

Hotel Grand Bretagne,

Via Torino – Milan 21 Sep 1881

My dearest Lulie,

I had a great treat indeed yesterday when I arrived from Venice to find your dear letters dated 24 – 26 – 30 Aug which had been forwarded to me here by Mssrs [Soubad Odrer?] & Co. of Geneva. I also got one from Frank dated 17 Sep at Marseilles & one from Mrs. Magruder. Thank Ive for his note enclosed in your letter. I am so sorry to learn by your letter of 30 Aug that up that that date you had not received any of my letters except the one mailed from Queenstown but I hope & have no doubt that they all turned up in due time & relieved any anxiety as to my whereabouts. I have written you once a week ever since I left New York & trust none of these have gone astray or made you uneasy. I trust that my telegram & the letter I wrote on 5<sup>th</sup> Sep in answer to yours of 18 Aug about your father duly reached you & helped in regard to your actions by giving my full approval of the course which was really the only one open. Frank writes that he had a well written letter from your farther written at London & in which he says he would sail on 15 Sep on City of Richmond & would therefore be due in NY about 25 Sep – say next Saturday. I hope & think you will find him so far well as to relieve you of any fear in having him at Garden City. Now my dear wife I have written again to Cunard Co asking them to exchange me if possible to the Gallia which sails 8 Oct, so that there is the possibility that you may have me, God willing, at home about 15 Oct – but I shall not probably know until about 5 Oct as the only chance consists in some one [sic] going by her wishing to postpone going a week or two & as the Servia is a very fashionable & desirable boat & goes 2 weeks after there is a chance I think of the exchange being made. I hope to meet Frank in Marseilles on about a week from this & have a talk over all matters at home. I hoped he could have found me here for a few days but he says he has no funds for travel which is sure enough in the light of the Australian drafts. It is a hard case all around! I shall probably leave Milan on 23 or 24 for Torino – stay 1 day there –go by rail to Mantone [sic] – stay a day -- thence to Nice for a couple of days & thence to Marseilles arriving about 30<sup>th</sup> or 1<sup>st</sup> Oct. I will stay a day there to see Frank & then go to Paris (Hotel de Louvre) for 2 days say to 4<sup>th</sup> Oct – thence to England & if the exchange is made sail on 8<sup>th</sup> – if not I will spend the rest of the time until the 22 in London or thereabouts. My health is about the same some very good days when I enjoy myself exceedingly just as of old -- & there are some bad days when I have some blues – I dont [sic] think I am any

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worse nor do I think any better than at home – the meals & times no better than at home – the meals & times [& work?] one has to drink – keeps my rebellious stomach more or less in trouble. I enjoy your letters ever so much & all the sayings and doings of the dear boys & the troubles of Rob & Syd are of far more interest than the affairs of nature, I assure you [?] poor little Rob must have been quite sick from your accounts. Tell Will & Jamie that as soon as I get back I have planned to take them to the woods near Glen Cove to hunt chestnuts and walnuts & we will take our basket & some nice lunch & have a splendid time. I promise them & they just remind me as soon as I get back. I will pick up some toys in Paris or London for them, don't let them have too great expectations for I am a poor hand at toys & besides the trunk won't hold much. I am wearing your new watch & find it all right. And now I must tell you something of my movements since I last wrote to you which was at Munich. From there I went by rail road to Lutz a small city on the Danube where I staid [sic] all night & left at 7 on a steamboat for Vienna where I arrived in the evening. The scenery in some places was very fine but on the whole I don't think equal to that of the Rhine – the current was very swift & in many places the river very narrow more like a mountain gorge & torrent, but the boat was small & crowded & the trip generally uncomfortable to all Americans accustomed to such large & luxurious steamboats. Vienna I found to be a beautiful city—handsome in some respects than Paris & especially was I struck by the beauty of the women & their pretty dressing – if figures are natural they are certainly the most stylish & elegant I have seen anywhere – but they are mostly dark beauties – the men are not so fine looking which is just the reverse here in Italy. I visited the art galleries, the Imperial Treasury to see the royal jewels crown (& they were splendid) visited the Imperial chateau of Mara Teresa at Schönbrunn rode out on the Prater or Parks etc. I left Vienna on last Friday & arrived same night by the famous Semmering pass [sic] railway at Trieste in Illyria thus crossing the Styrian Alps by day. I was a most beautiful ride. In the car I made the acquaintance of a young Polish gentleman on his travels, & we became companions & of necessity [?] water at Venice owing to the crowd – has was young however & thoroughly educated, familiar with English and American literature & history & very modest & agreeable, so I proved very fortunate. [?] we visited the few sights there are at Trieste especially the beautiful Chateau of Mirum the home of poor Carlotta & Maximilian. It stands on a beautiful promontory jutting out into the blue Adriatic & was certainly the loveliest “palace home” I have ever seen with anything that wealth & taste could create – the furniture and everything are just as the poor mad Empress left it even some of her own sketches in oil on her boudoir table. I felt much touched at her unhappy fate an ambitious but devoted & lonely wife with all to make life

