

Bebek Constantinople.

June 22nd 1880.

My dear Mary. -

I have only a moment to write while William is shaving, preparatory to going to town, - as I want to send this letter with him. Speaking of shaving reminds me - William could not use his hands to shave for so long, that he raised quite a full beard, - & is now (for a couple of weeks) looking like he used to. - Carrie has been in Scutari since last Wednesday, when William & I went over with her in a caïque. The babies are both well & growing finely, although their teeth have not yet appeared, & they will be seven months old tomorrow - my birth

day - . They bite a great deal & we look daily for teeth to appear.

What I write particularly for this morning is to thank you for the beautiful little shirts you sent the babies, & which came safely without a visit to the everlasting Dead Letter Office.

You are always such a dear kind sister, & so thoughtful. Unfortunately I had just made flannel shirts. I feel so sorry about it, & my first impulse was to ^{send} them (the ones I made) home to Evangeline, hoping you would let her wear them for her Auntie's & her little Cousin's' sakes, - but I straightway reflected that she was probably much larger than our babies, & by the time the shirts reached her, would not be able to wear them.

You need not feel self reproached about not writing oftener. I wonder you find time to write as often as you do, for I know you must be very busy. Write when you can without putting yourself out too much.

For the rest of the time I will know that you think of us. - I have just taken Ellen in my lap, as she has been cooing for a long time to get up, & she is so eager to write to Auntie May, & so very helpful, that I am afraid there must be much more for me to do in that line. - I have been making some little nightdresses while Carrie is away, - which is the first we have done towards short clothes. When you have nice & simple patterns for Evangeline, would you cut them off & send them to me? - Patterns can't be bought here. I expect to make our babies' dresses pretty plain, for every reason. -

- Now I have two babies in my arms,
for Mary too, refused to be longer among
on bed with her toys. In my anxiety to
keep the children quiet while I wrote
I stuffed them with too much condensed
milk I suppose, as Mary has just
indicated to me. Dr. Patterson said that
condensed milk (which is imported from
Switzerland) is better for babies than cow
milk unless we could always have it
from the same cow, so we have been
using it lately as an alternative. We
Soperhuc is washing, as usual. We
wash baby clothes four times a week,
at least, & have to buy all our water
at a piaster & a half a Reg, ^{I should have said seventy paras, which} about the
size of a ^{is a piaster & three quarters.} small Reg). The man who brings
it, is called a "sugee" (water carrier).
- I had to leave my letter a moment be-
cause two of us were frothing, & we then
sat down in the black walnut ^{rocking} chair
which used to be in our Scranton dining
room. A few verses of "Far from Moll's
cares retreating," - caused Ellen's cares to
retreat so that she gently fell asleep, so
I only have little roguish Mollies in my
arms now. - How do you suppose I could

put one baby down without waking her,
 + keep the other? - It was some trouble
 especially as I had to walk with them
 into to the next room. -

Now Mary gave indications of sleeping
 + her mortal cars have retreated, + she
 too is reposing on her bed. - They gen-
 erally wake up very pleasantly, + often lie
 quietly + play for a long time. - I put
 some worsted balls which I made, or
 their rattles, near their pillows, so that
 when they wake, they can be amused.

We have made a great havoc among
 bed bugs lately. I killed 13 on Ellen's pil-
 low one evening, + the other day William
 + I killed 35 on the childrens' bed.

They drop down from the ceiling, come out
 of the walls, + especially the drawers,
 where the natives slept. - One evening
 as William sat reading in the down
 stairs bed room a bed bug dropped, ap-
 parently from the ceiling, on his book.

