

Edward Squibb's letters

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Details

- one from Portsmouth 17 Feb 1820 on board *Ganges*
- 17 from India between 23 June 1820 & 12 Feb 1824
- no envelopes; sealed with signet ring with Squibb arms & ES; often crossed

Addressed "Mr Squibb Savile Row London"; one to Matthew Clark Esqr 14 Great Argyle Street London England"

George Squibb (GS) annotated date of reception on some – 6 months, 5 ½ months, 7 months, 5 months, 6 months, 6 months, 8+ months, 6 ½ months, 7 months, 5 ½ months, 6 months, 7 ½ months, 6 months average 6 ½

amounts paid: 1/8, 2/2, 3/7, 2/6?, 1/6, 1/0, 1/5, 1/8, 1/8, 1/6, 3/8, ?, ?, 1/-

Letter 1

Madras 23rd June 1820 [recd 21 November; entirely written & crossed, no address]

My dear Father

We arrived at Madras on Sunday evening the 18th after a passage of 18 weeks wanting a day from Gravesend. Since we left Portsmouth on Monday 21st February we have not touched at any place not even Madeira as expected else you would have heard from me before – the General Palmer is about to sail for England in a day or two from Madras by which I write. I kept a Journal of the voyage which I intend to send home by the first opportunity when I get to Calcutta. You will find every thing in it which happened during that time suffice it to say at present that the voyage has been altogether a fair one. The *Ganges* will stay about a fortnight at Madras we are expected to live ashore all the time but all Cadets and assistant Surgeons are allowed quarters free of expence (*sic*) in the Fort and their meals at the rate of 3 rupees i.c. [inclusive?] (7s. 6d.) p^r day in fact it is contrary to orders for any Cadet or assistant surgeon to live at or frequent taverns this applies both to those of Madras & bengal – Every one is obliged to keep a Dubash who employs under him a Maki or Shoe black it being contrary the dubash says to his cast to do such menial offices. The business of the Dubash is to be always attending upon you from sunrise to sunset for which I pay mine at the rate of 3 pagodas (10 rupees & a half) p^r month. They talk a little English and are able to transact any business – it seems as if they were employed on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief - It may easily be supposed that every body tries to cheat strangers so that the Dubash if he is at all honest may save his master a good deal of money – My dubash I believe to be honest, he is well paid and therefore has not so great inducement to pilfer & cheat as others – he repeatedly cautions me against the black fellows – of whom there are always a great many at the Messhouse (which is the Cadets' quarters) at some pretence or another for as all the rooms are open in the day time if small things are not locked up they can manage to take them away without the centinels [*sic*] or anyone else perceiving it – so many fellows get into the Messhouse at times that it is like the Royal Exchange or any other much frequented public place and we are often forced to kick them out for as they are a passive lot nobody hesitates to treat them like dogs – I have delivered the two letters I have for Madras to Mrs Bethan (from Col Constable) & to Mrs Macdonald yesterday, & shall dine with Mrs Bethan on Sunday. I shall be better able to tell you how I was treated at Madras when I write from Calcutta. I shall make up a packet of letters at Calcutta – this is the only one I write from Madras – Reports here say that the promotion at Bengal is very bad & that we have some chance of remaining some time as cadets but I shall soon know more about it- We are certainly one of the first if not the very first ship from England this year, so that we have the start of a good many cadets the Duke of York East-India man which we left at Gravesend and sailed a fortnight after us arrived only 3 days later than the *Ganges* – I have just been informed by his cousin who came out in the *Ganges* as

cadet that Capt. Roebuck is dead. I saw a character which a dubash has required [?] by Oliver Lloyd Ensign 2nd Battn. 24 Reg. The George Holme arrived 2 or 3 weeks before us - De Fries (Charles Fladgate's agent) is a bankrupt & has run away to Pondicherry C. It is a long way up the country I suppose. They say Calcutta is a much finer place than Madras - every thing here is much more in the English fashion than I expected but certainly grander - The first day we dined at the Mess-room there were only 8 cadets the dinner was perfectly English but what with the dubashes and the butlers servants I counted no less than 20 Black attendance, this we thought a great bore instead of a great luxury.

I rode out yesterday with another in a buggy; the road afforded a great contrast we met many perfectly English carriages buggies post-chaises &c the harness horses & carriages being just what you would see in London, excepting that there is always 2 or 3 Blackfellows running by the side in these were both Europeans & Blacks - as the road is just like a good English road only rather redder I could have imagined myself in the Regents Park the houses being not unlike - but then again we met Camels, bullock carriages palanquins &c & now & then an Elephant & his train which made it quite Eastern - the houses are much grander in outside appearance than most great houses in London if this Mess house were transported there it would be taken for some rich nobleman at least - the rooms are large & airy with folding doors and large windows but there is no furniture except a bamboo couch for the cadet and a few chairs in the Mess-Room - This is the warmest time of the year at Madras so that it is impossible to walk out in the day-time and the mosquitoes have been very troublesome to me in the night-time - I think it too early to say whether I like India or not but I shall be very glad to get to Calcutta as I don't like my present quarters. The death of the King was know by an overland despatch a month before we arrived - we have heard of the attempted assassination of the Ministers &c - I should be glad to see George out at Bengal as assistant surgeon but if he brings a wife I should advise him by no means to come out in a private trader but in a regular Indiaman. There were 3 married ladies on board the Ganges and they might as well have been on board a convict ship, for a single cadet it don't signify much though it would be much better for him in an Indiaman - On board our ship there was a very heterogeneous set some had been midshipmen one or two in the King's army others boys just left school - the first there was too much nonsense and they suffered liberties to be taken with each other which in the end led to serious quarrels, but as the Captain threatened to put any one in irons that fought on board his ship

I expected there would have been a few duels when we landed, but as it drew near here every body seemed to think it most desirable to drop every thing especially as most of the differences existed between Madras & Bengal cadets for the fact is we Bengalles as [?] a body pride ourselves upon having conducted ourselves in a better manner than that the others whilst among the Madras fellows there are some some so exceptionable than I should not like to be in the same regiment with them - I am very thankful to get quit of them not that I care for them as an officer can always get redress, and I have invariably found (tho I was not engaged in many rows) that he would give the most ungentlemanly insult would make the most cowardly apology - I need not repeat my wish to hear from home as often as possible as it is the only means of communication & intercourse between me & my family. I trust I shall receive letters as regularly as I intend to send them I am anxious about nothing so much as that I should retain a place in the affections of those I have left with the conviction of that India will be as grateful to me as England.

