

Algiers, Christmas, 1894

My darling Helen: I shall wish you  
all a merry Christmas and hope that  
you are having one, although I see from  
Mamma's letters that you all also,  
though with our mother and in the  
dear home, are having your tribulation  
& vexation - most natural - in feeling  
forced to go to Elizabeth. The only  
thing I can say is that poor Aunt  
Francis could with difficulty have  
come to you, there being no rooms  
in the flat. Next year I hope we  
shall be better fixed, and I am sure  
that for her an entire change of scene  
on that day would be better than  
to pass it in the old surroundings

when the human element has passed  
away forever. I wish she might see  
her way to join the house, but the  
problem is one on which another  
cannot very wisely proffer advice.  
Have you remembered, my darling, that  
this is the third successive Xmas I  
have passed away from home? Had  
I myself forgotten it. Of them all it  
has been the least merry - in fact,  
not only absolutely devoid of amuse-  
ment, but crowded with vexation  
& disappointment. Two years ago at  
San Francisco it was dull enough,  
but then I was soon to return home  
and was at least embarrassed. Last  
year I really spent a very jolly evening

with the Schiffs - and in the day there was the very lovely Riviera.  
To day we could not have given a Communion service in the Cabin,  
because the ship was entering the port, and the whole forenoon was  
taken up with securing her, receiving official visits, and all the  
other preliminaries of entering port. To add to my disagreements the  
news is that the San Francisco is not to sail before the first.  
Accustomed as I am to the exasperating delays of the navy, I  
scarcely know now what to expect. To crown all, the Admiral  
has asked me to dinner in that unexpected fashion which  
found me without an excuse ready. I had rather be kicked,  
yet as I feel it particularly important to keep on pleasant terms  
with him, I could not refuse without a thoroughly plausible

reason. So I am stuck. He is not congenial to me - in fact, I  
fear I am not fitted to run in this double harness. He is a  
kind-hearted, well meaning man, meddles very little with the  
ship beyond his own comforts, and seems upon the whole satis-  
fied with me; but he is essentially coarse, and seems at times  
to derive real pleasure from the feeling that he contravenes  
another. However, let this go. Except Blake & people I am un-  
questionably one who cannot <sup>bear</sup> the yoke of fellowship,  
a trait which makes me unpopular with the many, but  
I believe very cordially regarded by the few whom I too  
like. I wrote mamma a line on the 22<sup>d</sup> from Marseille, after my  
return from Aix. I can't recall just what I said, for I was

greatly hurried, so I may repeat myself. I went down on Tuesday the 18<sup>th</sup>, to your great uncle Charles Kubis, and stayed with him that day and Wednesday. On Thursday I left him with the understanding that I would breakfast with him at 12 on Sunday, on my way back to the ship. I went to the Schiffs, arriving at 12.30. That afternoon Mrs. Schiff took me to call upon people in the neighborhood of Eze and Velligranch, who had been kind to me last year. At 4 we reached their villa again and half an hour later came a telegram for me that I must be back to the ship at 4 Saturday. It was a complete surprise as well as a great disappointment. After looking at the time table, I decided

to take a night train which, leaving at 1 A.M. Saturday would bring me to Marseille about 8. I thus spent Friday with the family and Mrs. Schiff took me that day a long drive along the Riviera, and up the mountains to a hotel where the rest of the family joined us by rail and we had lunch. It was one of those wonderful days the Riviera can produce, brilliant sunshine, cloudless sky, warm yet bracing atmosphere, with the gorgeous mountain scenery and bright blue sea combining in a beauty that only land and water united can bestow. I left the Schiffs at 9.30 took the train to Nici, where I went again to Mr. Kubis, saw him for a half hour and then again to the station, where I took the train for Marseille. It was a very cold night and I sat up through

the whole. The train arrived on time, and at 8 P. M. that night  
we sailed. The promise of the weather was then fair, but the reports  
seemed to indicate storms at sea, so I had everything well secured.  
It was well I did for next morning we struck one of Nelson's  
north wester, which blew furiously all day Sunday. The adm.  
and I both agreed that only on two or three occasions had we  
ever seen it blow so hard. As it seemed likely the same gale  
prevailed at Algiers making it difficult to enter the port the  
Adm. ordered us to anchor under the lee of Memnon - to the  
south of it. It was nine in the evening when the anchor was  
let go, and I was so tired out, though the ship had done  
bravely, that I was asleep before 10 and did not  
wake till 8 next morning. Even then I would gladly have stayed in  
bed some hours longer, and my feet felt like lead, but after break-  
fast I was all right and greatly refreshed. We started again yester-  
day at 1 and arrived here at 9 this morning, but the day has been  
one of toil, worry and vexation. Your letter of the 9<sup>th</sup> and mam-  
ma's of the 11<sup>th</sup> reached me here - neither contains much news  
requiring an answer. I am glad you are having so many  
musical sprays. I wish you could get an hour or two more  
pupils each week. Cannot Mrs. Morgan help you in any?  
We shall I suppose stay here a week, nor can I wholly abandon  
the hope that the San Francisco may yet relieve us here. I  
feel very much saying good bye to the Schuffs, all whom  
without exception have been most kind and kind.

really I regret very much - but I have  
no wish to go back again to Villa-  
franche now that the adieu is over.  
It is hard I think that I shall  
never again see that beautiful Riviera,  
for, as Shorthouse truly says, things  
never again can be as they once were;  
but if I could only get back to you  
all, and to my natural occupation  
it would be all right. The dreadful  
mounting of uncaugential work is  
very wearing. And now, dear child,  
I will close and let this go to the  
mail. Love to mamma, Nellie,  
and Lyle who will still be with  
you  
Your loving father

Dec. 25 1894

Miss Helen Evans Mahan

75 East 54<sup>th</sup> St

New York

Etats-Unis d'Amérique

