

EAST INDIAN RAILWAY
CHIEF ENGINEER'S OFFICE
CALCUTTA.

4717

27th April 1917

My dearest Pippa,

I had an immense letter from you the mail before last beginning with an account of Mamma's attack and going on with affairs at Brighton - The first was most terrifying. I do hope she is going on getting better. As for the second, the only really bright spot is that you think Margaret's health is decidedly better. I am afraid she is not very happy and is greatly weighed down by her responsibilities, and Ursula's nurse having to go away is a heavy blow - You have been most noble in your efforts to help in regard to housekeepers and nurses and Octymania &c, and I am

sure she feels you to be a great support, so please keep on with the good work in spite of discouragements.

I am now an M.I.D.F. which means member of the Indian Defence Force, along with all other male European British Subjects between the ages of 16 and 50, and drill madly on the maidan every morning before breakfast, beautifully arrayed in khaki shorts and shirt with a rifle one Lee Enfield short weighing 8 pounds $10\frac{1}{2}$ ounces and measuring 3 feet $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches, or weighing 3 pounds $4\frac{1}{2}$ ounces and measuring 8 feet $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches, I forget which. I am in Class B reserve, which means over 41 and not

fit for violent and prolonged exertion, but capable of walking at least 5 miles, which is rather a crow for me, as most of my friends are either Class C (fit for sedentary military occupation), Class D temporarily, or Class E permanently, unfit for anything.

I have got to go to Simla tonight for a meeting of Chief Engineers, which is a most frightful bore as it means four days of the plains in the train and two in Simla at the outside. Also it is quite unnecessary, however Hookum hai so kya karega! Moreover owing to the necessity for conservation of rolling stock they won't allow me to put my carriage on the mail, so I have got to herd into an ordinary compartment with another Chief Engineer.

Fare thee well, and give my fondest
love to Hannah

Also to you

Ever your

Ralph

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4717



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