

Treasury Bench

Friday – 27: July: 1900.

My dear Friar

We have got our army estimates on tonight and they will last far into the night. Sir Charles Dilke is speaking. The house is more than half empty. The discussion is not interesting. So I can fill up a shining half hour by writing to you. I do not know where you are. But I hope you are all right. A good many men have come home as invalids, after suffering from fever, but the voyage as a rule does them so much good that those whom I have seen do not appear to have anything much the matter with them. And some of the wounded men too have quite marvellous recoveries. I am sorry to be unable to say the like about Tommy's collie dog. He got red-mange very badly. We sent him to the Veterinary Infirmary, but the doctors declared that his case was a hopeless one, and we have had him destroyed by them. He was becoming a nice dog too, and we are sorry to lose him.

I expect you are feeling cold weather which is reported from South Africa. Here it has been almost intolerably hot, and very dry – no rain to speak of for a month.

Things go on about as usual at Beckenham. Tommy is in Birmingham with the Smiths. Rowland is playing cricket but has not done anything startling. His highest score this season, so far, is about 60. The other day he went in 'to force the pace', he made 45 in 18 minutes, knocking 20 off one 'over'. He is going with the Devonshire team of the M.C.C. They play the county of Cornwall and also the county of Devonshire, and they take about seven matches in all. I hope he will do well. Three pro's (bowlers) go with them.

I do not know that I have any more chatter, but if even letters get to you, you may be glad to receive a line or two from you old dad. The war appears to be on its last legs; and so I hope to see you again before long, especially as it seems from your last letter that you are advised to complete your course at Cromptons. I myself think that, in the absence of a clear opening in So. Africa, you had far better do so. Old Crompton himself is likely to come home soon. He is not contented with the class of road engines which you have got, and proposes to design and devise new ones.

Even your affte

Dad