

" Birkenhead "

Little Belton

June 22nd 1912

Dearest Mother - The usual crowding & difficulty to get the trunks checked etc. at Montreal, but we & the trunks safely arrived here this morning - To be sure Annie left a cloak of hers on the train - She had nothing to do except look after her own packages, but then she had to hurry - It was cold & overcast this morning & we were glad not to have to drive 5 miles -

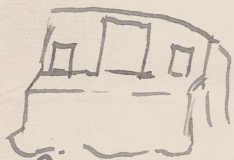
Crawford quickly brought
us to the house - & there
my story begins - We
looking round we felt as
if we must be dreaming,
everything looked so peculiar.
In the kitchen it was just
frantic confusion, but in
the dining room, drawing
room, upstairs, it was
mad arrangement - And
it was all done by
a mad woman who lives
miles & miles back in
the country - she disappeared

as is after her Rabbit, &
was discovered by Crawford
coming out of G. H.'s house -
He returned her to her
people & elicited from
her, that she had been
living in the house for
3 days - She broke a
pair of bed glass in one
of the kitchen windows
by way of entering -

And what a wonderful,
happy, busy, busy, three
days she had - No
doubt it must have been
longer - for she did much

work - I suppose it was
 to her the first real home
 she ever had had - I should
 say her predominating desires
 were towards a home, &
 religion - she made for
 herself three altars, & hung
 two long rosaries in the
 front hall to prevent evil,
 a sort of "God bless my
 home" - The crosses on
 the end of the rosaries
 are swinging in the wind
 now, that the front door
 is open - The altars were
 made with chairs, tables, cushions,

5
mattresses, there⁵ a curtain
or table cover thrown over
all, there was always
a sort of shelf effect about
the middle on which stood
3 pictures taken from the
wall of course - General



Gordon sat up straight
on one shrine -

But the linen, the beautiful
linen, was what most
charmed her heart, each
table cloth was wrapped
in a sheet much folded
& padded - were very long
table cloth she had put
on the dining room table

& their ^{ent} least the corners
soil, she had pinned them
up - attached to the handle
of a door by string was
a tightly tied up packet
of cards & envelopes she
had found - she was
very fond of string &
had used the scissors to
cut it - she made garlands
of the ribbons which looped
the curtains, & festooned
them about - then
in the sitting room she
placed a table right in
the middle, & piled all the

books from the shelves
thereon in neat piles - Some
of the pictures stood
on the floor but most
of them were rehung
with their cords knotted.
As a finishing touch she
placed that hanging bed
basket in one of the
windows attaching it
with string to the blind-
cord, & then with bar-
baric flourishes stuck
sprays of G.D.'s dried
corn through it & into

it - That was the finishing
 touch, I am sure - Up-
 stairs she rearranged
 most of the furniture,
 we are leaving the
 spare bedroom as she
 put it - it is a great
 improvement - Then in
 Grandmother's bedroom she
 put up some curtains
 she found in a box, nailed
 them well & neatly - They
 look most effective -
 The rooms over the
 kitchen wing were decorated
 with the patches scraps she

found in a box there, they
hung along the window sills
they dangled from a
rope & almost hid one
of the pictured shrines which
was in there - but to
tell you of everything
would take hours - the
chimneys off the lamps,
more pictures on the
lamp shelf - all the vases
in the pantry on the floor
& so on - Really I
never have seen anything
quite so pathetic, & funny,
in my life - I do not
know when I have laughed

So much at each new
discovery - Katherine laughed
too, & Annie was just
about to laugh, when she
saw the inscriptions, that was
one too many - her Methodist
backbone, & the thought
of Lady Dawson's name being
so desecrated brought forth
a blast of fury, the like
of which I did not know
she could contain ^{hers}

Poor Grandmother she cannot
help being aroused, but
she did not sleep all night
& kept saying such strange

sights from the ^{car} window,
that she was tired, &
frightened, this morning
& this last excitement
just seems too much.
She really tried to rest
this morning, but just
couldn't, & kept slipping
up to try & help to straight-
en things - Katherine &
I have got J.'s room,
my room, & the drawing
room, in a liveable
state & we now have
a nice bright fire going, &

have quite dismissed from
 our minds the possibility
 of unpacking today -
 We put all the mattresses
 + bedding out to air, but
 had to bring them all
 in again on account of
 rain - Poor Carrie is
 quite done out, + distracted,
 + is running about empty
 china bowls in the kitchen.
 Katherine is so sensible
 + helpful - She said she
 was paid in an asylum
 for 3 years + that she
 likes crazy people, + that

This is so exactly the sort
 of thing that they ~~to~~ would
 do - - - Go abruptly
 charge the subject -
Swill pails Richardson
 has them very nice
 \$2.25 - Could you let
 me know soon if you
 have yet ordered one
 or if I will take one of
 these - Another thing
 I hope that G. D. will
 get a new mattress for
 her bed - hers is very
 uncomfortable - Could I not
 just to send measures to

That bed company you
spoke of + have them
send me - What kind
would be best + how
much are they? So
sorry to trouble you
about anything more -

I cannot forget the
crazy woman - What
a wonderful time she
must have had - but
all to find it a
quickly ended dream -
I do not know why

Crawford did not tell
us until we saw for
ourselves -

Hoping you + Grace
will get off without
strange adventures +
spooks -

With love from
Clare -

P.S. I had meant
to write to Ruth or Lois
but you might just
send this on - as there
is a good deal to do -

+ I seem to have used
nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ my supply of
summer note paper -
C. H. H.

The stove + the grate
had both had fires lit.