

[Letterhead] Parker House, H. Brownell, Proprietor

New Bedford, Mass., 20 Aug 1879

My dearest Lulie,

My brief telegram of yesterday told you that I was one of the unlucky victims of “the great storm” of Monday night. It rather sickened me of yachting in such a queer summer when two gales occurred abreast, more severe than any in winter, both of which [text missing] poor little Cricket has been lost [text missing] but as many [text missing] other yachts have been destroyed & lives lost. I ought to be thankful that my case was not worse. All had been at anchor at Edgartown (Martha’s Vineyard), a safe cosey [sic] anchorage & a queer little New England town since Friday last when the rainy [text missing] weather began [text unreadable] a pleasant enough town in a very great way – fishing a little on [text unreadable] & running up to oak Bluffs camp grounds by the little narrow gauge “one horse” railway to get the paper and inquire for telegrams. Ive [?] does the cooking pretty faithfully & Shirlee, the washing of the dishes & we have lived pretty well but not exactly sumptuously – this is our daily “Menu” --

Breakfast

Coffee – (good) fresh rolls – oatmeal & milk latter in a bottle – boiled or fried eggs – Butter.

Dinner

Boiled blue fish – Beefsteak or [?] potatoes [sic], -- (sometimes) – peas – Pie – bread & butter –

Supper

Canned oysters – Bread & butter.

So you see we have not been starving by any means. One [several words missing or illegible] after dark [text missing] listening to the low sounds of the distant booms of the breakers on the South shore several miles away & the many “voices of the night” you are apt to hear on quiet nights on the water – the splash of fish, the dipping of oars, the sounds of animals and people on the shore – the bells striking the hours on the yachts & vessels, etc.

As I had been away from Newport my “base of supplies” much longer than I had anticipated and had in fact spent all my cash and had no means of getting any in this out of the way place, we felt bound to start back to Newport the moment the weather looked like clearing. As the

mss1996\_231\_1879\_JBH\_to\_Louisa\_Anderson



LancasterHistory

appearances were favorable tho' the result proved so deceptive (we could not have the advantage [here?]) of the Signal Service reports) we started at 10 in the morning on Monday – arrived at [?] Bluffs about 12 we anchored to get a paper & inquire for letters or telegrams from you. By that time the weather had clouded up & was very foggy & for a few moments we hesitated whether or not to go on to Vineyard Harbor and give it up the Day. I left the decision up to Shirley who is you know an old experienced “carhiresman” & he decided to keep on as far as Tarpaulin Cove at any rate & Newport if things improved as we proceeded. Tarpaulin Cove is a semi-circular bight in the shore of the island of Naushore, an island between Buzzards Bay & Martha’s Vineyard cove is about ½ miles [text missing] & affords a protected anchorage against any wind & sea except for the [?] East & East but entered open on that side. When we arrived there, the weather seemed unpromising and the day was too far advanced to make it advisable to keep on to Newport which was still 30 miles away & all open sea & rocky coast. Bad as it turned out, it was fortunate we remained as I fear if we had kept on we should have been wrecked in the terrible sea surf near Newport during the gale. We anchored about 3 in the Cove & went ashore & rambled about. This island 16 [?] long belongs to Mr. Ferbes of Boston has few inhabitants, but many thousand sheep & deer which he has carefully guarded. By supper hour (6 oclock [sic]) the sky looked very dark and threatening dense ragged masses of vapor [?] above & the wind decidedly rising and the [?] barometer falling rapidly. By seven oclock [sic] the night was closing in, the waves rising very fast indeed & the wind moaning ominously once [?] [?] craft which was pitching & falling uncontrollably & the rain falling in torrents. Half [text missing] the full force of the hurricane [?] exactly from the South East over [?] unprotected [text missing] of the cove & over a half hour the barometer had fallen half an inch! I knew that meant a west India cyclone so apt to come in August & I began to feel that we had a very bad prospect before us. The night was by that time of inky darkness only the prancing careening “white horses” as they rushed by being visible & we were plunging bowsprit under the waves – we had both of our anchors down & all our cable with which we might be able to ride it out but about [text faded] her bows began to fall off – I could see that she had begun to drag her anchors and in a few moments Shirley came to me & said that she was adrift & nothing more could be done for her. It was then pitch dark & wind howling by fifty miles and & a lee shore with great ragged rocks extending out into the water with here & there as we had seen a smooth suitable low beach of white sand – one [?] of saving the yacht from dashing to pieces was that we might drift upon one of these little sandy places. Our anchor once started seemed to take hold of nothing but first dragged along & as I knew we should be in the breakers in ten minutes unless the anchor should take hard enough to arrest her drift. I made I’ve put on the life preserver & I took one of the



