November & so on each month. So I do hope darling, you will be able to square everything up & have a nice little balance on the right side waiting for me, otherwise I shall have to give up the idea of going home & you will have to come out to me instead. I've sent down to Calcutta 12 photo plates to be printed, and I will send you a copy of each. I don't think I shall take any more till we move from here. I had a most lovely bath today; at midday, the only time when it is warm enough to bathe in comfort. How I long for the bathroom at home.

Una tells me Ethel is allowed by Uncle Mowbray<sup>10</sup> £200 a year so she will be all right as long as he lives, that he must be an old man now. I expect a letter from you tonight or tomorrow, as they will I hope come direct now. Darling heart I'm hoping to be on the move, then I shall feel as if our meeting were nearer. You will like having your mother with you. Darling sweetheart, I have such a lot of office writing to do to make up for lost time I must end this now. Much love & many many kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Love & kisses to my darling 4, & love to Ethel.”

21st November, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, One day is very much like another; between breakfast & lunch I work at my computations and then after lunch there is hardly time to make it worth while to start working again, so you come in for a little time. We now expect to leave here about Dec 17; so we've still got 3 weeks more. I may make a day's outing tomorrow to see if I can't get in some more miles in the direction we are going; but I have done enough to carry on with. My puttoo coat made by the regimental tailor has just come, very nice & warm & fits quite respectably. The fort little dogs have left today, as their master is not coming up again. About the 25th, if I can get yaks I want to go back one march to a hut just inside our frontier, as there is a hill I would like to visit there. I am looking forward to the warm things you are sending me. We expect to reach Gyantse by the end of December that is all I know about our likely movements. It is most interesting to me working out my computations; I have really done a lot. Hugh Wake's regiment were first out of going up here as they were not at Shillong. A teal alighted in the camp a night or two (*a*)go, numbed from the cold, it was put to sleep with the geese that this morning was found dead. There is no wind today so it is very pleasant, just the day for being on a hill. My feet are not warm at nights, although I have a pair of socks & long sheepskin boots. What I want is loose sleeping socks or stockings. I should like a pair of long drawers knitted like the khakhi sweater.

“24th. Darling, I knew you will be vexed with me for not writing more, but I do have really so little time to myself, and it is so difficult to write in the mess tent with 8 other fellows all talking. I thought of you yesterday & drank your health. I was out all day yesterday, did a lot of useful work; then this morning I was working at my computations. Two morrow I go back on the road up here 15 miles to a hut near the pass, Bailey comes up to meet me & I hope to finish my work & be back here on Friday, today being Tuesday; but as that is the day the mail goes you see I must finish this off today. I played football 2 days ago & I'm going to play this afternoon, so that will show you how much better I am. I've just received a very fine poshteen, a long one, makes me very warm. It will be bitterly cold at the hut tomorrow. About our movements, there is nothing new, we simply wait here till the Chumbi valley column move, so we shall not have any excitements. This trip to the pass will finish off my work, but I've got a good months work to work it all out, all I do is just to work out enough now to enable the surveyors to work off. If I can't get my work done in one day I shall have to stay on & come back on Saturday. The papers have at last letting out news about this show. It has been kept as secret as possible. It gets colder every day, but the days are still right & fine; only when the wind blows it is too cold for words.

“Nov 25. I am sitting outside my tent in the sun while my things are being packed, & have a little opportunity of writing; but even in the sun my hands are cold. I want to get my yaks off as early as possible, as it is 15 miles. I have a change of ponies 6 miles from here, so shall not start till 11 or so. The ponies here have a capital sort of run they keep up about 5 miles an hour & they go over any ground. When I come back I shall find a mail waiting for me. What

<sup>10</sup> His mother Julia's brother-in-law.

surprises all of us is that this fine weather continues, it really couldn't be finer, not a cloud in the sky & so long as you are sheltered from the wind it is lovely. I expect all the pass it will be very windy though. I will try & write a little up there this evening. I have had great difficulty in getting yaks, as they are all required for taking down superfluous kit from here; all the big tents &c. I am now in my own tent, much smaller than the one I had, but much warmer. The views are lovely. As I look up from my tent I look across the bare plain, then some bare brown hills & above them the snowy range. I wish you were here, but this is strictly not a ladies' show; Youngusband is the only married man & his wife is in Darjiling.

“After dinner we played bridge, at which I am very lucky just now, but without boasting I am the best player, so that's all right. Our mess tent with the stove is delightfully warm. I played football yesterday, I play back so as not to have too much running. It is funny in the middle to listen & hear everyone coughing. I am very well now, that we all in turn get coughs or lose our voices. I had my turn with my tonsillitis. One thing is disappointing & that is that one hasn't very much appetite; I suppose it's the height, we all feel the same; but after a light breakfast, one can do the whole day without lunch & not feel the want of it. The same way with smoking; you know what a lot I smoke in India, well now I smoke about 4 cheroots & only half of each. I suppose it's all a little mountain sickness affecting one. Dear heart how I am longing to be with you again. I am most fortunate professionally going on this show, but my heart is all the time with you and I do want to see your pretty face soon. I have very hard work, having to do all the triangulation & computations myself. You see I have to do as much as Renny and I did together in Peking; but of course the more I can do the more credit I shall get; and then we'll see about no. 5 or the Tibet baby. Almighty things are packed; but they are waiting for 8 sepoy's kits who are going with them to bring treasure (?) up; I wish they'd hurry up. Loading things on yaks takes much longer than mules to begin with. They won't let any native of India come near them. I only wish we were starting on our march to Gyantse now, it would be beautiful weather for marching. Our camp is a mass of turf walls round every tent to keep out the wind. I am taking up 3 extra blankets as the hut is said to be very draughty, so I shall hang them round. There are a lot of big ravens round the camp, very cheeky, they come to scavenge, big bloated looking brutes. I believe all the delaying is going to transport, anyhow we've got another 3 weeks to stay here, then we shall have about 5 marches to Kalatso, where we meet the other lot, and then 4 marches along a broad valley to Gyantse; that will be much warmer as it is only 13,000 feet, and I fancy we shall then get into houses, and in order to prevent us from going on to Lhasa, I expect the Tibetans will send commissioners to treat. I am quite warm sitting in the sun, but I must stop now darling as my men are going off.

“Evening. I left about 12, road 6 miles cantering mostly to a village Giri, then changed ponies and came along more slowly, as I saw my yaks ahead. I got in here at 3.30 & Bailey came in a minute after & our yaks very soon after. We soon had the hut comfortable; and enjoyed tea. There is a fire at one end of the room where our dinner is being cooked. We are 16,400 ft high & jolly cold it is. Big snow mountains just behind us. I only hope the weather will remain fine, so that I can get my work done. Today is Wednesday, I may get back on Friday or if not then Saturday. Our hut is quite cosy; it is a little large for the fire to warm it. We have rather a large party, about 10 sepoys, who had taking money to Khambujong, they are in a tent outside. We are just over the pass and in British territory again.

“27th Nov. I finished off my work yesterday, so came in today. Both nights I slept badly going I fancy to the height, because we were quite warm in the hut. I rode in fairly fast getting in at 12 & had a very enjoyable bath; but my things weren't in till 5, so I couldn't get hold of this to go on with. No news yet about our moving. Darling heart, I adore you & I'm longing every day more & more to be with you. Kiss our darling 4 for me & give my love to Ethel. Heaps & heaps of love & kisses to you my darling from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

1st December, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, I haven't got on with my letter because I had a heap of work to do when I got back from the pass. Then one day, yesterday I made a long excursion out to see some hot springs and then suddenly all our plans have been altered. Instead of marching across to Kalatso, we are going back to Guntok then follow the main force up the Chumbi valley; so Wilton, Hayden and I start on the 3rd; the Escort remaining here till all baggage &c. is sent down, then march back. I have had a lot to do arranging my packing &c. Today has been cloudy all day and looks very much like snow; we are anxious to get across the pass & then down to Tangu before it snows, otherwise we shall have rather an unpleasant time. It will be very pleasant

having a few days at a lower elevation, and I am also glad to get round and be with headquarters. Don't be in the least alarmed about me, sweetheart. The Thibetans even if they fight have only old-fashioned guns with a range of 400 yards; they will only oppose our advance by holding passes and will not attack, so that I shall never be within range of their guns, as I have nothing to do with the fighting. This is all absolutely true and not told just to comfort you. On the 3rd Hayden & I go up to the pass on the hut and to Tangu next day, but our kit may be two days on the road, then repeat the same marches to Guntok as I did coming up, reaching there on the 10th & join Col Younghusband on the 11th at Pakyong. I think it's two days to the Jelap La pass, and the main force will be about two days ahead, so I'm afraid and you're glad that I shall not even see any fighting there may be. Then we shall march up the Chumbi valley, across the Tang La pass & then into the brown map, and so to Gyantse, by which time it will be too cold to go on and we shall stop for a bit there. I think this is the plan that will be stuck to. We all hope the Tibetans will show fight so that we may get a medal. Thanks darling for the things you are sending out, parcels take a long time coming up from Darjiling, but as I am going down the line I shall probably find them at Guntok. I shall take several photographs on the road down that I'd missed coming up. I leave my surveyor here in case of any chance of getting in more work. We have yaks as far as Lamteng, one march beyond Tangu, and then coolies.

"2nd Dec. Just in from football. I think we shall get off tomorrow, but there are the usual difficulties about transport. I find my wind much better today and played forward. I made my sapper take a photo of us playing, I don't know how it will come out. I shall take this letter with me, and post it at Tangu. I was rather bothered this morning with some mistake I've made in my work, it isn't important but it bothered me. To date has turned beautifully fine, but after several warmer nights, the thermometer last night went down to 2° or 30° of frost. How would you like to be living in a tent with cold like that. My dear sleeping (*bag*) has had a big hole burnt in its as big as my head, my ass of a servant putting my hot stone in too hot. We all have hot stones instead of hot water bottles, the former are much better. I've had a lot of other sorting out things, as I have to leave a lot of my things behind to come down with my surveyor later on.

"Dec 5. Wilton & I came in 32 miles to Tangu today, rather a long day, up to the hut near the pass, the going was good, but this side of the path is very stony so we didn't get in till 5. Two miles from here we caught Hayden up, driving his own yaks, so I stopped to help him. Hayden is the chap I'd like most. Yes, I saw Robertson's C.M.G. & wired to congratulate him, but don't you see, darling, how much it makes me want to get something myself. There are as usual transport difficulties, but we hope to get off tomorrow to Lamteng or Lachen. There is a bungalow here, & 200 of the 32nd Pioneers, with 3 officers & Keays of the transport, so we were 7 at dinner. Then at 9.30 I had my bath & now I'm sitting in the little room shared by Wilton & myself, in front of a good fire, & with my poshteen on, and very comfortable. I found your letter ending Nov 13 on my arrival here. You had just got my telegram announcing my arrival at Khambujong. Dear pet, I am really very delighted in did about your singing, but I'm glad you're singing master doesn't flatter (?), when they do, they are simply rotten. Tell me every thing you can about our dear 4. This is news about Tempé<sup>11</sup>, I didn't know it before. I wish, darling, I had someone to write me a weekly letters about you, because that is what I want to know about most. You told me a certain amount about the children, but I want to hear about you. This place is 13,000 ft & there are trees here, Khambujong being far above tree going level it is rather jolly seeing them again & one has less other about breathing. I will telegraph to you from Guntok from there we go in two days to Guatong over the Lagyap La, & then go over the Jelap La to Chumbi. The further we go this year, the less there will be to go next spring & the sooner this show will be over. My idea is that we shall come to Gyantse getting there about the end of December, stay there January & February, go to Lhasa in March or April, get back to India in May & what I look forward to is being home for our birthday. This will reach you had few days after Christmas, but I wish you all a very happy Christmas & a happy New Year, which to us means that we may soon be together. My darling pet, I think of you continually & love you more than ever. A CMG is higher than a CIE, the latter is for Indian services, the former for work under Colonial or Foreign Office in England. In order to get a CIE darling, I must do the best work I can. The party in the mess room next door are breaking up, so I must stop. God bless you, darling, heaps of love & kisses, remember you are all the world to me, kiss my darling chicks for me, ever

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<sup>11</sup> His brother Wilfred's wife.

your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

7th December, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I left Khambajong on the 5th and rode through to Tangu 32 miles in the day, pretty tired. That evening I sent you of a letter. Yesterday we had a very tiring day, going to the rotten transport arrangements. I had to load up my pony & when Hayden & I started about ½ past 1 to walk to Lamteng, we caught up my pony in half an hour with its load off, so we had to tie it up & drive it on. This delayed us a lot & darkness came on when we were 3 miles from here. We stumbled on through the darkness along a very rocky path & finally got in; very soon got some tea & had dinner at 9. Col Brandie commanding the 32nd Pioneers was here. We had arranged to have coolies sent up from Guntok to meet us, but they hadn't turned up, so we are halting today & had a delightful late sleep. After breakfast we went to the Commissariat Godown<sup>12</sup> & hunted about & discovered a box of hams for the mess, so we bagged one. It is delightfully sunny & warm here & so nice to be down to a decent height, 9000 ft. I only hope we won't be delayed more than today.

“I ought to be working at my computations instead of writing to you. When I get to Guntok I hope to get another mail from you. I am so glad you didn't see it, but some paper, the Daily Express had a report of a disaster to the Mission at a place we have never been to under an officer of a name we none of us knew. It's an awful shame putting things like that in. There are no newspaper correspondence on this show so remember the only true telegrams on the official ones. When our coolies come we go to Guntok in 3 marches, Tung, Riatdong & Guntok averaging 20 miles a day; so you see me have our work cut out and you mustn't expect much of a letter, but, darling, it's only because I have such hard work that it is a physical impossibility for me to write you longer letters. I take every opportunity I can but I think, sweetheart, you must be able to understand that when one gets in dead fagged after a march one only feels fit to eat some dinner & go to bed. I think from now onwards my pay bill will be regularly cashed at Calcutta & the £70 will be sent home regularly arriving at the end of each month. Do pay off my tailors bill as soon as possible, as I have a lot of accounts with my surveyors Khalassies & the office at Calcutta. I have to keep my accounts carefully so each month I make out a little balance sheet. On 1st December I was Rs 1,380 to the good, but that included Rs 290 travelling allowance which may be cut as I have drawn full allowance & I may be entitled only to half. Hayden has just gone out for a stroll but I am staying in. I've bought a new rifle, Manlicher, very light & what everybody uses for hill shooting, so that now they may be able to get some shooting, but not till I get into Tibet again, as there is nothing here. White, the political officer of Sikhim, has asked us to stay with him at Guntok, very nice of him though we'd much sooner stop at the Dak Bungalow. He is joint Commissioner of this show under Younghusband. Your last letter was not very cheerful, darling. I will come home just as quick as ever I can, you may be quite sure. I am much too keen on seeing you. I wish you had told me whether Major Hodgson was coming out again or not. I expect I shall get your parcel of warm things that Guntok. How I did enjoy my sleep last night, perfectly warm & comfortable. My watch has begun to go again; It stopped at Khambajong owing to the cold. I am taking Wilton's Chinese clerk down, my Chinese comes in rather useful as I am the only man who can talk to him at all except Wilton. I've just ordered tea, shut the window & blown up the fire as the sun has gone off the bungalow, this being a deep valley. No signs of our coolies. I should like halting here very much only I want to join Col Younghusband as soon as possible. I've bought 3 yaks for Rs 30 each & lent them to the Commissariat, then I can use Govt ones without interfering with my drawing my travelling allowance. The more you tell me about dear Lisle the more I'm longing to see him. Evidently Wilfred means to make up for lost time. You say, I see, in your last, that you are not going to have no 5, well don't be too certain, though someone else besides you will have a say in the matter, and that's myself. You of being a very dear sweet wife giving me four children & they are in every way such a success; but I have no right to ask you for more. However if you do see your way to giving me one more, you will be dearer to me than ever. We have also got to see what we can afford; I don't know whether you have any object in view, when you try & save, but mine is to have enough money in hand to last out my leave at home & to enable us to have another son. Our separation being longer than we expected, has just the opposite effect on me to what it has on you; it makes me long to have another son more than ever; because after all the rough time I shall have been through before this show is over, I shall rather hope to be made much of when I get you in my arms again. Do you really mean to say that with our

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<sup>12</sup> An Indian term for a warehouse.

dear little son every day before your eyes, you don't want another, I know I should.

“9th Dec. On the 7th evening Wilton came in to Lamteng and went on next morning as he had his coolies with him. After waiting some time we rounded up all the ponies we could find in the village, 8, and loaded them & our own riding ponies & also got 4 coolies & started, but it was 1 before we started. We had a very hard time, and loads continually coming off, after keeping with the last animals to 5. We went ahead, walking very fast & running & finally got in here in the dark at 7.30 pretty tired; my cook, dinner things & our bedding were in but the rest didn't get in till 3 am. Here we found that the Commissariat Babu<sup>13</sup> was the cause of our not getting our coolies, for some idiotic reason he returned them to Guntok, however they are on their way out again & should arrive this evening, in which case we shall do two long marches into Guntok. This place is called Cheuntong on the map. Hayden has gone to geologise up the road. We slept like tops last night, waking at ½ past 8. I shall be glad when we get to Guntok, then there will be only 2 marches to get to Guatong, which is on the main line of advance. I've just had my hair cut & beard trimmed by my sapper, and am waiting for my bath to be got ready. Our appetites have come back as soon as we got to a lower elevation. I ought to do some work today but I really feel too tired. I haven't much news to give you, but we shall probably have some when we get to Guntok. The last three days it has been very cloudy, this may mean snow on the higher hills, but it is always much more cloudy & rainy this side of the main range than the Tibetan side. Send this letter on to Aunt Clara will you, it's only a short one but I'm always bad at letters of sympathy. I've just Vaseline'd my nose, as the skin is coming off badly.

“Dec 10. D~n the transport people. Our coolies ought to have arrived last night & now it's 11 & they haven't come even yet. All our things are packed & ready to go; if they come in any time before 4, we shall go down 6 miles to Tung, where there is a bungalow & we can get into Guntok from there in two days. It is sickening being delayed like this. I've just written to Mrs Bailey in Edinburgh to give her a news of her son in the 32nd Pioneers. We are rather running short of food too, which is a difficult thing to get on this road. If we could have got through without delay we should have arrived at Guatong in time for the advance; now I'm afraid we shall be too late. I hear Heycock has come up to command the Madras Sapper Company, it was really Tomiloe's (?) company, but the doctors said he could only go to India if he's served in a dry climate and phone, so he went into military works at Kohat on the N.W. Frontier. Elliot, RE who was at Sitapur at our wedding is up somewhere on this show. This bungalow at Cheuntong is a funny one, because it was originally a monastery. Hayden has gone out to try & shoot some pheasants for our larder.

“Dear heart, you will not get much of a letter for a few days while we're marching into the Chumbi valley, but it is very likely we shall halt from a bit at Phari Jong before crossing the Tang La, the pass north of it. It is sunny today, the first we've seen of the sun for four days. That was a very sweet letter of Margaret's, dear little girlie. I shall write to her very soon, but read out everything you can to them out of my letters, and show them on the maps where I am going to. As we come down so our appetites have increased, likewise the pleasure in smoking. The valleys here are very deep and hill sides almost straight up on each side. My pony has been enjoying the halt, but his coat is very thick for these warmer parts, I think he prefers the cold. I can see about two miles down the path but no signs of our coolies. I think of you my darling, constantly surrounded by our four darlings and long so very very much to be with you. I adore you more than ever.

“Evening. Our coolies arrived about 12, and we got off half an hour later; we only could do a short march to Tung. Tomorrow we have a long day, 19 miles to Riatdong, and then 14 miles up hill mostly to Guntok. We've sent for our dak to meet us at Riatdong (not on the map) so that we can polish off any letters that require answering, to have as little to do in Guntok as possible. We shall have to lighten loads there and leave things behind.

“Dec 13. We arrived last night & off this morning, 16 miles through Pakhyong to Rorataung, where we get onto main line. Darling, no time for more. Heaps of love & kisses to you all, forever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

16th December, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, We've had three very tiring marches from Guntok to here Guatong and today are halted, as our transport will not be ready till tomorrow morning. On the 13th we left Guntok after a very pleasant day of civilisation at the White's house, and marched first 10 miles to

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<sup>13</sup> Hindu for a second in command with some knowledge of English.

Pakhyong, then we changed transport to coolies and went 5 miles down to Rorataung on the Rungpo river, and so got onto the new line of communications. We found Boileau of the 2nd Gurkhas in charge there & he managed to scrape together coolies. With these on the 14th we went on the next stage to Lingtam, found Ross also of the 3rd Gurkhas in charge there (one of the Nain Tal Rosses). We got a change of coolies there & began a bad climb up hill to Sedongchen, where there was a bungalow. We got in after dark, as we had to keep with our coolies. However we soon had a fire blazing as it was cold. Next morning we had to wait till nearly 11 for four loads that we had had to leave behind at Lingtam and then straight up hill again from 6,500 ft to over 12,000, our coolies going very slowly. Then we had 4½ miles much better going and finally got in here at 6. Found this quite a busy place 2 companies of Gurkhas & about ½ a dozen officers. Hayden & I are in one of the huts built here when troops were stationed here after the last campaign. We had to clean it up, but now it's very comfortable, all our things are out airing in the sun. Then I had several official letters to write and here I am. Your last mail has probably gone to Khambajong. I got the Standards, but no letters, another mail ought to be in today or tomorrow. We have rated up transport here, 14 ponies and start tomorrow to Langrang (on the map just across the Jelap La) and next day we hope to get to Chumbi and catch up the main force. There has been no fighting so far. The force on the head consists of the 23rd Pioneers, 6 companies 8th Gurkhas and 4 guns and ½ company Madras Sappers. I did enjoy a rest in bed this morning. I had to leave my pony behind yesterday, as he couldn't go on, and I fancy will die soon. I fancy this was from his coming down into a warm climate & bad grazing and also by having to load him. All this walking has made me very fit though. The Jelap La is about 14,300 (La means pass), and then we dropped down to 9300 ft in the Chumbi Valley.

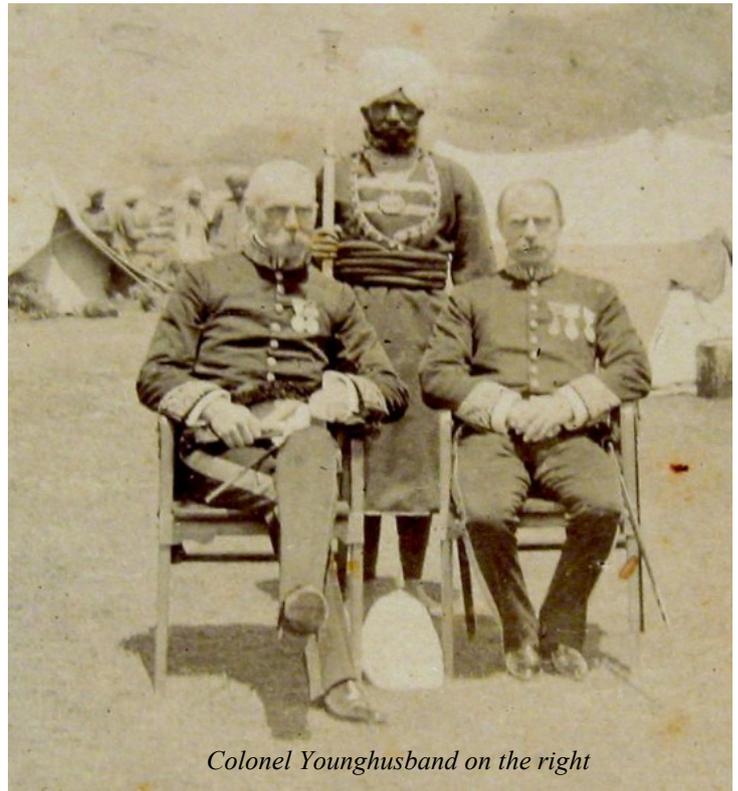
“21st Dec. I haven't been able to get on with my letter for several days. On the 17th we left Guatong, 12,300 ft with 11 ponies & mules, but no drivers, so we had to put ourselves and our own men on as drivers. We had to cross the Jelap La, over 14,000 ft, but after Khambajong we didn't feel the height. Then downhill very steep to Langrang, where we found 2 companies of the 23rd Pioneers. On the 18th we had an easier day, down the valley to Yatung, where we lunched with Parr, of the Chinese Customs and then 2 miles down to Rinchengong, then up the Chumbi Valley, very easy going almost level. We found the camp at the junction of two streams. Bakchan you will see on the map. Col Younghusband, Wilton and Walsh, the latter a new addition, an I C S man who speaks Tibetan. Our camp is at 9,500 ft on terraced fields, rather windy & dusty, otherwise all right. That morning Gen MacDonald had gone on to Phari, going to do it in 3 days with 600 men, no opposition. On the 19th after settling down, Hayden & I climbed a hill above the camp, but could get no view, as the valleys are deep & shut in. Yesterday we went 4 miles up the valley north of Gangu, a very pleasant walk back for lunch. This place is cold at night's, so I'm having a hot stone in my bed tonight. The sun only gets onto camp at 9.15 & off at 3, owing to the hills on each side. I've started a camp fire outside my tent for the evenings. Yesterday your dear letter of Nov 27 came in, but the one before has gone wandering up the old line. The troops at Khambajong evacuated it on the 11th and are now at Tangu. I fancy progress will be very slow owing to transport difficulties. I have two trips to make, one down to Assam Dholam below Rinchengong, on the Bhutan frontier, with one surveyor to start him working there, and the other up to Phari Jong, where I shall leave the other to work up as for us the Tang La, as we are not likely to advance beyond that for some little time. Col Younghusband intends himself to stop here until everything is ready to advance to Gyantse. Your 2nd parcel has arrived with the photo of the 3 girls. Thanks so much for sending it, I'm so happy with it. Now I should like a good one of you. This parcel contains bed socks, exactly what I wanted & gloves too, just right. You are the dear; now I'm very well equipped. I am sending you by this mail 12 photos I've taken. They are mostly very bad, but they will give you some idea of the country up towards Khambajong. I shall send as of today, though I'm afraid it will just miss the mail. Owing to Lennox Conyngham not coming back to India as soon as I expected I continued to officiate as superintendent 2nd grade all November, so that I'm Rs 300 better off than I thought, so I've invested Rs 1000 in 3½ per cent Rupee paper, put aside for my journey home. I enclose my tailor's bill, please pay it off as soon as you can, or pay it £20 at a time if you haven't had enough, but I think you ought to have now, you are getting £70 regularly every month. Dear heart, I often think of no. 5, and I'm saving on purpose to have another son! What you think of that? Do you approve? My sweetheart I adore you more than ever, when I look at the photos of our dear children. God bless you. I am feeling very well, so hope not to have to use your lozenges I've a lot of computations to work out, but this camp is too windy to write comfortably in one's tent. I hope the Tibetans will show a bit of fight or we shall

be done out of our medal. It's lunchtime, so darling, I must stop. Take care of yourself. I hate to hear of your being light or run down & suffering from relaxed throats, when you ought to be in blooming health in a place like Eastbourne. Heaps of love & kisses sweetheart, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Show the photographs to the children, and say that is instead of a letter.”

