

1894

Antwerp, July 26

My darling Helen: It was my intention to write you last night & mail the letter this morning; but the mosquitoes were so bad as to make impossible to do so. It was slap-slap, all the time, I could read with the book on any time, but could not spare the use of my hands to hold the paper and pen. I have protected my sleeping room with bar door and window, but the main cabin is open to their invasion. We are lying in quite a narrow river surrounded on all sides by flat plains - the ground characteristic of the Netherlands, both Belgium and Holland - the surface of

plains being little above, if it be not
actually below that of the river. They are
protected by the dykes of which you hear
so much in Dutch history, or will hear
if you see and Wotley. I am heartily
tired of Rotterdam which does not possess
interest for me a week, and our surroundings
are not pleasant. The weather has been
exceedingly bad, raining every day, which is
bad enough ashore but very much worse on
board ship - and besides much dirt &
wetness almost unutterable. Then, too, the
cause of our detention - the repairs - keeps
us topsy-turvy; we are in a din and dis-
order comparable to a navy yard without
the satisfaction of being at or near home.
It has also been hot much of the time, but
not enough to mind, and sufficiently cool at
night for sleep. I am remarkably well,
despite everything - not very alert or strong

but that I attribute mainly to the soft damp climate which makes the Dutch and Belgians the slow phlegmatic people which they are. Your letter of the 15th inclosing one from Legh, has just come. Though very interesting in the account of yourselves there is nothing that seems to call for reply. I want you to urge mamma to go to Mrs. Powell's; which Rosie is in the house then will be always a person of sufficient experience to act in case anything unusual occurs during a short absence. Mamma may be never so happy at home & yet be better for the entire change and absence for four or five days from the "trivial round". I particularly wish her to go - and preferably before you go to Don Abbot. Tell Nellie that I think I have track of a "solid book" for her - but not before fall. I don't want too much solidity in summer. I don't find anything to do here, and don't feel at liberty - either from duty or from economy - to go away. In fact I don't want to go away - haven't the slightest desire or interest to do so. I have to go ashore most afternoons for the same reason that I want mamma to go - to get rid of the trivial round.

I go generally to the picture gallery where there are several hundred pictures - many of them masterpieces of the Dutch & Flemish schools, notably of Rubens who was born here. I can't appreciate them but I wear away my time in a half interested way. Other times I stroll round the streets or sit gazing in the park thinking of nothing at all. There is a fine Zoological Garden to which I have been twice.

Tell mamma that I have received the deaft from C & C Randolph for £20. 1^s. I must close now, for I have to read and dispatch an article for the North American Review, which I have been on to till the last moment. Good bye dear child. Give so much love to Mamma, Mother, sister and Dodi.

Your loving father

The enclosed may interest
though you know the facts -

A. J. W.

Via London

July 26 - 1894

Miss Helen Evans Mahan
Broque (Long Island)
New York

Etats-Unis d'Amérique