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Dehri Bridge

Shahabad

18th Octbr 99

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My dear Pippa

Cataclasmus! Excursions!
and Alarums! You may have
received a scdabot from Gya last
week saying that S.F. was to be
started at once and I was to be
ready to leave for the Cape at a
moments notice - Well yesterday
a letter arrived from Stone who
has been at Simla as follows: -

"I am afraid we may not be able
to start Shikhoabad Fkd this season
after all. We have the sanction both
from the Board and from Government,

but the grant of money on which we depended from Government is I find practically certain to be withheld on account of Bombay famine.

I shall try to squeeze enough out of other works to enable us to make a beginning with earth-works &c. - but think it very doubtful if I shall be able to do this."

This is the cataclysm & is rather a sickener isn't it. how for the excursion -

Continuation of Stone's letter: -

"Of Shikhowabad - Fkd falls through for this season, would it suit you to take say six months furlough coming out next October?"

The answer to this question is that it would suit me rather nicely but (alaram) although I have got 16 months furlough due, I can't take any until 3 years after returning from sick leave viz until Nov 1900. The only chance is that it may be worked as a special case if the authorities can be got to see that it is to the interests of the Ry Co. that the rule should be relaxed. You see if S.F. does not go on till next October they will not have much use for me ^{till then} and it would be very inconvenient for them to give me furlough after it had started and hard luck on me not to give me any before it was finished

so I think it may come off possibly as I don't think that particular rule is made of absolute cast iron - If they give me 6 or 7 months now, the balance due to me will be carried over and be added to my next furlough so will not be lost.

It is rather beastly S.F. being stopped but the idea of going home for 6 months takes the edge off the pain. Stone is coming through here tomorrow and will be able to tell me more about it but untrickily this letter must be posted today so you will have to wait for further news till next week.

The thing is further complicated by the question of pay as I

shall lose a fearful sum of money by taking furlough now to say nothing of 3 months privilege leave wasted but I think the game is worth the candle - more of this hereafter.

The temple at Bodhi Gaya is very fine - the plates on which I took my photos turned out to have gone bad in the rains so they are rather feeble but they give an idea of what it looks like & I will send them to you.

I have written Sembean a congratulatory epistle in the datus tongue which I hope the poor lad will be able to construe.

but I have me doots - I
tried it on Nicholl who got
0 marks for his translation.

Yr loving brother

Ralph

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