23rd December, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida:

“My own darling sweetheart, Here I am back in the camp at Chumbi. Hayden and I started off yesterday bound for Phari Jong. We had first five miles off pretty good going up the valley, then up a level plain for 2 miles, and then another 4 still up a valley but the path very rocky, and then just as we were getting to the hut where we intended to stop for the night, we met Gen MacDonald & his force returning. He thought that it wasn't safe for us to go on without an escort, and so told us to come back with him next day, which we've done, but it was most silly rot stopping us, as we had Col Younghusband's leave to go up, and the people are absolutely peaceful, only too eager to sell grass &c. I haven't seen Col Younghusband yet, but I expect he will be a bit annoyed with the general, as Col Y is the boss of the whole show. I shall now spend Christmas here & shy & get away again after ...”



*Colonel Younghusband on the right*

*(Page missing?)*

31st December 1903, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I have just come back from a little expedition I made down south from here. Walsh, one of the political officers came with me, but as we only had a small single fly tent between us, and our bidding, I couldn't do any writing to you. We left here on the 26th I went only as far as Rinchengong that day, put up in a good Tibetan house, where Turnbull of the 23rd Pioneers had his post of a company; he had fever so I didn't see much of him. The next day 27th I went down the valley some 8 miles or so, and Walsh caught me up; we camped in a nice little opening on the hillside much warmer than here, then on the 27th we went along a very bad path, and had to send the mules back. This delay does a lot and we camped at the foot of a pass the Tenchala. We had to send back our servants, so I cooked dinner & breakfast next morning, rather well done. Walsh was no help at all. On the 28th we went up to the pass, a long steep climb, up to 13,500 ft, had a fine view down the valley, which was what I wanted, but there was a bitterly cold wind, so we didn't stay long, but came down again, picked up our kit and got back to our first camp. We then on the 30th went first down a steep hill to the river where it flowed through a gorge, back to camp and then in here, pretty tart. Today I had to draw up a map of where I had been and Col Younghusband had a long talk about the question of making a road up this valley, that used up the morning. Then I had to finish and send off my monthly accounts, so I've had no time for anything. It was a very pleasant little trip. I'm sorry to get back to this very dusty camp. However on the 4th we all move forward, first to Phari Jong, then across the Tang La pass to Tanu, where we shall halt again. English mail in today with the Standards but no letter than you. I thought of you my pet, on the 27th especially<sup>14</sup>. I've got myself a pair of Gilgit<sup>15</sup> long boots, which are very comfortable. I hope your letter may turn up tomorrow. Our mess now consists of Col Younghusband, Walsh, a Bingle civilian, who was Deputy Commissioner of Darjiling & Calks (?) Tibetan, Wilton and Hayden, O'Connor RA, Intelligence Officer & myself. Our food is much better here than at Khambajong and much fewer tinned things. I haven't yet been able to get myself another pony. We are all very excited over as the chances of a war between Russia and Japan.

<sup>14</sup> Their wedding anniversary.

<sup>15</sup> Indian army boots, quilted, wool lined and coming above the knees.

“1st Jan. (1904) 6 pm. Busy all day, as I have to go off tomorrow up to Phari; the main body start on the 4th but I want to have two days or so that Phari. As you have sent on the map of these parts to Murhill<sup>16</sup>, you won't see where I am, and it will be some little time before we get onto the other map. This morning I got your dear letters of Dec 11 & the one of Nov 20 which had gone astray. By the bye a little time ago you said that you or Cox were sending out a paper for me to sign for recovery of income tax, well none has come. I shall be glad to leave this camp, it is too dusty for words, everything on one's table gets filthy, so yours and the children's photos have all gone into my box. Sweetheart I write as often as I can, but it is difficult to know what catches the mail & what doesn't. No I don't think you could stand the cold, it has the very unpleasant effect on me that I have to get out of bed every morning about 4 or 5, for one thing. Here we are, 9,800 ft high and have night temperature of about 22° of frost. Phari is 14,000 ft or so, so much colder. I'm glad to be moving forward, the quicker we go forward, the sooner the show will be over. I have all my things packed ready for tomorrow just except my writing things. My hands are so cold writing, I shall have to stop soon. I'm so glad about your singing darling, I'm longing to hear you. Thank darling Margaret for her letter & ask Enid when she is going to write to me. All you tell me about the chicks is so very very interesting to me; I should like someone to tell me about you. I hope, sweetheart, you are eating properly & keeping well. You seem very busy. Now that you have no housekeeping to do, I ought to get very long letters. I dreamt last night you ran away from me! If I had a nice drawing room to write in I could write you pages, but we are having to rough a time for writing to be pleasant. It would be more comfortable to be warming oneself by the camp fire. Dear pet, I love you & adore you & I am just longing to have you in my arms & give you a good case, nothing more! Dear little Lisle must be a darling. I am longing to see my son! I shall be glad to get my boots. No we don't wear khakhi, all the members of the mission wear different varieties of puttoo clothes, poshteens after sundown & anything warm we've got. Now sweetheart, it's just dinnertime & I must get a little warm first. God bless & keep you, peeps & keeps of love & kisses, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

“15.1.04. (I mislaid this) I'm getting things shipshape in my room and getting to work; but I have such a pain in my b.t.m. left side in the bone you sit on, rheumatism I suppose. Fortunately I don't want to go out to work and have plenty to do indoors. This place is most frightfully dusty, everything on one's table is covered with dust. The convoy that came in yesterday started back this morning, and they will have a beastly march back across the pass facing the wind. It is rather cloudy today, but still we have no snow. Dear heart, I too long to be with you, I'm getting tired of being away from you, I longed to see your dear pretty face again.

“Jan 16. You will I fancy get longer letters now, as I have a regular arrangement now, of tea at 7, then a yak dung fire is brought in in a large bowl, and then I get up & right; but I must do work too. My rheumatism is just like that sciatica of yours in the crease, I can only walk with difficulty at times. Last night the mail came in with yours of Dec 24. I do hope you haven't been so foolish as to sell £100 Japanese, just when it is so near war. I will if you let me know at once, send you home some more money. But I never can make out why you can't let me know exactly each month how you stand at Cox. If you sent up your pass book to be made up on the 30th of each month, you could then let me know exactly. I'm sending you £70 a month, I really thought that you would be able to pay my tailor's bill & get square. You see, darling, you really must let me know each month exactly how you stand. Your £70 goes home in the middle of each month, it should reach Cox at the end of each month. If you will send your pass book up to Cox & let me know that on a certain date you have so much overdrawn, I will try & send the amount home extra, to set you square, but Darling, you must realise that if you can't live & save on £70 a month, it is quite impossible for us to live on our furlough pay of £42 a month, and that I should have to give up my leave home which would be a little hard. I have got my accounts all in excellent order, and know exactly how I stand. You have no housekeeping to do now, so really you might let me know more about your account with Cox. Your list of cheques is very useful, but I'm afraid you sometimes forget some. Of course I have my accounts with the Calcutta office, as I draw the pay of the Surveyors and Khalassies but don't necessarily pay them till the show is over. However what I have done is paid Rs 1,050 for the 7 new Alliance Bank shares leaving Rs 350 to be paid on 1st April; bought Rs 1,000 3½ per cent which cost Rs 983 and I've got a balance in hand. You were full of Xmas when you wrote, the dear children hands they do enjoy it.

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<sup>16</sup> Near Bradford on Avon, where his mother lived until she died 27<sup>th</sup> March 1902. Maybe Una and Mary were living there.

“12 o'clock. Hayden has gone out into a tent & now I've got my room to myself & have spent the morning making it comfortable; there are lots of things to do to get yet. I'm going to paper all the ceiling, and rig up a stand for my basin; then I can set to work at my computations comfortably & then I don't mind halting here. It's ever so much nicer having a room to myself. I have a beautiful fine yak dung fire. Two parcels came yesterday, one the cardigan jacket, which is very nice & warm & the Aillic (?) Paste I've already rubbed on. Then the boots came from Vine, they fit I think all right, but the nails he's put in our ridiculously large & not enough. I shall have them taken out & proper nails put in.

4th January 1904, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My darling sweetheart, Hayden & I left Chumbi on the 2nd & slept that night at a Pioneer camp. Amongst the fellows I met there was Luke in the Gunners, who came out on the same ship as you did two years ago. His wife is at home & was coming out, got as far as Port Said when he was ordered up here, so he just managed to stop her there. Yesterday we came on up here, a long march, 16 miles or so, but the last part quite level, a plain. We are in the Jong, or fort, a huge 3 storied building. There are 2 companies 8th Gurkhas & 2 Cos. 23rd Pioneers here. Today we went up to the pass east of here leading into Bhutan, then onto a hill & had a grand view, got back at 4, pretty tired. We have a nice room & really quite warm, the thermometer only went down to 19° last night. Now we have a fire of yak's dung, which is a great success. The rest of the force arrived on the 6th & move on next day, two marches to Tuna, but as they stop there 6 days, I shall probably wait here some of that time, as I have plenty of work here. We had a most lovely view today right into Bhutan on one side and right across Sikhim to Kinchinjunga on the other. The hill was a beastly one to climb as it was little loose stones.

“7th Jan. I was out all day on the hills near the Tang La pass, bitterly cold and when I got back my chest felt absolutely raw inside. I had a bad night, rubbed myself with Elliman's & eat your lozenges, & lay up on the 6th, so now I am all right except that the chill has developed into a good old nosey cold. Last night outside it was 14° below zero, 46° of frost. The main force marched in yesterday & I go on with them today, but we march at 1, as we only go 3 miles to the edge of the pass. The pass is a very easy one. Those are excellent lozenges, they did me a lot of good. Dear heart, I am so sorry I can't write longer letters, but it is a physical impossibility in this cold, but I think of you continually darling and love you more & more. Please don't think otherwise. My work is going on very satisfactorily but it is cruel work surveying at this time of year. I had a shot at a goa, Tibetan gazelle, but missed (see photo). There are a lot of little voles about here, in places the ground is honeycombed with their holes, tell Margaret. God bless, darling, heaps of love & kisses & one for our darlings from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”



*Goa or Tibetan gazelle*

9th January, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, I sent you off a letter from Phari Jong, that today, the 7th we only marched 3½ miles with Hayden's & my mules & his syce (?) bolted, all Tibetans of sorts, they got funtry (?), so we had a fine time on the 8th as we had again to load our own mules & act as mule drivers. I was so done, Hayden kindly lent me his pony (I can't get one here for love or money) and I was able to ride now & again. It was a very easy pass is the Tang La 15,200 ft onto a nearly level plain, but did march was long, 16 miles or so, no opposition. We camped in the plain About two miles beyond Tuna, and today moved to camp back to the village, which has only 4 houses, but which we are going to occupy, as the houses and the stone walls round the few fields form an excellent position for defence. Today too(?)the mounted infantry went out to hunt for the enemy. A helio<sup>17</sup> message signalled in the that about 1000 are encamped 10 miles east of here. I don't know whether the General will go out & attack them, 100 men would be enough to knock them. We are to be left here with 4 companies 23rd

<sup>17</sup> A wireless solar telegraph that signals by flashes of sunlight (generally using Morse code) reflected by a mirror.

Pioneers, 20 Sappers, one mountain gun & 2 maxims<sup>18</sup>, so we shall be safe against any attack, but I'm (*sic*) transport difficulties will delay or advance for some time. On the 7th it was very cloudy all day, but yesterday & today very fine. Thermometer last night 16 below zero, 48 of frost, which is our record so far. I had a jolly letter from Stuart Fraser, congratulating me on going on this expedition; also asking me to buy curios for him. So far, of course we have only been in poor villages, nothing good to be got till we get to Gyantse. My cold & cough is still pretty severe, my handkerchief gets frozen into a solid ball. We are really having a very rough time, too rough to be pleasant. I must go up tomorrow on to a ridge just above the camp and begin triangulation again. I hope for no wind, but there has been a nasty wind all today. We are here about 14,900 ft high, my dear, such lovely views, a great semicircle of snows east and south of us.

14th Jan. Dear heart, at least I can get on with my letter. On the 10th the General went back to Phari with the two ten pounders & the 75 Mounted Infantry & the empty convoy. That afternoon the few people in the houses were seen to be clearing out across the plain, and there was a general idea there would be a night attack. We all slept in our clothes & I had my rifle & 50 rounds alongside my bed, but nothing happened. On the 11th I went for a walk, but coughed a lot, and ditto on the 12th. That afternoon the Tibetan officials accompanied by their army of about 600 men armed with old muskets & bows marched to within two miles of us, they had come to call on Col Younghusband, but faked it at the last moment & wouldn't come in any nearer, so O'Connor went out to see them, then they all went back 6 miles to the village of Guru, where they now are. Yesterday Col Y. & O'Connor went down to their camp alone found all right (*sic*) at first, but very rude at the end. I've taken over the mess accounts, as no one could make head or tail of them. This gives me more work than ever. My cold is better, but my back aches a bit. We have made our little room very comfy, mud walls all round of course but we luckily found an old window stuffed up which we opened & now have plenty of light. Such an awful cold wind blows every day. I am not going out to work till it stops a bit & my cold is better. I fancy we shall stop here 10 days or a fortnight for supplies. Gen MacDonald is laughably cautious and has about the stupidest staff I ever came across. A mail came in yesterday & today a large convoy with I hope a mail too, has just got in. This is a regular Tibetan house, very dirty, but I've done a lot of cleaning in my room. However one's hands are beastly dirty continuously. I don't think anyone has had a bath for a week or more. Now I hear some mess stores have arrived, so I must go out to see them. (*This may be incorrect, but a displaced page 3 of a letter found after 21st March is inserted here.*)

"The slippers are exactly right. Just now I wear Gilgit boots all day, but later on they will be exactly what I want. Thanks, darling, very very much for sending me out the things. Now I don't want anything more, but now & again a pair of socks would be welcome. I've got four days work out of doors to do here, but that can wait. It is so nice to be in flower comfort & to be able to write to you. I love writing long letters to you my pet, but it is quite impossible with the cold & discomfort we have been having. I have to keep an eye on my fire, just putting on a piece of yak dung every few minutes. I have your dear letter before me, you had had no letter from me that mail. You see it is almost impossible to know when to post letters to catch the mail. The telegraph line is only up to Chumbi, but it should reach Phari soon. Will you do that about sending up your passbook on the 30th of each month & then let me know what you have in hand or what you are overdrawn; also always let me know the date the last £70 arrived, so that I can know whether you have just received one, all will soon have one. I calculate that at the end of this month I shan't have Rs 1,000 in hand not counting what I have invested; of this I look on Rs 600 has still a little doubtful, being the difference between single & double travelling allowance. I think I shall get the latter all right. What I can save depends so much on what pay I'm drawing, but I think I shall average Rs 300 a month, if you can only make that £70 do for everything at home. I think of you and the dear chicks so much. I've altogether had a good deal of pain to bear this last year, and I long for you extra much then.

"3 pm. I've been doing a lot of odds & ends of official letters & mess things. Now I have a room to myself, I find it so much more time to myself. My rheumatism has shifted to below the small of the back; it hurts particularly when I cough. The same beastly wind goes on every day. I'm jolly glad I'm out of it & in a house. Every day we wonder when the snow is coming. I fancy our worst time will be marching on from here if it snows. I don't find the elevation affects

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<sup>18</sup> The Maxim gun was the first recoil-operated machine gun, invented by Sir Hiram Stevens Maxim in 1883.

me at all now, except of course while actually climbing a hill. The more I think of our finances the more I think that we must give up the idea of no. 5. I had a jolly letter from Renny saying, "I sincerely trust you will at last get some recognition of your services." He says he is coming out in June, probably to Calcutta (between ourselves). Now darling, I must get on with my work. Heaps & heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"Kiss my darling four for me."

16th January, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own darling sweetheart, We are rather a set of cripples, Wilton & O'Connor went to bed before dinner, Col Younghusband directly after, all with colds. Hayden & I went & talked for a bit, then he went off, so I came to my room & brought a nice little gharra of fire with me & here I am. Tomorrow if all's well, I go off into the plain about two miles from here and start measuring a base for my triangulation, but I shall see how I feel in the morning. It is so delightful to get into old ways & sit chatting to you for a bit, when everyone else is in bed. Dear heart, how I do long for you. I am nice & warm in my poshteen. I am very proud (between ourselves) of being selected to go on this show, as it is by far the most important frontier expedition for surveying for years; but I don't want it to be too long. Our next move will be for Gyantse, that is 7 marches. Whether we wait here till all is ready I don't know, or maybe we shall go on & then wait a bit. The work at the end of this expedition will not be nearly so long as after my Yunnan work, because then I was continually marching & covered such a lot of ground. Here our moves are slow, so I don't do so much, but of course do it more carefully & accurately. I think of you darling & long to be with you & have you cuddling in my arms. I sleep very well, only waking early in the morning; but since I've got into a house & been warmer I can last out one thing till the morning all right. Now, good night, darling. All you tell me about my dear son (*Lisle*) delights me, from your accounts he is just the fine little chap I longed for. You have a real dear to have given him to be. I'm longing to see him, but not so much as I am to see his dear pretty mother.

"17th Jan. I was out from breakfast to lunch on the plain observing, till about 11 it was quite delightful but then the wind rose & it was too awful for words. My back didn't hurt walking, but sitting in certain positions & when I cough it is very painful. I did one of my four outdoor work days from here today. I shall go out again tomorrow but as early as possible. It's 3 o'clock now & the dust outside very (*bad?*) but I'm very comfy in my room. I stopped for a bit to finish up the work I did outside this morning. This triangulation that I am beginning here I hope to carry right on to Lhasa, so I want to be very careful over it. With Longe as Surveyor General & Renny at Calcutta I shall have good friends at headquarters. It's 6 weeks since I had my hair cut, but I don't feel as if I wanted it cut again, however in a few days I shall have it cut & my beard trimmed as there is a barber here with the 23rd Pioneers.

"18th Jan. 6 pm. There was a perfectly beastly wind today so I didn't go out. I got the Dr here to give me a mixture of Salicylate of Soda for my lumbago & this evening it feels better. A dak came in today, a note from Grindlay to say you're £70 had gone home, also a telegram from the Survey I sent down through Bhutan to the plains saying he had arrived all right & was coming up another valley into Sikhim to rejoin us, which, I'm very glad about, as it will be a good bit of work done. I'm so glad you sent me those mittens they are so nice for wearing in doors as I'm doing now. January is getting on, I fancy we are getting past the lowest temperatures; this pass & plain is famous for blizzards & I can imagine if this wind blew while it was snowing it would be very bad.

"Jan. 19. There is some light snow a good deal lower on the hills west of the pass, but the temperature was only down to + 5°. My poor old back is no better, but it's nothing like so bad as in Bangalore. I have my medicine to take 3 times a day, now I want something for rub on. Chillie Paste is of course very warming, but I don't think it's oily enough. We are now to have a dak every other day, which isn't bad for these parts. The general idea is that we have two months of winter still to get through; for the sake of the surveying I hope we don't do much marching while bad weather is on. The Sun comes streaming through my window every morning; at night I have a piece of sacking over it, as of course it's really only a hole. The only game here is Kyang, the wild donkey, but it's poor eating & has no horns, but two of our fellows got 5 duck the other day, an excellent addition to our food. We have agreed to pay Rs 7 a day each for messing. It really only comes to about Rs 4 a day, but such an enormous lot of tinned stores were ordered up, that we must pay off. We've each advanced Rs 300 to the mess as well. I'm so keen, darling, on having some money in hand when I come home. I have two revert from the Rs 1,440 grade to Rs 1,140 from whatever date. Lennox Conyngham

returned, but when Col Gore retires on Feb 16 I shall officiate again unless Roy finishes the Aden Boundary Commission before then, and the next man doesn't come back from leave till May and that is Hodgson. We are all in the survey very keen to know whether he is coming back whether he will retire, so you might discreetly find out, if you can.



*Wold Tibetan Ass. or Kyang*

“6 pm. I've been reading any silly novel of sorts most of the day. My pain is much better, except when I cough. I was well rubbed by Kali my Khalassi in the middle of the day & shall have another rub before going to bed. The wind has

gone down this evening; I do hope it will be better tomorrow; it practically prevents one from going out. I'm afraid, my darling, in times gone by I have often been dreadfully unsympathetic over your pains & aches. I can promise you I won't be so in future. I ought to have been doing computations today, but I really didn't feel up to doing anything but got into the most comfortable position going. I am so much more comfortable in my room, I have got it quite nice too, the great draw back is the filthy dust when the wind blows. It is a great nuisance being delayed all this time, solely on account of the rotten transport arrangements. We none of us know how long we may have to stop here, while we ought to be taking advantage of this fine weather to push on to Gyantse. At present the Home Govt. have only agreed to our going on to Gyantse, but I expect we shall go to Lhasa all the same. Don't get into your little head that I shall not be home this year. I expect we shall be back in India by June or July at the latest.

“Jan. 22. 9 pm. Stayed in bed yesterday & today & am better this evening, but have had two bad nights, pain in my bottom and small of back pretty bad especially when I cough. I am well looked after by Kelly, our doctor, and I think in another 2 days I shall be much better. How bright this little mud room would be if you were only here. Barring the pain I feel as fit as possible. Luckily we seem stuck here for some time (easier to write in pencil), so I hope this won't interfere with my work. I have plenty to occupy me, making a list of mess stores & doing the mess accounts I keep nice & warm with 2 hot stones, one at my feet & one where the pain is. If I lie on my back I really feel no pain at all. Dear heart, how this does make me feel for all the pain you have gone through. You mustn't expect long letters till I get well, my pet. Kiss my darling chicks for me & heaps of love & kisses to your dear self, ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Sweetheart, don't be anxious about me, it's nothing but just no. 1. pain & nothing more.”

25th January, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, Still in bed, but very much better. The doctor analysed some of my “one thing” because I thought something might be wrong with my kidneys and I was delighted to find there was nothing; that it is simply lumbago, quite painful enough, my dear, but it would have been much worse if it had been kidney complaint of sorts. I'm to go on with the same medicine. The great desire I have to go “one thing” especially in the evenings from 7 to 12, once an hour is due to the medicine driving off the acidity & he will let that go on for two days more and then change the medicine & stop it. There are now you know all about it. The pain is much better. Yesterday & today the wind is very bad, so I don't lose much by not being able to go out. Col Younghusband thinks we shall stay here a month longer; so I shall have plenty of time to do my work. I've bought another pony for Rs 150, Sent up from Phari. I haven't seen it, but Hayden said it looked a good one. English mail in yesterday. You wrote from Stevenage<sup>19</sup>, having a little holiday; I also had a letter from Ethel and one from Margaret about Xmas presents. When you send the Standards, darling, you tear off the advertisement sheets, but that especially on Monday include all the football, so please only tear of that sheet when it is only advertisements. I'm writing rather well in bed, aren't I. Yesterday I was doing all my monthly accounts & send them off, so I can do a good lot of work. I have Rs 700 in hand now, having paid off everything I know; so that by the time I hear from

<sup>19</sup> Where Ida's parents lived.

you in answer to this I could send you home an extra £50 easily if it will prevent you from selling out. Japanese stocks are of course very much down just now, owing to prospects of war. My body is beautifully warm in bed, but my hands are very cold. How delighted I was yesterday to get your letter.

