

The following "Lines written on the Recent Visitation of the Cholera at Peronepore July 1845" are in Spencer's handwriting but there is nothing to say whether they were written by him or only copied out by him.

Each Evening they bore them thro' the Melancholy gloom,  
A Soldier by a soldier wept, to the silence of the Tomb;  
The Mournful trumpets lonely note, the drums with muffled sound  
Betokened that one warrior more, was laid within the ground.

2.

The scourge came o'er us like a blight, none knew on whom t'would  
fall,

Today t'was in the barrack room, Tomorrow in the hall.  
At dawn a mother mourn'd her child, - before the setting sun  
Her husband was alone on earth, her sorrowing course was run.

3.

A Heavy gloom fell over all, none knew how soon they'd trace  
The signs they most foreboded on some lov'd "familiar face";  
Affection's ties were closer drawn, all enmities forgiven  
And those who seldom pray'd before now bent their knee to heaven.

4.

It fled at length it left us, on the pinions of the Blast  
It whirled away, o'er other climes its pestilence to cast,  
The mourning voices all are hushed, save now & then a cry  
Which rises when an infant finds no mother sitting by.

August 10, 1845.  
Peronepore.

My dear Mother

There was no letter for me by the last mail, but I find numbers of excuses for you however. I hope the next mail (it will be in in a day or 2) will bring me something. Edward says he strongly advises me to have the £500 sent out to him as he gives me 6% for it which is rather better than 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. I think it had better be so as it will be of great use in buying out also in case I go home for Furlough. But there is time enough before I get it to think about it. But I think Edward is right.

We have all of us enjoyed pretty good health here. I have never been better. There is a steamer coming up from Sukkur in a day or 2. By the Bye report sends us there but I do not think it likely. I must say good bye Mother Yr affecte Son  
Spencer Ryder

Augst. 22, 1845.  
Ferozepore.

My dear Mother

Your son is in very good health considering all things. How you must look forward to the Indian Mails - and what a quantity of letters to be read if they all come on the same day. I am afraid mine are the worst of the lot. It is but natural.

More alterations in the Garden. How different it will be from what I know of it by sight. I have told you all about the rain. There is nothing more to be said about it but the Beginning was very delightful.

Augt. 24. I received the mail of July 1st yesterday. You give bad news of Sophia? What will you do without Sophy. You do not tell me the name of the vessel that is to bring my parcel. I must leave off mo mother. I will enter more fully into your last letter next mail. Give my love to the boys and Minnie, & Believe me

Yr Dutiful & affecte Son  
Spencer Ryder.

3pm Sept. 14 1845  
Ferozepore

My dear Mother

I have received your letters of the 1st July & am much obliged for the kind wishes & remembrances of me on my Birthday. I have had a sharp attack of fever, but nothing very serious. I have now quite ~~xxxxxx~~ recovered from it. The weather is certainly getting cooler though it is still very warm in the middle of the day. We are all on the look out for the relief. But we do not expect to be sent down to Sukkhur. The 15th N.I. is the lucky one? I fancy if there is no army formed that we shall be sent down towards Bengal as it is our turn to go down that way.

There has been another death here of Cholera. Lieut. Hooper 12th N.I. But now there are no cases of it in the 62nd & we hope it has left us.

You give me bad news of Sophia. What would you do if Sophy goes away. I hope she will write to me although she may be abroad. I suppose my parcel is nearly half way across now. What does it contain. I suppose I shall be agreeably surprised when it comes.

We are having parades again now the weather is getting

\* wife of his brother  
George, she was in  
poor health & they  
have planning to go  
to Rome for her health  
taking Sophy with  
them.

cooler. I send you a small sketch of the house I am now living in. I am not sure that it will give you any very vivid idea of what it is, but I am afraid you will think it larger & much more comfortable than it is in reality. There have been a great number of thefts committed or attempted in the last week. A gang broke loose from Loodianah about 12 of them & they have come down here. They cut through the wall that surrounds my garden or Compound as it is usually called and quietly walked away with a bullock. They have attacked one house but I believe they retreated without doing much. I always have a dog tied to my bed of a night and a dagger under my pillow but I do not fancy they would attack a house unless they were certain of getting something worth their while. And I do not fancy they would find much more than blows in this house.