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charming so stricken. The gardens are small but just perfect & the view of the blue sea & lofty mountain [shires?] are a treat to me. We left Trieste on Saturday evening for Venice by steamer & had a most disagreeable trip owing to the crowd which made sleep impossible & 5 o'clock in the gray dawn saw us at the city in the sea. We were so fortunate as to get a room by mere chance – as the City was swarming. We had by more good luck & unknown to us stumbled on the great Festa of the year – the gondoliers Regatta on the Grand Canal & the illumination of St Marks Piazza by night. In the short space of a letter I cannot give you any idea of it – it was one of the three greatest scenes I ever witnessed – the other two being the opening of the great Vatican Ecumenical Council of the Church in 1870 & the other the 100 anniversary of the Fete Napoleon 1st in 1870. In a few words, the King, Queen & Prince of Naples in the royal gondola (silver & pale blue velvet) all the Venetian nobility in their state gondola, some crimson & gold – some yellow & green & all with gondoliers in the dresses of the middle ages actual satin & velvets of every color, & drapings of velvet even hanging in the water – nearly every window & balcony on the Canal draped in rich hangings & many with ancient tapestries of the homes of the Doges & all crowded with many and well dressed people & then every one [sic] I suppose of the many gondoliers belonging to Venice in the Grand Canal full of gay people – (we had to pay quadruple price to get one) made altogether the handsome scene I ever saw – the race between 9 gondolas very light & graceful craft built for racing – The royal gondola passed up & down ([surrounded?]) by the gondolas of the nobility) between us who lined the shore so we saw them well. But I could hardly hope to give you an idea of it all in a letter. We did not get back to the hotel until 5 o'clock [sic] – it began at 1. Next day I visited Titians [sic] greatest picture (& that is I think saying the finest in the world) & spent several hours over it the picture of the Assumption of the Virgin. Next day we started for Milan to my regret my Polish friend had to diverge at Padua on his way to Florence & I went on to Milan. I spent today at the Exhibition. It is very fine & the usual artistic taste that pervades everything Italian in seen in the work exhibited – it being purely national & not international is small compared to ours, but very large as the work of only one people & requires several days to see even superficially. Of course there is more or less sameness about all these Expositions.

Since writing the above I have had the great pleasure of getting your dear letter of 6 Sep & am so glad to learn you are [word missing] well & getting on & that the dear boys talk of Papa – his coming back. I have also by this mail received a letter from the Cunard people which makes it very probable that I shall leave Liverpool on the 8<sup>th</sup> Oct either by the Gallia or Parthia (both sailing same day). If by the Parthia I will arrive several days after the Gallia as she is much slower say 17<sup>th</sup> or 18<sup>th</sup> or even 19<sup>th</sup>. So I think you can keep a look out for me about that time if nothing happens altho' it is not absolutely sure yet that there will be room for me.

I have just heard of the death of poor Garfield & am very sorry indeed to hear of it & so [word faded] to be everybody on this side of the Ocean & there is general sympathy expressed. I do not fear anything, however, from the accession of Arthur to the Presidency as I think him a gentleman & a fairly able man & I hope he will have fair play shown on all sides.

I am sorry you think from Belle's letter that she cannot come. I fear the outlay of money is the great trouble tho' not pleasant to give us the reason – could we not in some way pay her expenses on & back in such a way as not to offend?

I find dear wife I have written you a long letter & my paper is nearly ended so I will send you a kiss & goodbye -- love to Ive & kisses for my dear Willie, Jamie, Syd & Reg. Remember me kindly to Willie when you write him. Give my kindest remembrances to your father & believe me dear Lulie

Your lovingly [word faded]

J Buck Henry