“6 pm. A dak came in today with a letter from Harry<sup>20</sup> & one from Wilfred, announcing the birth of his 2nd daughter<sup>21</sup> on Jan. 16; so our Lisle is still the boss of the show. The incident came a fortnight before time & no nurse till two days after. Luckily Tempé’s sister, Mrs Lang was there. A lot of parcels for the mess came, so I had them opened by my bedside, then read my Pioneer & then wrote a letter to Wilfred. I’ve got this indelible pencil, which writes rather nicely. I rather like squaring up the mess accounts, the only nuisance is that our bills ought to be half what they are; if a lot of useless stores hadn’t been ordered up. No one else would take it up so I volunteered, although I have more work than anyone else. A convoy comes in on the 29th with I hope the rest of my Khalassies & kid I left behind at Gangtok & Khambajong.

“After dinner. A lot of rolls of thick felt came up so I have floored my room with it & also put up some on the walls round the corner where my bed is. There’s not much wrong with my appetite, thank you. Dear heart, how I do long for you. That was very nice of Renny to write to you like that about me. You might ask him to come down for the day before he comes out, he will have to be in London. My fire is flaming up nicely in the middle of the room, but it isn’t easy to write. I like to put the paper down & think of you. I suppose Wilfred will go on & have another try for a son. My pain hops about, it now has gone quite out of the small of the back & gone to what you used to call the crease, which shows it is a muscular pain; dear heart, how I can sympathise with you now. We’ve nearly got through this work now. There are 3 houses in this village & Stone & turf walls have been built all round. The two maxims used to be on the roof just above my room, but now they are down on the ground at the corners of the enclosure. Nobody loves me! It is getting warmer here the minimum has only been down to 3° or 4° below zero even on calm nights. When it’s windy the temperature is higher. Just behind the village there is a bare hill just like at Khambajong. Now I must stop as I am more comfy in a lying down position.

“26th. I’ve shifted my bed round & have a box alongside & have my paper on it, so that I can lean over & write. I had a much better at night, slept from 10 to 5. The pain in my crease is just the same. I’ve had my tent pitched and as soon as I get my walls built around it, I shall move out, it will be much colder at night, but all these houses are very draughty. I’ve just written a letter to Kitty<sup>22</sup> for the New Year. I’m getting pretty tired of not getting out, I can tell you. It is more comfy sitting up & writing in bed. I have the candle on my left side which is much nicer. Today was another windy day after 11, the usual time for the wind to spring up. Hayden & O’Connor went out & shot 9 duck & 3 snipe, a great addition to our larder. I hope this pencil writing will (*be all right*) so that you can read it. I am writing with what is supposed to be an indelible pencil. O’Connor is the Tibet speaking member of our party, he has studied it for years. You are back home by now. It is nice to have a little holiday, but all the nice to get home again & see the dear chicks. I’m so delighted with all you tell me about our son, to have a sturdy manly boy was just what I wanted. I don’t write about no. 5, but I often think about it. I generally come to the conclusion that we can’t afford it, but oh! dear, how I should love to have about 6 sons, really I would. There is not the least chance of picking up any curios; but at Gyantse which is quite a town one might. Sticking still here is very slow work. If you buy books or magazines, darling, you might send them out to me. I hope the Tibetan is will show enough fight to get us a medal. Temperature down to 10° below zero last night, so it’s getting colder again. I’m fairly born in my room, but the room sometimes gets very smoky from the far, it wants constantly attending to. You get longer letters, dear, now I’m shut up.

“Jan. 28. I couldn’t write to you yesterday I had such an awful time on the night of the 26th. I woke up at 2 with a go of sciatica, all down my left leg. Darling you know what that is. I woke my boy up & he got hot stones that took the pain away a little. Unluckily I had taken 2 pills & they were griping me. Finally at 4 the pain in my leg was too much,

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<sup>20</sup> Ida’s younger brother then aged 13.

<sup>21</sup> Margery Julia Ryder.

<sup>22</sup> Ida’s younger sister married to Hugh Wake.

so I sent round for the Doctor & he gave me a grain of opium & in half an hour the pain had nearly gone & I could doze a little. I had previously taken some brandy I felt so bad, but brought it up at once. Yesterday I felt tender in the leg, but today I'm much better and now and just where I was two days ago, i.e. a dull aching in the joint in my seat, so I think with luck I've got the sciatica. Yesterday there was a regular dust storm all day so I shut up the hole that is my window & lit my candle. The pain I had in my left ball has nearly gone, so altogether, dear heart, you can consider I'm on the mend. I fancy when I come home it would be a good thing to go to one of those baths for rheumatism, and Dr Colgate. What is a good place to go to? The present idea is that we stop here all February & reach Gyantse on March 14. Col Younghusband has approved of my asking Col Gore to send up a young survey officer to be under me; this will help me a lot, and strictly between ourselves when the show is over, I can then leave him to do the fair maps, just as Renny left the China maps for me to do. I should then only have to stay at most a month in India. Today is windy too, but not so much dust.

“6.30 pm. I had a good many visitors this afternoon. Felt so much better, I wrote over & asked Kelly whether I might go out tomorrow, but he said better wait 2 or 3 days more, because I still have a pain on the btm just as if someone had kicked me. Tomorrow I've got a lot of old mess accounts to work out with Bailey who ran the mess at Khambajong, & who came over from Phari today. Tomorrow I fancy an English mail comes in, it is nice getting your letters regularly. I may miss a mail sometimes, but I can't help that, it is the post people's fault not me. I've just heard confidentially some dates; I'm afraid they are later than I had hoped for. The General told Col Younghusband that the transport could put us in Gyantse on April 14, so that while I suppose be powered date to arrive there, so we have another 6 weeks or so to stop here but it will be getting warmer every day. It really will be delightful not to have it so cold.

“29th. Much better today, darling, no return of sciatica. Mail in with yours of Jan. 8 which I will keep to inspire me for next mail. Dear heart, did you see how foolish it is to sell Japanese when there is any threatened war, however it is too late to keep its now. Don't ever ask Cox's advice, there was no such intense hurry to sell out. Don't be at all anxious about me, darling. Please thank darling Margaret & Enid for their letters, heaps of love & kisses to you all, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

31st January, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I'm up sitting in a chair after 10 or 11 days of bed, can't say I feel very brilliant, rather dotty on my legs, & I still have a certain amount of pain about the small of my back & joint of left leg, but still it's a great thing to get up for a bit.

“1st Feb. Just as I was writing this I had to nip back into bed, at least onto my bed, as I got a twinge under my left knee, but it didn't last. However as I had been up two hours I didn't get up again, as I thought that was enough for the first day. Now 11 am. I'm up and comfy; and at once start writing to you. On the night of the 30<sup>th</sup> it came on to snow & yesterday & today there is a little off & on. I just looked out of my window & the whole plain is a dreary expanse of snow, not deep, not more than 3 inches or so. All these hills are being dense clouds & missed, so I suppose we haven't done with the snow yet. Sweetheart, it is so nice to be up. I have to exercise my left leg, as when I sit down, I can't straighten it at the knee. I had an excellent night. We ought to have got a dak yesterday, but owing to the weather none was sent over; and I don't suppose any will come today. We are just 20 miles from Phari, I fancy that though we have had no deep snow here, there will have been much more on the Jelap La. I stopped here to write 4 official & 7 mess letters, so I have plenty to do. It snows very likely of & on all the time. I am very comfy & only just the least feeling under my left knee; so I hope soon to be quite well & then I can get on with my computations while the weather is bad.

“5:30 pm. I'm really much better, as I've been up all day & shop or probably sleep all day (*sic*). My leg hasn't hurt at all, and my back only now & again. It has been a wretched day all day, maximum temperature only about 14° & very windy, so no dak has been able to come across the pass. You have been rather badly treated today, as I've written 14 letters, so not much time for you. I'm going to give my room a good cleaning tomorrow, it is simply filthy, but I'm much better off in my room than the others in tents. They all left the house and pitched their tents in the courtyard because they said the house was too smoky. Yak dung has pretty well run out but luckily we got up some charcoal, and

some more is coming in a few days. The wind is howling round the house, and the plain is swept nearly clear of snow, all drifting up against the hillside. I have a hot stone at my feet. Do you know that a hot stone lasts warm much longer than a hot water bottle or bag. Walton our doctor at Khambajong has arrived & so has charge of me. He says that I ought if possible to serve in dry climates, and says Droitwich is a good place to go for rheumatism of any sort. Ask Dr Colgate about it. He says I've got over my sciatica capitally. I should have liked a dak today. I feel like reading, after all the writing I've done, I think I'll get "Vanity Fair" which I have been reading the last few days.

"2nd Feb. I had a great day today, having my first outing. I sat in the sun basking, a most beautiful day, then had lunch with the others in the little mess house they've built & lined with felt, then basked a little more & now I have come in. I can do very little in the walking line, because the sinew under my left knee is still quite stiff, however Walton says that will wear off in a few days, and all I have to be careful now is not to catch cold in it, so I hope that little show is pretty well finished. It was nice to get out & I was lucky to have so fine day. I do hope this fine weather will continue. A mail came in yesterday, mostly mess accounts. Hayden is going back to Phari very few days geologising so I am sending in a telegram to you to tell you how much better I am; because I'm afraid you may be anxious.

"After dinner. My room has had a good cleaning and tomorrow it will have another. No pain whatever in my back or btm. How delightful it is, only this stiffness under the knee. Dear heart, I'm feeling so cheery, now I'm getting better. I'm afraid I've been writing dolefully, but you know what it is to be ill & in pain, and then I'm all alone & faraway from those I love. Oh! dear, How I longed for you to tidy my pillow & make me wash my face when I didn't want to. I've got my lamp lit (I had to leave it behind) & it came up two days ago, it brightens the room so. It is one of those clockwork ones that needs no chimney<sup>23</sup>. I've settled of all the mess accounts for the month & now if I continue to get better I must devote my spare time to my computations. I want to have as little as possible left or when we get back to India. I'm sorry to hear Major Hodgson is coming back. They have brought in new rules for R. E.'s in India about permanent service, abolishing it for the future. I must write for a copy & study the question. I sit with a hot stone at my feet & no boots on, it is much warmer. I had dinner up in my room as it is so much warmer. Vegetables is what we are worst off (*sic*). Tomorrow a mail comes in I hope, dearest, it is so sweet to me to get your letters. I don't count on getting anything out of this expedition, all the same I ought to, between ourselves. We can get things up by parcel post, if we run short of anything, from Calcutta.

"I sleep very well now, just wake up once about four or so for one thing, but I don't get out of bed, I have a little biscuit tin under my bed. I have to take a pile tonight, as I am following your excellent example. I have my tea every morning at 7.30 & then laze in bed, as I don't think it wise just yet to get up till it's a bit warmer, however every day brings us nearer spring, all the same there were 42° of frost last night. How lovely it will be to be together again. The time we can spend at home will depend on how much money we have. Do let me know how you stand, because I do so hope you will save out of your £75 a month; it will make such a difference. Now be a good girl & let me know, say at the end of February exactly what you owe or have in hand at Cox. How would it be to send me out Cox's passbook made up to the end of February, and then I can see for myself exactly without any mistakes. I do like to know exactly how we stand. You should see my nice little balance sheet, every month, shewing everything I go and exactly what I have in hand. Don't think I grumble at your management, dearest; it's only that I'm selfish & what (*sic*) to have a good time at home without having to think too much of the price. Now goodnight my darling.

"Feb. 3. Another fine day, so I had a fine bask from 10 to 1 in a sheltered corner. I could walk a little better today & that is, I suppose how I assure go on improving each day with luck. A dak came in today, but very uninteresting. However I suppose we shall get the English mail on the 5th. You mustn't expect very interesting letters from this rotten little village, especially when I am tied up by the leg as I have been, but you are constantly in my thoughts my darling. I had a look at my pony today, he looks a sturdy little chap. I have such a lot of writing to do, 12 letters for the post today. I have my dinner up in my room by myself. I expect soon to be allowed to have it in the mess, I have lunch there. I shall finish this after dinner.

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<sup>23</sup> The Frenchman Bernard Carcel designed a lamp with the oil reservoir under the burner, in the body of the lamp. To keep the oil moving up to the burner, Carcel housed a clockwork mechanism in the lamp base that drove a small pump submerged in the oil tank. The winding key was located at the bottom of the lamp base.

“After dinner & a glass of port wine which has cheered me up. I've written two more letters about mess things. The stiffness in my leg doesn't conduce to very good nights. I have only the “Antiquary” by Scott to read & it's very dull. I believe we leave here on March 14 & reach Gyantse about April 14 & then begin the treaty making. By that time we shall be having better weather & be 2,000 ft lower; because really this climate here is not quite good enough, -10° again last night; but I'm nice & warm in my room. Here's a letter for Enid, I thought she'd like it on official notepaper. My darling little wife, how I love & adore you & long to see your pretty face. There's a good time coming for us; heaps of love & kisses, you dear, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Always kiss our dear 4 for me & don't let them forget me.”

4th February, Tibet Frontier Commission – Camp Tuna, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I had an excellent night & basked in the sun between breakfast & lunch. Now, after lunch I have come in doors as the wind has started & now I'm going to work up my computations & put them in order, even if I don't work at them.

“9th Feb. Dear pet, you've been neglected, but it was this way; as soon as I felt better I've been spending my daily bypassing in the sun all the day, & in the afternoon doing computations, as I wanted to get on with them. Now today (here I was stopped by dak coming in) I went for a short drive (?) ride, only a mile or so out of camp & back. My new pony goes excellently. I'm much better, my left leg still hurts if I stand from more than any few minutes & I go a bit dotty whenever I walk. I've also started a little rheumatism in my left wrist, so I am to go on taking my medicine. If all goes well, I go over to Phari with Col Younghusband on the 12th as my surveyor I sense down the valley has come back & I have to see to his map & write a report on his journey. Col. Y. Is going over to meet one of the Bhutan chiefs who has come from Bhutan to talk over the question of making a road up the valley. It's 20 miles ride to Phari but good going. I shall go out for a short ride each day to a customer myself. Gen MacDonald comes over on the 11th into a convoy & goes back the next day. Now as to the most important news about how long this show will last; the new Amtan (?), that is the big Chinese official at Lhasa, has at last arrived there from China and I gather that the treaty will be made with him at Gyantse, and that we shall not go on to Lhasa, thus of course shortening the show a lot. It is of course in one way a disappointment if we don't go to Lhasa, but between you & me, my dear, I don't feel quite fit enough to enjoy myself & I like you think of the end of it & of our meeting. I think that any rewards that had given will be given just as much if we only go to Gyantse. Your last letter of Jan. 15 came 3 days ago. All right about Japanese, if you've sold all right & if you haven't all right. However you & I between us must try & collect enough before I come home to enable us to live at home without any more selling out. You do your best, dearest, out of your £75 & I will do my best out of what remains out here. I have still a little feeling in my b.t.m. as if I had been kicked, but it only comes on now & again. We have all pretty well tired of this miserable little valley Tuna; but the weather the last few days has been delightful. At night the thermometer goes down to -2° or so, and in the daytime in the shade it gets warmer each day; today it was 59°, beautifully sunny & no wind. While you were away at Stevenage I have had a letter each week from Margaret & Enid. I'm so glad when they write, dear little source, but it is not so easy for me to write, I don't think you have any idea of the discomfort we're living in, and if I felt thoroughly fit I could write more. Owing to Major Hodgson coming back in February I'm afraid I shall not officiate again up a grade this year, which would have made a great difference. Except for snow storms we have I think got over the worst of the winter, and every day the days get longer. What were Wilfred's daughters names to be? I've forgotten<sup>24</sup>. I think we should be wiser to only have one year's lease this time, & keep some in hand, don't you? I shall probably get my majority in 1905, but it makes practically no difference as to pay. I do all my writing either sitting sideways at my table or on my knee. You hadn't received a letter from me when you wrote.

“10th Feb. I'm afraid this will not be a long letter, darling. I am going along very well. I rode out for 1½ hours today on the plain. We do over on the 12th to Phari, and I will write from there. No news here, we are very excited over the war<sup>25</sup>. Col Younghusband gets Reuters only two days old, so we are well off, we all back the Japs. I think when Gen MacDonald comes over tomorrow, it is to have a consultation with Col Y. & then we shall hear some more definite

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<sup>24</sup> Joan and Margery.

<sup>25</sup> The Russo-Japanese War 8 February 1904 – 5 September 1905.

news. My pony goes so well, he requires no urging, but runs along, not a trot, at a great pace. I have to make all the arrangements for our messing over at Phari so have plenty to do. Walton, our doctor comes up & sits in my room from 4 till dinner time to warm himself over my fire. It was windy this afternoon, I do hope we have a good day for crossing the pass. It is nearly level all the way. Now, dearest, God bless you, heaps of love & kisses to my dear chicks & more still to their dear sweet mother, whom I still believe is the dearest & prettiest girl in the world, for ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

12th February, Phari Jong<sup>26</sup>, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I rode in 20 miles today, which was pretty good. My pony went so well, but the first half I couldn't go fast as I was with the general. My tent is pitched in the camp just under the fort. I shall only stop here one day & go back on the 14th as I want to get the surveyor & his map to Col Younghusband as soon as possible. It is pretty cold in my tent, but I'm sure much more healthy than a house, however unluckily the general & part of the troops go down the valley tomorrow, so I have to move into the fort, a most striking place. All the time I was riding my leg didn't hurt at all, and as I sit now it doesn't, but if I stand for 5 minutes it hurts a good deal. I still have a pain in my left wrist but that doesn't matter. There is a good deal of wind here, and I'm afraid the sun would come onto the tent till late as I'm right under the fort. They say here that English mail leaves tomorrow morning but I'm pretty certain it doesn't. I ought to have got an English mail here, but of course the post sent it on to Tuna in spite of careful instructions. I should have liked it very much today as I haven't much to do. I'm dining tonight with the General, but I'd much sooner dine in my own tent. I've got to hot stones at my feet which keep me nice & warm. I have a bit of a cough, but that no one minds here. I'm rather pleased at having done my ride today without any trouble. My clockwork lamp has gone wrong so I only have a candle, a lamp warms the tent good deal. As the result of the general's visit to Tuna, I can tell you this news, that we stay at Tuna till March 20 or so, and then move on to Gyantse, slowly but steadily getting there about April 10. 800 ekkas<sup>27</sup> are coming up for transport from here onwards, most of the road from here to Tuna is a maidan. Just written a note to O'Connor as I have found 13 cases of mess stores and I'm sending them over tomorrow. They will be very welcome if they are what I asked to be sent up. This is 700 ft lower than Tuna, 14,300, so it ought to be warmer if there is no wind. I'm so pleased with my pony, he is small, but very sturdy, and always wants to be going. This was his old home, so perhaps he knew it. We passed a good many Kyang<sup>28</sup> on the pass, they are not shy as no one shoots them. Really although it's dull work I'm not sorry we are stopping at Tuna till March, when the weather ought to have improved a lot. I got the telegram today from the Surveyor General, saying that Lt Cowie RE was coming up to join me as my assistant, so that's a good thing. I've never met him so I hope he's a nice chap. Now goodbye, dearest, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover and husband, Charlie.

16th February, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I got back here on the 14th. At first I thought of not starting, as there was a dense fog & slight snow, however the sun came out & I had a fine day with the wind behind me. Since I've been back it has been windy & dusty, & though the nights are getting warmer, the days are beastly. My Madras Sapper photographer died today, & as (*sic*) one of my Khalassies died on the 7th, both of pneumonia, the others are not very cheerful. I am feeling ever so much better myself, I have rather lost my voice, but it is much better today. I brought an English mail along with me, with your dear letter of Jan. 22. How delighted you must have been defined Lisle walking when you got back. What a fine little chap he must be. You are just a perfect darling to have given me such sweet children. So our “Lisle” is still the only Ryder boy! Wilfred's new daughter is to be called Margery Julia & Mary is to be a Godmother so she tells me. I don't have an idle moment, as I can always turn to my computations. I now sit & write in my tent from breakfast till lunch & in my room till dinner time. I have a little charcoal fire now much nicer than yak dung.

“17th Feb. Hayden & Walsh came in today, so we shall be 7 at dinner tonight. A Bhutanese chief came in also to make a treaty about making a road up that way. It has been a beastly windy cloudy day today with little tries at snowing,

<sup>26</sup> Jong = a fort.

<sup>27</sup> Ekkas were typically drawn by a single horse, pony, mule (and sometimes bullock) and had a pair of large wooden wheels (and traditionally, a wooden axle and the carriage had a flat floor with a canopy providing shade to the passenger(s) and the driver.

<sup>28</sup> Wild donkey, see above.

so I have been in most of today, wasting time talking.

“19th Feb. I'm not getting on very fast with this letter, but yesterday I had a long day at computations & today I had to write out a report on the survey done through Bhutan, which has to go into Govt. My rheumatic wrist is a good deal better, but my b.t.m. is to be rubbed began as I still can't stand for more than 5 minutes without its hurting. If I can get some work finished that I want to do, I may go down for a few days to the valley west of Phari to have a lazy time in a warmer climate. Wilton is going there, and I made to, but the weather is not very suitable, as it is windy & cloudy. I think we are doing for a bout of bad weather, then after that it will warm up again. We are 7 in the mess now, so our little hut is very crowded. We ought to have got English mail today, but neither today nor yesterday did we get any letters or papers only parcels. Yes, I got all your parcels, dear & very grateful I've been with them. What I now want please is socks & make them nice & loose. I've still got my cough. I ordered some more jujubes up from Calcutta, but they haven't come yet, my voice is alternately a squeak or a croak. I got a lot of aches, 9 dozen, while I was over at Phari which are very welcome. I was thinking of no. 5 this morning but I won't write about it till we get nearer the meeting, but don't for a moment imagine I've given up the idea if it can be managed. I'm so glad you are getting nearly onto the right side. Oh! By the bye would you send Una a cheque for £15 for Spen<sup>29</sup>, it ought to have gone in on 1st January, but I've got, and if I can hold of this month's pay, i.e. in a fortnight, I will send you something more than the usual £70. Sweetheart, I know you are doing your best to be economical; even if you haven't sold out anything in a couple of months or so you will be on the right side; then bag £10 now & again & put it in the savings bank. Far from selling out Japanese now I should take the opportunity of buying more now that they are low, because no one thinks they will fail to pay the interest.

“Feb. 21. Today Wilton went off a few days trip back to the valley west of Phari; so as his tent is in a sheltered spot in our courtyard I have moved out into it. I did this especially as I felt a lumbago feeling in my back again, yesterday, which is better though today; but I don't get better in one respect that I cannot stand of more than 5 minutes at a time. One of the Bhutanese chiefs has been here the last few days. He has been giving the Tibetans good advice. We are all indignant at the alarmist rumours in the home papers, they originate from Darjiling & are all rot. It is a great shame that people should telegraph home that sort of rubbish about wells being poisoned, large Tibetan reinforcements; we laugh at these ideas, but of course to you at home they appear as true. It has been cloudy a good deal lately, but today the sun was beautifully warm. These are our night temperatures for the last five days: +8°, +8°, +3°, -2°, +3°, clear still nights are colder than cloudy nights. Your dear letter of Jan. 26 came yesterday. You were in the middle of influenza, what a plague it is. All our colds & coughs year are rather of that nature, in making one feel a worm afterwards. Mine is much better & my voice too. I had my hair cut & beard trimmed yesterday. I am certain that it is more healthy in a tense than in a house, so I am curious to see whether this change will have the effect of clearing out my lumbago. If not I shall try what (*sic*) a change to Chumbi will do, because I want to be quite fit when we advance i.e. about March 20. Dear heart, don't be a little bit anxious about the fighting. If they do oppose our advance, it will be very feeble indeed. I'm afraid too you may be anxious about my health. You know sciatica, it is very painful, that doesn't make one feel at all ill. My lamp is burning nicely & quite warms the tent. Then I have good thick felt on the floor & round the walls of the tent, that keeps out the wind. You will like to hear what I wear, thick vest & drawers, socks, long stockings over them & Gilgit boots, which have thick wadded things up to one's knees, the riding breeches I got in Bath, then higher up I wear flannel shirt, one of those hunting ties khaki sweater, cardigan jacket, puttoo coat & long poshteen & mittens & further; out of doors down from my third year, & of course I wear gloves, and if there is snow or dust, dark glasses. Then I have a couple of hot stones at my feet. Every now & then one does a sort of pant for breath, but not much as one gets accustomed to the height. I find I have very little spare time with my own work & the mess to run. Why didn't you persuade Major Hodgson to retire or at least to stay on till the end of his leave. I should have officiated for another 2½ months & that would have made a difference of £60 to us. I'm glad Sir Thomas Gallway gave you the good advice about not selling out Japanese, I hope you will stick to it. I would send you home more money darling, but I want to stick to the steady arrangement of £70 a month to you

<sup>29</sup> This is one of very few references to his older brother Spencer Charles Dudley Ryder (b. 25<sup>th</sup> January 1852) a teacher who had been educated at Hailebury College & Keble College, Oxford. He had a nervous breakdown and was admitted to an asylum (in Epsom?) in 1884 after patient attempts by family with his mental health.