The nights are most beautiful just now while the moon is up - not cold & not hot but just between the 2. It is so delightful to walk up & down the garden, I stay up very late sometimes if I get any one to talk to.

So Bessie is the first to be married.<sup>x</sup> I wonder who will be the next.

I have not had a single line from William but I suppose it is not his fault, but the Blame ought to be laid on the Post which is not at all well regulated.

I am afraid my letter is very short this mail but I will make up for it another day. We are daily expecting the letters of July 24 which went through Calcutta. That mail reached Bombay in 30 days & Delhi, right in the middle of India, in 37 days & 3 hours. That is quick work. I have heard that Lord Grey<sup>x</sup> is dead. I wonder when Annie will write me a line or 2. I have not heard from her for a long time & I think I wrote last.

I must now say adieu my mother

Yr affects. Son

Spencer C.D. Ryder.

What will Emily say when she finds I have not written to her in return for her bit of news & Sophy too has sent me a line or two and I have no return to make. All I can say is that I am in very good health & very happy and you must be content with that till I can send you something better. So good bye to you my sister

Yr naughty Brother Spen.

By the Bye I may as well say in case he should not write himself

<sup>x</sup> Elizabeth daughter of his  
uncle Edward March Phillips  
m. in Sept. 1845 the Rev.  
Edward Smythies who  
succeeded his father-in-law  
eventually as Rector of  
Hathern, Leicestershire.

<sup>x</sup> Charles, 2nd Earl Grey  
(the Reform Bill Premier)  
uncle of Sir George Grey died  
in 1845. ~~Married~~ ~~Married~~  
~~Married~~ ~~Married~~



and you may be writing to the Coldwells that Mr. Perkins is in good health & has not fallen in love with any one yet. Tata love to everyone.

Sept. 24 1845 Ferozepore

My dear Mother

I have received your packet of the 18th July and I am daily expecting the next. The Relief has come out at last. We do not move. The 15th go down to Sukkhur and two new corps are coming up here, the 33rd & 36th. The latter were at Dinapore with me. So we shall have 6 Infantry corps rather a strong muster. About 20 boats have come up from Sukkhur to this place and are now lying at the ghat or ferry about 4 miles off. They are to help make a bridge across the Sutledj, & there are about 40 more coming up. The crews of the boats already at the Ghat are daily exercised in their work, (making a bridge & taking it to bits again), & there are 2 Companies with 3 officers encamped on the banks as a guard. There is a report & it is generally believed that Peshora Sing has been murdered. The story I heard was this. Inwahir Sing the uncle of Duleep Sing, the young prince, had promised to make one of his servants a general on the death of Peshora Sing. Accordingly this servant goes & makes friends with one of Peshora Sing's servants who at his instigation I suppose murders Peshora Sing. Whether we shall go over the water or not, there is no telling but I should say it was not at all unlikely. The Seikhs possess a good deal of the land on this side of the River and as it very good land the Company would not mind if they were the owners of it.

The station is much healthier than it was, and the cold weather is approaching quickly. It is still very hot in the middle of the day, but it is not necessary to be out of doors then, & it is very pleasant inside the house.

By the Bye I do not think I have told you that we have got the percussion muskets, so have all the corps at this station now. Certainly they are a great improvement on the old flint locks, but some learned people say they are very bad for the health on account of the copper caps, which give out a pernicious

gas when they are fired off. All that remains to be seen.

The moon does not rise till morning now and the thieves are afoot again but they have not paid us another visit yet.

I am glad to hear my cousins have become so good looking.<sup>x</sup>  
Pray remember me to them if you see them again.

I saw in the papers that Mrs. Ridley had got another baby and I am very glad to hear it is getting on so well.

I am sorry to hear Uncle H. is not so well as usual, But I hope to hear better accounts in your next. I must now say good bye, for I want to send a line to Minnie.

