

% American Embassy  
New Delhi, India

(written at Landour Hill, Mussooree, U.P.,  
July 9, 1947).

Dear Mr. Rogers:

Two and a half weeks ago I came to the hills for convalescence. I believe the change has been a good one for me.

Professor Habib wrote me, while I was still in Allahabad, "My wife and I both felt that you were not taking sufficient care of yourself against the heat of our country". His earlier advice to the same effect had gone unheeded: a bit stubbornly, I had wanted to see for myself how I would react to India's most concentrated heat. By the time his letter reached me, I had at least learned that the plains are not the place for a sick person, if he can avoid them. True recuperation from dysentery and jaundice just was not progressing in the 112 degrees heat. And so I was already making arrangements for a move when your letter of June 4th, for which I want to thank you, came to urge me to take a long vacation in some place "where it will be cool and the air bracing".

Landour is that sort of a place. It is also somewhat more satisfying aesthetically than the flat plains. The red tile and tin roofs of this summer vacation spot are dotted among thick trees along the ridges, saddles, and steep slopes of one of the thousands of wooded mountains that fringe the Himalayas. To the south, just beyond a lesser ridge and 4000 feet below, lies the city of Dehra Dun. Beyond stretch the plains, which had yielded so much dust into the atmosphere during the dry, windy months that when I reached Landour nothing was visible beyond our own limited range of hills: even the lights of Dehra Dun, only a few miles below, did not pierce the dust. With the first rains, ten days ago, all this was cleared away. The view became quite spectacular, with the still-dry Ganges bed cropping out of the mountains onto the plains to our east, the Jumna to the west. Now, from the Landour summit ridge, on the rare day when the air is clear of moist clouds, one looks north forty miles to the snow-covered 22,000 foot peaks of the Jumnotri and Gangotri ranges of the Himalayas, from whose glaciers originate the two rivers. Were I not a convalescent, my idea of a real vacation would be to take the trek up the Ganges to these glaciers and to the valleys that hang under them. This year my hill stay is somewhat tamer.

Landour Hill is the summer home of Christian missionaries in North India - evangelists, doctors, nurses, educators, and pastors. American Presbyterian, Methodist and Baptist, Anglican and other denominations are represented at the Language School cooperatively operated by these groups for their new missionary arrivals in India. Here also is the well-known Woodstock School, which prepares children of missionaries and other Christian families for college education in both the States and in England. Living here with a Presbyterian family, I could have imagined myself in a small Ohio or Pennsylvania community. Neighborhood boys go out for early morning hunts, shoot crows, collect beetles, and practice for a swimming meet, while their sisters plan parties, discuss dates, and earn pocket money by

tending babies. Meanwhile, the adults, fresh from their various mission stations, compare notes on the past year's work and discuss future plans. When I have wanted, I've had the chance to talk to thoughtful, open-minded persons with years of experience and hard work in India, or to young idealists hopeful for its future. Mostly, however, my activities have been non-thinking and automatic: reading detective stories, New Yorkers and Saturday Evening Posts, walking as my strength has picked up, and joining the smalltown social functions - church suppers, school plays, Gilbert and Sullivan sings on 4th of July - which in a hard world sometimes seem oldfashioned and lacking in backbone, but which nevertheless preserve a good deal of the world's friendliness and balance.

Jaundice, I have learned, can be more of a nuisance than dysentery. Several doctors and former jaundice patients with whom I have talked assure me that "physical languor" and "mental depression" (their terms), which I have certainly been experiencing, are characteristic of the ailment. Dr. Robinson, whom I have consulted here, believes from my account of the case that the carbasonone taken in the second week of dysentery treatment had an injurious effect on the liver and that from it has stemmed the subsequent trouble. Carbasonone is known for having a toxic effect on some people, so she doesn't assign the blame to the doctor who prescribed it. My liver is no longer enlarged, but apparently I won't be fully healthy until the liver regains its strength as an important factor in digestion and a source of reserve energy when needed. Small doses of salts, hydrochloric acid at meals, careful diet, plenty of vitamins, and rest constitute my present treatment.

One acquaintance here recovered from this ailment in two weeks, another was under par for several months. But I've been feeling a great deal better in the last week, and although I intend to take it easy until I'm confident my strength is back, I'm optimistic that a couple more weeks will achieve the goal.

A truly heartening aspect of this history of a semi-invalid has been the kindness and help received from people. At the suggestion of Dr. Barar, and with her introduction, I wrote from Allahabad to Reverend Hazlett here at Landour, asking him to inquire among the summer residents for lodging and board for an individual on diet. At once he wired me to come to his own house. Here I am. It is not an easy matter in India and in the hills to provide a sufficient diet free from fried foods, low on all fats, and with pureed vegetables, but Mrs. Hazlett has accomplished it, and cheerfully. And a number of other people have offered to feed me when the Hazletts return to the plains, next week.

I was cheered up a few days before leaving Allahabad by a surprise visit from Phil Talbot, who made a detour for the purpose on his way to Bombay after two crowded weeks in New Delhi. Phil's program during the past month, incidentally, is demonstration that a really active schedule of travel and work in Indian heat can be maintained by one from a temperate zone. I've admired his energy. The chance to talk to him in Allahabad was most welcome.

My apologies to you for the long lapse since I last wrote.

Sincerely yours,

*Richard Morse*  
Richard Morse