To my Mother I send my affectionate regards & to my brother & sister every wish for their welfare and happiness with remembrances to all and allow me to inscribe myself

Your ever affectionate son
Edward Squibb

Letter 2

Calcutta 11 July 1820

My dear Father

I arrived here on Sunday 9 July having left Madras Sunday week. Whatever unfavourable impression I might have made on your mind of India from my account of Madras I now have the pleasure of removing. Calcutta from what I have seen of it is as superior to Madras as it is possible for one capital to be to another. Perhaps no one feels the advantage of the excellent government of Calcutta than a cadet. In

Madras the little care that was taken of us was disgraceful – the Marquis of Hastings¹ has amongst other general orders of late particularly issued some for the better welfare of the Cadets on their first arrival from England – there is a mess instituted in Fort William at which an officer presides, for those cadets who have no friends to go to, and it is expected that every cadet under his care will not hire any servants, nor buy any part of his equipment that may be expensive without consulting him – this is done with the view to protect the cadet from being cheated or robbed etc. I came up by a boat from Diamond Harbour. I arrived before the ship – As Mr Campbell was at Garden Reach I reported myself at the town Major's and got quarters in the Barracks Fort William a bed &c was provided for me which will also be useful for me up the country in fact I believe it is what is called a Camp-bed – that day I dined at the Mess – next morning I delivered my letter of Credit & 2 letters of introduction to Messrs Alexander & Co and my letters to Mr Campbell – Mr Campbell immediately invited me to live at his house and sent a man with me to get my baggage passed through the Custom house (as the ship arrived Sunday night) I am now writing from his house Garden Reach about 4 miles from Calcutta – where I have taken up my quarters – I feel myself very grateful for their kindness which I feel no doubt from their amiable characters of himself and Mrs Campbell I shall ever continue to experience. Mrs Roebuck was staying with Mrs Campbell so that I had just the opportunity of seeing her and indeed that is all for this morning she left us for Jepore on a visit to her mother-in-law – I thought she was not much altered since I last saw her.

The officer who ? us at the Cadets mess Capt. Higgins is a brother of the Town Major – He was enabled to give us conformation as to the promotion the place we are likely to be stationed at &c He says our rank came out before we arrived we are all Ensigns and that we shall be sent to Dinapore to do duty with the European regiment for a twelve month and then be draughted of other regiments – There are nearly 200 Cadets there – it is about 400 miles from Calcutta – the reason he gives for our waiting there such a time is that there is a thorough new organisation of the Bengal army talked of & it is not the intention of government finally to appoint any cadet that may come out now until such organisation is completed – I expect this letter to be in time for the Vittoria which sails to-day or to-morrow for England therefore I have not time to write to any one else – it is most probable we shall stay a month at Calcutta I shall have other opportunities of writing from here – Not the least advantage of living at a friends house is the saving of money for altho' the Mess is provided us at as a moderate a rate as it well can be – it would make some hole in an Ensigns pay – As yet I have delivered very few letters in fact I am rather in want of ???? before I can go on with comfort I will write an account of how I was treated by every body and I will certainly write to Mrs Clark by the next ship who perhaps has expected to hear from me before With my duty to my Mother and love t my Brothers and Sisters I remain Dear Father Your affectionate son
Edw^d Squibb

Letter 3

To Matthew Clark Esq^f 14 Great Argyle Street London England
14 August 1820

My dear Sir

I am afraid that my having delayed this long to wrote to you may have been imputed to neglect especially as it was your particular injunction that I should give you an account of how I was received by your friends – As we did not touch at Madeira my letters there were rendered useless – At Madras I delivered your letter to Mrs Macdonald she enquired after yourself & family and I afterwards dined with her - - - At Calcutta I delivered my letters in person to every body I could find out – those that were directed to the firm of any merchant's house were treated like all other letters as mere matters of business – some one opened the letter asked some general questions, such as what ship I came out in &c and there the matter ended – In general private letters directed to individuals procured me very civil treatment – amongst which as that to Mr Taylor from Mr Reid to Capt Ellis (by Mr Larkins) from Mr Cowell &c There was a Mr Mackintosh (an Agent &c) that behaved very civilly to me and who if I had not been so well off at Mr Campbell's would have received me in his house – and so forth – I got a letter to him from you and I learnt from him that it was written by a Mr Iles, as he said, a particular friend of his this Mr Iles I knew nothing about, nor in fact

¹ Governor-General of India 1813-23

from whom you got it I should like to know who this Mr Iles is, in case I should see Mr Mackintosh again, who is a very good sort of old gentleman. I cannot but make the remark here that in general where I expected to receive the most civility I received none and when I expected none I received the most – If I were to advise a Cadet as to what letters would be advantageous to him I would say that the only letter he need ring to Agency houses is a Letter of Credit – that letters to individuals will procure him some kind of civility, but that letters to officers in the army have the best chance of being serviceable to him – that if an body makes a great favour of giving him a letter he may be sure it will be worth nothing at all to him – And that should he happen to have no letters at all with him he need not care much for he can live very cheap at Fort William and will be taken very good care of. Finally it may be taken as a general rule by every body that your reception in India depends more upon the nature of the person to whom you may have a letter, than upon the claim you may have upon the said person – I am writing this letter from the River Ganges on my way to Dinapore to join the European regiment 350 miles from Calcutta, - I shall most probably send it from Boglepore [Bhagalpur] 255 m. from Cal. From which at present we are not far distant – We left Calcutta on the 26th July under the charge of Capt. Warden – Part of the division (we being all the Ganges (ship) cadets) were left behind on account of the illness of one of the Party, who we have since heard expired on the 31st Thus died Ensign Joseph Brandon after a residence (as the paper expresses it) of 3 weeks in this lethiferous climate” – He was above me therefore I have made one step

