

Allahabad. Oct 5th / 76.

5414

My dear Mamma

You would have quite a surprise in seeing Mr. Nicholl. I did not think he was so very high, but from what I have heard about him I should think he is kind and gentlemanly. I believe they came home for the year. I hope we shall see him as he returns to Calcutta, and then I shall hear about you. Did Miss Peaves get my letter?

Yesterday I went with Miss Wilson, one of the ladies belonging to the American Presbyterian Mission to see a native lady here. Her husband is a man. She does not profess Christianity at all but reads her Bible - which her husband does not object to - and is I think a real Christian at least. Their house is furnished quite in the English way, only with few ornaments, and it looks very curious to see her and her two unmarried daughters who live with her dressed in the native costume amongst these English surroundings. They all look about the same age except that she is much the stoutest, they had beautifully fine white muslin chuddals draped round them. Her youngest child is one of the prettiest little things I have seen, about eight months old, dressed quite in the English way, she has such funny quaint ways, and they all seem so fond and proud of her. It is a great trouble to the lady that she has no sons, as they are so much more thought of than daughters. She read a little to us in English, with the finest accent imaginable, no lady could have pronounced her words better. She can understand English, but does not speak it much, and as my Hindustani is considerably wanting, we did

not interchange many thoughts, except through Miss Wilson's interpretation, but I got on with the little girl famously. There is something remarkably sweet and unaffected in the manners of the whole family. I mean to go and see them again some time. In the evening I had a grand overhauling of all John's wardrobe and the household linen, in readiness for the divorce & tailor also comes tomorrow for a month. I have got a wonderful pile of things for him for the abolitionists' next lot north of line here. In the afternoon three gentlemen came to play badminton and had tea and "pepp" whilst they were here, we had three callers, so it was rather a busy time. Last Tuesday we had four gentlemen to dine, Colonel Mercur, Mr. Know, Mr. Williamson, & Jameson, so that the civil, military, clerical and medical departments were represented. On Wednesday Miss Wilson and her companion Miss Isard are coming. On Thursday whilst John was at the City Mission service I went to see the funeral of a young officer who had died very suddenly, only 24 hours before of dysentery. I had never seen a military funeral before, and this was done with all honours, the entire regiment attending. It took place at half past 6, just after sunset, and whilst there was a wonderful diversion for all over the west. The procession looked very picturesque, the long white line of soldiers winding forward upon the green background of trees. First came the firing party, then a gun carriage drawn by six horses, the coffin covered with a flag, and

the second, cap & on the top. I never heard anything so weird and melancholy as the Dead March with the muffled drums, and then the drummers light in the west and the moonlight in the east and the motionless stillness of everything except the long white line of soldiers seemed so impressive. By the time the service was finished it was almost twilight. Just behind the grave, as I recited it a large stone dropped, clearly relieved upon the clay, I could see no other stone, because of the mass of soldiers. Then came the three volleys and all was over. The young man, Captain Amber, only joined his regiment in India a few months ago, leaving a mother and sisters behind. At the time he was being buried, they could have heard nothing of it. He was not even ill when the last mail went out and his funeral followed so closely upon his death that even a telegram could not have reached them. It gave me a dreadful feeling to think that whilst a stranger was listening to the farewell volley fired over his coffin, his friends at home were just enjoying themselves as usual. If they could only have known what I knew. I could not get the idea out of my mind for a long time, one seemed so vividly to realize the fact of cruel distance. This is the second military funeral we have had lately. We are waiting now for the great numbers of Orinda. It is very provoking not being able to go on with a story. We have read 1, 2, 3, and 6. The 6th is rather disappointing. We were obliged to catch our mongoose in a trap the other day, have him carried to a safe distance and then set free. He became so very troublesome by climbing on the sideboard and knocking things over

and anything that could be eaten was sure
to be snapped up. But I quite enjoy him, he
was such a regular visitor about noon.
On Friday afternoon we had a sudden dust
storm and since then the weather has been
delightfully cool, quite 10 degrees lower. It is
a wonderful relief, after having it at 90 for a
fortnight. I am thankful to say we both of us
feel very well. I wish you could have our
dobie to spread the curtains for you. He does
not turn up beautifully, I never saw them
better done. Mrs. Le marriages I don't know, he
certainly does not spread them in our fashion
yet they are quite stiff and regular. It cannot
be that he has much experience either, for
there are now others of the kind here. He is a
capital man, but he drops small things to pieces
very much. When the rains are over, I shall have
my dear ones put up, but now, even after a
fortnight's drought, you cannot keep the starch
in anything, feels it quite limp after wearing
them for a day. I suppose the whole area for hundreds
of miles round is saturated with moisture.
I wish there was any rising ground, or even any
upstairs about Allahabad, from which we could
see the splendid sunsets. I see them positively
blazing through the trees sometimes, but we
cannot get a proper sight of them, in consequence
of the dead level. I hope Aunt Susan and Mr
Radmont will be able to come to Madras
while you are at Birmingham. It will do them
both good. I had a nice long letter from Mrs
Peterson the other day. If we were not 800 miles
apart we would have contrived a meeting
before this.

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It was very provoking not having the house ready when you returned. They might have found out before, that they had not paper enough to finish the rooms. I should think those two lower rooms will look very pretty now. It will be quite a treat to see a paper when I come home, here there is nothing but coloured wash. When I first saw our house, it was white-washed, with the most extraordinary decorations of green lines and ornaments all round the doors, archways &c. I asked to have it all scraped off, and pale green put on instead. There is very little room for any pleasant effect of colour in these big barn-like Indian rooms, and with the dull coloured matting too. The fruits are in perfection now, at least the best of them. This morning for breakfast we had peaches, mangoes, lichees, papayas and figs. The peaches were the best I have tasted in the country, almost as good as English ones. Generally they are only fit for stoving. The Kansamma has just been preserving some mangoes which I mean to bring home with me next year, if they will keep. On the whole I do not think Indian fruits are nearly equal to English ones, but it is pleasant to get a variety. I think you will like the guava jelly though, and the preserved pine apple is about as good as anything I

ever tasted. John is very tired today, having
held a military service at the Post, in
addition to the regular morning & evening
wore. The chaplains here are very hard
work. I am sure they deserve their pension
when they get it. Mr Hill, a young man
from Halifax, has come to spend the day
with us. He comes about twelve miles in
to church every Sunday, and often he
spends the time between services at our
house. He is on an indigo plantation.
He and Joe would enjoy a talk together,
for he took to the sea for three years of his
life. I think he is one of the most in-
telligent young men about here.
With our love to you both I am always
your affectionate daughter Eliza.

My mother's health is very well. They are
said to be quite good now, but they are
not nearly so prettily or interesting as kittens
of the same age. If I have room I will
enclose an account of the Allahabad
Jail. I have been to see it & travel there
John has a service in it once a fortnight
for the European prisoners.