

DEHRI BRIDGE,
SHAHABAD DISTRICT,
BENGAL.

no. 54.

4630

6th Sept. 99

My dear Pippa,

I think it is a
mistake for me to take leave,
because I always feel so very
sick at coming back to the
mill - life seems to be a
thorn without a rose. After
basking for a fortnight under
the murmuring pines & the hem-
locks with a French novel in
hand it is hard to sit on
an office stool and write

progress reports and draw pictures of menials quarters and at the same time praise God. However I suppose it is better to have loved & lost than never to have done anything but hate, and I had a most elegant time at Munsoorie Pahar, never getting up before nine o'clock, which may sound screech-like to you, but which is here, allowing for the longitude, equal to three in the afternoon; and spending the rest of the day in a thoroughly resigned and Christian spirit of carelessness, like the lily of the field, completely realizing the fact

~~the fact~~ that Solomon & Co. laboriously bisecting babies into two equal portions down below, were less to be glorified than pitied.

The most exciting event of the fortnight was a dance at the hotel to at which most of hussorie was present - I gave a little dinner party, the guests being Mr. & Mrs. Alston, May Huddleston & her brother and Mr. Turner who was in my year at Coopers Hill and got one of the R.E. appointments. I tried to get the Hungarian ladies but unfortunately they were already engaged. none

of the other ladies were worthy
of the honour. The speciality
of my dinner was the menus,
which were elegantly inscribed
on cards with a beautiful
floral design straggling
over them - To the right hand
top corner of each card was
attached by a pale green silk
bow a little silver gilt me-
dallion with an enamelled
pansy on it and the date
engraved on the back. Mine
was a special one with certain
words written below the pansy -
I tried to exchange it after-
wards with one of my guests,

but was met with a cold and harsh ~~my~~ rebuff. Perhaps you will not be so unkind if I offer it to you, but if you understand the French tongue, and are good at rebuses, you will guess how I felt when it was rejected with scorn!

I hadn't seen Turner since Coopers Hill but he had hardly altered at all - I dined with him afterwards at the Club and the other man at the table had been with me at the O.M.C! One ten years ^{ago} and the other fourteen! The amusing part

of it was that Murphy (or Eastwood as he calls himself now, having changed his name) was perfectly acquainted with every detail of my career, why I hadn't gone to Woolwich, what became of me afterwards &c, noticed that I had grown &c, whereas I had ~~almost~~ totally forgotten his ^{existence} - I have noticed this before - I think that in the days of my youth I must have been rather a striking sort of party.

The only other events were a most laudible performance

of the Gay Parisienne at the theatre and a picnic at the ~~lakes~~ Mossy falls when I went last time I was at Mussoorie and wrote a beautiful poem called "If it wasn't for the mountains in between." This time the picnic consisted of May x Winnie H. & the brother, whose name is Fraser and a young lady Miss Heinig specially included for his benefit. Unfortunately the choice was not considered a good one, another Y.L. having been hoped for, so gloom set in and I had to divide myself into 3,

the wretched Fraser preferring to employ himself in scooping large holes in the ground with his toes. The worst of having picnics around Mussoorie is that the whole jungle swarms with leeches so everybody has to provide himself with a parcel of salt - Every now and then a yell is heard & backs are requested to be turned while salt is sprinkled on the stocking, after which the party proceeds as before - I expect this would rather put you off picnicing in the Himalayas.

When we were returning up the hill Winnie and I were nearly swept down the khud by a large rock which came bounding down the hill and whizzed past just in front of me and under Winnie's dandy, beside which I was walking - most alarming.

Most of the people at the Charlie Billy as I said before were uninteresting, but Mrs Harper home Zobel's sister in law, who sat next me at dinner, turned out to be amusing - we conversed

on many topics, but the chief subject of conversation was the Hollowness of life. After exchanging the gloomiest news and thoroughly agreeing with each other that it would be far better to be dead she would put on her most elegant Parisian frock & go off to a tea-party with her young man, and I would retire with my French novel to my favourite shady seat, and we would both revel in perfect bliss till the next meal, when we would again

with our tongues in our cheeks express our firm convictions that all was Vanity, Idiotic but amusing. When I went down (early in the morning viz 6.30) I left her a P.P.C. card with an appropriate poem on the back of it. You may know it. It begins "La vie est vaine." Ha! ha!

I left the realms of delight on Tuesday morning and arrived at Muzhabsarai on Wednesday & Delhi on Thursday - nothing much had occurred while I was away - Garland had returned

from leave and Thomas
gone off for 3 months - I
thought you might like to
see him as he will probably
be one of my young men on
the S.F. Ry, so I told him
to call at 69 - no more news
about S.F. but Stone is
coming here on the 20th &
I have got to personally
conduct him back to Mohal
Sarai so shall probably
hear something then. Palmer
is going for a month's
leave next week.

Selham? How sounds
most exquisite I am
very glad Papa is getting

on so well - I am sending
him today two of Palmer's
photographs of one of the
bridges on the M.G. Ry.

The letter that Sir A.
posted for you in London
he was so careful that it
should not go astray, that
he not only posted it
with his own hand as you
tell me, but also put
three penny stamps on it!

I think the well is
running dry; I forgot
to say that we had the
most beautiful weather in
Mussoorie and had hardly

any rain though by nights
it should have done nothing
else but rain day and
night.

I hear from extraneous
sources that Oliver has
been having fever and
has gone for a fortnight
to Darjeeling when I
believe he is staying at
the Shrubbery with Jack.

I think he is likely
to be transferred to Sahab
ganje when the man
whose work he is doing
returns from leave, which
I don't suppose he will

be sorry for as it must
be a tight squeeze living
in Calcutta on his pay.

It is good that Dick &
Grace are going home - it
is early yet to say, but
I think with luck I may
be able to get 3 months
next July -

no more at present from

yr. affected brother

Ralph Hatfield