It is impossible for me to say that I like India that is that I like the country because the continual danger you are exposed to if you don't take care of yourself renders England a paradise by comparison – but I may say I like India, meaning, as I should think most people mean by such an expression, that I like my situation as I am perfectly convinced I could not do so well in England and I think the same would be the case with George, whom I repeat again I earnestly wish to see her as assistant-surgeon – there is yet room at Bengal for 150 as ensigns, but no lieutenantcies vacant, and I suppose there as many as 150 ensigns in the country but the complement is 310 – They make it a rule now not to post them till they are lieutenants so that tho I am at present an Ensign of the European Regiment at Dinapore and when I am drilled may perhaps do duty with a Native Regiment, I shall not be finally fixed [till] a vacant lieutenantcy comes to my turn – All letters at present therefore had better be directed for me to the Care of Messrs Alexander & Co, who will forward it to me wherever I may happen to be at the time – How long I may remain an Ensign I [don't *corrected to*] do not know 150 is a great many to get through – but we rest our hopes on an expected answer from the Court of Directors to certain propositions from the Governor General sent about a twelve month ago by a Capt. Craigie an overland dispatch – The purpose of them is about an augmentation and though the precise nature of the propositions is a secret, there is no doubt but that if the Directors will decide upon any of them we shall all be lieutenants in less than a twelvemonth – otherwise it may take two years before such a number will be digested. I cannot but express my gratitude for your uniform kindness to me whilst in England, and shall ever feel happy & highly gratified by any interest that you may take in my welfare at present – You will make every kind remembrance to Catherine together with the little ones, who are never to be omitted in family remembrances and than whom I know no one it would give me greater pleasure to see – remember me to my family – I remain Dear Sir

Yours affectionately

Edward Squibb

P.S. The Gun answers to admiration & again I should thank you for it.

Letter 4

Dinapore Oct^r 4 1820

My dear Father

I have been here now near 5 weeks, and perhaps you will think me very lazy when I tell you, this is the first Europe letter I have written from it – But I assure you I have not been idle, as I have been under the sergeants' hands all the time. We rise at gun-fire (half past five) every morning and have an hour's drilling before breakfast on parade – during the day we have a sergeant for the sword-exercise, and another for the musket for an hour at our own quarters And in the evening about 6 another drill n parade – this with the occasional mounting guard &c has kept us well employed – We expect to be dismissed from drill in a week

or so, and as the European Regiment with which we are doing duty leaves this in September for Garypour (about 80 miles north of this) we shall be moving then each of us to our several destinations – As they do not post us until we are lieutenants, we are allowed the option, when dismissed drill, of doing duty with any corps we please until our promotion - Lieutenant Roger W. Wilson of the 29 N.I. brother-in-law to Mrs Roebuck, is adjutant to an Infantry levy at Minpoorie (near Etawah and not far from Agra) – he has written to me inviting me to do duty with his levy when I leave this – I shall accordingly apply for it, and as soon as the necessary orders come from the Adjutant-General's shall take my departure to Minpoorie. We have just finished the musket, and have taken charge of divisions, so that we shall soon be reported fit, to the Commander-in-Chief, next month therefore I may reckon upon moving – We have capital quarters at Dinapore, and very reasonable, which is lucky, as whilst with the European regiment we receive less pay – There are a great many Ensigns before me, about 200, the new regiments are therefore very devoutly prayed for by myself as well as some 30 or 40 already behind me. Those that came out in the same ship for Madras are all lieutenants – but I do not despair of there being some change that will make us all lieutenants, - but only the old twoddles in Leadenhall Street [the Directors of the E.I.C.] take such a time to consider about it – It is well known the Marquis [of Hastings] has been crying it for some time past – I have heard there is about to be a force sent after the Seiks [*sic*], a people of whom no body knows any thing – but all agree there is to be some fighting somewhere – But the King's troops generally come in for the best share of that work -

October is considered the beginning of the cold weather in India - indeed I have already felt the such a day that I would have given anything for a fire, and was glad to get the blankets round me again at night – but it has not regularly set in for cold ye, though there is a very sensible change in the temperature – About half the Army are going to relieve one another now, as the cold weather is the only time they can march with comfort – the 59th (King's regiment) comes here – the first battalion of the 29th N.I. goes to Jaggernaut Poorie, a place on the sea-coast famous for the idol to Jaggernaut Poorie, where an immense number of pilgrims resort, - this is all I know of the movements – Lieut C. G. Constable Adj^t 28 N.I. to whom I brought a letter from his father (L^t Col. Constable) is dead – As I had not heard from him I wrote to him and te leter was returned to me saying 'Deceased on the 28th' August last - L^t Wilson wrote to his friend Capt. Cooper, deputy-paymaster at this station, a very kind letter concerning me which I saw, in consequence of which I have received several civilities from him – He introduced me to Maj. Gen^l Sir William Toone commanding at the station, for which purpose he took me to breakfast there, which I find is the usual mode of introduction in the Army, the commanding officer holding a kind of levee at them, -since that I have dined there. I have just taken a Moonshee to whom I am to pay 15 rupees a month, and I have him when I please and for as long as I please, in fact he is a servant. I have some idea of trying to get into the college, but I shall not take that step without advising with L^t Wilson, and if it is desirable and feasible[.] Minpoorie, I shall find a capital place I understand from Capt Cooper to prepare myself for it – There are a certain number of exhibitions allowed to young men in the army for the college in Fort William, and I have heard it said that there has seldom been known an instance of one passing in tolerable examination without his getting a staff appointment soon afterwards, but I doubt whether his merit avails any one much – interest is the thing – And I should think those go into the college who have expectations, and take that method for preparing themselves for a situation – but I will ascertain the fact – I know not how it is but I have a great [*missing* - ?presentiment] that I shall see George in India before long – it must be because [*missing* – I do so?] desire it,- he will starve in England an he might bring his wife out with him, and with economy manage very decently here – as assistant-surgeon he would receive the pay of a lieutenant, and I know of more than one Ensign here that manages to keep himself and wife, of course they cut it rather fine – There is a sad business with some of our Ensigns at present – there are no less than four in the Calcutta jail who are to be tried for murder – The judges are very tender of going hard with young men in these circumstances, and of course influence the jury – but I had rather be tried for killing a man at home than here, as the witnesses in these cases being generally black fellows have no scruple in perjuring themselves and swearing away your life there is no doubt that one at least will be hanged (unless he is proved insane) as he was tried not 3 months before for shooting a man, who recovered, and now for killing a man outright – as to the other three, as their cases are all different it will fare accordingly with them, though if they can by any means escape, no doubt the jury will acquit them – There are great allowances to be made for all this, as some of the black men are horridly provoking – the story of one of them is that being in a rage with one of his servants he struck him with his fist on the head, and the fellow dropt down dead – the least thing kills them – they are such weak devils – It happened to each of them whilst on the

