

Overland to Falmouth

Mrs Tremain
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England

Calcutta 14th Nov 1843

My Dear Wife

It was with much pleasure that I received yours dated July 6th and the 17th Sepr and it gives me much pleasure to find the dear children all well and at school. I trust they will make good use of their time.

I have been here about 11 weeks and Ihappy to inform you that I have succeeded in getting a Situation in a first rate house in the City & I have no doubt that I shall be very Comfortable. The climate is extremely not of the healthiest but...I shall stand same clime(?) as others and there are thousands of Europeans. Calcutta is a most splendid city - indeed it is called the City of Palaces not so undeservedly as the buildings are immense and of the most modern style & the Governor General of India's residence is certainly the most superb building I ever saw. Buckingham Palace is nothing to it & is neither half as large or as splendid and it faces the Race Course an immense park in the middle of which is Calcutta Fort and Citadel - this Course is very similar to Hyde park London. It is where all the Nobs and Tradespeople resort early in the morning & evening for a drive or a ride - there are some of the most superb... to be seen every morning here - it being too hot while the sun is up. (Because) I am now working I am up a morning about 8 o'clock - with you it is about midnight and you are probably soundly sleeping in your beds. I go to business at a morning at 10 o'clock & leave again at 6 in the afternoon - breakfast about 9 o'clock - tiffin at one (you term tiffin lunchtime) at the ...house and dine at my lodgings at 6. I keep a servant (Black) and a Palankeen to take me to business & to return. I get 130 rupees a month. A rupee is 2s in England and this is equal to £13 a month. I pay my servant 7 rupees and four palankeen bearers 20 rupees. Living in Calcutta is very cheap. I can board myself for 30 rupees a month including(?) boarding & lodging in a splendid mansion and it cost about 4 rupees more in washing. We Europeans are always expected to put on a clean dress everyday, my dress consisting of a shirt , white trousers, waistcoat, a short jacket, a small piece of ribbon surrounding my neck for a neck cloth with any shirt collar pulled down and a black hat as in England - but it is impossible for you to form any idea how beautifully white those blacks gets up.....and very white their dresses. It is like the driven snow. I verily believe those blacks to be the most cleanly set of beings - on the whole.....here most of the large buildings are enclosed around with a wall and inside of those walls are company (?) offices. Servants bathing...water tanks & so that in fact in the House where I lodge and board, there is not a single servant ever sleeps in the house all (are) in the outer offices(?) Two evenings since

after I had retired to bed (I) was aroused about 11 oclock by one of the most severe shocks of an earthquake (I) ever experience(d) or ...here - the houses shook so hard every one of the pear(?) trees in lower apartments(is) now outside for safety. I have some nice little curios here to send to you by first conveyance when I can by a party returning to England so he could get them ashore without paying the duty among which are some boxes elegantly fitted up with some of the most. handsome shells on every ... I do not know what I can send home (to the) dear children. Do they ever think of me - do they ever speak of their papa or have they entirely forgotten me - do let me know all about them for I assure while I possess breath to breathe I shall never forget them - I often think of them when they are asleep & often when in my bed and they most likely at play and do not forget to remind them sometimes that they have a father tho in a foreign land the first of his family who ever left happy happy England. I have much pleasure in stating that with only having one small illness - my health is exceedingly good in fact I was never better at working - I can assure you I .can do justice at the Table de Hote every day without a doubt and I am getting quite stout much more so than in England. I wrote a part of this letter intending to have sent.....overland and was too late the mail had left - you will say in your next it is along time since you have heard from me - it is I know that when I first arrived in Calcutta I made up my mind not to contact you until I could tell you what I was about - or what I had now tried to do . I have not had any letters from friends at home since I have been in India neither can I account for (those)I wrote.them - when at Sea by some conveyance I wrote (to) you - & from the circumstance of yr receiving your letter I imagine they must have received mine. I hope soon to receive a very long letter from you and do not forget toall about the children how they compare and what use they of their time - .tell them their papa sends his best love to them and thousand kisses. I could give a months pay to spend a few hours with them....if ever I shall see them again .but believe me I shall not fail to exert myself for their future welfare. I think there is a very good prospect now before me - in every instance where Europeans conduct themselves properly they do not fail to get on. I have much pleasure in stating that my present employers are highly pleased with me & that I shortly expect to move up a step -I am getting to know a little of the Hindoo language which will in time be a great acquisition to me there being clerks at the present time who are demanding four hundred rupees for a month. However my dear Mary I trust to have fortune for my success - believe me if I ever am fortunate enough to realise everything of importance my children shall reap the benefit of it. I wish there was a quicker intercourse between England and India & then would write you....& would hope to hear from you more frequently. Also I think India altogether is one of the most bountiful countries in the world - (I) have been out once or twice .about eighty miles out to country but nothing ever seen equals the Botanical gardens belonging to the Company where you will see all the beautiful fruit trees - in full bloom groaning beneath their heavy productions - even the air you seem to breathe there is

impregnated with the most delicious odour imaginable arising from the fragrance of the spice and clove trees - but all those sights only tend to stain(?) a shade of melancholy over my mind - I find myself alone and without a relation in this part of the globe - consequently the more in this place my mind is engaged the more swiftly does the time pass away. Accept my dear Mary my best love and do not pray forget to remind me to our dear children who I hope & pray will enjoy every health & happiness - with every wish for your...future welfare & respectability believe me.....Yours ever faithfully

James Tremain