So believe me Mother  
Yr affecte. Son  
Spencer R.

x daughter of his  
uncle Samuel March  
Phillipps

Sept. 24 Porezapore

My dear Minnie

I am afraid I have got nothing of importance to communicate to you, for I have given all the news to Mother. But I will see what I can do for you. I hear (or rather see) that Adelaide & Florence<sup>x</sup> have been ~~xxxxxx~~admitted to see you. I was surprised to find that they have been so much admired. They were nothing very particular that way, were they, when I was in England? What a remarkably unpolite speech.

I have come across two new animals to me a scorpion & a Bee-cobra. The first I found in my room under a box and I put him out of his misery by squashing his head. The other animal was brought me by my bearer on the point of a spear, with which he had killed him. It is a kind of Lizard. This one was a good length & prettily marked. I have got the skin hanging up in my room. It is said to have a most deadly poison - death in  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour or something. I certainly extracted a very vicious looking fang.

What an apology for a letter but it will show you that I have not forgotten you so I will say Tata. Give Sophy a kiss for me & tell her I will write to her next mail. So I will remain

Yr dear brother  
Spencer C.D. Ryder.

Octr. 16 1845.  
Ferozepore.

My dear Mother

It is said now that it is almost certain an army is to be formed - That the 27th & 54th Regts. N.I. are to remain to guard the station with 200 of the Umballa police. But whether we are to cross ~~xxxxxxx~~ in 1, 2 or 3 bodies or where we are to cross or whether we are to cross at all, is not known at present. However we have made up our minds on the subject and have fought the campaign all over in our own way.

I have been doing something new in the way of duty. I was sent down with Capt. Struthers, Lieut. Lukin & 2 Companies to the Ghat to guard the boats for a week. It was rather warm in the middle of the day But we found a remedy for that. We (i.e. Lieut. L. & self) went down to the Boats and fished all day sitting under an awning. The duty is taken weekly by each Corps (Infy) here & there was also 1 troop of Cavalry relieved monthly. The Boats I found were 35 in number. I made a mistake about the number in my last letter. 6 of them are armed with 1 6pd. <sup>55</sup>Canonade each. They are 24 ft. broad. I forget the length & would hold 150 men sitting down so as to be hidden from sight entirely.

The Ramleela, A Mahomedan festival is just over. It was a very pretty sight. Every evening fireworks & figures of wicker work with rockets instead of Bowels blowing up & mines doing their best to throw dust in our eyes. All together very pretty. The last night was the Grand one & a huge figure upwards of 30 feet high & very ugly with lots of eyes & arms [sketch follows] after being drawn about for a long time was blown up by being put on the top of a mine his arms flying about in all directions.

I think that your advice about the £500 is certainly the best that is to say that it is the surest though it would bring higher interest in this country though it would not be the safest. Edward talked about laying it out advantageously for me.

So it is all settled about your losing Sophy. How lonely Hambleton will be looking.

I have been trying to ornament the walls of my room in a manner consistent with my tastes - my gun & a rifle which is not my own but perhaps it may be, shot belts, powder flasks, ramrod



fishing rods, swords, knives, pistols &c so that the room looks a little better than it did.

My family of dogs has been increased very much with a litter of beautiful little spaniels.

Here is something for Richard to do for me. I want a good fishing reel, strong lines, gut, hooks, &c anything that strikes his fancy in that line.

From what place I shall write to you next I cannot say. We are in a great state of excitement looking out for alarms & news from all quarters. We all say we shall not be here next month or, we shall spend our Xmas in Cashmere "all manner of things of the same sort. "What must be must be" but I would just as soon stay here & have a good bout shooting game instead of shooting Seikhs.

I am expecting your next packet (Augt. 20) very soon. Every day in fact. I will now say good bye for a fortnight Mother

Yr affects. Son  
Spencer Ryder.

I have made a very absurd mistake writing upon 2 half sheets instead of one. Very odd that indeed. But I have no time to write another so I must send it as it is.

Cetr. 25 Ferozepore.

My dear Mother

Another division of the Boats have arrived. There are now 54. But I have no news to tell you about the war, indeed many people say that there will be none at all.