river – A great deal of this comes from not knowing the language – if a servant does any thing wrong, and he endeavours to speak in his own defence you only get the more enraged because you can't understand him, and the climate itself is enough to make one irritable- Indeed I don't know whether it is not a sort of affectation or not, some treat their servants as if they were assassins of who they lived in continual danger never threatening them with less than a loaded pistol – it is no wonder then that these things happen – I shall make up a large packet of letters for England before I leave this place, and most probably send it by Capt. Chivers – if he has not left Calcutta, I shall direct my agents to give it him – with love to all

I remain My Dear Father
Your affectionate Son Edw^d Squibb

Letter 5

Calcutta 30th December 1820 [endorsed rec^d p M^f Reid 13th June '21]

My dear Father

I take the opportunity of writing by M^f Reid who is returning to England in the Golconda – you may not perhaps recal [*sic*] to your mind M^f Reid (unless you see him) but he is the gentleman of whose marriage I informed Emma off [*sic*] (though I am afraid it was inconsiderately done!!!) in my letter to her – he fell in love on board the ship was married at Bombay and on my arrival here from Dinapore I found him & M^{rs} Reid staying at M^f Campbell's where I am at present also staying In my last packet which I am afraid you may have thought “too much of a good thing” at home (I will not in future overburthen you with such a posse of letters at once) I gave you to understand that I was going to Minpoorie, as I myself believed – but it is contrary to their custom to let unposted ensigns do duty with irregular corps – I had therefore applied for Jaggernaut Poorie where 1 Bⁿ 29th are now stationed – I have come this far by water on my way to it, but I now have heard we are to be posted in a few weeks – it would be needless therefore to go on to Jaggernaut and when I arrived there be ordered perhaps to Loodkana or any other place. I intend therefore waiting here till I know what corps I am to be posted to – in fact permission to do so – I am very glad we are to be posted, it finally fixes us and one has merely to look forward to the deaths &c in his own regiment for promotion – there are a great many before me – I expect to be posted fifth ensign – I think being posted gives me a speedier chance of promotion – We have accounts from Bombay of 600 sepoys who were sent to assist the Imaum of Muscat being cut to pieces by 4000 Arabs & 5 officers and a surgeon killed at Lascary. I hope this will make a stir. I have had the happiness to receive a letter from Emma dated the 18th of April 1820 – this is the only one I have received I am in expectation of another for I hope you did not discontinue to write at home because you did not hear from Madeira – Capt. Chivers left Calcutta the 18th Nov^r he will have delivered therefore my letters before you receive this – It is now cold weather – but I am told the next month it is to be colder still – it resembles – as to temperature – the spring of England but the sun is still very powerful – people now take to warm clothing 2 or 3 blankets &c and some to fires– up the country they have ice and snow at this time of the year – this is as you may suppose it far preferable to the hot weather – Calcutta is particularly gay but perhaps not so much so now as usual, in consequence of the absence of the Marquis, and much [?most] of his staff who are gone on a shooting party up to the Rajchmal hills which are aout 250 miles from Calcutta –between it and Dinapore – the Marchioness has gone with him – We have heard that they have shot one rhinoceros, which they were very anxious to do – the letter in the paper says it took 3 elephants to drag the carcass along – It was hit in the neck by a common bullet which immediately killed it – the others hardly made an indent on its hide – The new regiments have been so long expected here, and there seems so little [??likelihood]of their appearance that I give them up entirely- That puts an end therefore to all hopes of a speedy lieutenantancy – when I say that I may be four years an ensign I do not overdo it – The average number of deaths on the Bengal establishment only is about one a week or perhaps 60 a year, not including any ??? that is two to each regiment – now I know I shall not be lower than sixth ensign – I shall be a lieutenant therefore in 3 years which is as soon as I can expect to be if I remain unposted – by being posted therefore I have every thing to gain – and nothing to lose – I wish you would send me if you have an opportunity the East Indian Directory of 1821 which will be published by Black & Parr about September – I want to see how my ship mates &c get on at the other

presidencies – I hope my instigations have had the effect of inciting Georg to come out to India if he has had a opportunity and not taken advantage of it he may regret it ever after - He should be quick about it – Though I do not mean to say that this is a better country than [sic] England yet I am sure George should he ever come out here will agree with me that it is better to be in India than to stay grubbing in London – I have acquired a dislike to cities – even at Calcutta I feel my spirits sensibly depressed to what I do when away from it – it is next to moping in London – that noble city but vile place – I will write and let you know as soon as I am posted at present I have but to send my love to all & believe me Dear Father your affectionate Son Edw^d Squibb

Letter 6

Endorsed by GS “E.S. 21st June ’22 from the Fort of Kallingur rec^d 29. Jan^y ’23”

