

4718

EAST INDIAN RAILWAY
CHIEF ENGINEER'S OFFICE
CALCUTTA.

19th June 1917

My dearest Pippa,

I got the enclosed letter this morning. Please don't show it to anyone else and burn it when read. I send it so that you can see Margaret's state of mind - nearly every letter she writes is something like this, but I think this is the worst so far. For a long time I thought things would get better and tried to encourage her to stick it out but I have now given it up as hopeless and a few weeks ago told her that she was to leave the house and go to a hotel or boarding house, let the house furnished if possible but leave it whether or no, and find a house or school to send Leonard to. That she could get a maid if she wanted one and could find one so that she could have complete rest from all responsibilities - The children can I hope be taken in by the Richardsons in the holidays if Margaret can't have them.

It is no good trying to get her to "back up"

she obviously can't do it, and what I am really frightened about is her varicose veins. I told her to call in a doctor about them but owing to ideas of modesty she probably hasn't, or if she has hasn't shown them to him - I think she probably ought to be in bed and very likely has an operation. I can't possibly let her go on in this state of misery any longer - It is also probably the worst thing possible for her - I think very likely when she gets my letter telling her to give up the house she will say she can't, because of the expense or that she can't face the worry of the arrangements - In which case I can only ask you to push her out into the Dudley and get her off somewhere - let the house go to the devil. I mean hand it over to the lawyer who did the lease for me. I can't remember his name 'Scrutton' or something like that - MONEY can always be got by asking me for what is wanted. By the bye she says in the letter her income is

£600 - I send her £75 a month, plus £100 three times a year for school bills, plus £200 of her own money total £1400.

It is absolutely impossible for me to go home (a) Government forbids it (b) Occaney forbids it. When the war is over there is no saying when I shall be able to get leave - ~~Everybody~~ will want leave and those who have fought will get first claim and those who have been longest without leave - If I have got to go home after the war I shall have to resign - I have lately written to Margaret suggesting I should stay on (in hopes of being made Agent) and that she should come out here for a spell, where she will be happier than at home, as soon as females are allowed to cross the sea.

I don't think M & I have got enough between us to enable us to return and bring up children properly unless I get something to do at home, which doesn't seem likely. Best plan seems to be to hang on here, M with me most of the time either in Calcutta or hills, children at school and heaven knows where

in the holidays -

This has got to be hurried off to
catch the mail - It is atrocious of
me to worry you like this when
you are already tottering under
inhuman loads but I can't think of
anything else to do.

Ever your loving

Ralph