The weather is getting delightful though it is still rather too warm out of doors in the middle of the day. The mornings are very cold, and we have parade almost every morning (4 out of the week, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday)  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour before Sunrise. No more punkahs till next hot weather. There is a report here that Bahawalpore (on the Sutledj half way between this and Sukkur) is to be made a station of & the 14th is to be one of the corps to be sent there. If so we shall have to build. The natives say it is a very nice place and every thing is cheap there. So it may be now, but as soon as it is made a station of every thing will be double & treble the price.

How I wish I had brought out all my Fishing tackle. There are plenty of fish to be caught in the river & you know my love for the sport.

I wish I had known the name of the ship in which my parcel was sent. I am anxiously looking for it though it is rather too early for it yet. I fancy it will come in as a "Xmas Box" Just the right time.

Here we have been talking about myself all this time, and have quite forgotten the sad news that I have just received namely, Sophy's departure. It is a delightful thing for her to see what is to be seen at home and abroad but it is a great pity that you should lose her for 2 whole years. But it is necessary as you say, so there is no help for it. I received your letters of Sept. 2 yesterday with Sophy's good bye.

So you have nothing but cold & rain. I come out & Bask myself in the sun of a morning.

I am sorry to say I shall not be able to do all I intended at the Examination for I have been so put back with illness, and it wants continuous study. But I still intend to go up to an examination which I must pass before I can hold a Company. I shall not be able to get a Company till after 2 years service. That will be about the end of next May. Being in charge of a Company gives me 45 Rs (about) a month in addition to my other pay which will be a great help to an Ensign and then I hope I shall not be obliged to draw on my allowance so much as I do now.

Would you believe it, I have not received a single line from William since he has come out and Emily's account of the Elephant shooting was the first I have received. But I fancy it is no fault of his. Does Emily mean that flannel Jacket, Linen trousers & old slippers was his shooting dress, rather peculiar, the slippers, I should say.

I hope to make myself very comfortable here in the cold weather. I shall build a fireplace in a small room where the winter sun comes in. But I will tell you more of it when it is done. At present we are having the house cleaned and whitewashed. My room is or rather ought to be a delicate blue, But at present it might be any color for the dirt - long seams of mud which the rain brought down from the roof. My next letter will, I hope



tell you that I have got through my exam; with credit. Till then I will say good bye Mother

Believe me

Yr affects Son

Spencer Ryder.

And now my dear Emily

What shall I write to you about. Shall I condole with you on Sophy's departure. Tell her I will write to her when I know her direction and if I do not know that soon I shall write through you.

What news you tell me of William. Pray send me every thing of the kind. I will not ask you to transcribe his letters but should like to know as much of them as you can tell me as it seems fated that I am not to see his own handwriting.

You talk as if there was some possibility of your leaving Hambledon. I hope Mother will not leave it unless she is obliged to do so.

How Georgy must be delighted with the country & to think that he will one day have it for his own. I wonder when Annie intends to write to me again. I have been expecting a long description from her own pen. Give her a hint will you as to my expectations.

This is a poor return for your good letters But I have been writing to Richard this time so I will say good bye for the present.

Yr affects Brother  
Spencer Ryder.

(Some of Spencer's letters seem to have been delayed in the post because on November 1st the father or mother of his friend Perkins wrote to Mrs. Ryder "in complying with Mrs. Goldwell's request" to reassure her. "I cannot for one moment believe that it has been through any neglect of his that you have not heard from him by the two last Mails, for if I may judge from what my dear son Norman says of him he is too good & kind ever willingly to disappoint you". The letter continues "Our last from Norman.....says ..... "Mr Ryder is getting on very well, & is very steady, and no doubt he will, in proper time, through the interest he has, get a good appointment".)

which was left to Sir George  
Fry in 1845 by an uncle

Fallodon / Georgy  
He died  
before his father so  
he never did have it  
for his own.

Perozepore Nov 16 (1845).

My dear Mother

Reports are getting warlike again and it is said that the Seikhs states on our side of the river are to be demanded by us wholly and will become one of the "Protected States". If so it is not very likely that we shall get them for the asking. But we have now (or shall have very soon) an army of 51,600 men of all arms assembled at the various stations near the frontier of which 6400 are at Perozepore and if 2 thirds of that are available for service it will be quite sufficient to back our arguments and the Seikhs are not men to yield their own without struggle and they must know that if once the British begin to meddle with their government it will not be many years before they too will lose their independence & become a "Protected State".