My dear Father

Since my last letter I have been moving about a good deal but am now fixed for the present in the Fort of Kallingur. A few days since I received your letter communicating the melancholy intelligence of my uncle Fladgate’s death². In camp I had the pleasure to receive the two “Observer” newspapers containing an account of the Coronation³ which I found very amusing. I have not yet received the Newspapers sent on ? last through Messrs. Fletcher & Alexander but no doubt I soon shall. I have just seen in the Newspapers the arrival of M^r E. Gibson as Lieutenant in the 4th Dragoons at Bombay. I had seen his appointment before. He is fortunate in having got his Commission in a Regiment which has just come out. In those regiments which have lately come out to India there is not a Lieutenant who has been longer so in his Corps than 5 years – the promotion at first is so good. Our news here lately as become to us very interesting but the accounts we get are very contradictory that we do not know how to rely upon them. The situation of Turkey and Russia has afforded much matter for speculation. We had lately a report of Russia having attacked Persia and Turkey at the same moment. If the Russians conquer Persia and once firmly seat themselves there it is natural to suppose that they will turn their attention toward Hindoostan – but without that or without the strenuous cooperation of the Persians it is not likely they will invade India – indeed I do not see how they possibly can. Our last reports here are that M^r Canning is to be Governor – General of India and Sir E. Paget (at present Governor of Ceylon) to be Commander-in-Chief⁴ but we do not know when the Marquis of Hastings will resign. Some time since I wrote to Emma and requested to have some of my books sent out to me- as the list of them sent was not so large as I wish it to be, I enclose a new one in the event of these not being sent or that the others may be sent by some other opportunity – All that I mention will be found amongst the books that I left at home and I hope that you will not think me giving too much trouble by this request – if directed to the care of Messrs Alexander & Co Calcutta they will defray all the necessary expences for me.

I was lately over for a few days at Adjgush [?Ajaigarh], I believe I have before informed you that there were 5 Companies (or a Wing) of our Battalion at these two posts which are 18 miles asunder. They are both situated in a range of Hills but Kallingur is the largest & in my opinion the pleasantest of the two it is also reckoned the healthiest as having less jungle about it though I believe both are very well for that. It is 900 feet respecting height from the plain and as in most places inaccessible the path up it is nearly a mile – the coming up and going down of which is the most wearisome thing I have experienced. Adjgush is similar to this but more rocky & uneven the Summit – I have derived considerable amusement from the Magazines which you were kind enough to send by H. Cox⁵ and should also from the Times newspaper containing the Queen’s Trial but that we had had all particulars in the Calcutta papers long since for these things I am very thankful.

With my love to my Mother and all the family

I remain Dear Father Your affectionate Son Edw^d Squibb

Kallingur June 22nd 1822

² The surviving brother of Mrs Squibb née Mary Ann Fladgate, Francis, died 1821 aged 48.

³ Of George IV

⁴ Paget was appointed C-in-C January 1823 and served as such until October 1825. Canning did not become governor-general.

⁵ Hiram Cox?

Letter 7

To Mr Squibb, Savile Row, London. Endorsed by GS Kallinger October '22 rec^d 4 Mar '23

My dear Father

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of the 10th Jan^y last together with the Newspapers and Asiatic Journal accompanied it some days since. I had received your letter of 6th Feb^y before I despatched my last to Frank⁶ and I believe I have received all the letters written to me from home up to that date – I received a letter from Emma⁷ dated 8th March on the 28th Ult. and one from Charles Smith the day before, dated in April. Emma's letter was brought out I believe by Miss Gibson, and mentioned that George's marriage was to take place the latter end of April, so that I expect in a few days to receive another letter from home giving me an account of that ceremony. I do not know at present whether I shall remain at Kallinger⁸ or be ordered into Keitah the coming Cold Weather, but or Corps does not march this year, as expected on consequence of a new arrangement, which is I believe to take place, that of corps changing stations every three instead of every two years as heretofore – I have so little at present to write about that I do not know that I should have written were it not to acknowledge the letters I have received from home lately and that I may not incur the imputation of neglect by not writing. Indeed I am more anxious to hear from home in the first place that I may hear of George's marriage and of being comfortably settled (of which however I have heard) and secondly that I may have accounts of William's⁹ health which I hope to hear is improving and that I may get favourable accounts of my Mother's health which I was sorry to hear had suffered in consequence of Uncle Fladgate's¹⁰ death and from nursing [?Mrs Squibb's last child had been born 1806] and from anxiety on William's account.

I believe I have before mentioned that Newspapers are hardly worth sending out to India unless the expense is very trifling – the news they contain is generally old by the time (as I have hitherto found) they reach me – With regard to the Magazines which you were kind enough to send me I really do not think them worth the expence of sending them I do not speak on my own account but the Magazines appear to have been bought solely for me and I do not think them worth their price exclusive of the expence of sending them for they were dull things of [missing] although I am much obliged to you for them – I had intended to have written to my Mother by this despatch but finding that I have so little to say at present I must defer it to another time – with my love to my Mother and all the family –

Letter 8

Keitah¹¹ Jan^y 18th 1823 [endorsed rec^d 13 July '23]

My dear Father

I had the pleasure of receiving your two letters dated in July last the 12th of this month I received them both together so that they must have come out in the same ship – I received your letter dated in June a short time before I left Kallinger, by it I learnt of the despatch of the books I wrote for, for which I am much obliged, I did not expect them so soon for I had sent another list in a letter which I wrote some time since, in which I mentioned some book which I had forgot, but which perhaps you will be good enough to send should any opportunity offer but perhaps they are sent by this time – they were only 4 or 5 more of my classical books which I left at home – I wrote to Messrs Alexander & Co and enclosed the Bill of Lading so that they will be sure to take charge of the box when the Ship arrives but which I have not yet heard of – I was very

⁶ Elder brother Francis Squibb (1791-1833)

⁷ Elder sister Emma Squibb (1799-) m. Henry Wyatt d. 1874, emigrated to Hamilton, Ontario.

⁸ See Wikipedia, Kalinjar

⁹ Elder brother William Squibb (1790-1829)

¹⁰ Mrs Squibb lived till 1835. Their only other sibling, John, the eldest, had died in 1790 aged 30.

