

Alexandretta, Syria

March 16. 1894

My darling Franky: I put mamma
two lines from our last post, which may
or may not reach her before this does you. My
last long letter, to her, was from Smyrna,
which we left on Sunday last, the 11th, at
about 2 P. M. We passed through, or by,
many places and names familiar enough
to all of us who have read much of ancient
history, however cursorily — Chios and
Samos and Rhodes the coasts of Asia
Minor &c. The most interesting to me, both
in itself and from the attending conditions,
was the island of Patmos, in which St.
John was a prisoner when he saw the vi-
sion in the Revelations. I was called
just before daybreak by the aspect of the

deck, & say that there was a steamer's
white light, very bright, nearly ahead. As
I have to go on deck when steamers are met,
and my clothes were on, I got up almost
immediately, and then I saw a light, hang-
ing apparently, a way little above the hori-
zon, as brilliant and big in appearance as
a large electric street light. The officer
said, "I am sorry I wake you, Captain,
but it came in sight so suddenly, I could
not do otherwise - it is the morning
star." The words flashed at once in my
mind - almost the last in the Bible -
our Lord's - "I am the Root and the Off-
spring of David, and the bright and Morning
Star." It was then rising - if not immediately
over Patmos, as I think it was - over one of
the same group lying within half a mile or two.

The luster and apparent size, and the suddenness of the rising, all due to the extraordinary lucidity of the air, conveyed to my mind, as never before, what the force of the image must have been to St. John, who must often have seen exactly what I was then gazing on. Our course from Smyrna led us continually among the isles of the Grecian Archipelago, until Monday afternoon about four, when we passed the north end of Rhodes, and soon after struck the South Coast of Asia Minor, where ^{are} the ancient Lycia and Cilicia - St Paul's native land. The islands are not beautiful except with a certain severe and abrupt beauty - rising sheer and craggy straight from the blue water, scarce an offlying rock breaking the immense depth of the latter. We were wholly within the Turkish line, and misgovernment keeps the whole region poor, while centuries of mismanagement leave the people with little hope, or even dream, for better things. The slopes being great, I suppose there is little soil - here and there we saw places of more gradual decline, and even approaching plain country. These were often well cultivated and were beautiful - as man's hand generally, not always, makes Nature. There remains always, however, the incomparable clarity of the air and the brilliant blue of the Med. sea and sky, which would enrich any landscape; and we were favored with perfect conditions from Smyrna to Messin. The latter place, though said to have 6000 inhabitants is a mere strip of buildings, some two streets deep, lying along an open bay about eighty miles East West of this Alexandria. In itself, its chief interest is as the sea port now, and probably in older times, of Tarsus, St Paul's city. We were there two days, from Wednesday morning to Thursday (last) night, and I did not go ashore until yesterday afternoon, when several offers accepted the offer

of the railroad manager, and took a special
train to Tarsus. The latter is now merely
a dirty, tenth down, Turkish city, under
which lie the remains of the streets and
buildings in which the childhood and youth
of St. Paul were passed. Of those nothing is
to be seen, except possibly one Roman archway,
still standing, though a wreck in appearance.
The new town is, however, built largely of
stones quarried from the old ruins, and
therefore much of its materials is probably
contemporary with the Apostles. But when
you lift your eyes from the ground, you
see in all directions the striking features
of the landscape around which he grew up -
the broad Cilician plain - fertile then as
now - the steep and lofty hills of the
first range from the coast (Anti-Taurus)
and beyond them rising far beyond the

Taurus mountains, rising I suppose to 8,000
feet and now deep clad in snow for
3000 from the top. These Turkish towns
have not in themselves a redeeming
feature - dirty, tumble-down, unclean, &c.,
but the people and animals amuse me.
Men all furnished with Engravings of Mus-
sulmans - the turbans, flowing robes &c &c
but we do not realize the bright yet
dourly colors, the general shabbiness,
raggedness & dirt. As far as I can see,
those who keep themselves in good condi-
tion wear European garments, except the
usual fez, and possibly the shoes. A
string of camels too is an awfully clumsy
then long awkward stride, the fawning
motion of the head and neck, as they crane
their face and nose from side to side, &

above all the almost infinitesimal drinker who usually heads &
soubseins also closes the procession, often in a form of the slow-
moving, awkward brutes. Each is attached to his predecessor by a
chain & No 1 is fast to the packass. But when all is said, one
soon wears - for the novelty quickly passes, while the dust remains
This is the most out of the way part of the station - we shall get
no mail till we reach Alexandria probably a week hence. How
long we will be there remains to see, but we hope to turn west-
ward thence, and the Admiral expects to be in Malta about
April 10. I have little or no personal news, and shall put out
your letters now to see if they need answer. By the way, how does
your singing come on? I have looked over your last letter & find nothing
that wants reply. I have answered about the house at Quogon &c. I
am doing nothing and see no hope of doing anything literary. I don't
suppose the Secy wished to paralyze my activity, but he has done so
effectively; as for Ramsay, his right hand man, I have little doubt
that he considers that result positively a happy one. And now good
bye. I shall send this ashore & take its chance & probably not
write again until Alexandria, for I don't think anything
would be thereby gained. Love to mamma & the two rascals.

Your loving father
A. M.



TARSUS, ASIA MINOR, (*The Birthplace of St. Paul.*)

The view of the town is worthless -
throw out the minars, all but one or two,
and add indefinite dirt and squalor, it
may give a remote idea - but the
landscape - especially the foreground
range of hills & the snow covered
back ground convey a very poor
general idea.

A. J. G.



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