We have had grand doings at our hitherto dull station. You have heard that Prince Waldemar of Prussia has been in India. Well he has been all through the country from Calcutta, up the hills and has been right into the interior of the hills and has at last, for want of something better to do, found his way to this out of the way place. He came here 3 or 4 days ago and the day before yesterday reviewed the troops. All the troops of the station were out in full dress - Infantry, Cavalry & Artillery but the ground was so awfully dusty it quite makes me cough to think of it. The Prince could have seen little or nothing of our manouvres but of course he was highly delighted with every thing, though all of us agreed in saying that our corps could not have done worse "though I say it who shouldn't". And last we gave a grand party to the Prince. We did not sit down so many as was intended as several guests stayed away, but we had 28 and the party passed off remarkably well. The 14th are not a fast corps and they can therefore afford to come out rather expensively on an occasion like the present. The Prince is a very affable man good looking with a high forehead and a slight moustache. He is only 24 or 25 years old but he formed a striking contrast to our old bear of a colonel next to whom he was sitting.

The weather is truly delightful but before sunrise and for half an hour after too it is fearfully cold. I never think of going about without a jacket and at night a stuffed quilt is not to be despised.

I saw Bessy's Marriage in the Papers for we have got the news

but not the letters which we shall most likely have by tomorrow or the next day.

So poor Sophy is gone. I hope she may enjoy herself but 2 years is a long time. They say we are to be allowed to go home after 7 years for 2 years furlough or 1 year, instead of after 10 years. It will be a great thing if we get it. You may then see me before I grow grey though I do not know why I should grow grey at 30 either.

I suppose my parcel must be in Calcutta by this time. I hope Edward will write & tell me when it comes. I have had no letters from William yet. Very odd indeed.

I must now say good bye for the present and I send Emily a kiss & my love instead of a letter. I am afraid she do not like the exchange.

Yr Affectionate Son

S.O.B. Ryder

Camp. Ferozepore  
Decr. 28, 1845.

My dear Mother

In the first place I must tell you that I am here safe and untouched. But we have had a fearful Battle and now I will tell you all about it.

We were ordered out into Camp on hearing that the Seikhs had crossed in force about 12 miles up the river. This was on the 12th. The Camp defended that side of the Cantonments nearest the Enemy. They advanced to within 6 miles of us, but after that whenever they made a forward movement Genl. Littler ordered us all out and advanced towards them upon which they fell back. This occurred twice. We then heard that the Govr. Genl. & Comr. in Chief were in full march to our assistance with 7 Regts. of Europeans Horse & Infy & 11 Native Do. and a Battle was fought at Mudke 22 miles from this place. The Enemy were repulsed & 17 Guns taken, though our side lost a large number of men & officers. The Seikhs fight admirably behind their Guns on which they put their chief reliance. This Battle was fought on the 18th. On the 20th Genl. L. marched us out intending to attack the Seikhs in rear while the other force attacked them in front. We had not proceeded far when the Genl. heard that there



was a large body of the Enemy Cavy. advancing on Cants. so we returned. Nothing more happened that day. But the next morning (Decr. 21) we did march out & forming a junction with G Ga. force we advanced to the attack immediately about 2½ o'clock.

Now Mother you must know that we had marched 9 miles without any water or food & the men had had nothing to eat all day. We were sent into battle dreadfully fatigued. The Enemy was much superior to us in every thing. Well we came to the charge & the Enemy commenced playing on us with their Guns, sending the shells & round shot rather uncomfortably close. The officers all of us advanced some way in front of our men to cheer them on. But they hung back. The Grape and round shot were whizzing about my ears in fearful numbers it was more like a hail storm. We were ordered to retire and the Regt. was divided into right & left wings. Now that happened we could not make out. Our Cavy. [the 3rd ?] not the European Cavy. charged and came back quicker than they went. We afterwards went at it again our men dropping behind in numbers dying with thirst & then the colors dropped behind and the Adj't. galloped back to find them while the 2nd in Comd. and myself pressed on with a few men by the side of a Euron. corps the 9th I think and got into the Batteries. Capt. Struthers & myself here got separated and I found myself with some of the Europeans. You must know that the Seikhs had stopped the Mess stores of the 44th Regt. & the Hackeries were in the Camp. I got hold of a bottle of beer and it relieved me greatly. I then got into a mixture of several Regts. & found Struthers and Hume (48th). You must recollect that name. He came out with me.