¹¹ Lt Col Stephen Nation, 1st battalion, 8th Regiment, commanded the post of Keitah in Bundelkund (Bundelkhand) in 1821-3 *East India Military Calendar* vol 2 1824 & *The United service magazine* by A W A Pollock, part 1; when appointed CB 1826 was 23rd Regt Bengal N.I.

happy to find by your last letter that William was so much recovered and that it gave you at home pleasure to see my name as Adjutant to a Detachment (but which however could only be on my account) it was however but a temporary appointment, the arrival of the other troops broke up the Detachment – and consequently my Office ended – I am now Third Ensign having had only two steps as yet – it is rather slow – but I do not care much about the matter – it will all come in good time, and I find I can live on my pay as it is – which is as much as I can expect at present – I am going on Command the day after tomorrow – it is to convey, or escort, Treasure from Calpu¹² to Sangor, we shall pass through Keitah on our way to Sangor The General of the Division was expected on the 20th Inst to inspect us – we had been preparing for him – but I suppose he is not coming otherwise we should have to wait for him – I had got my white Tights and Hessian boots ready for him – but I don't make a good figure in them – By the way the Infantry Officers are to wear Sabres instead of straight swords in future not that I want one, as our [?Commanding??] Officer has sent down for a lot to Calcutta that we may have them all of a pattern and I have put my name down for one – but should there be any young friend coming out to India he may not be aware of it, and the others are generally supplied – It is a late Order – I have now nearly got to the end of my letter, which I was anxious to de[?] before I marched as perhaps you may be expecting to hear from me – Remember me kindly to M^r Clark (who however is always included in general remembrances) and Catherine & William & Frank – I have written to my Mother, and shall enclose my letter in this – I shall write to George & Emma soon, and send them my love in the mean time and kind remembrances to M^{rs} George –

believe me, Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son

Edw^d Squibb

Letter 9

Keitah March 8th 1823

My dear Father

I wrote to you and my Mother a short time before I went on Command to Sangar we returned from our trip the 18th of last month – In the first place I have to inform you that the Books which you sent me by the Ship City of Edinburgh have arrived in Calcutta, and are now on their way to reach me. I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you since I last wrote, which I attribute to your not having received any letters from me but I hope to be more regular in future – We did not go the whole of the way to Sangar but were relieved at a place called Keerahpore – about 5 marches from it – we were out a month, so that we were quite tired of it by the time we returned – We are now preparing for the Hot-Winds which begin about the middle of this month and preparing our tatties accordingly You will not perhaps understand what the tatties are, unless I explain it – The fact is the Winds that begin blowing about the 15th of this month are so hot, that independent of the sun they are enough to scorch you in your own bungalow to prevent which we have these tatties which are made of the roots of a long grass called huss-huss fixed & fastened together by means of bamboos and string They are made to fit in the door-cases, and moved about from West to east, or whatever quarter the wind comes from which is continually varying – the huss-huss is paced so as to admit the wind through its crevices, and a man remains outside watering them all day long – so that by this means we get the wind cool. This is rather an artificial way of life, but in this manner we are found to live for nearly three months in the year. I have no news since my last to inform you of – Lord Hastings has returned to England and there was a report that he had died on the passage¹³ – We have a yet no certain accounts of his successor. You will perhaps think I trouble you too often in commissions for books but I would be much obliged if you would send me an Oxford & a Cambridge University Calendar – they are printed yearly I believe and I would of course like the latest – but I do not want them yearly – one of each will last me as long as I am in India. I shall write to Emma to-morrow or next day, and send it by this – with love to my Mother and all the family believe me Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son

¹² Kalpi, then the headquarters of the Bundelkhand Agency

¹³ The report was incorrect. Hastings died in 1826(at sea).

Edw^d Squibb

Letter 10

Kalingar May 27th 1823 [endorsed rec^d 10 Jan^y 1824 Ans^d 24th Jan^y]

My dear Father

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter of 5th Nov^r a short time since – Since my last letter I have returned to Kalingar the Companies here having been relieved – I do not expect we shall leave Kalingar now till the General Relief of the Troops takes place which I hope will be the end of this year – The case of Books which you were so kind as to send me arrived here yesterday from Calcutta – the books are in excellent condition and just as good as when they left England – which must be due in great measure to the care in packing them for which I am much obliged to Mr E Lloyd I shall not fail to acknowledge the presents which have been made me – I am much obliged to you for the series of the New Monthly Magazine which I have read a little of and find very entertaining and instructive –

I was happy to hear of Emma's intended marriage, anything that tends to make her or any of the family happy – must make me so – I received her letter by the Thalia (dated May last) and am anxiously looking forward to the receipt of her next letter – I have received George's letter also of the same month – and shall write to thank him for it by this – I am glad you have heard from H. Cox – I mentioned to Emma (I believe) that I had heard from M^{rs} Lamb's husband at Keitah – I hope that Catharine will oblige me with some account of her journey to Scotland, and that William will also give me some account of his to Lyons if he is not too much engaged and (which I fervently trust) in good health – If they will all write to me on these occasions I shall be sure to hear of every thing which will be interesting to me – I cannot hear too often from them I am much obliged to you for the Dictionary you have sent, and also for the "Imperial Calendar" which is a great source of amusement to me – The weather here is extremely hot at present, we have not got rid of the "Hot Winds" we had the pleasure of marching in them last month coming out to Kalingar - I have described Kalingar before – we are in a very comfortable house (two of us) - - I never hear from (neither do I write to) Charles Fladgate – as we are in the same part of the world I think we might as well correspond if he has no objection – it would give me much pleasure – but I would not have it mentioned unless he would express a wish of the same kind – and as it is I can hardly keep up the correspondence I have – having so little to write about – I hope this will find you all at home in good health give my love to my Mother and kind remembrances to all the rest of the family – and Believe me

Dear Father

Your affectionate Son
Edw^d Squibb

Letter 11

July 20th 1823 [endorsed rec^d 31 March 1824 Ans^d 2nd April]

I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 30th Jan^y last which reached me the day before yesterday – I was glad to find my letters of June last year had arrived as you must have been a long time without any letters from me. I wrote to you on the 28th May last in which I mentioned that the books, you were so kind as to send me, had just arrived – I have remained here (Kalingar) ever since, nor do I expect to move for some months yet – The Rains have now set in so that the weather is much cooler and pleasanter & we are in a very comfortable bungalow, and one, which is not always the case, that keeps the wet out – As you desire a more particular account of how I pass my time &c I will endeavour and fill the rest of my paper with what merely concerns myself an indeed I have no other news to communicate – I always spend a part of my time now in the study of the Languages – a plan which I certainly intend to follow up – I have been lately turning over my old School Books with some edification and they brought back with them a train of recollections which had for a long time lain dormant within me – I am sorry I did not make a longer list when I wrote last for them – they have however nearly all come that I asked for there are however a few whose names I will mention (which are left at home) which would assist me – they are