& I save what I can out of the balance. They are rather slow at passing my accounts at Calcutta, so I have to keep a balance for expenses here. I am really better off than I make out, as I made everyone in the mess, including myself and advance Rs 300 to the mess to clear of a lot of bills, and to charge Rs 7 a day for messing, so as to get the mess well on the right side. It is rather interesting running the mess. I make out a balance sheet each month to show how we stand, and everyone seems pleased at the way I do it. The more one has to do the better up here. I say, Ida, there is no objection to your sending photos to the papers as long as my name doesn't appear & don't add any description except what I write on the photos. They generally pay one pound for each photo; so I will send you home as many as I can. I am getting up a hand camera. Put any money you get for photos in the savings bank. I take salicylate of soda for my lumbago, 18 g a day in tabloids (*sic*). My wrist is practically well. Of course warmer weather does me good.

“Feb. 23. A beautiful day, not a breath of wind. This is something (*I*) like, and I expect will do me a lot of good. I have no cough now & my voice is quite right. I rubbed 3 times a day. Walton says I shall gradually improve but mustn't expect anything very rapid. Don't forget to send the £15 cheque to Una. I have told Grindlay to send you £85 this month instead of £70, and write & let me know whether you think you can get square without my sending you more home. I save out here about £20 a month after sending you £70. I think you ought to save £10 a month once you are square. The Bhutanese chief has gone back, he had an interview with the Tibetans & told them they were very foolish to oppose us. They said they wouldn't attack us here, but would oppose us when we advance. +4° last night, I think that we have nearly said goodbye to minus temperatures. Now darling goodbye. God bless you. Heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

23rd February, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I send you off a letter today, but I have just made myself comfortable in my tent. The days are so much longer now, it's 6.15 & still quite light. Yes, you dear, I shall have plenty to tell you when I get home, such a lot of things one doesn't write about; but I shall prefer hearing your dear voice. I'm so longing to hear you sing too. It clouded up a bit this afternoon, but the morning was lovely. I have just written to Grindlay to tell them to send home £85 instead of the usual £70, when they get to my February's pay bill. Out of my March's pay I have to pay Rs 350 for the last instalment for the new Alliance Bank shares. Then I shall soon 10 shares, value Rs 2,350, and giving Rs 120 eight year interest. I have my Rs 1,000 also invested in Rupee paper, about Rs 800 in hand as well, so that remember dear I can always send you home more if you require it. The Alliance Bank shares I don't want to sell out, but without that I have you see Rs 1800 of which I look on Rs 1,500 as put aside for my passage money home & out again. I have a large bit of felt across the door of my tent, keeps out all draughts & wind.

“Did you see that William Watson & Co, the Bombay agents have failed? Several fellows here have money with them. I shan't have any particular news to give you tell me move on. You may generally be pretty certain that I shall be with Col Younghusband on the advance to Gyantse. Don't be at all alarmed about fighting. In this sort of open country I don't see how the Tibetans can ever get near enough to us to hit any of our men.

“Feb. 25. Yesterday & today I had two good days work at my computations and worked out a lot of points that I observed at Khambajong, which lie between here & Gyantse. I hope before we leave here to have them all finished. English mail in today with your dear letter of Feb. 5. You had no particular news, except that the “flu” was going off. I know what a tiring time you have when the children are ill. God bless you for the loving care you take of our dear chicks. The more you tell me of our son, the more I long to see him. We have no news here, my leg is just the same, only hurts when I stand. I take salicylate of soda 6 grains 3 times a day & I'm rubbed by my Khalassi 3 times a day. We are having a turn of warmer weather, +11° last night, but it has been cloudy most of today. My feet are the coldest part of me, owing to my getting so little exercise. I generally go to bed about 9.30 & then do an hour's read in bed. My dear pet don't you be nervous about their being only 400 men here; we are excellently fortified and could beat 20,000 Tibetans if they attacked us. Yes, all your parcels have arrived, the one with a swagger ties I told my office at Bangalore to keep till I came back, as they would be no use up here. You poor dear at the dentist, I hope you hadn't much pain. We have 3 doctors here, of whom Walton is the doctor with the mission, he also shoots & collects all the small birds he sees. I don't think there is any likelihood of Hugh Wake's<sup>30</sup> regiment coming up here. If another regiment is sent

<sup>30</sup> Ida's brother-in-law.

it will probably be Pathans. You didn't mention it but the officers in the 8th Gurkhas on this expedition are very feeble lot.

"28th Feb. Dear heart, you've been sadly neglected, because I've been occupied with my computations. Today I walked quite a mile, my leg hurts most of the time, but I am none the worse for it. I went to a stream in the plain with Walton, who netted a lot of small fish, biggest about 6 inches, some we're going to eat & some in bottles as specimens. Then this afternoon I was busy with mess accounts, making out mess bills, and a balance sheet. Our last 3 night temperatures<sup>31</sup> have been, +20°, +8°, +8°. The +20° was a fluke; but I think we've done with going below zero. Hayden went off back to Phari for a few days. Yesterday was an awfully windy day. Walton says a moderate little walk each day would be good for my leg. I got in 4 oz bottles of jujubes up from the stores at Calcutta, but I have no cough now, so keep some for future coughs and others I've handed round. Col Y. told me yesterday that the General had asked for 1,000 more troops, most awful rot I ever heard. This will mean delaying our advance. The General is the most cautious man I've ever met, just the wrong sort of this sort of show. I daresay he would do excellently against the Boers. I told Col Y. what I thought, & I fancy he sent a wire to the Govt. saying more troops were quite unnecessary. Down in the Chumbi valley they hear wonderful reports about enormous numbers of Tibetans collecting & swallow all they hear.

"Feb. 29. +8° again last night, this we look on as quite warm. I again went out today, feeling much better, walked 2 miles or more across the plain and then rode back. My leg hurts a bit but not nearly so much, so I am very pleased with myself. Wilton came back today. Now Walton & I are thinking of doing a trip to the same valley west of Phari. Darling pet, I'm afraid this is a poor letter, but you see as I get better I must take advantage of it & get on with my work. The more I can do now of these computations, the less I had to do when I get back to India. I've moved into my intent as I had been living in Wilton's. This morning was beautifully warm and I enjoyed my outing. I took my rifle with me but saw nothing but Kyang. This along a halt in this uninteresting spot and my not having been able to get about much, isn't the best thing for long letters, but always remember dear that I love you very very dearly. I feel a bit tired with my outing darling, they give this very poor letter, sweetheart, heaps of love & kisses, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"Kiss our darling chicks for me."

1st March, Tibet Frontier Commission – Tuna, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, It is nice to get into a new month, because it makes me feel winter is coming to an end. Last night it was again +8°, this morning was nice & sunny & I went for a walk with Wilton, about 1½ miles down the edge of the plain. Then we lay on the hillside & asked in the sun & walk back, so you see I'm getting on, my leg hurt very little. I shall do a walk every day. This afternoon it clouded up & then snowed a little. My 9 new Khalassis arrived today from Gerhwal (?), they look a useful set of men, then 6 boxes of mess stores came in & I had to go through them. I really never have an idle moment, which is lucky because the time goes so much faster. I fancy it will be a bit colder tonight. The sun comes on my 10th about 7 & that generally wakes me; then I lay awake thinking of you, you darling & then my thoughts go on to no. 5. How I should love to have another son, but I'm afraid we shall not be able to afford it. I haven't been able to learn any Tibetan, but an interpreter has left Darjiling to join me, then I shall start, if I can find time.

"5th March. I've been doing a bit of a walk every morning. We now have breakfast at 8.30, and then I go for an hours walk & still have plenty of time for my computations, which I'm getting on capitally with. Our night temperatures have been, +5°, +12°, & +8° the last 3 nights. Last night it snowed quite gently & we knew nothing about it till we woke this morning, about 2 inches & a lot melted in the morning, but this afternoon got cloudy again, and when I went out for a stroll just before dark there were heavy black clouds over the pass. The natives of India suffer a good deal from pneumonia, there have been 15 deaths here including two of my men, one Khalassi & the Sapper photographer I brought up from Bangalore. I must say the days pass pretty quick here, they are so monotonously alike. I can walk quite comfortably now, only a little pain now & again. Your dear letter ending Feb. 12 came yesterday. You had no letter from me that week. I'm so sorry, but now I post my letter about two days too early to

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<sup>31</sup> Fahrenheit.

allow for delays. How are the children getting on with their lessons? All you tell me about our dear little son makes me delighted. Mrs Traill has another son, born in November. The Japanese are doing capitally, we are all delighted. I'm anxious for the land fighting to see what they will do there. I'm glad you haven't sold out any Japanese, they must stick to our little nest egg. I have a beastly nib. I got an RE Journal last mail. I'm 31st in the list of captains and should get my majority next summer.

“7th March. I had a 4 mile walk this morning, no pain in my leg at all, but of course I get pretty tired even after a short walk like that. It was +14° last night & +12° the night before, but the days are rather cloudy & windy. I am sending you a snap photo of that Bailey took me one day just outside the village. I hope you will admire me! I'm sending down for a camera like his. I heard today that the 7th Fusiliers and the 5th. P. I. Were coming up. I don't know whether it's true. Two parcels have just come from Una & Mary including 7 pairs of socks, which will be useful but they are not handknitted & so scarcely thick enough for just now. I can only write at intervals, I spend most of the time with my computations. I haven't been sleeping very well, I think it's taking coffee after dinner. I shall knock it off & see the result. The only thing wanted to complete my kit in the photo is Gilgit boots instead of slippers. The photo is not for publication, but Una & Mary might like to see it so right Father & Mother<sup>32</sup>.

“March 8. +8° last night. I went for a walk this morning & another this evening. Tomorrow morning Col Younghusband, Hayden & I are riding out onto a spur of Chumdherlin (??). I want to see whether it will be a good place to observe from. My leg is practically all right now.

“March 9. +9° last night, but we are going to have it cold tonight. I went out just now for two things & it is snowing on the parts & on the hills & sweeping down here, & it was only 21°, of course it always is cold just before snow. I've been having an idle day. I rode on to the spur above the village, but it was so bitterly cold, I came back pretty soon. It was too cloudy for us to go across the plain as we intended. It is certainly too cold to observe with a theodolite when there is any wind. I hope you've sent as at £15 to Una. I can walk or ride quite comfortably, no trouble with my leg at all. Govt of India telegraphed to know when we are going to move forward, so Col Y. wrote the General a pretty stiff letter, telling him what he thought of the rottenness of the transport arrangements & the ridiculous caution the General does everything with, so I hope this will have the effect of having things a bit. I am writing for a Kodak camera, the very best price £11; and then I'll send you home any number of photos of the people &c. Which I can't take with a stand camera. I'm afraid this is a very dull letter, sweetheart, you know how one feels sometimes. I have my tea at 7.15 get up at 8, in between I think of you & the possibilities of no. 5. It's partly your own fault that I want children, because the ones you've given me are better than anyone else's. I look on you as four times a better wife than most women. I know we should both be delighted at having another son, but then I think can we afford it, and also is it fair on you. After having had four, to ask you to have another because I knew it spoils a year you. You're a dear sweet darling anyhow. How I am longing for this show to hurry up, so that I can get home to you. Please, please don't be anxious about me, dearest. This really is the safest expedition to go on, if you had chosen it yourself. It's so nice to feel quite well again. I only wish these winds would stop.

“10 pm. Just back in my tent from the mess house, snowing steadily. I'm sucking a brandy ball, sweets are very nice in this cold. I must pop into bed, darling, but I just wanted to tell you some news & that is higher door you more than ever. Heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Kiss our darling 4. Can Lisle do any talking yet?”

10th March, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, We've had a wretched cold day to day, a little snow last night & a very cold wind all day. I found my ink frozen & had to thaw it on my hot stone. English mail ought to be in tomorrow. It was too windy to go in the morning, but Wilton & I went for a short walk this evening, all rights going out with the wind behind us, but bitterly cold with the wind in our faces; this is a regular cold snap, but it looks fine this evening. However each day we get nearer to warmer weather & the days are now much longer; the son gets onto my attempt at about ½ past 6 in the morning.

“12th March. It has been windy & beastly all day. On the night of the 10th we had any minimum temperature -5°, last

<sup>32</sup> That is Ida's parents.

night +6°, don't forget that +32° is freezing point. Mail in yesterday with your dear letter ending Feb. 19. Darling how I love your letters. I went for two walks today. A convoy came in today bringing us rations to 10th April. The General hopes to have things ready for an advance early in April. Ekkas are being brought up to be used from Phari onwards. I wore my cardigan jacket last night in bed & was much warmer & slept better; but it snowed last night, but only about ½ inch. If only this Windward stop. Now, this is why our advance is delayed, the convoy came over with 2 companies as escort, two more came out halfway from Phari & 2 more from here. Now the two companies who come right through have to use up a lot of mules carrying their kit, Russians, tents &c. when they might be used bringing rations; this all mind you in country where we all ride about with at most 2 mounted infantry as escort. A Tibetan interpreter has arrived for me, so I shall start learning Tibetan tomorrow & see how I get on.

“March 13. I spent most of this morning with Wilton & Walton netting small fish in a stream. We've got quite enough for dinner & breakfast; then after lunch I had to price a lot of most stores taken by different fellows at Gangtok & send in the bills. After tea I went for a little walk. I sleep so much better since I've been able to take more exercise & I can walk quite long distances. It was +3° last night but very cloudy & windy all this afternoon. In the evenings the snows look so fine, just at sunset. I got a note from Grindlay saying they had sent off £85 to you on 8th March. It is rather interesting running the mess, by the 1<sup>st</sup> May we shall have paid off all our debts, and I shall then begin to repay the advances we have all made. I wish the telegraph line would be extended up to hear instead of stopping at Phari, then I could send you a line sometimes to catch the mail. I always now take a little walk 10 minutes or so before breakfast. There are no signs of when this expedition is going to be over. I fancy we shall be at Gyantse by the end of April.

“March 14. -1° last night. We rode across the plain on to a broad spur running down from Chumlarli (??) & had a fine view of snows & glaciers. As usual in the afternoon it got windy & tried to snow. I believe now we are going to advance about the 24th, the sooner the better, and we shall be jolly glad to get out of this place; but I shall be very busy the next few days rearranging kit &c. I walked up the hill today in great style & was at the top first, so there's not much a matter with me. We were all vaccinated today, as Tibet is rather a small poxy country.

“16th March. Dear heart this must be closed this evening & unluckily I have a slight headache. Perhaps I shall be better after dinner. I had to have a gathering & my thumb lanced today, rather painful. It has been a most beautiful day but last night was only +3°. Mrs Fraser has sent me a lot of chocolates, very good of her wasn't it. Darling, forgive a short letter. I've been so busy, arranging what to take on when we advance. We shall all be delighted to move on. Hayden, Wilton & O'Connor have all been seedy lately. It has been rather a strain on our small this winter at this highly elevation & great cold. If it is fine tomorrow I'm going out early to observe from the ridge just above the camp.

“After dinner. Heaps of love & kisses, but I must go to bed, my head will be all right tomorrow, forever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

17th March, Tibet Frontier Commission, Tuna, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I sent you off a very shabby letter yesterday, but I think you understand that it is rather difficult writing here. However our weather is really improving +8° last night & a bright sunny day. I went out at 8 on to the hills above the village, did my observing & got back at 10.30. It was rather windy otherwise all right, then after breakfast till lunch I was busy arranging my things. Col Youngusband had a wire from the General saying he hoped to reach here on the 26th & advance next day. I hope this is so & he won't go putting it off again. I've just been out for my evening walk. I'm going up another hill tomorrow, if it's not too windy; then I've got to work out those observations which will give me 3 days work. We are to reach Gyantse in 12 days; it is only 7 marches so I suppose we shall halt somewhere, probably at Kalatso.

“18th March. Your dear letter of 26th Feb. came today. How I love your letters, you darling. I went up onto my hill & finished all I wanted to, but it was very windy.

“21st March. I am going out tomorrow for a 2 or 3 days trip to the Lingshe La, a pass into Bhutan east of here; as I hope to get in a good bit of new country the other side of the range. Hayden is coming out with (*me*) & I have an escort of 20 men, besides which I can see the village here from where we camp, so I shall keep up my signalling communication. I have (*been*) very busy the last few days working out triangulation for this work & also for our

advance, which has been put off but only for a few days; I fancy we advance in about 10 days. I am posting this tonight, as I might miss the mail by waiting till I get back here. Dear heart how I wish I could find time to write you longer letters; but now 6 pm. I feel so tired with working out my calculations. I'm feeling absolutely well again, in fact I'm one of the healthy ones of the party, O'Connor, Hayden & Wilton are always getting something the matter with them. We are having it gradually warmer, about 14° the last 3 nights; but the wind is as strong as ever & oh! the dust, one's table is simply covered with it. I'm taking out my rifle with me in case I get something to shoot at. Very well we'll drop no. 5 for the present, with full permission for me to start the subject again whenever I like! I heard from Wilfred today, asking after my sciatic, he also said Tempé had heard from you. Bravo! old girlie, I'm very glad you wrote. I'm only taking the inner fly of my tent for this trip. I want to see what it will be like, as when we advance I shall only have enough carriage for that. I've been having a gathered thumb, (*sic*) but it's all right again now. The more you tell me about our dear son, the more I love him & the more I love you. How about the children & their lessons, don't you think Margaret ought to have regular drawing lessons, to see to it will you. I shall be more busy than ever, I have to do my monthly survey accounts, mess accounts & get ready for the start. I then send from Gyantse, our postal arrangements will be rather sketchy for a month or so till the line gets into working order. You are a dear sweet girl not to grumble about my being on this expedition; when I'm tired & have difficult work, it's so nice to get comforting loving letters. I always do about ½ an hour reading when I get to bed & sleep much better for it. I always go to sleep thinking of you. My travelling allowance has been passed all right; I officiated up a grade for only one day in February owing to Major Hodgson coming back before the end of his leave; I don't know where he has gone to. I had a very pleasant letter from Col Longe asking me to collect butterflies for him, he says Renny goes to Calcutta when he comes out in May. I'm glad you sold one of the coats for £10; that is the best way to pay my tailor's bill off gradually. Don't waste any sympathy on me for having to save; as long as I'm on an expedition like this there is nothing to spend one's money on. After this month I hope to be able to reduce all our mess bills, as we shall have paid off nearly all our bills. I don't fancy we shall go further than Gyantse, as when the Tibetans see we mean business I fancy they will come in & treat. God bless you dearest, I do adore you. Heaps of love & kisses to your dear self & our darlings from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Can Lisle talk at all?”

*(Page 3 of a letter was moved above from here to follow on from 14th January.)*

24th March, Tibet Frontier Commission, Tuna, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I've come back sooner than I expected, so I hope this will catch the mail. Hayden & I went out on the 22nd across the plain several miles of which is rather bad going, dried marsh. Then we went over some rolling hills and build moraine from glaciers & finally pitched our camp on the shores of Lake about a mile across at the foot of the Lingshi La. Next morning we were having breakfast early to go up onto the pass when we saw a lot of Tibetans coming round the lake, about 100 or so, half mounted. When they arrived they were very polite & asked us to go back; which I decided to do, as otherwise there would have been a fight, which Col Y wants to avoid as long as possible; so we packed up our things & marched back, but as our yaks were tired we stopped in the plain about 6 miles from here. The Tibetans followed us some way; very friendly. I had two long shots at goa, which are very wild & missed. We were in helio communication with Tuna & when we got in Col Y said I had done quite right to come back, & that I was right only coming halfway, which I did to show the Tibetans we want in a funk of them. Now this evening it is snowing again. The two mornings we were out were perfectly lovely, having breakfast at 7.30 outside my tent. Hayden got a go of fever yesterday, but is all right today. The actual day of our advance is not yet settled, but it can't be very long delayed now. My new hand camera has arrived & tomorrow daily is going to shew me how



*Yaks*

my tent. Hayden got a go of fever yesterday, but is all right today. The actual day of our advance is not yet settled, but it can't be very long delayed now. My new hand camera has arrived & tomorrow daily is going to shew me how

to use it. I shall be able to send you home plenty of photos soon as we advance. I found lots of letters I have to answer tonight darling & my lamp is burning very badly, so I must stop. Heaps of love & kisses to you & our darlings, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

26th March, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I was out at 7.30 this morning, as I wanted to observe an angle, from my station near here. It was such a lovely morning; then as usual the afternoon clouded up. 42° & +9° are my last two night temperatures. The telegraph line comes tomorrow. I've just been out watching the poles being put up. The General arrives on the 29th; he then sends back all animals for more provisions & I believe we start on the 3rd April. I'm doing my packing gradually; I still have mess stores to pack; and about two days more computations & then I shall have everything ready. The men are on £40 kits, & I have two mules & one for my office. I'm feeling quite well, sweetheart. Yesterday the mail came in, your letter ended March 4. I'm so distressed about your throat, dearest, you get a sore throat so easily. You are doing capitally with your accounts starting; it is nice to be at last on the right side.

“6.30. Closed my tent & lit my lamp; but it's rather windy. How I love your sympathy, darling; yes, the sciatica was very bad; it wasn't owing to damp clothes, but I fancy, the intense cold; however I'm as fit as possible now. Yes, we've all found time very dull. Luckily I have had plenty of work. I went out for an evening walk, found the telegraph posts had reached here, & they say the wire comes in tomorrow. What a darling Lisle must be, fancy his carrying the clothes basket. Having a fit of coughing in bed is like me, but I have quite given that up. My pony is a great success, one of the best here, he doesn't trot, but runs as hard as he can, is always willing to go. Yes, it is really much nicer in tents. The 23rd Pioneers live in the house still, but it is much warmer in the daytime in a tent. I think everyone here wears a beard except Wilton & Walton; yes, I have mine nicely trimmed, I am having my hair cut & beard trimmed tomorrow. Cold to a certain extent is bracing, but the great cold & the elevation combined is very trying. My vaccination has not taken. This month I have just played the last Rs 350 for the new Alliance Bank shares, and also I bought my camera, so I haven't gained ground but I still have Rs 1,000 in hand, besides what I have invested, i.e. Rs 1000 in 3½ per cent & Rs 2,350 in Alliance Bank shares. I've just made out our mess bills; this is the last month I charge Rs 7 a day, as we have reduced our debts to Rs 2,300 & from 1<sup>st</sup> April Rs 5 a day will cover everything. Cowie is on his way up to join me, he left Guatong today; he may just get up in time. I wonder what he's like. I especially asked for a young survey office to exclude Pirie, who is too conceited for words; Cowie is just a captain.

“28th March. One day it's just like another, I go out for ½ An hour's walk which we have had 8.30. Yesterday I had a little headache, however an hour's ride got rid of that. Today after breakfast I went onto the ridge to watch the mounted infantry go out to reconnoitre. They captured a man with 3 guns, who however was let go again this evening; however we made him first fire off his guns, & I think all the servants are very brave now, because it took about 10 minutes before one went off i.e. between each shot. He couldn't get a big target at 50 yards & his gun carried about 300 yards. I had a wire from Cowie, saying he would reach Phari on the 30th & so I suppose here on the 30th. Each day I do a little packing of things I leave behind.

“30th March. The rest of the force & a large convoy of food arrived & today I was out all the morning survey. Tomorrow the whole force are going out to tell the Tibetans to retire or if they refuse to turn them out. We shall all return, leaving 2 companies at Guru, I shall leave a surveyor there. I don't fancy they will fight, but I watched them today on a ridge building walls &c. I've got practically all my triangulation ready now as far as Kalatso. Cowie arrives on the 1st & we all advance on the 3rd, 7 marches to Gyantse, so now things are beginning to buzz a bit.