This was followed at intervals by
 others, until he remarked that it was
 growing monotonous, + gave up reading.
 Mrs. Seager told us of a similar case, ^{last}

Winter. Some one whom she knew found that the bugs dropped from the ceiling on her bed, in preference to any other part of the room, so she changed her bed, when they also changed their quarters to her new ones. - We have never found any in the big bedsteads yet, I mean living there, but they get into the bed clothes, & we have been so thickly packed in that we have not ventured to use poison. People say the only way to do is to go over all the cracks in the house (which are legion) with corrosive sublimate, - or syringe them with boiling water. Of course the latter was impossible, for our rooms are packed full of furniture, & we had no place to put it, in house or yard. Oh Mary! our house is perfectly filthy. There is not a single respectable family I have met in Turkey who live as we do. All the other missionaries have nice houses. It is not at all the wish of the Board to have missionaries live as we do. I can not tell you how intensely I long to be rid of Hananishu. He should have sent him away long ago, & indeed told him before

we went to Bulgaria that he could try to find a place - but a sort of pity makes us let him hang on, to cheat us, & impose on us, & aggravate us so that sometimes we feel almost mild. I wish you could be here one day, & I know you would feel the same. (A charitable wish, is n't it?) Yet I am so anxious not to do him injustice that when anything good is said of him, I am thankful that somebody can see it. I cannot make him clean anything. He is not willing to do anything but cook & wash dishes in his dirty fashion, & with our small family & plain living that is very easy. He never makes cake, pie, or any dessert, buys things ready to cook, never makes bread (we buy it) has the milk, water, & fuel, brought to the door. I can't imagine him picking feathers from a chicken. The scraps which are left he throws out the kitchen door in a nasty pile, & what the dog (for we have a nice dog who came to us, & some cats who catch our rats, which are numerous,) don't eat, the chupque (Scavenger) carries away. He never even would clean off a stove when we used them, - & as for helping William to lift boxes etc. as he has had to do a good deal,

can't imagine him helping. He is greatly in-
sulted if I ask him if he likes such or
such a thing to eat (as I have sometimes
in kindness, thinking I would leave some
for him). - & oh! - in countless ways he
is - inescapable. Sometimes he seems
to show some goodness, - being fond of the
babies for one thing, ~~for one thing~~. He
goes to church, & seems very proud of his
goodness, & is very shy. - I hope I am
not doing him injustice, but it is hard
for me not to detest him. - I often think
of Aunt Ellen & John Depp, & like her
mourn over my hateful feelings, which are
infinitely worse than hers, I am sure.

When he don't want to do any thing he is
"sick" or "poor man", & not knowing Eng-
lish perfectly, often finds it convenient
not to understand very simple words.
How I do want to be Mistress of my own
Kitchen again. William would send
H. away any moment if I would approve
& has given him some settings down
which were not mild. When I want H.
to clean his pans or tins etc, he always
say he has very much work to do, & with
tears in his eyes says if he can't please
Madama he will go, he very poor man.

he going to be sick, he not have it in his heart to be cross;—but he never reforms. Like a simpleton as I am, I think I must be too hard on him, & vicariously contrive how I can help him in his work by doing the drudgery, while not to appear conquered, I remain quietly dignified, except sometimes. Some weeks ago when I told H. to clean up his kitchen which is actually filthy, we went through our usual formula, & I took him up when he said he would go, & replied "very well, you may go. — How soon will you be ready?" — "After two weeks" was his reply, but that is the last I have heard of his going, & in our controversies he takes care to avoid that subject, & indeed hinted around about going to Bulgaria with us, altho' we took pains to tell him that we would have a Bulgarian girl. You with your neat kitchen will be surprised to hear that I never knew till very recently, the color of our kitchen floor, when after a terrible battle I got it scrubbed. To my surprise it turned out to be red brick. I had always supposed it was some dark stone! —