Butler's Geography – Gradus (ad Parnassum) – Lemprieres Classical Dictionary – a Delphin Virgil – a Latin Grammar – and Murray's "English Grammar" - They are by no means worth the expense of sending unless some friend will take charge of the – seven (7) in number with a little handbook called Seale's Greek Masters I look anxiously forward to the receipt of the packet of letters (which I hope will be a long one) and the Magazines (the New Monthly) are very entertaining – I did not like the London so well I liked Ivanhoe (which my mother sent me) exceedingly – I had quite forgot it but I think it one of his best novels – I shall finish this letter, as I dare say I shall soon be writing again

with love to my Mother and all the family believe me Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son

Edw^d Squibb

Letter 12

Kalingar, August 13th 1823 [endorsed rec^d 26th January 1824]

My dear Father,

I have lately had the pleasure of receiving the parcel of magazines which you despatched for me in November last – containing the New Monthly Magazines for July, August, and September -22, wit a letter from you and also one from Emma Since I last wrote I have had a piece of news to communicate which perhaps however you have heard in England before this – The New Regiments which have been so long talked of in this part of the world are at length to take place – Four (4) New Regiments are ordered to be raised – I do not know the arrangements yet, so that I cannot tell whether I shall be removed or remain with the Corps I am at present They will be numbered the 31st, 32nd, 33rd, & 36th – the two latter are to be what they call Marine Regiments, that is, for general service in all the Company's dominions on this side of the Cape – I will write more about it when I see the promotions &c – it only takes place in the Infantry In your last letter you mentioned that you thought you should be able to get letters to Lord Amherst¹⁴ in my favour and also to Sir Edw Paget (the Commander-in-Chief-) I have no doubt if you can get them they will be of considerable service to me – that to Lord Amherst from so near a connection as Lord Plymouth¹⁵ I think must be attended to – There will be a good scramble for Staff appointments now for these four regiments will require 2 Staff to each Battalion (the Adjutant and Quartermaster) making in all sixteen – these are in the gift of the Commander-in-Chief but of course can only be given to those in the corps – I have now a request to make which I don't know however whether you will attend to , which is that you would send me a watch from England I hardly like to make a request of this kind without accompanying it with a bill for the probable cost of such a thing, and I would do it, if I knew how such a thing would be taken – I find myself now that I take some pains to employ my time at a loss to regulate it – and as to buying a watch in India they are so very dear and generally so very bad that I don't like to do it – I don't think I could get one under 200 Rupees, and then I could hardly depend on its going – I need hardly say that if you do send me a watch I would not wish anything showy or expensive but merely one whose going I can depend on – for otherwise I would just as lieve be without one, as with one – [missing] excepting the before mentioned to communicate – I am, as usual, at Kalingar – I expect shortly to see all the new postings to-gether with the relief when I will write again – I shall enclose a letter for Emma in this, I think, before I despatch it -

With my best love to my Mother and everyone of the family – I remain, Dear Father,

Your affectionate Son

Edw^d Squibb

Letter 13

Kalingar 11th September 1823 [endorsed rec^d 12 April '24]

Since my last letter of the 15th August I have not had much to communicate – The only news with me is

¹⁴ Governor-General of India 1823-26

¹⁵ Lord Amherst married the widow of Lord Plymouth in old age, some years after his return from India.

that our Corps is going to Bareilly a station higher up the country than this, towards the Nepal Hills I understand it is a very nice climate, that is for India, and I dare say it is from its situation – this is not a very large Station – about 5 Companies more than at Keitah – I shall like it the better for that – Lord Amherst has arrived in Calcutta and taken upon him the Government. Our Commander-in-Chief Sir E. Paget is coming up the country to review the Troops and will stay for a time from Calcutta I believe he is at present at or near Cawnpore – I have not yet seen the Postings to the new Regiments so that I cannot tell whether I shall be removed or not – I have not received any letters or parcels since I last wrote – I expect that we shall march from this about the beginning of November - The weather here is beginning to get cool and pleasant – We have not had so much rain lately – I am thinking of getting my agents to send you a Bengal Directory which is published yearly in Calcutta I know you can get the register which is published in London but these contain more than the other – they tell the different stations of the Army and also where each Battalion is stationed – the number of Troops at each station – and other matters – It will be published next January – I enclose in this a letter for my friend Charles Smith – I hope to hear soon from Emma as Mrs Wyatt but shall perhaps write to her before that – I have always some thing to ask you for and at present it is that you would send me what French books I left at home of which I had about half-a-dozen – that, the French, being a language I intend to cultivate -

With love to my Mother and all the family – I remain, Dear Father,
Your affectionate Son
Edw^d Squibb

Letter 14

Kalingar September 24th 1823

My dear Father

When I last wrote I requested you to send me some French Books and the time before it was for some Latin Books – I find every time I write I want some book or another – and therefore I write now to request you will send me all the books which are left at home, and which did belong to me I have the less hesitation in writing for them as they are not likely to be of use to any – body but myself – this is the last time I hope to trouble you on such an account and therefore take the opportunity of mentioning two works which are very scarce to be met with but which I wish to get they are “Hours of Idleness”¹⁶ by Lord Byron and “English Bards & Scotch Reviewers”¹⁷ by D^o – which two are now published and sold by M^r Benbow No 9 Castle Street Leicester Fields the price of the former is 2^s .. 0^d and of the latter 1^s and as I know you wish me to write a better hand – if you will put up with them a short treatise on hand-writing or even a few copies I will do my best to profit by them –

I have not heard from home for some time the last letter I received dated 30th January last - so that I am anxiously expecting some letters very day – I mentioned in my last that we are going to Bareilly – since that I have heard nothing of the postings and removals to the new Regiments – In one of my former letters I asked for an Oxford and a Cambridge Calendar and you will have seen my request (in the letter before the last) for a watch – which I hope you will send me – I have been a very punctual correspondent of late hardly missing a month without writing but I wish I had some letters from you to answer Indeed I hardly know how to fill my letter having so little in the shape of news to communicate –

