

Hamilton Hotel
Hamilton, Bermuda
6th Feb 1875

My darling wife,

Tomorrow the Carrina sails for New York & then all our intercourse with the big outer world will cease for nearly three weeks & we will be fast shut in this little spec upon the ocean until the Carrina gets back. So I send my live greeting! God grant that all is well – my little family at home. I miss you & dear baby terribly—(don't believe what Mrs. Greenfield tells you --don't & I have dear baby & Dody's photo on my dressing table & dear wife I am distressed about my dear little blue picture for I cannot find it tho' I have searched my trunk from top to bottom – you after all not have put it in when packing my trunk – I asked you I remember to put it in but do not remember your doing so – tho' I am so sorry not to have it here to look at & talk to yet I hope the [?] may be the explanation of its not being found let me know when you write, if you have found it. I felt so badly that in the confusion & excitement of getting off I did not bid dear little baby an especial goodbye & kissing--& yet my heart smote me sorely. The Gulerbridges go home by the steamer tomorrow & doubtless she will tell you [?] having had a couple of glimpses of me. Mr. O called on me the day after my arrival & I returned the visit but found them just driving out of his Uncle Mr. Harvey's gate where they are staying (a couple of miles out in the Country) so I only had a few minutes talk with Ellie while standing by the carriage. She seems to be very much pleased. I called on Miss Lollie O at Mrs. Butterfield's & was kindly received by Mrs. Bullafus & Miss Lotte & Mrs. Beille called on one day or two after but I was out.

The Carrina will start on her return on the 18th Feb so be sure to have your dear letter & the papers directed to me at Hamilton Hotel, at Mr. Gulerbridges [sic] office by the 17th. I have written to Dody & told him to send his letter to you & that you would enclose it, as I feared he might misdirect it. I have had several very pleasant pulls on my little boat & find it just the things except that on occasional days it blows too hard here to use the boat & truly this is a place for high winds being just on the border of the NE trade wind belt, but I think I will be able to now pretty nearly every day. The boat attracts a good deal of attention here & is advanced as all these boats are heavy & clumsy. I am dressed just as when I left home except my overcoat & have not dared to changed under shirts except by wearing two [?] over for the air here is so loaded with moisture that I am afraid of rheumatism of which I have some slight twinges on the [word faded] You have no conception of the perpetual humidity of the air [two words faded] my [?] & [?] feel as stiff as boards & my linen as if it had just come out of the wash & yet no one



takes cold. This little spec [sic] of an island is in a perpetual swirl of gulf stream clouds -- warm & steamy & the sky clear & clouded alternatively every hour -- so that all nature is damp!! It ought to be good for complexion, but I have not yet seen enough of the fair sex to say if it has any beneficial effect.

Murphy alluded to the boat matters very well the day I left & I told him to ask you to pay the express \$3.50 as I did not have enough currency to pay. Here we use gold & silver only & a dollar [dearer ?] than as we see in the papers -- the prices seem reasonable, too -- \$4 for a horse & carriage for a day. Frank has no doubt told you that he came down to see me off & I was very glad indeed to see him as I was feeling pretty blue & his coming quite cheered me up. Tell him the German who came [? ?] haste as we neared out of the dock actually got on the steamer [all in all?] a [?] a pleasant companion. Now I suppose you will want to know something of my voyage & my impression thus far of the "State vexed [?]." You will remember that on the morning I left there were grave doubts whether the Staten Island boat could force her way through the vast ice floe caressing the bay to her dock at the Battery. We were a full hour and a quarter grinding and ramming our way to the city through the Arctic looking mass & I began to doubt whether I should be [?] for the steamer. On board the Carrina I found the usual crowd of friends to see the passengers off & there came a scramble to get ashore when the whistle sounded & the lines were being cast off. As usual at the last moment, just as the vessel was moving out, along came the late passenger in the presence of a German gentlemen with black goggles & umbrella, making frantic but impotent [?]. We pitied him and thought it was no use but with true German pluck he made a dash at a passing tug & actually succeeded in being put on board. We [word faded] a path through the ice & when opposite Stapleton I waved my handkerchief vigorously in hopes that some dear eyes might be looking through the glass to try & recognize me, but I think we were too far over to be seen. We passed Sandy Hook & the day closed cold, lowering & cheerless & the deck was deserted for the [word faded] and smoking room. In thirty six [sic] hours [running] nearly South we had left Winger behind us & were in the warm "muggy" air of the Gulf Stream tumbling and wallowing about on lively ~~style~~ sea to the great discomfort of the stomach in most cases. How absurdly conceited it makes people not to be sea sick like [?] people and how offensively they parade their superiority -- they cackle like a hen over her one egg -- as if something [?] had been done. Overcoats were discarded & all who could keep their feet were on deck. The trip to Bermuda takes you across the current of the stream & keeps the vessel most of the -- [sic] was broadside to the swell so the ship must roll viciously & it can't be



