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Calcutta

18th Feb^r 1890

My dear Pippa

I was sent for from Allahabad last Tuesday and started in the afternoon and the reason you didn't get a letter last week from me is that I didn't remember I should have to write a day earlier than usual. Arthur and Kelly went off for a visit to a place called Aligarh on Monday and so my departure was rather convenient. I believe I have at last discovered a chum. He is on the

railway and his name is Pierce. He has got one of the railway houses in a very convenient position near the station. The only possible drawback to this plan is that he may prefer to go on living by himself as I have not yet broached the subject to him.

I got to Calcutta on Wednesday morning and went to the Elliotts who received me with open arms. Lady Elliott is a great character - She talks incessantly and doesn't care a bit what she says. One little anecdote will illustrate this - She ~~was shaking hands with~~ A certain aide-de-camp who was rather more proud and 'aughty than usual came up to her and began to talk in a condescending way, whereupon she remarked "You talk to me as if you were God Almighty and I were

a blackbeetle." She is now the terror of all aides-de-camp.

I go to the office here and to do calculations about bridges and I also go around with papa when he goes around. Yesterday we went in a little steam launch up the Hooghly about 30 miles to see the ~~the~~ Jubilee Bridge which is a very big one. It was very pretty the banks of the river were lined with temples and tropical plants all the way up.

I saw Louis Paul on Saturday and he was very friendly & took me for a drive - He ~~was~~ is very sick with Maurice who apparently insists on marrying straight off. I have also seen Winifred and Hugh Barnes who live also just across the road and I always go there to dinner when papa and the Elliotts

are dining out. The baby is the exact image of Winifred. Yesterday papa and I went to a conversazione of the Mahomedan literary society whose 1st meeting papa was at 26 years ago. He was welcomed with reverent awe and presented with a beautiful satin program. Dr. Owen was there & asked affectionately after Dorothy. I have been to two dances, one at Government House. The ball room there is very fine with pillars in two rows painted white and lighted up by more than 400 candles. Papa & I are going to day to see some coal mines, Sir Alexander has gone on before - we shall return tomorrow. We had thought of taking a trip to Darjeeling but I am afraid there will

not be time, there are such heaps of things to do. It is a great pity because Darjeeling is the most lovely place on earth and I shall now probably never see it. In about a week we shall start up the line and go right up to Delhi. This will take some time as papa has been forced by brute strength to stop at night so as to get a chance of sleeping. This is a very good thing because I think his stay here is doing him good and his gout is going off.

I shall never write a decent letter till I start a diary which I shall shortly do and ~~be~~ model my letters on yours which are simply lovely. Love to everybody

Goodbye

yr loving brother
Ralph Strachey