I shall expect letters from every one of the family by this next packet which is to come to me and which I suppose M^{rs} Gibson is to bring out I see Henry Cox has obtained leave of Absence to go down to Calcutta which I suppose is to meet them – His Corps the 29th does not move – We expect to get strawberries and apples at Bareilly – these are very great delicacies in India – we get a kind of crab-apple at Keitah and they say strawberries will grow here – but I have never seen any – We shall be all very glad to move I dare say – for although it is a great trouble moving all one’s things the marching in the cold weather is by no means unpleasant – and we shall not begin our march till November – I enclose in this a letter for Emma who I suppose is by this time is [*sic*] M^{rs} Wyatt – and with love to my Mother and all the family

I remain Dear Father

¹⁶ 1807

¹⁷ 1809

Your affectionate Son
Edw^d Squibb

Letter 15

Kalingar 15th Oct^r 1823 [endorsed rec^d the 10 April '24]

My dear Father

A day or two since I received your letters of the 18th April which mentioned the receipt of mine of Oct^r 1st last year – when I wrote to you last I was uncertain whether I should remain with the 8th Reg^t or be moved to one of the New Regiments – but now I have contrary to my expectation, been removed to the 28th Reg^t This is in consequence of an arrangement made to equalize the Junior part of the Army for they removed nearly all the Ensigns and posted them to different Regiments – I am posed to the 1st Battalion of the 28th which is at present at Mhow a station in Malwah where I shall proceed and join it as soon as I am ready for marching which will be about the beginning of next month – Mhow is rather to the South of this – more towards Bombay –

It was rather a bold undertaking of M^{rs} Gibson to leave England at her time of life and come out to India and I cannot say that I think she has acted wisely in so doing – It is quite bad enough for those who are obliged to live in India to remain in it but it is the last place in the world for a person to choose voluntarily as a residence especially to spend their latter days in - If she thinks she cannot live without the society of her daughters she had better have kept them with her or at least have remained at home till she could have the pleasure of seeing them again which I dare say she might in a few years – indeed I am afraid she will repent of having left England but it is now too late for her to change her mind and she must remain in India I suppose whether she likes it or not –

I have received no Magazines of later date than September 22 – It was the London Magazines which I thought so dull the others the “New Monthly” are very amusing – and I hope you will continue to send them me, and also the Newspapers when there are any interesting news – I am glad to hear my name has been mentioned to Lord Amherst and Sir Edward Paget and I hope it will be [missing] qualify myself for any thing that may offer – I am of course promoted in this new Regiment and take rank from 11th July 1823 – I have been exactly three years an Ensign reckoning from the time I landed in Calcutta which was on the 9th July 1820 – I am Dear Father

Your affectionate Son
Edw^d Squibb

Letter 16

Mhow 12th Feb^y 1824

My Dear Father

I ought to have written to you on my arrival at this place but my letter has been delayed so long I hardly know when I shall get it off In my last from Kalingar I believe I informed you that I was then about to leave that place to join my new Corps the 1st Battalion 28th Regiment at Mhow in Malwa – I left it the 28th October and arrived here 12th Dec^r last after a long and tedious march¹⁸ Befor I left Kalingar I received he parcel of Magazines containing William’s Frank’s and Catherine’s letters and shortly after my arrival here the packet brought out by M^{rs} Gibson with yours and Emma’s letters. My Mother’s letter of the 17th July reached me last month and George’s letter of 20th August has just come to hand so that I am a good deal in arrears in my correspondence but must make it up - Mhow is rather a large station there being 3 Battalions of Infantry a Regiment of Cavalry and some Horse and Foot Artillery at it – it is about 16 miles from Indoor the Capital of Kolkar’s country (in which Mhow is situated) and not above 30 or 35 marches

¹⁸ The distance is about 350 miles in a straight line; so he travelled about 10 miles a day on average.

from Bombay to which it is nearer by nearly two thirds than it is to Calcutta – The Cantonments are situated on a rising ground but the ground is stony and the country all round it very barren there are but few gardens to the houses here, and hardly a tree to be seen - it is an out of the way station for us but would be convenient enough for the Bombay Troops - The best thing at the place is a Library and Reading Room which belongs to the Military and is certainly a very good institution but I cannot say that it is altogether a pleasant station though I like it better than I did when I first came here Messrs Alexander will perhaps send this letter along with the Bengal Directory which they were to get more me, and which will give you a great deal more information (of Bengal) than the Directories published in London do besides giving the Battⁿ to which each officer is posted, it gives the different stations, the force at each, and where each Battalion is stationed – which you will see opposite each Bttⁿ – It also tells you in the Margin of what is called the “Army List” the time that each Officer has been in the Country that is, the year of their entering as cadets from which you may form some idea of promotion, and how slow it has been off ate years in the Infantry particularly – Subalterns of fifteen years standing are allowed the Brevet or Army Rank of Captain (but they get no additional Pay) there is hardly a regiment without some of these Brevet Captains notwithstanding this late augmentation of four Regiments The Commander-in-Chief is at present up the Country where he will probably remain till next Cold weather in December or January by which time this corps will have left Mhow – having already been two years at it – I enclose a letter for my Mother and shall now send this letter (which is not the first I have written) without waiting to add any thing further – Young Holkar¹⁹ has been out from Indoor for these last few days with his Troops and the Resident has been here and we have been on the qui vive – but I don’t suppose he had any other intention than to amuse himself, although he left Indoor with too little ceremony – I remain with love to all the family – Dear Father

Your affectionate Son
Edw^d Squibb

¹⁹ The under age Maharajah of Indore. “In 1818, the Holkars were defeated by the British in the Third Anglo-Maratha War, and the Holkar kingdom became a part of the British Raj. As a result of this defeat in the Battle of Mahidpur, the treaty of Mandsaur was signed, through which the Cantonment town of Mhow was handed over to the British.” (Wikipedia)