

Southampton, Sept. 18/94

My darling Helen: I hope I may be able
to send you a decent letter, but somehow
everything seems to become more hard and
harder as the course goes on. I feel very tired &
have so many letters to write of all kinds that
I never do that and everything else mechanically.
I have just returned from a short trip about
twenty miles from here to see a gentleman
from whom I hoped to get some information
about Lady Nelson, the wife of the great
admiral, but he was unable to give me any-
thing of any particular value. He had
been trustee for her three grand daughters &
had known their mother, who was daughter in
law to Lady Nelson but never seems to
have received any particular information
about the latter. You know that she &
her husband were separated, owing to his

infatuation about another woman - our
Lady Hamilton. About the latter everything
is known but poor Lady Nelson seems to
have sunk into utter obscurity, and I
cannot even begin to find out what sort
of woman she was, except that her life
was blameless. My host lives in the
New Forest, which has been the "New"
forest ever since William the Conqueror
turned it into waste land for the sake

of the deer which he was so fond of
hunting; and I think that showing the
neighborhood to me was more attractive
to my entertainer than imparking his
seauty knowledge. It is a well,
sparsely settled woodland, interspersed
with many open spaces, one which
long falls after the chase could have

been had. On Friday last I met Aunt Susan and Cousin Sarah, dining with them at a hotel in town, and the next day I saw them again on board the steamer. I think she looks older - Sarah had not been well. Edith when she first came into the room I thought looked pretty, but the impression disappeared after a little while. The weather has been good since they sailed and I hope has been so for them, but I felt very homesick when the steamer was leaving the harbor. You will now soon be going back to town, and I hope, my dear child, that you will not overtax yourself with teaching or other work. I wish this, of course, primarily on your account, but I also look to the future of us all. There is no necessity for laborious work now laid upon you, but I have fears that in a not very remote future the pay of United officers will be reduced. It will in that case be necessary for us all to work and possibly pretty hard - but by then you will have your full strength if you do not impair it now. Of course, if you marry, you will transfer both your work and your support elsewhere - but we have at present to contemplate the other contingency. The same distrust of the future of the United list, with other reasons also, impels me to return as soon as I can, in order that I may more surely get myself for gaining a support independent of the navy. Let me tell you this simply that you may feel that the gaining a few dollars more just now is not to be weighed against the husbanding your health against the day of need. I would not indeed leave you idle, only measure your work and aim at regularity of effort; above all

avoiding the fatal habit of doing things by fits and starts. A person who regularly and steadily employs four or five hours a day can without great difficulty - succeed at eight or ten; but one who does not work systematically can rarely acquire that valuable quality in later life. I hope both you and Willie will try to write regularly & by the way - say over a fortnight, and without expecting a reply always. It is most important that a boy should feel all in his home near & dear as continually; yet he cannot write so many letters in reply. I myself have felt the pressure greatly during this cruise in which I have so much else to do - & now I must try to write & dear also without expecting even all. It seems easy,

perhaps, but it is really at times very
hard work. We expect to be here within
a week for Havre to go into dock, and
then we will work gradually, but I
trust also rapidly towards the Medi-
terranean. Since we must remain out I
wish we were at least as far as Lisbon
now. I have no news, and am so pre-
occupied with the increasing worry
of the ship that I feel as if I never
shoved. Goodbye dear child. With
dearest love to mamma and Nellie

Your loving father

A. J. Mahan

Wednesday evening - Am
closing for the mail. Will

Sept. 18 - 1894

J

Miss Helen Evans Mahan

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New York

United States of America