

Allahabad. Oct 29<sup>th</sup>  
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My dear Mamma. It is a year yesterday  
since I landed, and a year tomorrow since  
we were married. I suppose no year of my  
life before ever had so much put into it of  
new experience. I can truly say that I am  
much happier now than I was at the  
beginning of the time, and I have not  
been better in health for a long time  
than since the beginning of the cool weather.  
We shall have about two more of the com-  
fortable months, and then our annual  
boiling will begin, but I think my last  
year's experience will help me to make things  
more comfortable. At any rate my knowledge  
of the language is enough now to enable me  
to give directions, instead of perpetually walking  
about to see after things myself. I mean  
to cut all my clothes to proper order and  
the house cleaned up before the heat begins,  
and then there will be nothing to do with  
one's hands. Indeed our rooms are so dark  
in consequence of the perf mats over all the  
doors that reading and writing are almost  
impossible, but I can sit in an easy chair  
and write when I can do nothing else. We  
have to make arrangements for shutting  
ourselves up during the hot months, as Arctic  
travellers do for shutting themselves up from  
the cold. I am preparing my clothes too, to  
slip on without any unnecessary pinning of  
bows, collars &c for the trouble of putting on  
an additional thing on, or even having it put  
on for you, is an addition to the sorries of the day.



all this sounds rather "fussing," but any one in England simply cannot imagine what the heat is here in Calcutabad, during these a few months. Mr Kempson, the Director of Public Instruction, a very thoughtful, reserved sort of man, who has been in India a long time and who lives with Mr Harrison near says that Calcutabad is quite the hottest station he has ever been in, and that it is quite impossible to make any one at home understand how oppressive it is. But the sudden springing up of all one's energies when the delightful cool weather does come, is equally indescribable. I have never felt anything like it in England, but I suppose that is because one never goes through such misery of heat there. You should see our roses now, at the end of December. He came them all the year round, but this is the time of their perfection. John has had a double set of them planted round the lawn tennis ground, with a ribbon border of crimson and white phlox in front. The church decorations on Christmas day, were of roses and yessamine on flat bands of arbor vitae and very pretty they looked. I was busy keeping to put them up when the English letter came and I heard the strange news of Mr Dawson's death. I am very anxiously wanting to hear from Aunt Susan more particulars. It seems as if such an impossible thing to believe. Yet it seems better that he should die in the midst of his usefulness. It will be a terrible loss to Aunt Susan. A day or two ago, at Delhi, one of the viceroys aides de camp was killed by being thrown from his pony whilst playing at polo. I really think a stop ought to be put to that game. It is such wild reckless work.

I was very glad to get over our Christmas day. It is too much of a parody on all one's old associations, and one is too far away from one's friends to make it anything but a sad time. Still the first Christmas here is very interesting. He got up in the morning to find our verandah wreathed by the servants with leaves and flowers, and a garland hung across the gates at the entrance. Then the three servants who belong to the dining room came and made their salaams, bringing plum cakes iced over with sugar, plates of biscuits, sweets &c. as a Christmas offering. The other servants, and different people from outside, came into the verandah with "dolis" or trays of fruit, flowers and vegetables. One was quite a grand one. It was made of bamboo covered with tin foil so as to look like lattice work of silver. The spaces between were filled with marigolds and yessamine and upon the flowers were laid in little separate heaps, almonds, walnuts, raisins, pistachio nuts, limes, oranges, peaches &c. In the middle was a large plate made of crystallised sugar, with a box of paper upon it. I shall rather spoil the beauty when I add that it was sent by the undertaker, a native who is apparently anxious for our custom. The other dolis contained, besides beautiful rows of flowers, oranges, citrons, limes, peaches, pears, beans, cauliflowers, cabbages, radishes, turnips, carrots, artichokes, lettuce, ruff, parsnips, potatoes, mint, "brinjals" pomegranates, betwars, and many other native things whose names I cannot spell. In the afternoon all the servants came and had butcher's flesh given them to the amount of 30/- He sent the vegetables to the hospital and workhouse, as of course we



could not get through a tenth of them. After  
morning church there was a dinner to nearly  
old widows. The table was spread under the trees  
in the church compound. Mrs Dally and I  
cut up the things for them. John gave them a little  
address, which they accompanied with many  
prayers and "bles, yours", and the same old  
woman who had once invited for me the very  
questionable blessing of "many yours" asked  
that God would fill his cup with silver and  
gold. For dinner they had rice and curry, roast  
beef and potatoes, followed by plum pudding.  
Many of them ate with their fingers, but then they  
are very particular to wash them afterwards.  
By way of dessert pieces of betel nut were handed  
round wrapped up in green leaves and pinned  
together with a clove. Then all was over they  
came round Mrs Dally and kissed her, and I  
was rather afraid they would do the same to  
me, but they only kissed my hands. Poor bodies,  
they all seemed very pleased to get a good meal.  
Afterwards we had a succession of callers. Then  
the parson, chaplain and John had a game of  
tennis, then came tea, then we dined and went  
to dine at Mr Waterfields, a real Christmas  
dinner, with plum pudding blazing in brandy. We  
finished up by a round game of cards, and "so  
home and to bed". I often smiled during the  
day for a quiet half hour to gather home my  
thoughts, but it never came. However, they were  
much at Melvern. I dare say you will be  
thinking about us tomorrow. Wish you could  
see us just as we are and then you would not  
have any anxious thoughts about us. With  
much love to you and Mary Catherine, in which  
John writes, I am your affectionate daughter Elizabeth

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