“March 31. Darling I am very tired, but before I go to bed I must write to tell you that I am all right after our first fight. We marched out that 8, 4 Cos. 32nd, 3 Cos. 23rd, 2 Cos. 8th Gurkhas, 150 Mounted Infantry, 2 10 Prs, 2 7Prs & 2 machine guns, round this spur & then across the plain. When we were about 2 miles from this position, some 20 Tibetans rowed out & had a confab. with Col Y. He told them that we had waited all these months to negotiate & we couldn't wait any longer, so they rode back, our troops were deployed & gradually advanced the Tibetans retiring down to the wall they had built on the plain, without firing. Then they were surrounded on 3 sides & were told they must lay down their arms. This state objected to do. We all were close up. I took a photo of their wall with our sepoy

on one side & they on the other, then sepoys were told off to disarm them & suddenly they fired a shot, hitting a sepoy & attacked several with swords. The sepoys opened fire & the Tibetans fled across the plain. I was with Hayden about 10 yards from the wall when this began, however my pony which I was leading bolted & dragged me back some 50 yards before I could get it round. By that time the Tibetans were in full flight. They lost very heavily, I should think 400 killed, 100 wounded & about 100 prisoners. In the meantime the men on the hills cheered them & we all advanced another 3 miles to Guru, which was captured & then I rode back with Col Y. Wilton & Walton & 3 mounted infantry to here as Col Y. wanted to send off telegrams. We got back at 4. Our total loss as far as I know was no one killed, Major Dunlop 23rd Pioneers. Candler a Daily Mail correspondent sword cuts in 12 places, but he will recover all right. He was among the Tibetans, leaning against the wall writing out a telegram when they set on him & about 10 sepoys, none seriously wounded, as I knew it would be a walkover for us; but it was not pleasant seeing these unfortunate Tibetans being shot down; however perhaps on the whole it was for the best, for now we are very unlikely to have any opposition between here & Gyantse. I was up at 6 this morning, dearest, so I must go to bed. God bless you darling, heaps of love & kisses to your dear self & our darling 4, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"I sincerely hope we shan't have to fight the Tibetans any more, it is too one sided. Two Cos. 32nd Pioneers & 100 M. I. stayed out at Guru."

2nd April, Tuna, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, It's 10 pm & I ought to be in bed, but the advance on the 4th & tomorrow I shall be very busy packing up. Cowie arrived today & that this afternoon I was busy seeing to his instruments. English mail in yesterday, with yours of 11th March. Thanks so much dearest for copying out all the passbook, now I know exactly how you stand. £85 in hand at the beginning of March including the remittance that arrived on the 4th. I think I'm right on reckoning you will save about £15 a month, so in 3 months you will have paid off my tailor's bill & then we shall owe nothing & you can go ahead. If you want to invest I really can see nothing better than Japanese which are very low now. That was a sweet letter from Margaret, thank her so much for it & give her an extra kiss, & one to Enid too for hers a mail or two ago. We march to Do-chen on the 4th about 12 miles & I believe get to Gyantse in 7 days. There is a rumour that the Tibetans will oppose us, a march beyond Kalatso, but I doubt their making much of a stand after the awful beating they got. Their total losses seem to be about 400 killed, 200 wounded & 200 prisoners, ours only 2 officers & 11 men wounded. Poor Candler, the newspaper correspondent has lost one hand & the other badly cut, but is going on well. Dunlop the other wounded officer of the 23rd has lost 2 fingers, they were inside the Tibetan sumger (?), I was 10 yards outside, but note Tibetans near me, as they were all inside the sumger, a stone wall about 3 feet high. The general was also inside & shot 3 men with his carbine. Now a good night, darling.

3rd April. Darling I am dead fagged packing all day; now it's 10 o'clock & I have to be up at 6. I fancy we shall march straight away to Gyantse. I adore you, sweetheart, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"I fancy our post will be rather sketchy for a fortnight or so."

5th April, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, I don't know when I shall be able to get off my next letter to you. We left Tuna on the 4th & jolly glad we were to get away from it at last, & that marched to Guru, just the same march we made the day of the fight. Today 12½ miles to just where the outlet of the lake is but I went up to some hills on the left as well. We have camped on a slight slope to the lake on which are the huge quantity of geese. Hayden went out & shot two, which we eat tonight. It snowed lightly for about two hours on the march & jolly beastly it was, now it's cloudy & cold. Tomorrow we march to Kalapangko, said to be only 5 miles from here, so I am going up to a hill 3 miles to the left.

7th April. A post goes back tomorrow morning, so here's a chance of letting you know how we are getting on. Yesterday we marched from our camp on the shores of the Bamtso Lake to Kalapangko, on the Kalatso Lake. I went up first of all onto a hill to the left from where I had a fine view & got in a lot of work, seeing several hills I had surveyed up to on the other side from Khambajong, then I came back to the old camp by 12 & did the short march 5½ miles. In the afternoon I went for a walk a couple of miles also round the lake to look for an outlet, found there

was none. I sent carry out with an M. I. reconnaissance. They went about 14 miles ahead & then were fired on by a village occupied by 200 Tibetans. They were 120 yards off when the Tibetans opened fire. Well today we came 11 miles all along a plain & have encamped about where Pika is on the map. The usual M. I. reconnaissance went on tomorrow's march & found no Tibetan soldiers anywhere. The village Samedra where Cowie & his party were fired at we can see from here has been evacuated; the villagers say the soldiers bolted yesterday having 4 killed & 4 wounded. From here onwards we go along a narrow valley; so tomorrow I go up with the Gurkhas (?) onto the hills & I fancy we shall have a long day, as the March to Kangma (?) is a long one. I'm feeling very fit, all the work does one good. It is cold at night's, 20° or so of frost. I take several photos every day & have sent 10 down to Calcutta to be developed. I think the Tibetans are on the run, they may make one more stand before Gyantse; but I don't know. We should reach Gyantse on the 10th. To date we have encamped between two deep broad hillsides, which join here & then we follow this right down to Gyantse. It snowed a little last night, but soon melted & it was quite hot on march. We have all taking to topies. So far, we have come down very little, I fancy we are about 14,500 ft. I have been able to do a lot of surveying & my work is all coming up well. Cowie is a nice chap & keen. We get up every morning at 6. just at sunrise, have breakfast about 7 & march at 8. We got a dak in today & are still in signalling communication; the end of the telegraph wire being at our camp on the shore of the Bamtso Lake. Parr of the Chinese customs, who is one of the Chinese commissioners is in our mess, so we are 8 altogether & that requires a bit of looking after. We left one company 23rd Pioneers at the end of the telegraph line & 20 men at Guru. Just had some whiskey & water, as I was rather thirsty. There is so much noise in camp at night I haven't been sleeping very well; the mules particularly are very noisy. We had ekkas for the first two marches, but they have gone back as the path wasn't good enough. Then we have about 1000 yaks as well. I love advancing, because the show is likely to be over all the sooner. How I long to be with you again, darling, but for the present we must wait a bit. I fancy we shall get a medal for this expedition, be necessary fighting has taken (*place*) and the hardship of the winter has been very great. We all only have single flies to our tents, which is a good deal colder than the double fly. In case I haven't time to write to Una & Mary, just let them know that I'm fit & well. No trace of lumbago now. I walk most of the day. Darling, I write as much as I can, but I am so tired in the evenings; heaps of love & kisses to your dear sweet self & our darlings from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

12th April, Tibet Frontier Commission, Gyantse, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, here we are at Gyantse at last, every day has been a long tiring one & I have had no chance of writing. I sent you off a letter on the 7th & now a mail is suddenly going off in half an hour. On the 8th we marched 12 miles down the one narrow valley that led all the way here. In addition I went up a hill on the right of the 1,700 ft & got into camp at 5. On the 9th we only marched 9½ miles, because the Tibetans had prepared a position across the road, a big stone wall across the valley with engars (?) up the hills, but they evacuated it.



Gyantse (?)

On the 10th we marched 12½ miles & had a fight. The Tibetans were in a very strong position, 1,600 of them, the valley narrowed to a gorge & they were on the hills on both sides, but they were turned out, with a loss of over 100 killed & we 3 wounded. I watched the fight from a spur, looking at the Tibetans firing on the ridge above, but none of the bullets reached us. Then yesterday we marched in here 13½ miles & camp 2 miles from the town; quite a big cultivated plain full of villages. Today I went out to watch the troops occupy the fort which was done without opposition & now just had lunch. There will be fine chances of surveying here. This afternoon we all ride out to see a proposed site for our permanent camp & as soon as we move in, I shall begin my work. It is quite hot here, only 4 degrees of frost at night & now in a single fly tent I am sitting in my shirt sleeves. It is quite possible the Tibetans

make leaving now & come in to treat. Write & tell Una & Mary I am all right, I have no time to write. God bless you, darling, heaps of love & kisses to your sweet self & the chicks for ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“I am very well indeed.”

14th April, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, Postal arrangements are getting a bit more regular & a post leaves here now every other day, the first closing this evening I hope we shall receive letters as regularly. We were hoping for a mail today but none has come. Yesterday I went out with a party who were looking for a signalling station. We went up onto a hill about 6 miles south of here and had a grand view, so I selected it as one of my theodolite stations. I shall be able to get a tremendous lot of the surveying done while halted here. East I could see some fine snow peaks about 50 miles away, which must be near the big lake Palti; then north I could see some more very far away, 100 miles or so and north of the Brahmaputra; West I could see hills that must be near Shigatse; only south from where we came, higher hills blocked the view. On the way back I



found a good level place to measure a base & when I got in about 4.30 I found camp moved about a mile to where we are going to have our permanent camp; a village with good courtyards & trees and a fine grove of trees  $\frac{1}{2}$  a mile long on the banks of the river, at present they are bare, but buds are showing.

“The river is only a little chap, 20 yards or so wide, and one can ford it on a pony in most places. There are a lot of wild iris growing in the grove, none out now. I think the General & transport go back on the 18th, we being left with 650 men. Today I went up to the Jong, or fort, built all over a rocky hill about 400 ft high, the town & monastery are round it. Tomorrow I shall start my triangulation. I have to observe at 5 stations which I can do getting back to camp the same day, two on my base in the plain & 3 on hills, each a good pull of 3000 feet or so. The star observations I shall hand over to Cowie to do; then later on I hope to be allowed out on trips for 2 or 3 days with an escort. Yesterday it was a beautiful day, but today has been cloudy & now in the evening a regular gale blowing. As a punishment on the Tibetans a temple in the Jong has been occupied & all the little Buddhas taken out & we have each to have 3, they are bronze & have no value. This camp is in ploughed fields & very dusty, but we move into our permanent camp in 2 or 3 days, where we shall be very comfortable; we pitch tents in a courtyard with fine trees and have a good room as a mess room. The plain is about 5 miles wide & mostly cultivated. There (*are*) a lot of geese about, which we hope to go for in a few days, but at present shooting is forbidden, so as not to frighten the people & let them settle down. The only book I have to read is “Count Hannibal” by Stanley Weyman; I read a few pages every night before going to bed. It is much warmer here, our last four nights have been  $28^{\circ}$ ,  $29^{\circ}$ ,  $22^{\circ}$ , &  $31^{\circ}$ , but this wind tonight is very bad, it is difficult to keep a single fly tent steady. We are all having baths, I had mine today & feel



*Kumbum of the Palcho Monastery, at Gyantse, the largest chorten in Tibet. It was built in 1427. The chorten is packed with exquisite Tibetan sculpture and painting and rises 35 metres.*

very comfortable. Now darling, I must stop, to write a letter to Col Longe. Heaps of love & kisses to your dear self & our darlings, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

20th April, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I have several days writing to make up. Yesterday the General left with all transport, leaving us with 4 Cos 32nd Pioneers, 2 Cos 8th Gurkhas, 2 7 Prs (?) & 2 machine guns, and we are in a well fortified village near the river and about a mile from Gyantse. We moved in on the 18th & jolly busy I’ve been arranging things. We are all camped in a courtyard, with big trees just beginning to bud. We have a long room on the ground floor for our mess, and our building a mess Godown for stores. Then yesterday morning Hayden & I went out shooting, he got 2 geese & 2 hare. I got 1 goose, 1 duck & 1 hare. Wilton got 2 geese. Then in the evening Hayden went out again & got 3 more duck & a hare, so we have a well-stocked larder, but we are a mess of 10 now, as Col Waddell, I.M.S. (?) London Times correspondent & Hadow of the Norfolk’s machine guns have joined our mess. All this means more work for me as mess secretary. Today I went out with ... 12 miles down the Shigatze road, you will find the place Dongtse. I wanted to prospect before beginning my triangulation, and tomorrow I go out with Ottley & some Mounted Infantry northwards to try & get onto the watershed between here & the Brahmaputra; then I shall pretty well know the country round & can begin to work. English mail in when I got back with yours of 25th. We have bought 4 cows & Hayden takes charge of them & the dairy. The centre of our courtyard we have made into a kitchen garden which Wilton has charge of & it has been dug up, so I hope the seeds will do in in a day or two. It is quite hot in the sun, and we have had some beastly dust storms. The general idea is that we shall be here for 2 months, and then a British regiment & 2 more guns come up & we move on to Lhasa. Dear heart, I’m longing to be with you, but of course I must see this show through. You mustn’t mind my being ambitious, sweetheart and anxious to get on. I fancy we shall get a medal for this. What a splendid little chap our son must be, how can I thank you enough, you dear, for giving us the four dear children. We receive & send back a dak regularly every two days, but no parcels yet. We are very comfortable in our courtyard; however I intend to be out as often as possible. Our stay here will give me the chance of doing a lot of work. I’m afraid I shall have no time to study Tibetan.

“23rd April. On the 20th I went 12 miles down the valley, a cultivated plain 1½ miles wide, with Hayden & O’Connor & some Mounted Infantry, to Dongtse which you will find in the map. We were well received everywhere & were taken over a monastery. On the 21st I had a very long day about 18 miles out to the Yung La & the same back. From 8 to 5 yesterday I went up onto a hill, 6 miles from here, & observed & back at 4.30, so today I took a day in with accounts for the month. Tomorrow I’m off to another hill; the whole valley is quite peaceable, tongues out everywhere<sup>33</sup>. The mornings are lovely, pretty hot in the middle of the day & then the usual wind springs up with often a dense dust storm. I’ve just written to Grindlay, telling them to buy another Rs 1,000 of 3½ per cent Govt. paper, that is my second thousand, and I have Rs 100 to commence the 3rd thousand. I have reduced our messing to Rs 5 a day for this month, and shall keep it at that now. Being a mess of ten now instead of 6 as we were at Tuna is of course much cheaper. I had a letter from Renny last mail from Pau, in south France where he was enjoying himself as usual. Today I’ve been super intending building a mess Godown, so as to have all the stores on shelves; but it isn’t finished yet. We’ve had tables & benches made for the mess & now play bridge after dinner. On the 25th I go out with Amounted Infantry to the pass in the Khambajong direction & on the 26th up another hill, then I shall do computations for a day or two, enough to start my surveyor at work.

“2nd May. I am so sorry darling I must have missed a mail out how to find time to write I don’t know. I went out on 28th with Cowie & Hayden & an escort of 50 infantry & 35 mounted infantry to reconnoitre the road to Lhasa. We marched 17½ miles 1st day to Gabzi, 2nd day 15 to Rahung, surveying en route; then we took the mounted infantry up to the Karola, and found a Tibetan wall 2½ miles on. We could see a few men behind bobbing up & down, so halted about 600 yards off & Hodgson in command of the escort went forward with 6 men, to draw their fire. At 300 yards they began to fire, I should think 500 to 1,000 of them and some more on the hill began rolling stones down on Hodgson’s lot. However he got his men back to where we were without anyone being hit, then we all mounted & rode back. They didn’t pursue & we got back to Rahung all well, having found out exactly what was wanted. Yesterday we marched back to Gabchi & today in here. Now tomorrow we are going out with a force to hammer the

<sup>33</sup> A sign of respect in Tibet.

Tibetans & shall be away a week. I go out as I know the road & the enemy's position. It snowed the night of the 30th & we had a beastly ride in today against wind & snow. I got in a nice lot of country surveyed. After the fight I shall probably right with mounted infantry straight across to Kangmar, two marches back on the road to Tuna, to explore that road. Write & tell Una, I asked you to let them know I was all right, in case I have no time to write. I am also trying to send you a wire. Much love & heaps of kisses my darling to your dear self & the chicks, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

3rd May, Gyantse, to Ida: "my own sweet darling, I didn't go out with the force today after all; thinking it over I thought it was a waste of time Cowie & I both going out, as I have heaps of work to do here. So I let him go & stayed behind myself & thought myself very unselfish in so doing; only Col Younghusband, Walton & Col Waddell are left in the mess. I have been busy all day with letters & accounts & had also to work out two more points for my surveyor. I fancy the column will be out a week. I shall probably go out to Kangma on the 7th to get there on the 8th as Cowie & the mounted infantry will go back that way. Yesterday after we got back your letter ending April 8 arrived, with a sweet letter from Margaret too. It is quite fine today after yesterday's bad weather & this morning was very cloudy, snow lying on all the hills. I shall probably go out to one of my stations tomorrow. I feel pretty tired after our 5 days outing, as we did 90 miles in the 5 days. So for some reasons I'm not sorry to have stayed in, but I should like to have seen the fight.

"8th May. Well after all we had our excitement; on the 4th I went out to one of my hills 6 miles south of here & when I got back there were vague rumours from the Shigatse direction that we were going to be attacked. Well, I was woken up about 5 by a sudden firing & Tibetans shouting all round. They were firing through the loopholes in the wall of our compound, before our guard could turn out. I had my rifle tied loosely to the tent pole & cartridges but in the dim light I must have slipped a knot or something, anyhow I couldn't get hold of the rifle, so I peeked out, saw that no Tibetans had got inside our compound, but that they were firing through the loopholes, so I bolted to the mess house upstairs & got a mission rifle. Then I went across to the other house, and got on the roof to a loophole & fired away from there till presently the Tibetans began to bolt, then we sent some men out in pursuit. Our total loss was wonderful (*sic*), 2 men severely & 2 men slightly wounded. Their loss was 139 found killed, about 30 picked up wounded & 20 prisoners. They had started from Dongtse about 1 when the moon rose, 800 to attack us & 800 later to occupy the Jong. Luckily it was quite daylight when they attacked & how the sentries didn't see them sooner I don't know. We had 150 rifles. Then after the pursuit they fired on us from the Jong, but the only bullets that came near, were one or two from rifles they have, as the Jong is 1000 yards off, quite. Last night we expected an attack so I volunteered to share duty with the other officers, and went round sentries at 2.30. No attack came off & I had a good sleep after breakfast. Today I've been watching them fortifying the Jong, building walls between the ruined houses. They are said to be about 900 strong. Col Brander has his fight on the Karola pass today & will be back here on the 9th, then I fancy we shall go out & recapture the Jong. Till then we remained quiet, and have rather a dull time. The curious thing is that all the plain is dotted with proper ploughing taking no notice of their having been fighting. This lot of Tibetans are all from Shigatse. We are all hoping the general won't come up, I really believe he funks, he is so cautious. You may say you are glad he is cautious, but it also means that if we had a good general we should have been in Lhasa by now, and our meeting would be by so much the nearer. We are all sleeping in the larger house as the mission compound was rather exposed. I command the roof of the house.

"9th May. I'm pretty well fagged. On the 7th the M. I. with Ottley, O'Connor & Landon came in riding 45 miles with news of our victory on the Karola, after some hard fighting. The one thing we are all sorry for is Bethune's death, the best of good fellows & a fine officer. Yesterday we had a little demonstration against the Jong, to make them show where they were. I took 20 men & worked down the valley a bit so as to see round the Jong on to the big walled monastery behind, the walls of which are lined with men. Some volleys at 1,800 yards soon made them clear out, under cover I lay out in the fields from 10 to 1.30 & then retired. They opened quite a heavy fire when we retired, rifle bullets whistling about, but I had no men hit. The M. I. had a little fight on the right & killed about 6 Tibetans, are currently loss was one Syce<sup>34</sup> shot in the enclosure & he died last night. Today Col Brander's column comes in & my

<sup>34</sup> A person who takes care of horses, a groom.

military duties will be over; it's very tiring at night. I go round once during the night, last night at 3.30 which thoroughly wakes one up, and so each day I have been very sleepy & had a good sleep in the day. The Times have their own correspondent, so has the Daily Mail, but all other home newspapers have Reuters telegrams. Reuters have their correspondent here.

"May 10. We buried poor Bethune in the grove near the river. About 10 we sent out a small column to search a monastery about 3 miles away. When they got back about 3 the Tibetans in the Fort began to bombard us. As their bullets are falling about the compound, those of us whose tents are not protected by the house sleep & live in the mess. I've got one bullet about this size (*he draws an oval about one inch by half an inch*) that came through my tent when I wasn't there & broke the leg of my table then flattened up against a stone. We have a look at the Jong now & again from the roof & the maxims have a go at them now & again; but most of the day I've been doing computations in the mess. No one hit so far today. We've only got 7 prs. If we only had 10 prs & another 50 M.I. We should be much better off. However, don't be alarmed old girlie, we are as safe as possible. I'm afraid darling, I haven't been writing you much of love letters lately, but I do adore you more than ever & still think you're the dearest and sweetest pet in the world. God bless you darling, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"Kiss my darlings for me."

14th May, Tibet Frontier Commission, Gyantse, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, I now have charge of all the defences of this post, so I have plenty to do. I volunteered, and Col Brander him says he is very glad to have me. I have built a lot of walls about inside, so that one can move about comfortably under cover. The most exciting performance was with drawing from a large threshing floor about 80 yards by 50 on the jong side of the enclosure, it was the mule (?) lines, but much too exposed. As it was all under fire during the day, I had a parade of everyone at 7.30 & we worked till 10, carrying in the bricks from the old wall, levelling it & building a new one. Of course we had sentries out & a covering party, but no one was allowed to speak; however it was all very successful. I'm practically on my legs all day. Yesterday besides my work here, I was out 3 hours, burning a village about ½ a mile off in the plain, with a company & some M. I. Our first reinforcements come up on the 16th, 100 men with a convoy & on the 18th another 2 Cos. i.e. About 160 men but we are absolutely safe as it is. The only nuisance is that when they fire you have to keep undercover. We have only had 1 man wounded in the last 6 days & yet bullets come fairly frequently into the enclosure. They have about 10 also guns of sorts that can reach us. So among them we have 4 picked shots on our roof to fire at them, and now daren't come anywhere near. I'm so afraid they will be wring city telegrams to the papers. Reuters' man particularly & make you anxious.

"15th May. I have to be out every morning at 6 to put the men on to different walls &c. Every day the place gets more & more impregnable. Some places are rather a nuisance as they are under fire; last night I had two parties digging ditches, from 7.30 to 9 after dark & another cutting down trees; I shall have the same tonight. Tomorrow a convoy comes in, and I have to have the place ready for the mules. I really am on my feet all day; the Tibetan's big gun throws bullets 3¾ lbs in weight; but it doesn't do any damage to us worth mentioning. Our dak of 4 M. I. Was fired on yesterday by 4 Tibetans, who then bolted & yesterday the rest of the M. I. Went down the valley a bit & were fired on from a monastery, but had no one hit. Amongst other things I have cut the two small nullahs<sup>35</sup> leading water to the town; of course they can get water from the river at night, but that will bother them. We've been working comfortably since 6, but now the Tibetans have begun to fire, so my men have to come in under cover. I give each party two bits of work, one exposed when the Tibetans are not firing, & one under cover when they are firing. We expect a dak in today with English mail. I fancy all our parcels for a good month have been looted, they collected at Kalatso & we sent some Tibetans & ponies from here to bring them up. They left Kalatso on the 3rd & haven't been heard of since; an awful blow because we had regular weekly orders for the mess, cakes, cheese, butter, cheroots & so on.

"16th May. Today the convoy comes in, so I have to complete the enclosure for the mules. Last night I had a party out to take an outside ditch just after dark, but the Tibetan's must have had information because they opened so heavy

<sup>35</sup> A ravine or gully.

a fire that I decided to withdraw the party. Each day that passes without being hit is satisfactory; of course by now everyone knows where the dangerous spots are & by watching for the smoke of their guns, one can always dodge across. Yesterday the English mail came in, yours of 21st April, with two little photos of Lisle; really, sweetheart, he must be a grand little chap & how I adore you for giving him to me; it makes me long for another! Thank darling Margaret for her letter.

“18th May. I’ve pretty well finished our fortifications now so gave the working parties only a half day; however we found this morning that the Tibetans had occupied a house about 600 yards off & sniped us from there, not doing any damage; however tomorrow morning a party are going out to attack it & I spent some time with Col Brander under the bank of the river where we crawled out & had a good view, discussing the plan. Our two little 7 prs are just now having some trial shots at it. It has got very windy & dusty the last few days. Our vegetable garden is peaceably progressing, quite a lot of the seats have come up, but some make no signs.