But why work up my feelings & yours? It is no use. — I feel like a caged bird

beating against the bars. - Little did I think when I commenced that I would write such a letter! - As you may imagine, William had to go without my letter. I was afraid to have him wait longer, & miss his boat. He is much better than he was, & I am quite as well as ever, having entirely regained my health. When I look back upon this winter's experience it seems like a horrible nightmare. Every evening I felt an expressible relief that one more day was gone, & each morning, that a night had past, I was even thankful for every hour that was past. - Strange to say I have been generally cheerful as ever. Carrie has sometimes said she did not see how I kept up such good spirits. For the first five months after coming to Turkey I was scarcely free from suffering of one kind or another, - but that came harder upon William than upon me, & more upon him dreadfully, - while at the same time his own health was miserable. It has been a very very trying time for him. I don't see how we could have lived through it if it had not been for Carrie, as William & I often say to each other. I should have had to keep Mrs. Parks for several months, but even that would

not have made it up. Carrie's society has been as much to us as her help, which is saying a good deal. Now that I am so well I don't intend to give back the care of the babies at night, or their morning baths, to Carrie, when she returns from Scutari. I think it is better all around that I should have them now, & I want my little darlings. I have had to give them up too much already. - I think though, that giving them up as I did, particularly the care at night, - & my letting housekeeping go so slipshod, has given me back my health. My husband is so indulgent & thinks yet that I am a good housekeeper, altho' the way I keep (or don't keep) house would I am sure shock most people as neat as he is, & I have no doubt that if he had let me, I would have made myself sick more than once in my zeal to make our house decent. - How I have run on! -

I am sorry to hear that you are not so strong as you were. Do be careful, & take Edmund's advice when he wants you to ease your strength. The last letter from home (from Mother it was)

said she had just had a note from
you that Eva was not well. I am so
anxious to hear by next mail that she
is better, - I dreamed that we were home
& I saw a beautiful baby about the size
of ours, & looking a little like Ellen, sit-
ting in someone's lap. It had on a short
white dress, - its hair was light brown,
eyes soft & brown, cheeks plump, mouth
small, - altogether an exquisite baby.
I said "Whose baby is that?" - & some
one said "It is Mary's little Eva," - & I
felt dreadfully ashamed, to remember
that I had written home such brag-
ging letters about our babies, & you
had never bragged about yours at all,
& she was the prettiest of the lot. -
Both William & I consider Mary quite
as pretty as Ellen. Although they look
so much alike as you will think from
the pictures, their expression is totally
different. - Mary has a very roguish, mis-
chievous look which her pictures do
not have at all. Her eyes sparkle with fun,
& she looks as nice as a much older child,
& is quite excitable. Ellen is quite as bright
but a real baby, & is more placid in dis-
position. They both laugh out loud very
heartily, & enjoy a romp. - Mary is very
much like William, ^{+ very quick in her motions} & I often call her

Wilhelmina Henrietta. She is always trying to stand on her head, & Ellen is always trying to hang by her feet, & they both are very active, -

But I must stop, for I want to surprise Larric by having a lot of sewing done when she comes home. Still, I don't feel as if writing letters was a waste of time. William is always trying to induce me to write more, & there are so many I want to write now. -

Please give my love to all enquiring friends, I often think of the good people up your street, & wonder how they all are. The Wards, the Jays, Brigham's, Miss Storrs, Dearborns &c &c, & last but not least, Aunt Emma & family. - Aunt Emma managed to astonish us all, & follow the fashion of having daughters, & the biggest one of the lot, too. I never was so surprised as Miss Eugenia May made me. I meant to write to Aunt Emma, but I don't know when I can. So you give her my congratulations, & tell her that I would take more interest in this little one than I used to in her other

babies, nor that I am not so afraid of
babies, - & have wished many times
that I could see it, - I believe
I wish every day - or - think how nice
it would be, if Eva could be with
Mary & Ellen. The three would
look so cunning together. -
Good bye - I feel as if I had been
enjoying quite a visit with you
today, & it has been very pleasant to
me. - Give my love to Mrs. Lusk.
While I think of it - I wish I
had her recipe for catsup. Mother
had it but I never copied it in my
book. Is it in Mrs. Paul's?

With love to Edmund & yourself,
I remain as ever
Affectionately your sister
Ellen S. Belden.

By this same mail I intend to send a
picture of our babies to Aunt Ellen.
I wanted to have all three styles go
to Oxford, & if you & Aunt Ellen would
rather exchange, than to keep the ones
I send to each, - why do so, -