

**DAILY MAIL
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**A GREAT CLIMB
READY TO ASCEND
KINCHINJUNGA
THE FOOD SUPPLIES**

Mr. Allister Crowley sends a second article on the preparations he has made for the expedition which he is leading up Kangchenjunga, or Kinchinjunga—the third highest known mountain in the world.

Probably by this time the expedition will have started. We hope to report its progress by special heliograms.

LAND OF SOLITUDE.

(BY OUR SPECIAL COMMISSIONER.)

“Bandobast,” Darjeeling, Wednesday, July 26.

How ridiculous appear those persons who claim that romance is dead, when one remembers that one has but to walk down to Northumberland Avenue and take one's passage on a pirate ship! How ridiculous, when a single week's march from the railway plunges one into the depth of a gloomy and forbidden land, into forests whose leeches make them all but impassable, and upon glaciers whose terrible solitudes have never yet been invaded by man! Yet this spice of adventure is not to be obtained without an infinity of trouble.¹

Arriving at Darjeeling after an uneventful voyage, I first gave vent to my feelings, as in my previous article, and then set about to see what preparations were necessary. Had I been Mr. Pierpont Morgan I should presumably have approached the King-Emperor with a view to purchasing his Indian dominions; it would have been a waste of money.

For the resources of this Empire are generously at the disposal of the reasonable traveller. Nothing can exceed the personal kindness and practical help which everybody concerned is only too ready to bestow. The Government will take every pos-

sible trouble that can be of any service; that is, to a responsible expedition with an intelligible object.

It is no doubt true that a certain charming lady, who has acquired no small reputation in Mahomedan circles by beating her husband from time to time in front of his coolies, somewhat loudly complains that she finds Anglo-Indians uncivil and disinclined to help. If this is really so, it is most extraordinary.

A BABU LETTER.

For myself, I must not let slip the opportunity of saying how very highly I value the innumerable kindnesses I have received on all hands. From the very start my formidable task was smoothed on its broader lines, while in the details I received so much help when an enthusiastic Italian gentleman, M. Rigo de Righi, the able young manager of the Drum-Druid Hotel, at which it is my much-prized privilege to stay, proposed to me to allow him to join us. As he speaks both Hindustani and Tibetan, and has six years' experience of the natives of these parts, my scruples were easily overcome.

The next business requiring attention was to find a headman to contract for and manage coolies. M. de Righi knew an excellent fellow; but he was in prison! This, however, as you know, is no drawback to a man's character in this country. Crime is common enough, but so is conspiracy. It is consequently the merest toss-up whether a given prisoner is a sinner or a victim. Anyway, if he is a good man at his job, nobody cares. So when he came out I engaged Nanga Sirdar in spite of the following communication of a jealous rival:

"To the General Sahib,
Darjiiling.

"Sir,—I beg most humbly and respectfully to bring to your kind notice that your honour I am Nima Serdar conductor of Sikim feuld and interpeter tibetan language, and your honour has been submitted my Testimonial and your Trustworthy my certificate and allow me for act after a some weeks and therefore your honor beg to inform you I having heard Nungan Sirdar was servant of woodlands Hutal and he stolen a Rickshaw of his Masters and sold at in Kurseong a Gentleman when the Manageress got traceing and he was santenced for One year, and alone said Nungan Sirdar freen from the Jail to this morning and appear before you for the work, he is acused, how will

be found gentlemen cook, and you will kindly enquiring to the Matter and considered, and I shall ever, pray.

I have the honour to be, Sir,

Your most obedient servant,

NIMA SERDAR BHOTIA,

Darjeeling, 24/6/05.

Thanks for the information sent by Mr. Dover from Gantok, in Sikim, I began to get a grasp of the Bandobast—"arrangement, settlement, completion," says the dictionary, but the word means more this—constant practice, alone gives the full meaning)—that would be requisite. Darjeeling is practically the last post where supplies can be obtained; it is unsafe to reckon on anything beyond.

FOOD FOR COOLIES.

