



Grand Hotel. Brussels
March 30th 1884

My dearest Anna

We have had a severely prolonged fast in the matter of home news but I am thankful to say an abundant feast on our arrival here late last night. I sat up till 12, reading letters & even then had not finished our paper - would not permit positive encroachments on needed rest. There were five from you from July 10th to March 8th, & with the exception of poor Bernier's having had another had thrust, for which I am very sorry, it was delightful to have that attention - as was going on invariable at home. We have had cold weather, with short exceptions, throughout our travels - cold I mean for the climate

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through which we have passed but
we seem to have escaped an unusually
gloomy & dull one in Canada. I hope
you may enjoy an early spring with fine
high sunshine such as I know you love.
But I must restrain myself from writing
about anything but business as I have
only a limited time & it is Sunday. We
stay over here tomorrow chiefly because
Gage has many letters to answer, which he
wishes to attend to before entering upon
the interruptions that London life inevitably
bring & we hope to be there Tuesday night
April 1st. Rankine has secured the same
rooms, 27 Eastbourne Terrace, Paddington,
that were occupied by Sir Alex. & Katie Salt
& we feel sure that the messing & re-arranging
our wardrobes & storing housekeeping will
keep us hard at work for a day or two so
we may have no time to write before
the Canadian mail of Thursday 3rd April. What
I find that I have I shall go back ^{in person} by B
Connect our journey with what you have.

Just heard of us.

In case you may not have received
 Papa's letter from Port Said let me re-
 m- that your suggestion about Eva or
 one remaining in Britain, till near the
 time of the meetg of B. Ass, is now considered
 a settled thing, dependent of course on future
 developments. There is no need that we can
 see her ~~happening~~ England so soon as the
 middle of June, but that must be settled
 later as it wd only make him adhere more
 firmly to his intention if we are too apt
 to this intention at present. So he may sup-
 pose that Papa is in Montreal from
 last week in June & that J. & W. are by that
 time in this own house in Quebec &c.
 & that you are at Paris, in those circum-
 stances I do not know of any one who wd
 be so trustworthily & useful ^{in any house} as Ellen. If he
 found it best to sleep at the own house she
 wd cook what meals he wanted at home
 she wd presume as the prints ripened & get
 the kitchen flat chered, or perhaps more.

By the 15th of August I sh^d be only two great
 pes to get Mary or Jane Cook but there
 is not a shadow of hope that they sh^d be
 got at that date. Perhaps the best way
 w^d be if you w^d be so kind as see Ellen
 & ascertain if she intends to return to us & if she
 does let her be engaged from whatever
 time between July & August & direct her to
 come, tell her I wish her to try & get little
 Mary (or Annie as she was also called) to come
 as table maid from 15th Aug. She will hear
 of her at Mrs O'Brien's Registry & if she comes
 get her she must get some one else that
 she can depend upon. Which w^d I think
 please her & she w^d be more likely to be
 content with her own choice. Then if
 you sh^d ask Catherine - Mrs Butler - if
 her younger sister sh^d come to do the wash
 ing & bed room work, failing her I can
 think of any one else, but if we had the
 prospect of two I sh^d not fear trusting to
 find one after our return. Miss Wells
 I sh^d like to be engaged also from the 15th

as we Count upon having Curtains
 to alter in the library blinds & shutters to have
 & besides I don't expect her to make herself
 generally useful during the week of my
 as in case of the failure of a boat she
 can't help in a pinch. Ever & I think it wd. be
 a charming plan to sail from Liverpool
 say 1st Oct^r land at Rimanski & stay
 at Mitis hotel to see you for a few days.
 She further proposes that she sh^d. go on
 alone to Montreux on the 14th & take all
 the trouble of starting the town establish
 ment, especially if she c^d. induce papa
 to go to Mitis & take a week's rest just
 before the 1st of the Oct^r return together.
 As to you I see plainly the difficulties that lie
 in the way of your being present & wd.
 gladly offer to stay at Mitis & care for the
 children as well as I c^d. & let you go to fill
 my place I did ever to entertain which you
 c^d. do better than I. I look forward with

dread to the whole affair & heartily
 unite with you & Eleanor in wishing
 the good folks wd all stay at home or
 go anywhere out of Montreal, it is & has
 been the life & soul of our whole holiday. I
 fear will get much all the benefic paper may
 derive from his so called rest. I shall
 give out for Ellen to come to us I am utterly
 at a loss what to do, it is at all times so dif-
 ficult to get a good Cook that I shd dread
 more to find one at the last than to ^{have to} ~~have~~
 & arrange the whole house within a week
 hammer in the meantime I shall hope
 that Ellen wishes to return & probably you
 will be able to let me know before paper
 goes out. I think he rather looks forward
 to being asked to stay at Florence's but it wd
 be quite as well to be independent at
 least to some extent so that he wd sleep
 & take breakfast or perhaps lunch just
 as it suited him or W. & J. I am delighted
 to hear that after this anxiety they have got back

Such a desirable house & in such a
nice situation. I shall of course be glad
to get anything they may want in London
& I hope your corrected & full list is already
on its way there. I thank you very much
for remembering about the measure per one
Carpets. I fear you have much added to your
Cares between our wars & J's. There are
many things I wd like to thank you for but
none so much as your continued wise
thoughts for Feory & for Rankine. I am so
glad you think the former progressing
towards more interest in things as per the
letter I hope to see & perhaps to hear something
of his plans & prospects I have entered too
fully into the new scenes around me to
have dwelt much on other matters but
sd thoughts will sometimes intrude
massly about these two. How many of our
friends in Montreal have had sore
trials during the short period of our absence
it seems to myself careless & impolite not

8 notice these letters but I have so much always to tell that time fails me. I think I do not overlook or forget about them. Another sad event is the death of Prince Leopold. our poor Queen has had many deep sorrows.

Tell Eric that papa is much obliged for his letter. I was yesterday when he was at Bahn he bought him a real working steam engine which is being pushed there in a box with a great many stones. As he is such a clever geographer he will know that it is in Germany & consequently the engine is a German one. You have given me a good deal in asking for indistinct able dolls! rather tell the little girls that they must attend to their own family as you have to do to yours. I am going to impress them by my stories of how industrious the young children in Egypt are. Eva is writing the interesting things to you to adieu. Your loving Mother