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Singapore R. S.

E. I. Co.

India.

2-12-03.

My dearest Mama,

Just a short letter to wish you
all a very Merry Christmas, & every
good wish for the coming New
Year. We are still living in Mr
Colvin's house, unable to get into our
own & I fear won't be able to do so
until about the 7th or 8th! Mean
time we are living any how &
I don't know what we should do but
for Mr Colvin's kindness. The whole
house has had to be done up, large
scaffolds have been put in to help hold
the house together, & all the old

doorways which had rotted away
have been replaced & the whole house
painted inside & out, it was so dirty
it has been inhabited lately by several
families, one after the other each one
only staying for six months at most
& consequently not taking the least
trouble to have the house done up or
looked after at all, & it was in a
terrible state.

It looks such an
enormous house from the outside but
we've very little room inside really
& the biggest room in the house is abso-
lutely wasted on account of its having
to be used as a passage, & being the
only means of getting into the ~~rest~~
of rooms beyond! However I intend
making it into a large day
nursery for baby, which is the best

& the only means of using it at all.
If you could spare a few of
the bright coloured pictures from
some of the Xmas numbers, they
would go far to making the
walls look less bare. The nurse
hasn't arrived yet & we haven't heard
from her for ages! I don't see how
to think we never shall again!!!

Ralph is away up the line some-
where but coming back tomorrow
evening I think, & as Mr. Colvin
also goes away tonight, baby &
I will be left all alone. Ralph
is going to bring back tons of French
Polish for all the furniture, which
looks so awful, after having been
peeled away for such a long time
that it looks past redemption al-
together! It is very quiet here
& even the "H. O. S. B." have gone

& we hardly ever see any one, but it
has got much cooler & is quite
pleasant again. Baby keeps so far
well, & is cutting fresh teeth without
the least trouble or difficulty, he &
the little dog Nero are great pals, & do
so sweet to see little Dick, tantalizing
the wretched dog, nearly as big as himself,
& throwing stones & balls for him to run
after. Baby is on his feet the whole
day long, never still for a second, &
is beginning to get into terrible mischief.
I've never seen such a young child
take such a keen enjoyment in being
thoroughly naughty & impish. Well
I hope you will be able to have a
great number of your dear ones gather-
ed round you for Xmas, & that it will
be a real happy jolly time with no ^{concern}
& sadness to spoil it for you. With
fondest love for us all to you all

Yr. affectionate daughter
Margaret W. Strachey