

Allahabad. Nov. 15<sup>th</sup>/26.

My dear Mamma

5525

We are now in the midst of the crisis of "annual repairs", and with only the experience of good English built houses, you can scarcely imagine what that is. Ours ought to have been done a month ago when the nights were still warm enough to have made living in a tent pleasant, but this house belongs to Government and we have to wait for our merits until red tape is pleased to attend to them. I don't know what we should have done if a gentleman had not kindly lent us a tent containing two rooms, which will be pitched in the compound today, and we shall have to live in it for perhaps a fortnight, until the house has been patched up. All the furniture has been heaped into one room, whilst the woodwork, floors, ceiling, and walls of the other are repaired. I am sitting in the verandah now in the midst of a queer assemblage of things. One has to have eyes all over, for the people have no idea of arrangement or what to do first. I shall be very glad when it is over. The parties are going on at a fast rate. Yesterday I had lunch with Mrs Oldfield, the wife of one of the High Court Judges. In the afternoon we went to Lady Louper's reception. When I came home I found two invitations to dinner, one to Government House, one to Mrs Waterfield, and the day before there were two others, one from Lady Stuart. We have also had two invitations from Mrs. ~~Stuart~~ Christmas day. When

he got home yesterday, besides the invitations, there was a letter from a chaplain about I have never seen proposing a visit of five days from himself and his wife at the end of next week! I told them we should be very glad to see them, if they liked to have a tent pitched in the compound along with ours. This is not thing to do in India. In addition to all this there is the summer fortnightly dress to prepare for, and the Christmas clothing to cut out, label, and distribute amongst the ladies who make it.

The dinner party at Mrs Turner's last week was very elegant. There were twenty people, the table most exquisitely decorated with flowers which are just in perfection now. Mrs Allen, the bride of the Pioneer proprietor, was there in all her wedding splendour. She wore an ivory white silk dress, long train, train of tulle lace, trailed over with sprays of brown ivy leaves and white roses, diamond bracelet and pendant and earrings. Mr Allen they say draws 7000 a year from his paper, but he has not the reputation of a gentleman. Another bride was there in white satin, puffed all over with white tulle. I expect Mrs Oldfield's party on Saturday will be very grand too, and so will be the dinner at Government House on Monday. But Lady Louisa is very pleasant, much more so, I think, than Lady Strachey. It is a great ceremony, going to these receptions. All that I did was to shake hands with her, pass on to the first empty seat, which happened to be by General Mordaunt. I talked to him until it was time to go, then shook hands with Lady Louisa

again and so came away. One is not supposed to stay more than five minutes. The aide de camp marches you up, and says also you are in the dismantled state of our house makes it impossible for us to have anybody to dinner now, so I am getting a rest in that direction, which is not unwise. For ten successive days we never dined at home by ourselves.

Friday. Of invitations the cry is still, they come. We had a third yesterday for Christmas day, and one for dinner next week. I have only three dresses that do for these occasions, so I ring the changes upon them pretty frequently. It is an advantage that one can always get flowers and sprays of sweep, to set off a dress. Yesterday I went to lunch with Mrs Harrison, wife of one of the High Court judges, who has just returned from five months' tour in Europe. I had the pleasure of seeing all the lovely bonnets and costumes which she has brought back and really it was a very nice sight. The dinner dresses are three, one the darkest possible sage green with great slashings and puffings of the palest brocade of the same shade. It is quite a work of art in its elaboration, no more making thin one dresses, I think, for people who must keep up with the fashions. No 2 a black figured serge like that of Aunt Susanna, with rows of alternate narrow gold and silver braid, huge black ribbon bows mixed with loops and tassels of the same gold and silver, pocket the shape

of a tailor birds nest, and covered with  
bosoms and puffings. No 3. the most ex-  
quisite shade of cream coloured silk  
with trim and facing of same coloured  
brocade, and dozens of yards of cream  
coloured lace all about it, bosoms of crimson  
velvet wherever bosoms can be put, all pocket  
bodies, and the trimming arranged in a  
point at the back of the neck. A fairbroough  
hat, laden with black feathers, cost four  
guineas, and I suppose everything else  
was in the same proportion. The walking  
dresses were very pretty too.

We have to live in our verandah now, as  
the house is completely dismantled, and we  
take our meals and sleep in the tent. It  
reminds me very much of "playing at houses"  
or of being in a cabin on board ship, but  
still we are very comfortable. A friend  
has lent us the tent. It is divided in half,  
one part for bedroom and the other for  
dining, and there is a little verandah  
all round. We have our sideboard, table  
and four chairs in the first part, but  
we only come in for meals and after  
dark. I dare say we shall be in it for  
nearly a fortnight, until all the colouring  
painting and varnishing is done. I  
have to receive callers in the verandah  
where I have a table and two chairs.  
Fanny all this in England in November

I am really much more comfortable in  
this tent at night <sup>Fawcett Library  
7 Wilford Street  
London S.W.1</sup> alone I have to be alone  
than in the house. Besides the house is so  
appropriated now with the image of that poor  
eye lying snuffed in the white cere cloths  
I cannot bear to be left alone there, but  
here in the tent, I seem to lose the impression  
of it. I think you would go out of your  
sits during an Indian cleaning. It is  
done in such a very scrappy, inefficient  
way. no soap and water used, because they  
say that brings the white ants, which are so  
destructive. Woodwork here is all painted  
a dark brown, so that finger marks do not  
show, and indeed I don't suppose there are  
any. For the doors always stand side open.  
Once a year they are painted and varnished  
and that is all the cleaning they get. The floors  
are all of cement. In culinary matters they  
are just the same. For the last three or four  
weeks I have been conscious of a most dis-  
agreeable smell whenever I sat down to meals,  
and I fancied it came from the electric plated  
hot water dials which are always put under  
the plates, but yesterday the mystery was solved.  
I saw our "masaliche" or scullery boy washing  
up the things with an implement something  
like the little crops which we sometimes use at  
home. I called him to bring it, and you  
would scarcely credit the vile sour smell  
it had. I believe it had been doing duty for  
breakfast tiffin and dinner ever since we  
came to the house. I told him to take it  
right away and bury it, and come to me  
for a new one every fortnight. He has already

eight clean dish cloths a week supplied to him  
so the things ought to be all right. The table  
servant attends to glass and silver. They are  
very little children in their ways, so thoughtless  
and yet so patient when blamed. They never  
try to justify their faults, but just put their  
hands together and "salaam".

I wanted to write to Mary Catherine and enclose  
one or two letters this week, but it has been such  
a continual race that I am afraid I shall have  
no time. Tomorrow I get up at 6, in the women's rising  
class. Leave at 9. Then the dobbies' account &c. and  
then I must rest in Mrs Oldfield's party at night.  
I seem to do quite very well, but I have to apportion  
my engagements to my strength. I love you in  
love to you and M. Always your affectionate daughter, E.

Saturday, your letter has just arrived, I am  
very glad you all keep tolerably well. I wish  
you would have our dombie to save you from  
making your beds with ironing. He  
does do the thing so nicely. They have a hollow  
iron filled with hot charcoal, much larger  
than those we use, and with a trap face.  
He has a famous lot of things to do this  
week, all the curtains &c. He had a nice  
meeting of the women this morning 31 of them  
They were told about the proposed saving bank  
and seemed to take kindly to the idea. They  
are a shiftless lot. I have just finished  
my household affairs. It is a regular race  
on Saturday until 11 o'clock. so many things  
to be settled. I wish I could see the "Fro" now.