cushions & we awaited the inevitable result. It was a pretty anxious moment for if we were to strike the rocks it would have broken up the yacht a hundred yards from shore & we should pass [?] a [?] for our lives in the surging waves –but thank God she did miss the rocks [text faded and/or missing] smooth sand beach [text missing] 30 feet on either [text missing] had the [choosing ?] [text faded or missing]

on the shore [text faded or missing] landed after 8 oclock [sic] with nothing worse than a wetting, somewhat scared & [text missing] Cricket is I think but little injured tho' she now lies 20 feet from the water high & dry on the beach. We were a pretty dismal little party on the beach I assure you – with the wind howling like mad – the spray from the sea flying & the sand stinging the skin dark as Erebus & raining. The wind must have been blowing 60 miles an hour & to give you an idea of its force, I can only say that it picked up a 16 foot row boat & blew it bodily 20 feet from where we had put it on the shore. We went into a clump of trees some way back & somewhat sheltered where we staid [sic] until about midnight when the tide had fallen enough to leave the yacht quiet and dry & slept in our clothes pretty well until morning. The light house people came soon after day light to see us – they at first supposed we were all drowned. I see by the papers that many vessels & yachts elsewhere were swamped, broken up or blown ashore & we must be very thankful – I left Ive and Shirley early yesterday morning & got a waggon [sic] as far as Woods Hole and from there came by steamboat to get assistance to get the yacht off. By the kindness of Mr. Swift [text missing] this place (an old Washington [text missing or faded] I was able to get [text missing] hire a small schooner [text missing] the yacht. They left at noon [text missing] hoping the Cricket is not more hurt than I think she will be here by tomorrow evening & probably start for Newport next morning. I am so sorry for many reasons but especially this expense of getting her off which will be I suppose from 50 to 100 somewhere – I had just been congratulated [text faded] that I was getting along so economically (about \$10 a week for all three of us & so it is all the other way & rather sickens me as I have said of yachting). I fear that if your cousin started [? ?] the 18<sup>th</sup> she will have suffered greatly on the trip as she must have met the storm in her way.

Thanks for your prompt reply to my telegram – I got it about 7:30 yesterday evening which was very quick & I was greatly relieved to hear that your father was [better ?] & the children were all well as I have not been able to hear from you since my telegram of the week before & I was getting very anxious indeed. I do hope that when I get your letter at Newport I shall find that you very dear wife are not suffering in health & that the outlook is more cheering as to your dear father & Aunt Sydney & that you feel some [text faded] . I do miss you very so much & look to the time [text missing] we can be together again. [text missing]. Dody is well & [text missing]

have cheerfully [two lines crumpled or missing] on board their Yai was at Newport, at New Bedford & at Oak Bluff. Mr. Cassat made him very pleasant. Sadie was not [?] it much as she seemed to b suffering from fear – They started for Jersey City last ~~Saturday~~ Monday & must have had a very rough & discouraging trip in the rain & wind. The illumination of the yacht fleet here was like ‘fairy land’ as in the dark, dark night the [text missing] of the yachts the spars and rigging stood out ~~with~~ [text faded] silver & crimson tracing with perfect distinctness against the black night when the [bengal ?] & red lights were burning & the air alive with bombs & rockets. I wish you could have seen it – forty yachts were anchored in the harbor – mine the smallest.

My own dear heart [text faded] but was good as it has been at any time in the past year from which I am devoutly thankful. I suppose I will soon think of laying up the yacht & going to Garden City or somewhere – depending somewhat on the continuance of good weather. I see Dr. [Leery ?] has had 20 case of yellow fever -- I do hope you are not to be in any danger for Frank is having many cases – let [text missing] know at any time if there is danger [text missing] but have to be done [text missing].

I believe I [text faded] with reading & [text faded] out of matter so I [text faded and missing] with love to your father, aunt & brother & loads of kisses for you & our boys.

Your loving husband,

J BH

mss1996\_231\_1879\_JBH\_to\_Louisa\_Anderson