“19th May. I had a long day today, as the force went out at 3.30. I went with a party of 15 men carrying tools, first came 2 Cos. Gurkhas then 2 Cos. Pioneers, then myself. I got up along the river bank to within 200 yards off the house occupied by the Tibetans, which is 500 yards from here. By that time the house was rushed, so I doubled across the open under a goodish fire from the Jong, found the Gurkhas going through the different rooms & resistance practically over. Well I then it was broad daylight & I set to work to fortify the house, as we were leaving a post of 50 men in it, and I worked till 3 & then came back with the rest of Gurkhas. We were well protected from fire, except the 200 yards or so in retiring & we mostly got over that before the jong people spotted us. I was jolly tired when I got in; about 5 we had another excitement in heavy firing on the road our dak comes in with 8 Mounted Infantry, so the rest of the M. I. Haven’t come in yet, but firing has stopped now; so altogether we’ve had rather an exciting time. I have to be up at 6 tomorrow for ordinary working parades. A message has just come in with news that the dak were attacked & had 1 killed & numeral two wounded. The other 5 with the M. I. some distance out, and a company have gone out to help them in. this must be posted tonight, but I don’t know whether the dak will be sent through tomorrow. You darling, how I love you. God bless you dearest, heaps & heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

26th May, Tibet Frontier Commission, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, we are getting along very comfortably; a convoy came in on the 24th with some reinforcements, 53 32nd Pioneers, 80 sappers & 20 Mounted Infantry & best of all the 2 10 prs & some more rifle ammunition. As there were 3 officers with the sappers I thought I might go back to my own work, so gave up charge of the defences having I think made them about as strong as they can be. Early this morning, a force sallied out to go for the village about 1,000 yards away which the Tibetans had occupied, and have had a pretty tiring time of it, as they had some 8 hours house to house fighting before they got hold of the village. We here were on the lookout for any Tibetan reinforcements coming out and got about 20 or so, the whole of a small lot who tried to come out, I think only 2 got back. I don’t know what our losses have been. As this has now become a military show I & the survey party come under the General. We don’t send out a dak now except when a convoy goes; so I don’t know when I catch a mail or miss it. Last week he was sent me out those two dear little photos of our darling boy. He looks just the sort of son I always wanted. I was awake at 2 this morning, so I’m pretty sleepy now, 3 pm. The guns, maxims & 1 Co. Gurkhas are just coming in through the grove behind our village, so the Jong is keeping up a hot fire. I am collecting the different bullets that a drop in the camp. Your last letter was of April 29. You had just heard from me about the first fight at Guru. I assure you I don’t feel at all brave when bullets are flying about.

“28th May. A convoy of sick & wounded are going down tomorrow, so this is a chance for sending off letters. The fighting in taking the village yesterday was very hard, we lost 1 officer, Garstin of the sappers killed, O’Connor of the Commission severely wounded in the shoulder & Mitchell 32nd slightly wounded, 3 sepoy killed & 6 wounded. The Tibetans had about 200 killed; but this doesn’t interfere with their holding the Jong. After dinner I was disturbed in my letter, having to finish a map for the General; and now I am so tired. The convoy starts at 4; so I shall be awake early. Sweetheart, darling, what bothers me is that I know how anxious you must be; but we are as safe as possible here; ½ of the 7th Fusiliers & the whole of the 40th Pathans & 8 more guns have been ordered up, though they will

take a month more to get here.

“I shall now have more time to write, after this, as I have given up charge of the defences, having completed them & now only act as a volunteer for odd jobs. Cowie goes back to Kalatso to pick up the triangulation and will be away about a fortnight. Now darling, goodnight. God bless you, my pet. Kiss our darlings for me, but ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

29th May, Tibet Frontier Commission, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, Yesterday a convoy went back & most of the troops went with it to escort it past a big village that was supposed to be held, however it wasn't, but the towers were blown up & now it is considered safe to send a daily dak through again. I went out to the Pala village captured on the 26th & looked after the fortifying of it, then took 6 men, crawled up a nullah & cut the water supply of the Jong & town which I fancy will rather annoy them. I got back by lunch then slept solid from 2 to 5, now I'm writing before breakfast as after I am going out again to the Pala village with 20 Sappers.

“2nd June. I spent every morning till lunch looking after the defences of the Pala village, which we captured on the 26th & as it was pretty well finished, I gave the men & myself a day off today. Yesterday a convoy came in with a lot of mess stores, parcels & a week's letters, including yours of 6th May. You dear, I am so pleased about your singing, but why keep it a secret from me that you were to sing a solo. I am most delighted about it, I hope you weren't to nervous, but let yourself go. Yesterday evening a prisoner was sent to the Jong with a letter from Col Younghusband to the Dalai Lama, saying that we would still negotiate up to the 25th, after that we were going on to Lhasa; but the messenger came back this morning with a message that they wouldn't take the letter. However there has been a sort of armistice all day, till we found them building more walls, so sent a warning shot or two, which stopped them. Oh! I never told you of their night attack, a very funny performance on the night of the 29th, full moon, which is a lucky day with them. At 1.30 we were all woken up by firing. I got onto the roof of the house & there they were about 800 yards off, yelling & firing for about two hours, not daring to come nearer, if you came close to the two outlying villages, & the Gurkhas sallied out & got 6; by about 3.30, they shut up & we went to bed, but it rather disturbed our sleep. We had some chota hazri<sup>36</sup> on the roof while the firing was going on. Yesterday I discovered two young cannon in the Pala village & had them brought over. It was an awful job, as they weighed about 300 lbs & worked in a sort of underground dungeon. I got rather a nice big metal teapot also. I shall gradually be able to get you a certain amount of loot, more interesting than valuable. I also got 12 pony loads of grain. Our kitchen garden is getting an excellently, we had some mustard & cress one day & now the peas & beans & French beans are growing finely but I don't fancy we shall get much before we leave. It is quite impossible to say when we shall get back to India, but I reckon I can start home two months after we get to India. We are having a great dinner tonight, all the officers of the garrison, we shall be 29 altogether to drink Lord Curzon's health in a case of champagne he sent us up.

“6 pm. I am going out with a force tomorrow to burn a big village about 2 miles from here, which was occupied & fired on our dak but is now empty. However there's a lot of grain & straw there which we are going to bring in. I've also had to write out a long list of stores from Calcutta & so I don't have much time to myself. I've just been for a stroll up through the grove, as we have a picket at the other end so it's quite safe. It will please you to know that I sleep with my Manlicher rifle loaded with 5 cartridges & my revolver loaded with 6. Now, darling goodbye, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“There was some snow on the hills this afternoon. Give my love to our darlings & kiss them for me & give one extra to Enid for her birthday, I am too dead tired to write.”

5th June, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I have got a new time for writing to you at 6.30 am. It is absolutely perfect climate now, bright sky, quite still & not a shot from the jong. However they were very active yesterday & as I walked across the open ½ mile to the Pala village I was bombarded all the way. The nearest shot came about 30 yards off & when I got to the village a bullet from a Lhasa made rifle hit the wall about two feet from my head. I was busy all the morning getting grain out of the Pala village & sending it over here, and that is what I shall be doing this morning after breakfast. I always wake early & am up while everybody is asleep. O'Connor who was wounded in the

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<sup>36</sup> A light meal eaten very early in the morning.

shoulder is nearly well again. I've been looking up the R. E. list to see when I become a major. May 6 1905 I must get it by & sooner if there are retirements &c. unexpected, so you see no. 5 will after all have a major for its father; 2 as a lieutenant, 2 as a captain & how many do you think as a major? You needn't think because I have it written about no. 5 that I have at all (*sic*) given up the idea, far from it; in fact I don't mind telling you I still have hopes of having two sons with a year between them. What do you think of that?

6th June. Post goes off tomorrow morning; & I've been out at the Pala village from 7 am to 4.30 pm; then when I got back I shaved & had tea & then have been writing ever since. We've started building a wall & sunken road right across from the Pala village to here. I had 60 Pioneers & 60 Pioneers & (*sic*) did about 230 yards, under such a heavy fire from a garden occupied by the Tibetans 600 yards off; I'm glad to say nobody was hit. Col Younghusband whose tent is next mine left at 4 this morning for Chumbi, to arrange things with the General, & as he was called at 2.30, I got jolly little sleep. Tomorrow I go over to my Pala village at 8.30. I'm making it jolly strong. Now darling I shall be too tired to write after dinner. God bless you my pet, don't be anxious about me, I'm all right & first rate at taking cover. Heaps of love & kisses to your dear sweet self & our pets, forever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

7th June, Gyantse, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, The General & reinforcements arrived on the 20th & then I fancy the bombardment will soon be over. Very many happy returns of your birthday<sup>37</sup>, my pet. I can send you no present, only my very deepest & truest love forever. Today I am going over to the Pala village after breakfast to spend most of the day. Easton of the Gunners is coming too, as I suggested he should have some shots with his 10 prs at the two big jingals<sup>38</sup> that annoyed me so much yesterday. I am writing in my tent in pyjamas 7 am. The mornings are beautiful, in the day time the sun is a bit hot, but I don't wear a topi, only a puttoo hat like a Terai only thicker. I had such a good sleep last night partly owing to my tiring day & also to giving up coffee after dinner. I'm afraid our vegetables will be up too late for us, they will be very nice for whoever is left here. I believe two more battalions, a battery of artillery & a Co. of M. I. & one of Sappers are the new reinforcements besides the 7th Fusiliers & 40th Pathans. We already know of, rumour has it, that Gen Smith Dorien is coming up to command. I hope he is ... (*end of page*)

8th June. I wish you belonged to some Library or reading room where you could see the Picture papers. There are so many Tibetan picture papers nowadays. Did I tell you my first set of Kodak films proved an utter failure, not my fault, but bad films. I wish you would get me 12 dozen for 3. A. Kodak & send them out. Find out the address of the Kodak people from any advertisement & tell them to send them out fresh & in a carefully soldered tin. I want each roll to have 10 films. Yesterday I was over at the Pala village from 8 to 2, & then I went again at 6 to arrange a place for a maxim which is being sent over there. We expected a dak in yesterday, but none came. It is rather funny working under fire, one man is on the lookout & he shouts when the smoke of one of their guns goes & everyone bobs behind cover. I have a collection of their bullets & cannonballs. When once this covered way is complete there won't be much work to be done. I'm rather proud of my fortifications.

15th of June. This has to go off today & I've left it a whole week, but every day I've been on some job or other. We've dug a trench 900 yards across to the Pala village, so one can go across now in comfort; then one day I was breaking down one of their water channels, to prevent any water getting to the town; we've had one or two nights of arms mostly from the Tibetans attacking the Gurkha outpost. Now I've done some star observations which has let me loose on to a bout 3 full days of computations; so I have plenty to do. The General & his reinforcements are expected here in 10 days, then I hope we shall knock the Jong and then advance on Lhasa. How very delighted I am about your singing at the concert, darling. Please take all the lessons you can, next month I will send you home another £10 as a little present to you to enable you to take every advantage you can of lessons &c. In the meantime don't you be one bit nervous about me, darling; I am as fit as possible. The Tibetans have built a long wall out from the town at the foot of the Jong to about 600 yards in front of the Gurkha outpost, which is about 500 yards from this house. Yesterday evening there was a regular blaze of fire from it but we had no one hit. We've had a certain amount of rain, but in between the sun is pretty hot. I have been transplanting our beans, cabbages &c. They are growing very nicely. We have a daily dak now again, and tomorrow a convoy comes in with parcels. I shall wear uniform as soon as the

<sup>37</sup> 29th June.

<sup>38</sup> A type of gun, usually a light piece mounted on a swivel; it sometimes takes the form of a heavy musket fired from a rest.

General comes, so I have ordered up some khakhi serge to make a second jacket. I have one & also some material for breeches.

16th June. Many happy returns of our birthday, you dear; God bless you. I have been computing all morning; afternoon out of the Gurkha outpost, on which the Tibetans kept up a hot fire. Darling, I love you more than ever & am just longing to have you in my arms again. Kiss are darlings for me, & heaps of love & kisses for your dear self, forever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

17th June, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I got up at 6 after chota hazri & watched a good deal of heavy firing going on on the hills above the Pala village. We had a patrol of 20 men out & the Tibetans were firing from him on the street on the hills & from the Jong. We didn’t fight back. I got some khakhi serge up yesterday but the Elgin Mills sent me white cord for breeches instead of khaki, the fools. Renny is in Calcutta now, I’ve had one or two letters from the Surveyor General’s office signed by him. Now the Jong are firing away hard with their big guns at our patrol retiring into the Pala village. Our mess is a long run with painted walls, open on one side, luckily away from the Jong. One reason why writing is difficult, is that one leads a sort of public life. My tent is rather hot in the day, so I write in the mess, & as there are always about 6 fellows there, writing is rather disturbed; then there is the excitement of the firing which leads one out to watch it. Today is the last daily post, as we’ve received information that the Tibetans have sent out a small force to stop our dak, so in future it will go irregularly but with more men. It rained a bit last night, but I am having our garden watered morning & evening. How much I think of you, dearest and of our four darlings. I’m afraid there will be some years between Lisle & his next brother. Oh! my, there’s so much firing. I must go up & see.

19th June. Yesterday the 10 prs had 10 trial shots with common shell at the jong, some of them went through the walls & burst inside, & must have done a good deal of damage. Today has been very dull, hardly any firing, and this afternoon I had a good sleep, but it rained quite heavily. My little inside is a bit disturbed today. I suppose the change of weather. A post closes tonight & that will probably be our last post till the General comes, as it isn’t safe for small parties to go through. My sweetheart, don’t judge of my love by my short letters; it is like board ship, living a sort of open public life. Kiss my sweet darling is & heaps of love & kisses to your dear self, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

23rd June, Tibet Frontier Commission, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I was so delighted to read the notice of your song at the concert. Bravo! my dear girlie, my warmest congratulations; I long to hear you myself. I meant to have started you a good long letter, but got a go of trots instead, which has made me feel slack. However I’m all right again this evening, but Walton says I must stick to eating slops for a day or two longer. The Tibetans made a feeble attack on our post in the Pahla village last night, firing for about an hour from 2 to 3. I got on our roof and watched; we fired 4 star shells from here, but only one lit up the ground at all, but the Tibetans got frightened them & retired.

“Your dear letter of May 27 came two days ago. I have told Grindlay to send you £80 instead of £70 this month; the extra £10 being free you to spend not save, my birthday present for singing lessons or anything else, with my very dear love. Mike condition of affairs is that besides the Rs 2,000 I have invested in Govt paper, I have Rs 700 towards the next Rs 1000 & save Rs 400 a month just now, going to our mess bills being practically nothing. You might approach our landlord and ask him for an option to extend our lease by the year, as it will be up in June 1905. We have had one or two heavy showers, but fine the last two days. I have had my own tent pitched behind a fine stone wall, dug the floor down a foot & am very cosy, beautifully protected from fire. Kiss our darlings from me & thank Margaret & Enid very much of their letters. Heaps of love & kisses to you my pet from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

30th June, Gyantse, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, the General & his force arrived on the 26th. As we heard that Tibetans were holding a village about 7 miles out on his road, a force went out from here to get on the hills above them & as I knew the hills I went as guide. We started at 5 & got into our position about 8; only 3 shots were fired by some picket of theirs at us. We then waited till the General’s force came down the valley & attacked. The Tibetans held out very well to we began to fire our 10 prs down onto their wall, when they left it & bolted into the houses. Fighting went on for a long long time & then when it was over we had to act as flank guard, so we didn’t get in till 5. The Tibetans had about 200 killed & we had 4 killed & 6 wounded, one officer Major Lye 23rd Pioneers severely. On

the 27th everyone had a rest. On the 28th the force moved down the plain the other side of the river, cleared a few villages & then made for a large monastery on a rocky hill about 4 miles from here & strongly held. I watched from here; everyone is so sick of the General's slowness. He began at 8, wasted hours doing nothing & then began the real attack at 5. Then it was a fine sight, a thunderstorm was coming on & our shells were bursting on the crest; after each shell burst a few Tibetans cleared, but some stuck to it & finally the last crag was



taken by the Gurkhas with the Tibetans hurling down rocks on them. Our loss was extraordinarily small, 1 officer, Capt Craster of the 40th Pathans killed, 2 offices & 5 men wounded. Early the same morning we occupied two small villages close up to the town without any warning. Yesterday I went up to the monastery & did some surveying, also a little looting, nothing of value. In the afternoon the Tibetans asked for an armistice to get a boss in, so we have peace till sunset tonight. I don't know whether they really want to treat, or whether this is only humbug. Certainly the capture of this rocky monastery in full view of the Jong must have had an excellent effect. We have a telegraph line in here now & post comes through every two days or so. I hope they won't start treating here & event us from going to Lhasa. I think the show will end all the quicker if we go to Lhasa; because if we don't the Tibetans will think we can't.

“2nd July. Yesterday one of the two Bhutanese chiefs, the Tongsa Penlop arrived to give the Tibetans good advice about negotiating & today there was a meeting. One of the four Lhasa councillors arrived with other Tibetans & there was a long Durbar, only talk so far but there is to be another meeting tomorrow. I don't fancy this will result in anything except to delay our advance for a fortnight or so. We have rainy cloudy weather now & rather a dull time.

“8th July. Now let me see where to go on from. The Tibetans were given till mid day on the 5th to clear out of the Jong. Not having done so that afternoon, a force went out & played about on the Shigatse side to give them the idea that we were going to attack from that side. During the following night our attacking force got into position between here & Pahla village & started out at 3.30. I got onto our roof to watch; three columns went out to a tack 3 points in the town, 2 Cos. in each column & 2 Cos. in reserve to each. The left column did well, but the Centre & right got a panic (don't mention this to anyone). The 7th Fusiliers 1 Co. & 23rd Pioneers 2 Cos. suddenly fired on, bolted back for, leaving only about 50 men for those attacks, however they did it all right & by 6 the whole town on the side was in our hands. Then about 50 Gurkhas on their own started up the sloping path to attack the Jong, but were withdrawn till the place had been properly bombarded. This went on pretty steadily all day till 3 when 2 Cos. Gurkhas went up to attack a breach in the lower wall. It was a fine site, they had to go up a sloping face of rock, led by Lt Grant eighth Gurkhas, who should get the VC. When he got to the breach, which was very difficult to climb, he went up it with one Gurkha, the others below covering him. Nearly at the top the Gurkha slipped & fell down some 20 feet or so & Grant slipped down to the foot of the breach, then collected a few more men & went at it again. All this time the Tibetans had given up firing & were heaving down rocks, however the Gurkhas got in & then the Tibetans collapsed, & our men were soon swarming up through the houses & by about 4.30 were in possession of the whole place. Yesterday I went over the place to see it. Today a force has gone down to Dongtse, 12 miles from here on the Shigatse road, Cowie with them & I hope he will get some surveying done; then when they come back I hope to go out a march in the Khambajong direction, for 3 or 4 days, that is if we still stop here. I don't think the Govt are keen on our going to Lhasa, but I must say I don't believe the Tibetans will agree to our terms unless we do. I know that Govt will do all they can to finish this show by the 1st November so as not to give us another winter in Tibet. Our losses in taking the Jong were Lt Gurdon<sup>39</sup> 32nd Pioneers killed, 7 officers wounded, none seriously, 5 men killed & 24 wounded. With my telescope I had a fine view of the whole fighting. Rain seems to have shut up now, but it is generally cloudy in the evenings.

<sup>39</sup> Perhaps a relation of Robin Gurdon.

"I often think of no. 5, I don't suppose you do. But, my dear, I should love to have another son, wouldn't you? I've sent you off a small packet of photos. I have kept some, as I want them for a paper I am writing for the Geographical Journal.

"16th July. We are really going to Lhasa, probably on the 12th & now I am busy as possible, packing, sorting out things & arranging about the work, so I must send this off. Heaps of love & kisses, my pet, to your dear self & our darlings, for ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

14th July, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own darling sweetheart, At last we've started on our way to Lhasa. Today we marched 12 miles to Kothang. We were to have marched at 7.30, but it rained heavily during the night, so we left at 8.30. Cowie and I are doing a theodolite traverse so we had a hard day, getting in at 4.30. It rained a lot during the day & is doing the same now, everything gets wet & it's cold to. This is the force that is with us.

4 Cos. Royal Fusiliers & maxim  
6 Cos. Eight Gurkhas & maxim  
4 Cos. 32nd Pioneers & 2 maxims  
4 Cos. 40th Pathans  
2 maxims Norfolk Regt.  
200 Mounted Infantry  
6, 10 prs.  
2, 7 prs.

"A pretty good force altogether. We are 12 in our mess, so we are dining in two tents, 6 in each. I shall have a long day every day till we get to Lhasa. The Tibetans are said to be holding the Karo La with 2,000 men.

"18th July. I meant to have written some part of this letter every day, but have had no time. On the 15th we marched 13½ miles to Lungma, raining a good deal, I got in at 6 & then after dinner it rained again & everything was drenched. On the 16th we marched to Ralung, only 8 miles, I got in at 1 but spent the afternoon computing out my work. On the (*17th?*) we marched 10 miles & camped just on the Karo La pass 16,000 feet, snows all round; the M. I went on & found the Tibetans 3 miles ahead in a strong position, but today they had bolted. The Gurkhas & Pathans went up into the hills after them & killed about 100 losing 100 killed & 2 wounded. We only marched 8 miles, but I only got in at 5; as the General as usual dawdled & delayed as much as possible. Tomorrow we march on down this valley to Nangartse, the jong of which was found by the M. I. To be held by the Tibetans, but of course they may bolt. Darling, I wish I could write you more of a letter but I am so dead fagged. God bless you my pet, heaps of love & kisses to your yourself & our dear for, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

20th July, Tibet Frontier Commission, Nangartse, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, we here yesterday & today halted; but I've been busy all day with computations. We marched 12 miles here down a valley about ½ a mile broad, quite bare. Here there is quite a large plain & we can see the beginning of the Yandok tso Lake. There was a tremendous thunderstorm yesterday evening & rain & ditto this afternoon, so everything is wet & uncomfortable. A mail came in today with your dear letter of 25th June. I'm feeling very well indeed, heaps of work to do. I am so very delighted about your singing, darling. Thank darling Margaret for her letter. Tell Una & Mary you heard from me. We reached the Brahmaputra on the 25th, but it will probably take several days getting things across. God bless you, my pet, you are ever in my thoughts, & oh! What a happy meeting we shall have. Heaps of love & kisses, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"When is Violet going to write me a letter?"

22nd July, Tibet Frontier Commission, Pedejong, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, Yesterday we left Nangartse & marched along the edge of the lake 11 miles to Yasi (not on the map) & then today 5 miles still along the lake to here. It would have been perfectly lovely if it hadn't been for the rain. Yesterday was very bad, I got in at 5, drenched. Cowie today has fever & I've bruised my foot stepping on a stone. We have a post of 1 Co. 40th Pathans here, the same as that Ralung and Nangartse. I'm getting on excellently with the work, but it gives me a long day every day. Tomorrow we march about 11 miles all along the lake, on the 24th over the Khamba La pass & down to the

Brahmaputra, the 25th along the river to the crossing place. There we shall probably halt several days, crossing. The height of this lake is 14,700 feet & when it rains there is snow on all the hills round, so it is pretty cold. I only have the inner fly of my tent, which doesn't stand much rain, so last night I slept in my clothes as my bedding was all wet. A lot of fish have been caught by different fellows in the lake, very good eating. I heard from Wilfred that his regiment go to Chitral in September for a year, so Tempé & the children go home in the cold weather. Will you send the enclosed to The Bailey, Banks & Biddle & Co. Philadelphia, Penna, USA. with a money order for 10 dollars gold, (ask the Post Office, but it is about £2) & keep the insignia when they come, not to wear but rather an interesting thing to possess. Heaps of love & kisses, my pet from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

26th July, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, On the 23rd we left Pede Jong where we left a post of 1 Co. 40th Pathans & marched 11 miles along the lake, raining a lot. On the 24th we had a short climb over the Khamba La & then looked down into the Brahmaputra valley, & had to (*make a*) steep descent into it, camped on the river bank. The valley is broad, 4 miles or so, well cultivated & the river running amongst sandbanks more like a river in the plains. Yesterday we marched 5½ miles along the river to near the crossing place. The M. I. Had gone on the day before & sees the crossing place, where the Tibetans had left the two big ferry boats on this side. 2 Cos. Pathans & 5 Cos. Gurkhas crossed yesterday, but a very sad accident happened, a small raft, made of 2 Berthon boats capsized drowning Major Bretherton & 2 sepoy, another sepoy was drowned swimming in the river in another place. Today 3 of the 10 prs, 1Co. Gurkhas & the hospital crossed. I fancy we shall take at least 2 days more. In the meantime my surveyor is getting in a good lot of country, but I am laid up with my foot, which is rather swollen. I must have twisted it, so this halt will do it good. The Tibetan peace delegates come in tomorrow, but they only talk, & won't come to business till we get to Lhasa, i.e. 4 marches beyond the river. I've been busy with computations & my monthly accounts all day. It really looks as if this show was (*sic*)not going to be prolonged much more. They want to get us all out of Lhasa by the middle of September. Now do you ever think of no. 5. I wonder. I often do; & here is our darling Lisle nearly 2, when you get this, give him a great hug from me on his birthday<sup>40</sup>. How I longed to see you all. You most of all. God bless you darling, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."