Now, if a coolie carries 80lbs., and eats 2lbs. a day, how many coolies must one engage to carry 100 loads of 80lbs. each to a distance of 20 marches from the base of supplies? I leave my readers to work out the answer, but the net result of my own problem, which was very much more complicated, was that I decided to send on 8,000lbs. of rice, dal (a grain resembling some kind of bird food), ghi (clarified butter), salt, satu (made of barley, and other foods, which they mix with hot water and chew. Mr. Dover remarks that a man can only eat 1 1/2lb., eating all day!); chilis and other nutritious and succulent commodities for the coolies to Jongri, at the south foot of the Guicha La, one of the passes over the E. branch of the S. outlying spur of the Kanchenjunga massif, the spur that connects it with Pandim.

In view of the persistent rains of Sikkim, this food had to be tinned and soldered up, and, in view of the presumed carelessness of the coolies, I decided to pack the tins in a rough wooden framework. Behold, then, a vast collection of old paraffin tins, crates, sacks of food, carpenters, plumbers, and other necessary adjuncts to the task of carrying civilisation to the snows upon the verandah outside my room in the Drum-Druid Hotel.

By the way, Mr. Freshfield can never have seen the view from this verandah, or he would hardly have omitted to record the priceless and illuminating fact that it exactly resembles that of the Schnobspiter from the Dummehutte on the Eselgletscher.

Under the constant personal supervision of M. de Righi or myself the work went steadily on, till on July 24 and 25 110 loads in all left for Jongri. Mr. White, of the Political Department, was kind enough to supply the coolies for this purpose; and I have also specially to thank him for the trouble he took in sending for his photographs from Gantok and Calcutta for my examination.

Mr. White "makes no claim to be a mountaineer,"—perhaps just as well, if one takes his fine mountaineering record, and contrasts it with the much-advertised achievements (if it is an achievement to be pulled up a mountain by an overpaid peasant) of the pusillanimous braggarts of Savile Row, whose policy has brought the sport into such contempt that England, once its leader, can now produce no three climbers of the first rank to set against the 80 or 100 experts of Austria or Germany.

In spite of my continual ill-health—people who would go to Darjeeling as a health resort would go to Hades for the skating—the work went on steadily enough. Calculations, lengthy bargainings, careful weighings, more careful inspections, occupied days and nights—there is no "bridge" for the luckless man who is sent on ahead to make the bandobast.

Whatever he forgets is finally forgotten; neither wealth nor intellect will conjure up in the wilderness of glaciers a single ounce of sugar that has not been taken at the start and nursed carefully up to the moment it is needed. Lists, labellings, numberings, cross-checkings, weighings—where is romance gone now? And I feel with a particular shame that nine-tenths of the population of London would do this job a great deal better than I can.

WAITING FOR COMRADES.

Well done or badly done, however, it is done; and I have nothing to do but wait for my three old comrades, the shikaris Salama, Ramzana, and Subhana, who are coming over from Kashmir to stiffen the transport service, and the doctor, who with his two friends Reymond and Pache, should soon arrive from Switzerland.

Being extensively ill, I take ten days in Calcutta to recruit; and no sooner does the beautiful warmth of the plains get into my Darjeeling sodden carcass, than I feel fit to do anything in the world.²

On the way back from Jalpaiguri to Siliguri, at the very foot of the hills, I saw the mountains for the first time (it is the only

place in the world where this can happen) a wall of nearly 28,000 feet stood up above me, visible. It was Mr. Freshfield's "Vision," for a description of which I must refer the courageously curious to his book.

I must have missed most of it; to me it seemed merely a very fine view of a very fine mountain mass. I must remark though (what Mr. Freshfield unaccountably omits) that this view strongly reminds one of the Footel Borg seen from the Ratzbruke in the Piffelthal.

I wish the rest of the party would turn up. But they have been shipwrecked in the Gulf of Suez—which is undignified—and I suppose will turn up four days late with a ton or so of provisions which they are bringing out from Switzerland. So that I have let this article run on, perhaps unduly; but what fun it will be in three weeks' time when I can go in for a thousand poetical descriptions of the march to the foot of the mountains!

ALLISTER CROWLEY.

1. A large chunk of text left out here specifically mentioning the Alpine Club, which appeared in the Indian press report.
2. The bit about the Duke of Wellington, which appeared in the Indian press article, left out here.