

Grand Hotel Paris

19 August 1881

My very dear little wife,

You will be surprised to see by the heading that I am in Paris instead of London. We arrived safely at Queenstown a few hours after I closed my last letter to you. The fog that had surrounded us almost uninterrupted (except for a few hours) cleared off as we reached Cape Clear -- & as we emerged from it early on Friday morning we saw the lonely Fastnet] rock which stands guard some 9 miles from the extreme end of Ireland & rears itself a hundred feet above the surf washed base & upon which the light house stands. We stopped several hours at Queenstown harbor to discharge our mails & a few passengers & there started for Liverpool 240 miles away up channel. Soon after we started & about 5 o'clock it cleared off beautifully & the bold Irish coast stood out beautiful purple against the sky of gold & emerald but alas this was the only fair sky or pretty scene that I was destined to have – it soon clouded over became cold a strong wind blew up a rough sea & next morning when we arrived at Liverpool it was about as miserable & forlorn as you can imagine – raining & blowing & the grey scene [?] with the moist air & so cold that overcoats & thick clothing were necessary. We were detained at the Custom House 4 hours by the delay in getting the baggage off the ship (the river was so rough) so that all the evening trains had [started?] & so Frank Freeman & I went to the new hotel & he left that night for Edinburgh. It was so cold & miserable that I thought it doubtful whether it were worth my while to try Scotland unless the weather changed & as the people said it had been for a week. I was [induced?] to stay quietly in L'pool until Monday. On Monday morning when I woke & looked out the prospects looked no better -- cloudy and foggy – thermometer about 50° (it had been from 40 to 60 all the week) just like late November weather at home – so I decided to give up Scotland & in fact England until on my way home for they say Oct is apt to be clear & fine but it would not be cooler than of late. So I left on Monday by the NWRR arrived in London at 2 o'clock [sic] fare to London about \$5.50 or 21 s 9 d distance 240 miles time 5 hours. I drove from [Euston?] Station to Waterloo Station (fare 1 s 8 d or 45 ¢) & had a dinner (such wretched meals as they give at the English stations) soups made of “ext beef” slice done brown roast beef, piece chicken tasteless & a piece of green gauge pudding crust indescribably bad & ½ bottle of Chablis cost 5 s 4 d or about \$1.25. I will give you prices as far as I can remember to give you some idea of what things cost here. In fact I find that the price of everything has gone up since my last visit to the Old world very much. I took train at 4 o'clock [?] from Waterloo for



Southampton & the Isle of Jersey: fare 27 s or \$6.75. The weather still continued cold & rainy & I was getting a cold & rheumatism in so much damp & was [?] heartily glad to get away from Old England & into a better climate. We left Southn. at midnight & came around Guernsey about 8 in the morning & tho' it was still the same wretched I enjoyed very much the picturesque approach to the harbor & the old town sloping up the steep sides of the hill & the bold [frise?] outline of the island & the half dozen other smaller islands in sight & with all the soft velvety verdure so characteristic of old England – indeed the ride from L'pool to Sh'ton was a delight to my eyes in its emerald robe with here & there a field of yellow wheat or barley & all so well kept – but alas at what a cost of this vile damp wet climate – it has cured me of ever wishing to live in England I confess -- & yet I would admit I never saw such a fine race of healthy big men or beautiful women & rosey [sic] children & yet I don't believe [?] would be able to live a year in it – at least as it seem to me judging by what we would do it here with the children in such wintry weather – I am more & more struck by the contrast since I arrived in France – here I have hardly seen as well built, blooming handsome men woman & child – where in England in the short time I was there I saw dozens [?] to go on with my story – we finally arrived at Jersey (St. Helens) about 12 oclock [sic]. It was much crowded & I had to be lodged out of the hotel. I took a carriage & drove to several houses all over the town & suburbs. I saw many very handsome private residences & many stores that would have done credit [in?] appearance to London or [Southampton?] all of which surprised me very much & as there is no import duty prices seem very low to me – best cigars 3 d -- a [?] finest [?] only 3.50 ladies \$2 & [text missing] to look at – boys suits [text missing] everything seemingly in proportion. But I asked one landlady & she gave me a price [?] butter 1 s 6 d or 30 [?] butter & 1 s best cuts of beef or per pound. They seem to have the greatest variety of beautiful flowers & fruits such pears, grapes, cantaloupes, peaches or apricots but I believe all more or less raised under glass but at moderate prices. Car fare about 31¢ per course or 2 s 6 d per hour. As I had seen about all there was to be seen including the pretty cows grazing in the fields I left next day by steamer 3 ½ hours run to St Malo in Brittany arriving about 12 oclock [sic] fare 8 s or \$2 – it had cleared off as we left Jersey & became pleasantly warm & we had a fine trip, tho' most of the passengers were sick as usual in the channel & the approach to St. Malo a picturesque old walled city of [?] of Louis 13 was delightful & I [?] around its narrow streets & tall houses huddled within the wall that coops them in & as my first £10 was nearly expended I went to the Bankers & got some more money. I then strolled around on the beaches took dinner & started in the evening for Paris at 5 oclock [sic] arriving in Paris next morning at 5 oclock [sic] fare 47 fr or \$9.50. I drove here to the Grand Hotel & shall probably remain until Monday when I hope to get your dear letter as I have written to London to have it forwarded to me here. I am so anxious to hear from you every precious



[text missing] little & hear [?] all about home – for now I am so glad I have a house after all with never to bother with servants [?] there. I am so apt to grumble oh, I miss you dear wife & my very little boys more than I can tell me & it makes me dreadfully homesick when I allow myself to think of it – but 2 months will soon pass by & I trust the dear Lord will unite us all in health & happiness once more. I think you had better send your letters to care Lombard Odier [?] Geneva until I write you expressly to the contrary.

The weather here is fine tho' cool (65°) & the sky bright. I do not find Paris much changed except a beautiful new street called Avenue de l'Opera which runs from the Boulevard near the Grand Hotel down to the mass of buildings of The Louvre & near the Palais [text missing] – it is a beautiful wide street [text missing or unclear] new stores etc. I am going today to the Exposition in which I am mainly interested & will write you about it. The court yard of this Hotel is lighted by electricity & much improved at night – otherwise I see no change in 10 years – nor on the [Boulevard?] that I can see – even the same Cafés stores, etc – but fewer soldiers & priests I think are seen & I suppose less pomp than under the last Empire. I suppose I shall be in Geneva by Tuesday or Wednesday next. I will call at the Legation tomorrow & present your letter of [?] all is [text missing]. I have not yet stumbled across any acquaintances. I hope to see Mr. John [Schuiff?] in Geneva & shall be glad to see [?] are old friends.

Give my love to Ive & tell him I hope he is taking good care of you all so that you will not suffer by my absence in any way – lots [text missing] to darling children from [text missing] across the big ocean & [text missing] of love for your my dear pet [?] may call

Your loving husband

JBH