29th July, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, We crossed over the Brahmaputra yesterday and the Admission camp is in a nice grove of trees and very

<sup>40</sup> 31st August.

comfortable. The rain seems to have more for less stopped & we have had bright hot days. The crossing over will finish I believe tomorrow & we march on the 31st. Tibetan peace delegates, two of them, came in day before yesterday & again today. They talk a lot, but we are much more nimble in tone. They have been given our terms & I fancy we shall get to Lhasa without any more fighting. A mail came in with yours & Enid's of July 1, just four weeks. I wish you wouldn't go getting colds, darling. You don't take half enough care of yourself. I am as fit as possible, except my foot, which is much better, it was a sprain & I've been having it painted with iodine. It is so much nicer this side of the river in our grove, the other side was a bare plain with sand hills & very hot in a single fly tent. The Indian Govt have said we must get away from Lhasa by the middle of September if possible. If this comes off we shall be back in India easily by the middle of November and then I say (*stay*) two months to do up fair maps, so I look forward to seeing your pretty face at the end of January. This is 6 months from now, quite long enough, but still things are getting more definite. The Tibetans have got our terms now & though I expect they will kick a bit at them, they will agree in the end. I shall have two years leave due to me, and shall apply for it all, how much of it I shall actually use depends mostly on whether there is any no. 5 or not. I should like my dear, to have just as large a family as I could afford. I hope this won't make you blush. I have at present got £100 out here besides my passage only, that is besides the 10 shares in the Alliance Bank, Rs 2,350, which I don't want to sell out. How much have you got? I expect you've paid off my tailor's bill by now & can go ahead, but of course you haven't got as much incentive to save as I have. I save to be able to afford another son, and I don't suppose you want one as much as I do. If you finally decide not to have any more, then I think a year will be quite long enough to spend at home. The worst of it is, if you agree to no. 5. I shall want no. 6. I have never given up my idea of having two sons a year apart, that is one of my ambitions on which I am just as keen, as getting a CIE, so now you know. You darling, how I love you. You can also imagine that I wouldn't mind having you in my arms, it being 19 months ago since I had the pleasure, and after all this time I shall be worse than I ever was before. In fact I can't quite imagine my having you in my arms & not putting you in the family way, especially as if I hadn't gone on this expedition no. 5 would be just about arriving now! Our children are very very dear to me, and everyone makes me love their dear little mother all the more. I hope to send off another 16 films today. I get them developed by a man named Paar in Darjiling, send him a description of each & tell him to send you 1 copy of each & 1 copy to me. We get excellent peas & beans here & also fish, so we are in luxury. I'm 19th on the list of captains now and even if no unforeseen vacancies occur, I shall get my majority on 6th May. When I get to Lhasa I hope to get a dot of surveying done, and be very busy. I only hope the weather will be clear. Now, darling, goodbye to the present. Let me have some news about no. 5. Heaps of love & kisses in the most improper places from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Kiss our darlings for me & thank Enid very much for her letter.”

5th August, Lhasa, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, We arrived here on the 3rd & yesterday Col Younghusband went to to return the Ambans call (he is the chief Chinese official), so a good many of us went with him to see the town. It is disappointing, very dirty with some good buildings, the Potala, the Dalai Lamas palace is a fine big building on a hill overlooking the town. From a little distance of the town is hidden by groves mostly of willow trees. It is beastly rainy & dirty. We are encamped on a grassy maidan<sup>41</sup> near the river, we hope to get into a house soon. No looting here, but I may be able to do a little buying when things settle down a bit. As soon as the weather improves I shall have to start climbing about on the hills. I'm sending off another lot of 12 films today; don't let them go for



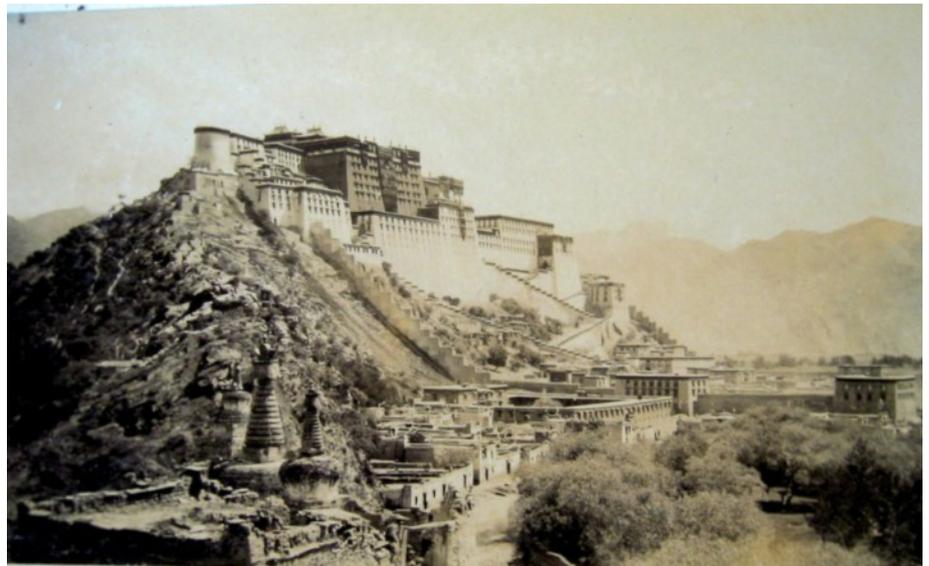
Panorama of Lhasa

<sup>41</sup> Defined as an open area or space in or near a town, often used as a marketplace or parade ground.

10/6 each, £1 is what is generally paid, try several papers, but do it at once on receipt of photos. Meetings for negotiations are held every day, but of course real business has hardly begun. We are in a land of plenty now, a bazaar is forming just outside our camp. The General as usual is in a funk, don't repeat this to anybody, but he suffers continually from trots, which have completely shattered his nerves, he wanted to turn back 4 times between here & Gyantse but Col Y. wouldn't have it. My inside has been a little disturbed lately, the damp probably, as you thought. We are all disappointed with Lhasa; but still it is a great thing to have been on this show. If I'm not allowed out beyond the immediate neighbourhood I shall have rather a dull time. Much love my pet & heaps of kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

7th August, Lhasa, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, The real reason why I write you such short letters is the great discomfort we are in all the time. I have a table, but it is used as a mess table for all meals; then the rain is beastly, it rains every night & there is no chance of getting things dry. Everything is at present peaceable, quite a big bazaar of Tibetans selling vegetables has sprung up just outside our camp. On the 5th I climbed up a hill above camp, it took me 4 hours. I wanted to have a look round to select my stations for triangulation. Yesterday I started measuring my base; I shall not hurry about the triangulation as it is much too rainy & cloudy. I've got to make a plan of Lhasa too, so altogether I shall have plenty to do. We are men camped on a grassy plain about 2 miles from the two little hills on which the Dalai Lama's residence the Potala & the Medical School are respectively. The real town is another mile further on. There is a lot of marsh & reeds about the River or at least one branch, for it is all split up into a lot of channels, is about ½ a mile away. Our camp is being made fairly permanent, a mud wall & ditch & obstacle of branches all round.

"I've finished my films. The small box which I thought contained more, I found had tooth powder in it, rather a blow. I often think of no. 5, my dear. I wonder if you ever do. I must say I should dearly love to have two more sons; but then it is unfair on you when you have done so much more for me in that way than any woman we know to take advantage of your sweetness & ask for more. If you decide against having any more you will have to be very firm about it, because I know the moment I see Lisle I shall want another. The wild flowers here are so beautiful, all over the hill sides. We have presented



Lhasa. and the Potala

our terms to the Tibetan is & Chinese, and great discussions are going on. One term is that they pay off an indemnity of ½ a lakh a day from 5th May, the day they attacked us at Gyantse to the day they signed the treaty, so the quicker they sign it the better. I believe it is certain we get a medal; if it is the usual frontier medal there will be three clasps, Tibet, Gyantse & Lhasa. If it is a new medal, the two latter will be the clasps, anyhow I shall get all there are. Don't you think I deserve another son for all I have gone through. Here comes the rain again. I am writing before breakfast, but I must dress soon. I see that they have reduced the number of years for an R. E. Lieutenant to become Captain from 11 to 9. When they did this for the staff corps, they gave them their majority in 18 years, but I see no signs of their doing that for us. I am very anxious to know how much you are saving, the more the better, and it is so nice to have a good bit in hand, so mind you let me know. Mumps has started in camp, one officer & a good many men.

"8th August, 10 pm. The first clear night we've had in a long time, so Cowie & I have been shooting stars since dinner. There is very little surveying to be done yet awhile, the General is much too nervous to allow anyone to go out. I've never (*known*) a general who is more universally disliked & look down on by his officers. Today a force went out to collect food from a big monastery; played about as usual & did nothing. I have your dear letter of 7th July which

came yesterday. Thank darling Margaret for her letter, and tell her & Enid they shall each have a letter from Lhasa. No, my dear, the Tibetans are not crafty, but they are very silly. The only chance of getting them to agree to a treaty was to come on here, and the show will be over much quicker than if we had begun talking at Gyantse. I've been a very little disturbed in my inside the last few days, indigestion I think. We get no parcels here, but hope some will be up in a fortnight or so, letters come every 3 days. You will see our news in the papers much sooner than in my letters. What we are all especially interested in is whether the Tibetans will except our terms promptly enough for us to get back to India before the winter. I hope you will do well in your tennis tournament. Grant of the 8th Gurkhas as I believe been recommended for the VC. He is a son of Col Suene (?) Grant, so if Mrs Grant is in Eastbourne, congratulates her most warmly from me & tell her it was the most gallant bit of work I've ever seen. Yes, I shall certainly expect to be very much spoilt when I come home and don't want to find you and old maid! Our camp is very strong, a little river on one side, a mud wall all round and obstacles of branches outside. When the sun is out it is jolly hot in a single fly tent.

11th August. After dinner & pouring rain. Every(*thing*) as wet as possible, but I have some good news, We are to leave here on 15th September, leave 1 battalion at Gyantse & ½ battalion at Chumbi, then go back to India, where we shall be by the end of October. Allowing two months for us to do up my fair maps & you will be in my arms by the middle of January. I think this seems very likely to come off. We move into our house tomorrow. Today it was too rainy to move camp. Heaps of love & kisses, my pet, to your dear self & our for darlings, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

12th August, Lhasa, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, We are in such a comfortable house, moved in today with 2 Cos. of 40th Pathans as escort and the main camp on a much drier maidan outside. This house is rather Chinese in style with a courtyard, 3 storeys high & the rooms all ornamented Chinese style. The house is built of stone & very strong. Cowie & I have a room together, and now I hope to be able to write longer letters. A Mounted Infantry patrol went out today in the direction of the Pembu La & captured 60 prisoners & their guns without firing a shot, so probably tomorrow I shall go out & try & get onto the pass to do some surveying. The Chinese Amban paid Col Y. a long visit today but I don't know with what result. I am delighted with the idea of clearing out before the winter, I do hope it will come off, but don't count on anything. You will of course see the latest news in the papers; in fact by the time this reaches you, you will have seen whether we are leaving Lhasa or not. Don't forget to let me know whether you have cleared of my tailor's bill & what you can save. What gives me the best idea is if you let me know from your pass book what you had in hand when a new remittance arrived, excluding the latter. With £70 a (*month*) I rather count on your saving £10 a month. I shall hope soon (*to*) the asking you for your “interesting dates” to time my arrival accordingly. I shall on the way down do everything I can to get the fair maps started quickly. I don't know where we shall spend the two months, I would prefer Bangalore so as to get hold of my kit again, Calcutta is too expensive. I don't want to spend any of my savings before I get home. Oh! my dear, I wonder if you can imagine how I am longing (Aug 14) to see you again. Yesterday I had a long day out onto the Pembu La & back. We had a magnificent view & I did a lot of work. This morning I was out starting the triangulation off my base. Your dear letter ending July 15 came yesterday, mostly about your tennis. I hope you had good luck in the Devonshire Park tournament. God bless you my pet; heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

20th August, Tibet Frontier Commission, Lhasa, to Ida: “My own darling sweetheart, What a pleasure it is to give you anything; you are so pleased with the extra £10 for your singing lessons. I wish, my pet, I could afford to give you heaps of things. I am very proud & delighted about your singing. I had a long day out yesterday with the Mounted Infantry surveying, starting at 8 & getting back at 6.30. Today I was surveying all the morning & playing football this afternoon & got a good bruise on my leg which is very stiff in consequence. On the 23rd I hope to go for 3 days, one march from here to just below the Pembu La, to do triangulation. The weather has been much better lately, though there is a storm brewing tonight, but I think the rains are over. Anyhow yesterday I had a grand view of snows a way to the North & West, up to 100 miles away, so I hope to get in a good deal of work now. Everything is pointing to our leaving here in September, which means that we shall get back to India in November. I'm so sorry about addressing your letter in Una's envelope, very careless of me. The post goes off every three days, so I really writes you 2 letters a week, but this is a very short one. I can now look definitely forward to our meeting which makes me very

happy. God bless you darling, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

23rd August, Tibet Frontier Commission, Lhasa, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I had settled to go out on my little trip to the Pembu Gong La tomorrow, but it has turned cloudy, so I have postponed it. I have hopes that after all my trip down the Brahmaputra may come off. The best of it is that getting off the main line like that one will go much quicker & that I shall be back in India as soon as the main body. I shall have an escort of 100 or 200 Gurkhas no danger, & a great thing altogether. This is an idea I have had for a long time & it is such an easy way of making a name for one’s self & what is best of all doesn’t delay our meeting by one day, so I do hope it will come off. Heaps of love & kisses my pet to your darling self & our 4 chicks, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

29th August, Camp (13 miles beyond Lhasa), to Ida: “My own sweet darling, At last I’ve got out on my little trip & am encamped up the valley about 13 miles from Lhasa & very nearly opposite Dhejen Jong, a nice little camp on the banks of the river. 1 Co. 32nd Pioneers under Capt Cooke & 12 M. I. are my escort. Tomorrow we take the M. I. & Go as far as we can up the valley & on the 31st go back to Lhasa. The people are very friendly, bringing supplies &c. willingly. It has been much finer today, so I do hope we are really coming to the end of the rains. There are one or two storms knocking about but plenty of blue sky. Carrie went down to Gyantse today with a convoy to get on with the works there. Oh! sweetheart, how capital you’re getting into the finals of the single tennis. I wish I could be watching you. The river here the Kyi Chu, is very much in flood, about 400 yards across but shallow. Our camp is on a little bluff on the bank. Yes, there is no doubt we leave Lhasa about 20th of September. If I go down with the main force there will be sundry delays &c. If I’d do my Brahmaputra trip I shall I believe get to India sooner than the main force.

August 30. Had a very successful day with 15 mounted men. We rode 15 miles up the valley & got in a good bit on the map. We got to just opposite the Gamden Monastery which is on the map, started at 7 & back at 5.30, a pretty tiring day. Tomorrow we march back to Lhasa & I hope to be allowed out again next day. The weather is much finer, so now I want to get my work done as soon as possible. I have three trips still to do, each of 4 or 5 days. If they all come off I shall get a fine lot of work done. It is so much nicer being out in camp like this & away from the whole army.

1st Sept. 10 pm. I’ve been busy all day arranging for my 2nd trip & go off tomorrow, coming back on the 5th. A dak goes out while I’m away, so I must scribble you a line & leave it here. Negotiations are going on well and there is no doubt we shall be leaving here in 3 weeks or so, and which ever way I go back I shall be in India by the end of November. If I go back the way we came there are several little side trips for 2 or 3 days that I ought to do to finish up work, and then of course and harmony with all its rules &c. can only do short marches. We should also probably stay a few days at Gyantse. There is one great advantage of my being on an expedition of this kind is that you can see all the news in the papers much later (*sooner?*) than my letters. We, I believe, leave one battalion at Gyantse & one at Chumbi, but as I shall have done all these surveying within reach, there will be nothing left to be done in that line. I shall do my very best to get my fair maps done quickly, so our meeting is quite within sight God bless you, my pet, heaps of love & kisses to your dear self & our 4 darlings, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

7th September, Tibet Frontier Commission, Lhasa, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, I went out for a trip west up a valley on the map, camped on the 2nd Pangdong with 1 Co. Gurkhas & 25 M. I. Then the next day rode 15 miles further on, surveying & back; & on the 4th went up a Hill, both long days & back here on the 5th; arranged to go up to the Pembu Gong La on the 6th, but have had to put it off, as it rained heavily again. I hope now to get off tomorrow. We are all going in state to the Potala today to see the treaties signed & I believe now there is nothing to delay us leaving on the 20th. If the Brahmaputra trip comes off I will get Reuters correspondent to put it in his telegram so you will no. I reckon it will take 2 months at most & I will of course send you a wire from Sadiya in Assam. You will only be a month at most without a letter. Now, sweetheart, don’t go & get nervous about it, this isn’t like wandering in China. I shall have a good escort & about 6 officers including a doctor with me & there is nothing whatever to be jumpy about, but I daresay it won’t come off. You can see on your map the rough course of the river which we which we should more or less follow all the way down. I’m not for any more long wanderings & the this journey I should get much more kudos than for all my work in China.

6 pm. Just back from the treaty signing, not very interesting. It has been a fine day & I do hope the weather has

changed, as I want to get my work is finished. I've got no cheroots & very little tobacco. I've heaps at Gyantse by parcel post, but they won't let parcels come up. I shall be very glad when Murhill<sup>42</sup> is sold. Una & Mary are I'm quite sure living much beyond their income. I really don't believe there is anything better to invest our share than in Japanese. I think you had better address me now C/o Surveyor General's Office, 13 WOULD Street, Calcutta, because I can have my letters then re-directed on. So sorry you were beaten in the tennis finals, probably in the next you will get less handicap so you will have to play up. I don't see any signs of your having Margaret & Enid taught to swim. I wish you would only the summer will be over by now. I shall have to get you to get me a suit to go home in, I'm very badly off in that way & it will be pretty cold for me arriving in February or March. I've got to pack up now for tomorrow & then go over to the camp to arrange about the transport &c. I came away from the Potala before everything was over, so as to get time to myself. God bless you, my pet, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"Kiss our darlings from me."

8th September, Tibet Frontier Commission, Lhasa, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, The General thought it would be better to put off my trip one more day, and this morning doesn't look very promising. I don't know when the rainy season is going to end. Each day almost is the same, raining at nights and on the hills above a certain height it snows. Now that peace is signed I can turn my thoughts to no. 5. I wonder whether you want another son as much as I do, but then as I have often told you if I succeed with no. 5. I shall do my very best to have no. 6 a year younger, so you won't be able to say I haven't given you plenty of warning; and if you agree to no. 5, I know no. 6 will come too. On the other hand I've no intention of going for no. 5 unless you wanted to, because I love to think of our Lisle as the product of our love for each other. I love you so much more when you're in the family way or when you have a baby with you. I'm so sorry but I can't help it.

19th Sept. I'm afraid I've missed a mail. I went out on the 9th for a trip to the Penbu Gong La, camped about 9 miles from there, climbed 5 hills, one a day & came back on the 14th. On the 15th climbed another hill from here. On the 16th there was a conference about the Brahmaputra trip which looks more hopeful, anyhow I am to go in command, think of that my dear if it comes off. We leave here on the 23rd & reach the river on the 26th & get a final decision while at the river. Either way I shall be in India by the end of November. You're not very good about sending round my photos. Ida you should try every picture paper in succession, Graphic, Illustrated, Sphere, Sketch, King & others. If you do that with each set, you will gradually get nearly the whole accepted. You can imagine I'm pretty full of work, what with my own computations & settling all the details of the Brahmaputra trip. Fancy me commanding, my dear, 2 Cos. Gurkhas, 200 coolies & 6 other officers. It will be a grand opportunity for me & such an easy chance.

"6.30 pm. We shan't get a telegram from the Govt finally saying yes or no about the Brahmaputra till we are between here and the river. Much love, my darling, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"India end of November, in your arms in February."

22nd September, Tibet Frontier Commission, Lhasa, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, We are actually off tomorrow. 5 marches to the river, as we cross the Brahmaputra a march higher up than we did before, on the way up. I feel almost certain that the trip down the river to Assam will not be sanctioned and there will go the only chance of doing it, and the best chance I shall ever have of distinguishing myself. I hope to go ahead from the river with the rest of the mission & a company of Gurkhas meet Curry at Nangartse. He has to do a little wandering about, and I shall go straight on to Gyantse where we shall arrive on October 3. There I have to make arrangements for a party going back by Simla. I might possibly have to go back that way myself, but I'm not at all keen; we'd get to Simla in December. This wouldn't delay my coming home at all because Cowie would be going on with the fair maps. We are having beautiful weather & shall have a very easy march to Gyantse, a little cold at night is perhaps. Wilton was getting his parcels up through the Chinese & his servant, so I asked him to get mine too. Some robbers attacked the party on the Karo La, killed the 4 men, Chinese & Tibetans & looted most of the parcels, some have been recovered, but I haven't anything to smoke. Wilton was going overland to China, but it has been decided it isn't safe. I rather agree because

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<sup>42</sup> Una and Mary had lived on at their mother Julia's house.

he proposed to go by himself with only 2 Gurkhas. You may be always sure that I am sensible & cautious over my travels. We shall probably wait a week or so in Gyantse & then I shall have to spend a week about Phari. Already the force at Gyantse is beginning to move down to get out of our way. I've got so little kit that it is very simple to pack; it's not like coming up here when we had to pick & choose what to bring. I think the probable amount of leave I shall take will be till October 1906. By the bye I shall probably be a Major before we meet. There was a bit of a tamasha last night, rockets & sword dances by the Pathans & a sort of theatrical performance by the Sikhs. You will see all about our movements in the papers. I don't like to know when we shall send off letters when we are moving down, but the telegraph is at Gyantse and I will telegraph any news from there. Much love, my pet, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

8th October, Gyantse, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, I got in here on the 5th & have been very busy getting ready for the trip to Gartok & Simla<sup>43</sup>. We start on the 10th & reach Simla about 15th January. Cowie takes the survey party down to Dehra Dun & starts the fair maps there, so nothing will be delayed & of course it's a fine bit of exploration for me to go on. Wood of the Survey comes with me & a surveyor; then as the ostensible object of the expedition is to see to this trade mart at Gartok, Rawling who is doing the political is to be in charge but is to conform to my wishes in every way. Bailey of the 32nd makes up the party; so we are very nice little party; we have a very good hospital assistant native, who has been with the mission the whole time, 8 sepoy & odds & ends of followers, 42 ponies of which 17 are for riding, & 100 yaks is what we start with. We are being done very comfortably, 3 animals for each officer, so one can take plenty of warm clothing & we shall want it too. I'm very sorry not to have been allowed to go down the Brahmaputra but this is a good journey to have made. O'Connor & some M. I. probably go with us as far as Shigatse, so we shall send a dak back from there & as the route we go by is the regular courier route to Eastern Tibet, we shall very likely be able to send back letters two or three times. If we do I shall send a telegram to Renny-Tailyour and I've asked him to wire on to you; then as soon as we get into British territory, 19 marches from Simla we shall send on a messenger. Those last 19 stages there are bungalows & we come down the Kubu (?) valley. I may have to go down to Calcutta for a few days to see Col Longe. Wood will go straight back to Dehra we shall have all the maps ready in a month or so. You darling, how I shall enjoy getting home. I shall have well learned my leave. A dak comes in every day here, today yours of Sept. 16 arrived, very short, my dear. I am so glad you were getting on well with your tennis. You are really very good at it. Who is Mr Miles your partner? I shall laugh at cold after this. Wood & I have a tent to make it warmer.

Oct. 9. We are busy all the time tacking & settling things however, now we are complete in our little camp, with nothing, but what we have got to take with us. I expect we shall have an awful job getting started, the first day is always difficult. We march to Dongtse tomorrow. Now, goodbye, my pet, heaps of love & kisses to your dear self & our darlings, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

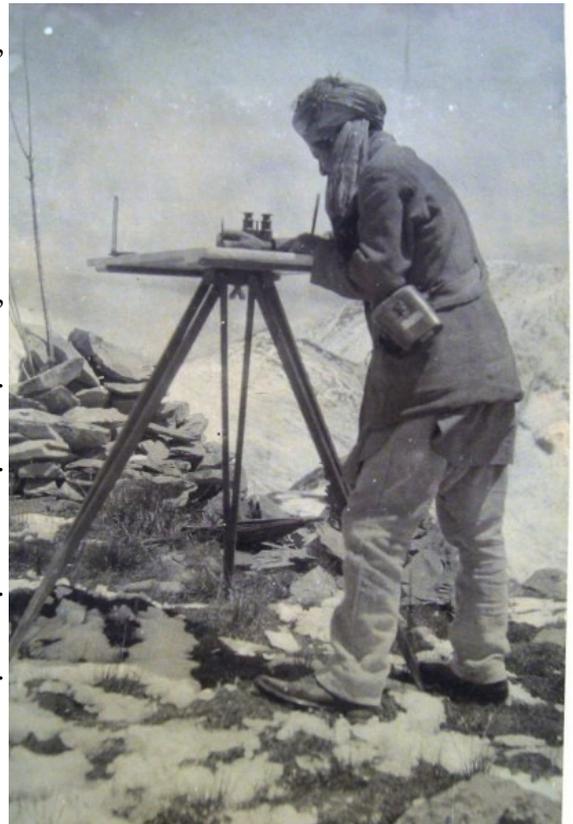
14th October, Shigatse, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, We have made a most successful start. Left Gyantse on 10th Oct & marched 12½ miles to Dongtse down the valley. I started my survey from there & next day had a long day as I went on to the hills as well doing a 14 mile march. On the 12th & 13th we did 14½ & 16 miles. Here we are in a grove just outside the town & as soon as we arrived a lot of officials arrived with presents of food &c. We came down here with ponies & yaks, but only take on the ponies & get more here in place of the yaks. These have been collected & will be brought to us tomorrow. In the meantime we have a lot of Tibetans making warm things, there are 10 in front of my tent making gloves now. I think we shall get off about the 17th. The Tibetans, the official & villagers are all very pleasant; and I don't think we shall have any difficulty with them. It is very convenient having Wood with me, he is out surveying today & I get a day off.

