

Hotel Victoria Interlaken

4 Sep 1881

My dearest Loulie.

I hasten to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of 15 Aug but especially yours of the 18th (in duplicate) which I received yesterday, and as I hope my reply will reach you some days before your fathers [sic] arrival, may give you what relief I can in your dilemma as to what you should do. I learn from your letter that your father left Australia in July via Suez & England & expected to leave Liverpool about 14 Sept for America, which would put him in New York about 24 Sep.

I am so sorry my dear wife that you have to face the difficulty without me to help you, but I am rejoiced that you have so capable a counsellor [sic] & adviser in your Cousin William & I can not [sic] tell you to do anything better than follow whatever advice he may give you. You are placed in a position of painful conflict between your love & duty to a suffering and unfortunate father on the one hand and a mothers [sic] jealous care and watchfulness for her little flock of children on the other – of course to preserve them from possible harm must plainly be your first – paramount work & duty & yet I think perhaps both ends can be in – measure can be attained. If on his arrival in NY of your father he seems well – as well as he has been for the last 2 or 3 months & Miss Irving thinks there are no symptoms of any outbreak of violence (& she can better judge of all his than any person on this side of Australia from her long intercourse with him) it seems to me that here can not [sic] be any very immediate danger in having him come to our house & occupy the guest room. I must not tell you to do what a mothers [sic] watchful love will prompt you to do naturally that is keep a most vigilant look out for any sign of approaching mental disturbance & in such event take prompt stops to prevent any harm by having help at hand to take him to Flushing & secure the safety of yourself & the children & as to the rest we must trust to God. There are some duties and positions in life that risks much have to be taken, as a religious duty as in this case I do not see but that not only filial duty but common humanity bids us take the risk. He naturally seeks first a beloved daughter & I could not have the heart to impede his giving to you, unless when he arrives you & Cousin William see that he is clearly not

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in fit state or Miss Irving anticipates an outbreak. I should be on the lookout for danger after he has visited Staten Island or has had an interview with Kentgen for then ~~if~~ soon when he realizes the utter hopelessness of his case the poor fellows [sic] strength may give way to the shock. Then be on your guard. I should think your cousins [sic] suggestion about the man to be a good one. But I think it to be especially important to arrange if possible for you & Mrs. Morgan to met him in NY first & see for yourselves how he really is & what Miss Irving advises as to safety of taking him out. She is a clear headed woman & knows all the facts & if Mrs. Morgan could ask her I think she would feel bound to advise truthfully under the responsibility. I wish my dear wife to show any kindness respect & hospitality to your father, because he is your father & shall place no limits upon you – save only the [school?] safety or yourself & our dear children. So you see you have carte blanche. I believe that after spending a week or two with you he will probably take some steps in regard to his future life whatever direction that my take, as that perhaps after all the matter will resolve itself more easily that now appears to us – but on any count it would be dreadful to me not to welcome him to my house after all his sickness and misfortunes unless he is clearly not in a fit state – I feel truly that this must be our duty & that God will take care of us in doing it. I have written to Liverpool to see if I can exchange my ticket for the Service 22 Oct to the [Seytreen?] on 24 Sep as soon as I hear I will let you know & in that event will soon arrive at home & relieve you of the sole responsibility which must rest so heavily upon you in my & Franks [sic] absence. But there is such a rush for berths homewards & will be for some time, that I fear it is doubtful as to my getting the exchange asked for. It will be hopeless for me to locate your father in that great Babel Land without more information or among all the steamship people even if I were to go to Liverpool now.

I arrived here last night after being cooped up in the hotel at Lucerne during a 3 days downpour of rain – during which everybody was miserable with the cold – indeed Europe has been plunged in a cold wave ever since I landed -- I don't think the therm has touched 70 for more than one or two days in 4 weeks – for the last [word faded] it has seldom reach 55° & as I sit in a very room facing the Jungfrau I shiver at times as I dont [sic] think the temperature is 62° if that. We have [?] in this parlor [two words faded] when I arrived & the snow [words faded] on the sides of the mountains within a few thousand feet of where we are. In fact it is like late November weather at home and has been ever since I landed except a few days in Paris & Geneva but never more than comfortably warm. It was to my plans – the cold makes it no use to go Austria [or?] the Danube & unless there is a great change I give that up. If I get the exchange to the Scythia 24 Sep – I shall next Thursday cross the Alps to Lake Como via the St. Gostraw Pass from Lucerne then go to Milan for a few days to see the Italian Exposition – then to Genoa



& from there to Nice & Meulona & Monaco & then on to Paris for a day to see the [words faded] [?] then to Charring Cross in London to stay until I start for the [?]. If I cannot affect the exchange my plans might be somewhat changed especially if it grows warm – in which count I may go to [Vienna?].

[words faded] I can look on the beautiful Young [words faded] [?] white 13600 [words faded] vault above & is [words faded] vivid green of everything [words faded or missing] the beautiful valley.

I went to the Scotch church here this morning & heard an excellent sermon from the Rev. W Bell of Edinborough & quite a touching prayer for the recovery of the [word faded]. People in Europe take a great interest in poor Garfields [sic] case tho' they are apt to overrate political significance of his possible death – from their want of knowledge of the structure of our government – most of them think Arthur to belong to the opposite politics – democrats -- & that brings to their minds a confused but revolutionary idea. But [words faded] show great interest & sympathy [words faded] [?] in England & France [words faded] when very short owing with cold [words faded] our country will [words faded] misfortunes. In [words faded] a fine prospect in [words faded] in which one even [words faded] floods of rain & [words faded] out as in late July all was so fair [& promising?]. The same cold & rain has [sic] sadly [?] with pleasure travel as I knowly [sic] [word faded] think of the temperature being below [words faded] much all August!!

I must try & get the boys some toys things on & on – I got Will a pair of lapis lazuli sleeve buttons here & Ive an [?] scarf pin & I got you a good string watch chain for your new watch. I expect to rescue the old watch in Geneva tomorrow – I left it with Le Coultre to be thoroughly repaired – tho' he it will never keep good time as it has no [?] balance wheel –but it will be as good [words faded] do for Will when he is in [word faded].

[words faded] wife –how I wish I could [words faded] & the dear boys all by my [words faded] \. I would enjoy these [words faded] – kiss Will & Junior [words faded] Rob & Reg --& give [words faded] & believe me your loving husband

J Buck Henry

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