helped, so it is unjust for a staunch ship to abuse her ~~so-much~~ for rolling so much. A pretty flying fish & two tired birds came on board during the trip. The fish we caught but the birds after spending a day and night with us said goodbye and flew away. Bermuda on the north is surrounded by a [?] circle of coral reefs from 5 to 10 miles off shore ones which the surf thunders [?] cease, making the approach especially to sailing vessels an anxious one. We made the light – a lofty one 320 feet above sea level – but [?] night on Sunday & by breakfast time we were skirting along the south side near enough to see the green hillsides & white stone villas & cottages – for they are all white washed from top of roof to foundations. The roofs being of their stone slabs covered with cement & lime washed & [secure?] to collect the rain & divert it into cisterns – This is the only fresh sweet water obtainable on the island for drinking, cooking, and washing purposes — all well water is brackish & unfit for use. We made the circuit of the island before reaching Hamilton – passing by the south side & the entrance to St. Georges harbor where we took one black pilot out of a little boat that appeared & was lost to sight [?] as it rose to the crest & fell in the billowing the very rough sea made by [?] exceptionally strong tho' clear Swales west wind—making a pretty sight. The hills about St. Georges – two 300 feet high are covered with [?] & [?] dotted with the white tassels of the newly [six words faded] -- the shape and elevation reminding me of Quebec as we rounded the NE point past St. Georges path – a very [?] one -- wound in and out among the outlying reefs of coral rock & their brown outline were quite visible to all of us in the ~~perfectly~~ [?] transparent blue water – a blue like that of the Mediterranean – a pale lapis lazuli blue – when you look down into it as you lean over the cliffs [sic] side. All our home waters are you know green, from a pale to a dark bottle green when you look straight down into it. All water on a calm clear day looks blue if the angle of vision is sufficient to see the sky reflexions [sic] – but that is not what the artists call the true local color. Here the local color of the water is an intense blue & very beautiful. It is as you get glimpses of the sea in your various sides about the island. For size and general aspect the Bermudas are not unlike Staten Island in Summer garb – Tho' in detail of trees & shrubbery very different. Here the prevailing types are semi-tropical. The hills are mostly covered with red cedar & the valley and [?] with palmetto, bananas, and oleanders which latter grows to twenty or thirty feet in length. There are also scattered specimens of royal palms, paw paw, indian [sic] rubber tree & mahogany & orange. These latter grown for ornament. There seem to be but few orange or lemon trees & I do not find any of these fruit for sale. It is found that the onion, potatoe [sic] & tomatoe [sic] grown for consumption in New York is too profitable to allow any of their small



[?] of land being used for fruit than can better be produced in the West Indies. They plant what pays best, here as also when a that [sic] happens when the homely onion – publicly despised but eaten the secret relish & beans when husbands are away. I am writing this letter seated at the open window with the air warm as we have at home & the little garden in front of the hotel filled with blooming plants – rose, geranium, lilies, & the thermometer has ranged from 64 to 68 all day long every since my arrival a week ago. The air I found a little too damp but very like that of Newport in summer – not foggy but saturated with an ever present moisture.

But I found I must stop dear wife as the smoke from the steamer pipe warns me that we are in an hour she will be off.

Give my love to Aunt Sidney; the Dr. Lurle? & Frank -- & loads of kisses to dearly little baby. Write me a great long letter as it is only [?] in 3 weeks I have a chance to [?] & believe me your very loving husband

J Buck Henry

PS. I will tell you more about things in my next.