This was after sunset. Where the rest of the corps was I could not tell, so I stayed where I was. While I was talking with one of the officers a Seikh Galloped right into the midst and stopped about 10 yds. from me. The officer called out "who is that" and he turned to gallop off. I saw what he was and sung out "Kill him Kill him" and as he was going I saw him turn round in the saddle & saying Blackguard Feringhee or something like that he fired a pistol at us which did no harm and the next moment 3 or 4 muskets went off and he was rolled over. I ran up to him & found 2 or 3 Sepoys quietly putting their bayonets through him. I am afraid to say I was rather glad than otherwise.

I next got into a Euron. Regt and we formed square & lay down. I got some clothes out of a tent (This was the Seikh camp) & tried to make myself comfortable. But some fools of

Sepoys lighted a fire and immediately bang came the matchlocks from every side of us and the Balls whizzed over our heads. The fire was put out and the Sepoys lighted it 5 or 6 times. Each time it blazed up <sup>once</sup> ~~back~~ went the matchlocks. Then 2 of the enemy crept up to within 80 yards of us and got behind a tent and fired right into the middle of us. One ball hit one poor fellow on the Cap of the knee and the other slightly wounded an officer. There was an incessant firing and blowing up of mines all night long and the Brutes brought artillery to bear on us and played over us for some time. Luckily we were lying down or there would have been a fleemish account of us. However not long after we got up and quietly marched off and left the Seikhs to get into their camp again.

I found some of the 12th afterwards and heard that they had 4 offrs wounded and poor Tulloch shot. I felt as if I could have offered my head to the first Seikh I met. I afterwards found poor Somerset (A.de C. to the G.G.) sitting under a tree with 5 Bullets in his breast. I was in Compy. with another offr. & we got some water and a Doctor for him and I left him my p. coat. It was dedicated to a good service. This was about sunrise. Very soon afterwards I found my regt. and they looked upon me like as if I was a ghost for one of the offrs. had said he distinctly saw me hit with a nine pound shot in the Body & that I fell forwards on my face. However Thanks to God I was unhurt.

I found that 2 of my Brother offrs. had been taken away one hit in the Breast & another in the leg. Weld & Wood. Walsh had a graze from a grape shot in the inside of the ankle. Struthers was hit in the arm & Lukin in the Thigh. These 2 last were contusions. But I was safe - to the surprise of every one. I found Tulloch had been hit in the jaw which was feach red & part of the Tongue carried away. However he is doing well.

Decr. 22 We had another hard fight which ended in our Dragoons charging the Enemy's Cavy. & putting them to flight. They all went away and we slept that night and the next on the field. We had water from where there were some dead bodies at least it was supposed so But we were not particular. The Enemy have a great reverence for their dead and are supposed to have hid numbers. We lost a great number of men and officers But I do not know exactly how many.

Today Decr. 28. The rest of the force marched out to "bate the Sakes" again while we remain here with the 62nd (who have lost 7 officers killed and 10 wounded) to take care of the Cantonments. Our Corp is kept behind for the same reason But I think it is a great shame. 97 guns have been taken from the Enemy altogether. I must now say good bye for the present, Wishing you may have had a happier Xmas than we have. I have to be on duty at the fort the whole of the day so good bye.

Yr affecte Son

Dec. 31.

Spencer

By the Bye of course I forget everything that has any reference to business. I think the Best thing to be done with the money will be to send it out to me as I wish to put it into the Delphic Bank. It is certainly not quite so safe as in London there is very little difference and 8 per cent instead of 5 would be a little better.