"3 pm. I've been busy all day with the others getting our warm clothing. I'm using a Swan pen, which is not a success. I think we shall get off on the 17th. Then it's about 600 miles to Gartok which we can easily do in 2 months, allow a week there & about 25 marches to Simla. I'm getting my coat lined with lambskin, & my trousers lined with chamois leather. I think it's so lucky being able to do this trip without delaying my coming home at all. Will you tell Mrs Harris that I haven't bought a single turquoise in Lhasa; they asked ridiculous prices & I've had no time for hunting

<sup>43</sup> There was a change of plan whereby he goes to survey up the Tsang Po to its source, rather than down the Brahmaputra to Assam.

about for the things. We are the first Englishmen to come here since 1785 & after this no Europeans have been on our route at all.

“Oct. 15. Our preparations are getting on. I’m having my Jaeger (?) sleeping bag lined with lambskins. We shall get off all right on the 17th & march for Puncholing which is just on the edge of your map. We hire our animals & change every few marches. At present we have ponies, mules & donkeys but later on we change to yaks as soon as we get to beyond civilisation. This halt has been very useful for getting in a large bit of country surveyed; but from now onwards I want to do a little halting as possible. Our march runs parallel to the main snowy range of the Himalayas about 50 to 100 miles north of it, so we should have some fine views. We hope to get letters sent in from Jang Lache about a week from here and then perhaps once more, then it will be easier to send them in either across to Almorah or on to Simla. Really darling, you have nothing to be anxious about. It is still quite hot here in the daytime, beautiful weather, not a cloud in the sky. At night we have about 10° of frost. Our camp here reminds me very much of Sven Hedin’s book. The grove has lost all its leaves & looks very wintry. Our Tibetan official who accompanies us to Gartok is working very well. This is our party, 5 Gurkha, Mounted Infantry; 4 of whom act as our 4 orderlies, 3 military surveyors armed, one Survey of India Surveyor, who does most of the plane tabling, 5 Khalassies to carry instruments, 2 cooks, Hospital assistant, 7 men with our own baggage ponies, of whom 2 Indians, the rest Tibetans of sorts. Then we have our hired transport with Tibetan drivers, my Tibetan interpreter & Bailey has another. I ride on my own sturdy white pony, with an M. I. saddle to carry my rifle. Then I have long saddle bags filled with odds & ends including my flask of whiskey. As far as Jang Lache we shall have an easy time, i.e. 85 miles then 28 miles beyond that civilisation ceases, which shows that from there onwards we shall always be over 14,000 feet. When I get to Dehra Dun, we shall have 8 sheets to draw, but they will all be very simple sheets & I shall have plenty of draftsmen. When we get to Simla, I shall very likely be a Major & perhaps the despatches for the Tibet expedition will be out. I wonder if I shall get anything. I think if I don’t that this (*sic*) show will get me a C.I.E. however I won’t count on anything. Today we are going to visit the Tashi Lama, who is the next biggest Lama to the Dalai Lama. Tomorrow we go over the big Tashi Lumpo Monastery. The more I see of the way the Tibetans are working for us, the more certain I feel that we shall get to Simla all right about the date I say 15th January. It will be too cold for there to be any inducement to take it easy. Of course we shall be better off the later the winter is this year. I’ve just bought for 8/- a most beautiful fur cap, covering the whole of my head & neck except just my face, that’s a great addition. The only thing I’m not well off for is boots, but I’m getting a pair of Tibetan boots for the colder weather.



“Oct. 16. We’ve had a great job all day, but most things are ready. Heaps of love & kisses, my pet from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“Kiss our darlings & what about no. 5?”

22nd October, Puncholing, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, Everything going as well as possible. Wood & I left Shigatse on the 17th as we wanted to do, a short march to go up a hill, so did 7 miles, on the 18th it rained steadily all the morning so we gave up our hill & marched up a bare plain into another where we camped in a nice grove of trees. In the evening Rawling & Bailey joined us. As they had had a long day, we halted on the 19th, but Wood & I had a very tiring day, as we went up a big hill that was further than we thought from camp, but we had a fine view & did a lot of work. 20th we marched 15 miles in a similar sort of plain, sometimes bare & stony, sometimes cultivated. 21st we did a 16 mile march & also went up a hill from which we got a grand view including Everest & other big peaks.

Today Wood & Bailey went on 16 (?) miles & Rawling & I did the march, only 13 miles. We are just on the left hand edge of the map you have. We change ponies here, but all the Tibetan officials are doing all that well. We reach Jang Lache on the 24th two days from here & change ponies a game there & perhaps will be able to send in letters. We are now fairly started & are having a very easy time. I thought there might be delays with getting ponies changed, but there have been none & we are keeping easily up to our dates, & my dear getting such a lot of country surveyed. At each camp Rawling has the treaty out & has it a read to the Tibetans. We are now alongside the Brahmaputra<sup>44</sup> which has already got smaller. Of course we haven't got into the cold parts yet, so far 11° of frost has been our lowest. The day's being, except once, beautifully fine & clear & in the sun quite hot. We've always had lovely camps in groves alongside the villages. From Jang Lache we have 40 marches to Gartok, which I said we should reach on 15th Dec. While we have 12 days spare for halts &c. Wood is a very hard working chap & so saves me a lot. We're all very well, except one military surveyor who we are sending back, as he won't stand the cold. I've been troubled with a little toothache. We've generally (*been*) called at 6.30, breakfast at 7, outside till it gets cold, then we get started about 8 & as the path is good, everything gets in by 1 or 2. I have such a lot of furs that I shall be much better off than last winter. Keep sending the Standards as I shall enjoy them, as we get near Simla. Much love my darling & heaps of love & kisses to your dear self & what darlings, ever your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

25th October, Tibet Frontier Commission, Jang Lache to Ida: "My own sweet darling, I send you in a letter last from Puncholing, then we marched here in two days, 30 miles along the Brahmaputra, not very interesting. Today we halted here but no holiday for me, as I was up on a hill till 4. Then since that I've been busy repacking as Rawling & I are going off the main road to follow the river. As I shall be surveying myself all the time till we meet the others, i.e. in 10 or 14 days I shall have my work pretty well cut out. This is quite a little town & all the officials & people most anxious to please. We have fine weather, but getting colder every night & the wind is already pretty bad. Much love my pet from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

28th October, La-go, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, I must try & keep a letter going, but it's not so easy, as I am surveying myself. We left Jang Lache in two parties, Wood & Bailey with most of the party & kit crossing the river & keeping to the main route, while Rawling & I follow up the river itself."



"29th Oct. Interrupted as usual. While on the 26th we marched up the plain 10½ miles & camped about opposite where the main party were on the other side. On the 27th we did 11½ miles. The valley narrowed & we followed the river all day, high hills on the south

bank. On the 28th we did 12 miles, the last two we left the river & went up a big side alech (?). Today we went up on the hills & got a lot of work in, but only moved our camp 8 miles. Rawling & I have a small tent between us; today we are encamped on a terraced field, but up to now we can have always pitched our tent in the little walled enclosures alongside a village, sometimes with trees, but we are gradually getting away from them. It is rather interesting surveying in this part of the Brahmaputra, which is quite unknown. We are glad to have a village (*near*) as far as possible as then there is no trouble about grain & fodder for the ponies. The villagers are all as humble & polite as possible. We are doing shorter marches than we meant to, but it is difficult to arrange marches when one doesn't know the road, however we are keeping comfortably up to our dates.

"Nov. 10. Sa Kajong, Longitude 85°, Lat 29° 30'. It is hopeless my pet, to try & keep up a daily diary for you. All this last fortnight I've been surveying myself, getting in late & then writing up my board, and after dinner it is too cold to do anything but get into bed. We followed the river for several days & then had to leave it owing to there being no road along it, crossed a high pass & got into a big plain along the south of which we could see Everest & all the main Himalayan range, then we came back into the river valley again. I had 3 days lumbago, & oh, it was a job

<sup>44</sup> From here to its source it is known as the Tsang Po.



surveying with it on. Luckily it went away & I am very well indeed. We met the others here yesterday & are halting today. Tomorrow we divide again & I go along the river 6 days to Tadmin (?). I think we shall reach Gartok on 10th Dec. & I see no reason why we shouldn't be in Simla by 15th January. The weather except yesterday has been bright & sunny, but the nights are cold, 37° of frost last night & of course it will get steadily colder every day, but that won't matter, as long as it doesn't snow. The other party have got some gazelle. We saw nothing, but feed on partridges & sand grouse. We may get letters from Tadmin, back to Gyantse. After that it will not be worthwhile & we shall try & send letters forward. The Tibetans are helping us along splendidly, we are met at every camp with fuel, milk, grass &c. No cultivation here, a small village in a large plain, Kyang about on it & we've said goodbye to cultivation now till we get into the Suttlej valley. Goodbye my pet, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

"Kiss our darlings from me. We are having our dak sent out from similar to meet us at Shiptri, the frontier, 19 marches from Simla."

15th November, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, Things are a little better today as we are in a house. The last 3 days the weather has taken a turn for the worse, cloudy windy days & so cold, snow a little on some of the hills, but luckily none on the plains we've been in. We get into Tadmin tomorrow I hope & meet the other parties there. They will have had 2 days halt, lucky fellows. While we left Sakajong on the 11th and one march is very like another up over a little pass into another plain, where we forwarded a small river. Bailey is with me & we each shot 2 geese with our rifles. He also shot a goat & a fox. We had a long day, 19 miles to a little monastery Pukta, but we sent on a servant with a Tibetan, who had tea ready for us in a Tibetan tent, our things are not getting in till after dark.

"Nov. 12. Up a side valley & over a pass to the Brahmaputra where a little hut had been cleared for us, but when we had settled down, I remembered the great difficulty we had had in crossing the river before owing to the floating ice. I decided to pack up & cross at once which we did in a skin boat but it was dark before everything was across. It began to cloud up that day.



"Nov. 13. We marched along the plain about four miles wide in which the river runs, a regular sort of Sven Hedin desert, a little dry grass growing on the plain, a beastly day, no sun. We finally halted at a little camp of black tents.

"Nov. 14. 15 miles along the same plain. All along there were a lot of Kyang & Goa; the former you know & Margaret does, are wild donkeys, the latter gazelle, not so wild we couldn't shoot. Camped at Rala a small monastery with some tents alongside.

"Nov. 15. Today there was a little sun, but very windy up over a pass about 17,000 ft, our general elevation in the plain is about 15,000 ft. The Tibetans wanted us to stop at a place about 9 miles, but I wanted to get on, so on we came to this place, one house & some tents. I'm glad we are in a house, as although it is cleared there is a very strong wind. Tomorrow I do hope it will be better. Temperature down to about 40° of frost at night.

"Nov. 16. Tadmin, we joined with the other party, all well & march on tomorrow. We calculate on getting to Gartok on 7th Dec. & Shiptri on the 13th. It was very cloudy this morning & awfully cold, that cleared later on. Much love my pet, all is going as well as possible, ever your loving husband & lover, Charlie."

15th November, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, Your dear letters of Oct. 23 arrived on

the 13th that all yesterday I was out visiting a hill about 8 miles from here & didn't get back till 4.30. I had a successful day and did all I wanted to, but I was too tired to do any writing when I came back. Today I was busy this morning working out computations, now this afternoon I have a little spare time. We have just received a reinforcement of 60 men, under Hart of the Pioneers which brings our total up to 360 men. Col Younghusband is at Darjiling and should be starting soon to join us, but we are not expected to make a start till early in December. The later it is the colder it will be. Malcolm is the name of the man who travelled with Wellby (?) through Tibet, he is in the Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders I think. I'm so sorry about your goitre, sweetheart, what does Dr Colgate think it comes from? Yes, the prospects of no. 5 seems rather poor just now. No, there has been nothing in the papers about Tibet because the Indian Government have been very keen to keep it all as quiet as possible so as not to let the Russians know what we are doing. The Balaclava cap will be very useful when it comes, but parcels take about 10 days or so longer to come here. I had one, but it is too tight & I can't use it, so this will be very useful. If I telegraph to you, send on the news to Una & Mary, they are very keen on hearing the latest news. I won't forget the turquoises or prayer wheel, but there is nothing to be got here. The excursion of 17th Oct. didn't come off. No, I wouldn't count on anything at all, but hope for the best. I can just feel that I have a throat, but it doesn't interfere with my eating or sleeping. My foot is quite well. Bailey has such a nice Jaeger waistcoat, I wonder if you will send me out one like that, lined with red flannel would be an addition. I haven't quite got back my strength yet, I feel easily tired, but I'm getting stronger each day.

“Nov. 17. I had a long day out, starting at 9 & getting back at 5; altogether about 23 miles but I rode most of the way. When I got onto my hill it was bitterly cold, there was a strong wind blowing. Hayden came out with me, and we could hardly stick it out. We had a jolly ride back across the plain, cantering our ponies most of the way. Days I go out I have no time for writing darling & all this morning I was working out my computations. I was jolly glad of my fur lined cap, tied down under my chin, one I had in Peking. There is a strong wind blowing today, quite impossible to go out. Reinforcements are coming up, in the 44th Gurkhas, four guns & a Company of Bengal Sappers. They do not come up here but by the Chumbi valley route. No signs of our moving yet, we are waiting for Col Younghusband who is still in Darjiling. I have two easy days work, i.e. Between breakfast & lunch & one long day & then I shall have finished; then I shall be glad of a move. It will be bitter cold marching in December. I always am called at 7.15 & have a cup of tea, then I have my tent door open & let the sun streaming, while I lie in bed till 8.30 thinking of you. I then get up & we have breakfast and then I have plenty of work to do till lunch. Two geese have been sent up from Sikhim for our Xmas dinner. We've called them Sandford & Marton, they are very friendly. I do hope we shall get a medal out of this show, to do that the Tibetans must show a bit of fight. My throat is quite well again & none the worse for my outings. My foot is quite well & I haven't felt my back for some days, so in that way I'm feeling very cheerful. I only want to get on the move, so that I can get home the sooner to you.

“Nov. 19. Yesterday I was out on a hill about 6 miles away in the plain, got back by 2, & today up on a hill just above us, but with a climb of 1,200 ft & got back from lunch. Tomorrow I shall be very busy working away at my computations, as now I have practically finished all my observations and I want to work them out pukka, so that I mayn't be in any way delayed when the expedition is over. Col Younghusband left Darjiling yesterday & arrives here on the 27th. The Chumbi valley column start on Dec. 1 & ought to be at Kala-tso on the 8th, then we shall start from here. The mornings are still fine, but the afternoons are regularly windy & then it is beastly out. We are mostly sitting in the mess tent, the only warm place, but my hands are very cold. I've just had a new puttoo coat made, it looks very nice & is warm. We should get English mail today or tomorrow. Dear heart I wish I was more comfortable, then I could write more. Does it ever strike you how much easier it is the you writing in your comfortable drawing room. My great time for thinking of you is the days when I don't go out. I have tea at 7.15 & get up at 8.30, such a lovely laze. I even think of no. 5. We ought to have much better food than we do, but Bailey our mess secretary doesn't look after things well & we live much too much on tinned foods. Our messing is also more than I thought, last month it was Rs 6 a day including everything, my outfit allowance of Rs 1,000 & the deputation allowance of 20 per cent on my pay i.e. Rs 228 a month has been sanctioned, but I knew it would be; however it's a nice little some to get. There may have been a little delay in sending the £70 early in November, but I have heard that my pay bills have been sent to Grindlay (not Bombay, but Calcutta), so I expect it will be all right. Now I have to save for my ticket

home and also to have a little in hand. My beard is getting quite a respectable length.

“Nov. 20. & this must go off. I was working out my triangulation this morning, dear heart I do have very little time for writing. Once the sun goes down we collect round the fire, and it is impossible to write. I worked out a .90 miles east of here today, so I shall get a good area of triangulation even from here. Your dear letter of Oct. 31 arrived this morning, so you see we are only 3 weeks apart. How I should love to see my dear little son; darling don't you realise what I miss separated from all I love. I am very well now, darling, don't be at all anxious about me. I only wish I had more time writing; but on such an expedition as this I must do my work well & keep it all ready up to date. Col Younghusband has been delayed & is still at Darjiling, but the other force, cross the frontier on Dec. 3, I believe that is settled. It is delightful getting your letters regularly; that is an advantage of being on an important political mission. The reason why we are moving forward is to forestall the Russians who are believed to have designs on Tibet and that is why we are going on in spite of the winter. We shall all enjoy getting into a warmer climate, Gyantse<sup>45</sup> is about 13,000 ft & we shall probably occupy houses there. I think of you very much darling, you're very very dear to me, so take great care of yourself & what a happy meeting we shall have. God bless you my darling, heaps & heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.”

17th December, Tibet Frontier Commission, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, We have nearly got to the end of our troubles, all well. I must leave any description of our journey till data, still too cold for writing. We have had a most severe time, but have done a lot of surveying, surveyed the Brahmaputra up to its source, then the Mansarowar and other lakes, then the Gartok branch of the Indus and now is the Suttlej from its source to British territory which is a total to be proud of. We yesterday got Indian newspapers to Nov. 14. I see I have been mentioned in the despatches, but I don't know in what terms. We have only 2 difficult bits to get over & hope to reach Simla on 11th January. I've shot 5 Tibetan antelope. From Simla I go down to Calcutta for any few days and then to Dehra Dun, where I shall do my fair mapping, address C/o Grindlay Groome & Co. Bombay. All well, but we have all pretty well done up. Much love, my darling, from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie.

“I think I shall have all my maps ready by end of March & April will certainly see us together again.”

27th December, to Ida: “My own sweet darling, we crossed the frontier on the 24th, one of our hardest days, an awful climb of 5,000 ft mostly through snow & then down at 6,000 ft. Since then the path has been pretty bad along the edge of bad khuds<sup>46</sup>, now however it is all right & tomorrow we get



to our first bungalow. On Xmas Eve we found a dak waiting for us at the frontier with your dear letters from Sept. 23 to Nov. 18, so I am pretty well up to date. Murhill is for sale on Dec. 15. You ask me about the repairs, well, really I think Una has done wisely about it. A house in good repair & looking nice would fetch much more. What a singing bird you have become, sweetheart, I am so glad & longing to hear you. Don't talk rot about a month more or less separation making no difference to me, of course it does & I'm going to come home just as soon as ever I can, but I must see my maps fair drawn & ready for publication first. In the Pioneer I see the P&O steamers advertised for several months. Till I get to Dehra it is impossible to say exactly by what steamer I shall come, but I should say that I should leave India not later than the steamer of 1st April. It is rather tantalising, I have missed the Pioneer with the full Tibetan, so I don't know in what turns I've been mentioned. I only saw just the telegraphed list of those mentioned. I hope if I get anything it won't be brevet majority as I am so near getting my majority. I have a lot of writing to do, sending a long description of what I've done to Col Longe & also a shorter one to Sir Clements Markham, the President of the Geographical Society. Do the best you can in the saving line, sweetheart; you're not much of a hand at it, but I'm no better in England. I read Fred Byrde's letters but I think you'd better leave the money

<sup>45</sup> This would be seem to be in the wrong direction; does he mean Gartok?

<sup>46</sup> A ravine or steep cleft.

alone & not gamble with it. I can't tell till I've done up my accounts in Calcutta what I've saved, but I think we shall be all right. I shall have to cut your £70 a month down a bit, though, because that would only leave me Rs 90 a month to live on. I'm glad you like the Order of the Dragon; no, we won't be allowed to wear it, but still it will be nice to have. Thank Margaret & Enid very much for the two horses heads they sent me as Xmas cards. I wish I could have got a telegram to you in time for Xmas, but I think you'll get it for the New Year. I've strained a tendon in my right wrist climbing over rocks & have it rubbed. On Christmas day we got to a Moravian Mission station & had our first eggs, bread & potatoes. Tomorrow we start baths, we've none of us had any for 2½ months! I think we ought to get another dak soon. I told you I had got 4 Tibetan antelope horns, they are the same style as black buck. We get to Simla on 12th January, doing the ordinary marches, we can't go faster, as we have coolies. I shall leave Simla on the 14th, stay one night at Chumballa (?), paying of men & sending them to their homes, then go down with Rawling, reach Cawnpore on the 16th, stay there one night, as he has to get his things there, then go on down to Calcutta, reaching there I suppose on the 18th. Isn't it curious I found out that Wood is paid and if you of the old Gwynne, Neville's father. He married a year ago & his wife is expecting a baby just about now. I was very sorry to see Lady Elles had died in Simla in November. I am writing to Sir Edmund, who, I suppose is done in Calcutta. She had had enteric, got over it & then died suddenly. I heard from Wilfred from Chitral he had got an ibex & was very pleased. I suppose we shall soon hear that Port Arthur has fallen, the Russians have made a good defence. How jolly it is to be writing again to you, my pet, in a decent climate, with no longer frozen (*sic*). I'm glad you won the battle with the landlord over the WC. We are enjoying apple's, we get them small, but good at every village. My darling, I think of you, extra much on our wedding day & how you are the sunshine of my life. I want to bring you home something, darling, would you like a silver set for your dressing table, or would you rather I got English silver. I shall be in the north of India, so much easier to get that sort of thing. Much love, my darling & heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

31st December, Urni, to Ida: "My own sweet darling, We got another dak today with your dear letters of Nov. 25 & Dec. 2, so I am rapidly getting into regular touch again. I was, I must own, disappointed at seeing the Tibetan honours out & nothing for poor old me! I had a very nice letter from Renny-Tailour saying they couldn't understand it unless it was to give me a C.I.E. at the end of this journey, may be, anyhow I shall expect something when I get it, not before. I know you will be disappointed too darling, never mind. Renny had wired you home of my being all right on Nov. 10 & you had got that. Una tells me the house agents had put £2,500 as the reserve price of Murhill. I shall here soon of the sale, as it is on Dec. 15. What a dear little chap Lisle must be, I'm very proud of him. Yesterday we passed Chini, where there were Moravian Missionaries, they gave us a good lunch. It's very pleasant marching down this valley, good road & now we're among the deodars & firs & beautiful scenery. I walk all the marches, but am not very fit. I have had toothache a good deal, as an old stopping has come out. I shall have to see to it in Calcutta. Then my wrist is very painful, bandaged & painted with belladonna, rather difficult to write. We don't do long marches - 10 or 12 miles a day from bungalow to a bungalow. It will be rather curious to go to Simla again. We shall stay at the Club and I must go & see our old house. I believe Simla has grown a lot & there is a railway they are now. I was so glad to get Violet's letter, give her a kiss for it. I should have liked to have heard Capt Scott; but a great deal of too much fuss made about the North & South Pole. It is very comfortable being in bungalows & a good climate & being able to have regular baths now."

1st January (1905). Happy New Year you, my pet. We are in such a nice bungalow, two storeys, in a fir wood. The man we sent in with letters & telegrams on the 17th from 6 marches beyond the frontier has come back having sent off our telegrams on the 28th, so you will know by New Year's day that we are all right. I shall telegraph from Simla. I think any letters we send in now will not catch any mail earlier than the one we can catch at Simla. It's rather nice marching easily along here. One can do such a lot of work & writing letters &c. My poor wrist is so painful, I can't lift or carry anything. It's rheumatism right enough. However, otherwise I'm very fit, & thin! I only weighed 12 stone in Lhasa & less now. I should think you can imagine how we shall enjoy our first good dinner in Simla Club. Renny has sent me up a box of clothes to Simla. Now goodbye, darling, heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

23rd January 1907, Kohat<sup>47</sup>, to Ida: My own darling pet, Just back here from our journey to Thall. Crosthwaite got a special courage from the Railway & we were very comfortable. It was a most interesting journey. We started yesterday at 11 and reach their at 5.30 only 56 miles, so you can imagine the train didn't go fast. The interesting part was having a good view of the Samana Range, where Saragari was, the post held by 22 Sikhs in 1897, who were all killed. Then we had a good view too of the Durgai. Thall is in the Kurran Valley. We slept the night in the carriage & came back today& found your letter written on the 21st here. Tomorrow we leave about 2 & tonga 32 miles to Bandha (?), a dak bungalow, and the next day on to Bannu, where some people called Glancy are putting me up. I don't know them but Tandy has arranged it. All the hills round here are very bare and ugly. I hope you are taking care of yourself. My leg is flourishing, really hardly bothers me at all. We are just going out to call on the Deputy Commissioner. If you get no letter about the harness from Rawal Pindi look out in the Pioneer & try & get black not brown, the latter wouldn't look well with our black trap, and remember it is for a 14.1 pony, but anything from 13.3 to 14.2 which do for Jack all right, collar not breast for choice, as the latter rubs him. I'm simply longing to get back to you, life is very dull without you. God bless you darling, heaps & heaps of love & kisses from your adoring lover & husband, Charlie."

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<sup>47</sup> South of Peshawar, Pakistan.