

4425

Bunderchooran

18th March /91

My dear Pippa

In your last letter was the surprising news of Dick being made A.D.C. to Sir Henry Norman. It sounds very good but it must have been a fearful blow to everybody - I expect however he will return in one year having married an Australian millionaire's daughter.

We arrived here on Monday the 9th moving on on our way to Jerriah. B. is a small village about 5 miles west of Koomadoobish, our last camp, and

across a small river called the Khoodia,
of which more anon. Wright left K. on
Sunday and left Peddie & me there to
follow on next day. We had had a
good deal of rain all that week, &
on Sunday night at about 7 o'clock a
tremendous storm suddenly burst upon
us. It began by getting pitch dark,
then rain came down in perfect sheets,
thunder & lightning banging about above our
heads, ^{& hurricane of wind} and in about five minutes after
I had been peacefully sitting outside the
tent reading your letter we were crouching
in fear & trembling in a bulging tent
with a river flowing in at one door
& out at the other. Well it wasn't
long before our fears were realized for
suddenly one side of the tent blew in

knocking down a bookcase & chest of drawers
into the river and we had just time to
grab our big hats and fly, before the
whole tent collapsed. By this time it
was hailing in true tropical style, with
hailstones about the size of walnuts, (there
were many much bigger, about the size of
an egg, but walnuts were the average) and
there we were prancing about screaming
with pain when hit by them. Luckily
our heads were preserved by the hats.
With great difficulty we made our way
across the field towards the other tent
when we heard cries for help issuing
from a black mass on the ground. Go-
ing up to it we found the cooking
tent flat on the ground with several
kiltmatghars underneath, nearly drowned

and smothered, and kicking about in the
midst of soup, moroghee &c. This was our
dinner. We rescued the kits and took shel-
ter in the other tent which was standing
~~at~~ with difficulty & were wondering what
we should do next when a man arrived
with a letter ~~saying~~ from the wife of a
colliery manager who lives close by asking
us to go over there for the night as she
expected that we should be drowned. With
many blessings on her thoughtfulness (as
we had never called it was very decent of
her) we struggled across the plain to the
Verey's house about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile. We had to
find our way there by lightning and once
very nearly got lost in the jungle. How-
ever we got there at last and were pro-
vided with dry clothes dinner & bed &
so ended that adventure.

next morning we packed up the wreck of our tent & having with difficulty found some clothes that were only damp, we proceeded towards Bunderchoran. Peddie said he knew a short cut there, and as he had been there before, I foolishly trusted him, & the result was that in two minutes we were completely lost. After about two hours coursing about we stumbled on the road & all went well till we got to the Khoodia - When Peddie had crossed it before it was only about 10 feet broad and 3 inches deep, but now we saw a foaming torrent quite 150 feet across. However we thought we could easily ride across and made the syces take the ponies' heads and lead them over. I carried a dog on my saddle in front

there was a good strong stream and the water about came up to our knees, but all went well until we got to the middle of the river when my pony got onto a quicksand, and at once lost its head and began kicking and plunging & knocked the syc flat. I dismounted hurriedly on my back in the water. Luckily the syc had not let go of the bridle & I managed to catch the dog again and we dragged ourselves on shore, once more sponges. N.B. Peddie also got off in the middle. When we got to Bunderchoan we were rejoiced to find that the tents were not blown down & that Wright had some dry clothes. This was a good thing as our own things did not arrive till next day, as they could not cross the river.

The best of the rain is that it has kept the weather cool, it is now only 87° in my tent. I expect we shall be out about another month as we have just heard that the survey to Derriah has been sanctioned.

My bearer was much rejoiced to hear that Dick was now a 'captan sahib' & sends many salaams to 'Guril Sahib' so does your loving brother

Ralph

to you.