

Samuel Townsend [609]

Transcript of a Letter from Major Edward Townsend [620] to his mother concerning, amongst other things, the death of 'Uncle Sam'.

The relevant parts underlined; it could also refer to Samuel Townsend [409]

Christmas 1849.

Camp Poona,

My dearest Mother,

Just one year passed away since we met. How this anniversary brings up the recollection of this time 12 months, - the sudden order for India - the hurried preparations the short little Fortnight of leave - the busy week in London & the last, last flyaway week in Bath. Now, at the other end of the World, keeping Christmas amid dust & heat, instead of Ice & Snow. How rapid have been the Wings of Time. I can hardly realise that a year has flown away since last Christmas at Bath. Since I last wrote, I have been away for a month, being ordered to Ahmednuggan(?) on Court Martial duty. The weather being fine I rode the whole way, making 5 days journey, & sleeping at the Dack(?) bungalows, built by the Government at each stage. I set out, with 2 other officers, on Eve'g of Nov. 15. in the cool of the Evening, forded the river Moota Moola at Kurmadee 6 miles hence and reached the Bungalow at Lonee, 13 miles, soon after dark. Here we found one servant who had been dispatched in the morning with the bullock carts, containing portable bedstead & bedding, Tables, Chairs also eatables and drinkables; for the Bungalows, like Turkish caravanserai only afford shelter, tho' the people will provide meals, but bad and expensive. Nov 16. Sent servant &c. on after breakfast, & followed in the Evening, to Koadipoor 14 miles, passing the Beema river at Coniganne ferry, close to the obelisk erected to commemorate the Battle of Coniganne. Nov 17. on 13 miles halted there. Nov 18. Sunday. This is the Canton.... the Poona irregular Horse, commanded by Major Tapp, with whom we dined, & breakfasted next day. Nov 19. to Loopa 15 miles - & on Nov 20. to Ahmednuggar 17 miles. I had letters to Mr. Spooner, Collector of Ahmednuggar and Dr. McKenzie of the Artillery. The former was away; but I stayed with the latter, from Nov 26. till I left. The Court sat on 26. Nov. but having to send the proceedings to Bombay for Sir W. Cotton's confirmation, occasioned our delaying till Dec'r. 10. when returned, reaching Poona on Dec 13. I rather enjoyed the trip, both as a change, and as showing what Indian travelling is. The place, too, is worth a visit. The Fort is spacious, & an interesting specimen of Oriental fortification. It was captured by the Duke of Wellington and a large Tamarind Tree is shown under which His Grace's tent was pitched. The Arsenal has many curious objects. A 100 pounder Cannon, & several other Guns, many of them early Trophies of the Great Duke; whose deeds are fresh in the recollections of the natives, on whom he seems to have made a lasting impression. A Newspaper mentions poor Uncle Sam's death. At first I did not believe it, till it occurred, that there might very likely have been delays in communicating the intelligence to relations, (the date in the paper is Oct. 21.) & it might not therefore reached Bath till after the last mail had closed. When last in Town, a year ago, I called in Walcot Place, but did not see him. It occurred to me then, from the tone & appearances of matters, that some alarm existed, tho' I did not like seeking for information. I hope no delay took place in some one writing to Sam. There is no call in calculating for the mail, now due four days, will no doubt tell all

that is to be told. The Steamer is the "Aukland", a slow vessel, & I fear we shall not have letters in time to answer by the departing steamer of January 3.
January 5. 1850. The sluggish "Aukland" arrived at last, & yesterday brought the long delayed Mail, with your letter of November 3. confirming the Newspaper account. It seems though, Sam not having been written to sooner, but I suppose danger was not apprehended till the last. The will seems a very fair & proper one. The last time I saw him was January 1846 (about the same time when I was at Chickerley for a few days,) when in Town from Bath. I called but was told he was ill with Gout, and could not see anyone; he wrote a note however, wishing to see me, & I called again & saw him. That was the last time I was in Town till Christmas 1848, when I again called, but did not see him.

We are thinking of migrating to Mahabuleshwar for the hot months - i.e. those called par excellence hot. If leave can be had from about March 10. to June 10. The Bungalows there are tenanted only during the hot season, & rents are high in consequence; but I believe we are to take one conjointly with a Dr. & Mrs. Edwards, he the chief of the Doctors at Poona. Meantime, the General is taking advantage of the present cool mornings to have the Troops out for Brigade exercise once or twice a week.

Jan. 14. The Southampton Mail is about to close; so I come also to a close. Another home mail has been due here four days; but this steamer too is said to be slow, so that it will be impossible to reply by the return mail to any letters she may bring. The weather is good tho' still hot in the middle of the day, delightful in the Mornings and Evenings. We generally drive out in the Evenings. How I should enjoy driving you out in the Britzpa amid the strange sights, and strange figures which would interest you so much in this strange land; But such may not be, and it is no doubt well as it is; though I often imagine you close at hand, whether driving out, or seated quietly in this airy spacious Bungalow. Ever affly **E.T.**

I write again to C.H.(?) in this mail, expecting my Commission. Should you not hear from them, or receive it, it might be as well if a friend going to Town, would call in Cray's Court, & enquire.