

**LETTERS
FROM BERMUDA**

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Letters from Bermuda by Jane A. Eames

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JANE A. EAMES

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BY

Mrs. JANE A. EAMES.

SECOND EDITION, WITH ADDITIONAL LETTERS.

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LETTERS FROM BERMUDA.

I.

HAMILTON HOTEL,
HAMILTON, Bermuda, Jan. 12, 1875. }

MESSRS. EDITORS: Greetings to you from this gem of the sea, and through you to our many friends among the readers of the MONITOR. Six days ago we left the ice-bound hills of New England; and as I sit in my room, and look out of the open window (no, there is no window in the room, but, instead, two large glass doors opening on the verandah) upon the blue waters of the harbor, and the green hills beyond dotted with white houses, it is difficult for me to realize that this is January, and that only last Wednesday I walked the streets of Concord, slipping about on their thick coating of ice and snow. What a marvellous change, and how speedily made! Three days and three nights of discomfort, and we are in an earthly paradise.

On the afternoon of Thursday, the 7th of January, at four o'clock, our good steamer, the Canima, left New York, and in less than an hour we began to be in rough waters, and one by one the passengers dropped out of sight, the writer of this, one of the first to disappear.

The Canima is a staunch, Clyde-built steamer, long and narrow, but, like all propellers that I have seen, rolls fearfully. She is well manned, her officers thoroughly understanding

and performing their duties, and, withal, extremely courteous to their passengers, doing everything in their power for their happiness and comfort. The servants were exceedingly attentive, ready to run at all times for us.

I did not again make my appearance upon the stage till Saturday afternoon ;—not that I was so very sick, but I was so extremely tired and uncomfortable I thought it best to keep as quiet as possible. There is not much change in a sea voyage, except in the noises around one. The creaking of the ropes, the throbbing of the engine, the waves dashing against us and pouring over us as though longing to devour us, the crockery knocking and thumping about, the retching, vomiting, and coughing of the unhappy victims of sea-sickness,—these are the sounds that constantly greet the ear. We did not see any ships, but, on the contrary, shipped many seas, each one seeming to knock us about with a little more force than its predecessor. We were constantly told that “We shall have rough weather crossing the gulf, but after that we shall be in smooth waters.” That may have been the case in other instances, certainly not so in our experience, for it is difficult to say when we had the roughest,—before, or after, crossing “the gulf.” Each morning our attendants would announce that “We had a fine run last night.” Well, if it was any pleasure for them to call it a “fine run” I do not begrudge it to them, but I called it a roll, and a tumble, and a plunge, and every time a heavy sea struck us, our steamer would quiver from stem to stern.

On Sunday came the joyful cry, “Land in sight!” Up I scrambled, dressed myself as speedily as I could, and went on deck. There, like a dark cloud against the horizon, lay Bermuda, “the haven where we would be.” Oh! what a joyful sight! Nearer and nearer it seemed to come, and calmer and calmer grew the water, till it lay before us and around us like an azure sea of glass.

I ran down to call the Doctor, who had not been out of his berth since leaving New York, and by the time I was

back on deck, this isle of beauty, in all its loveliness, was before me.

The approach to the harbor is through narrow straits, studded with islands whose vivid green was in exquisite contrast to the blue sea. Peeping in and out among the trees were white houses, and, as with infinite care we threaded our way through the intricate passage, new beauties were unfolded at every turn, and called forth new adjectives to express our admiration.

Darkness fell on the scene just before we reached the dock; but soon after six we were in this hotel, and were warmly greeted by the senior proprietor, John W. Dodge, Esq., a classmate of Dr. Eames's in Brown University.

And now, what shall I say of Bermuda? Not much more in this letter than I have already said; for, although I took a long and lovely drive yesterday morning, my head was so weak, the effects of the voyage, that I could only lie back in the carriage and enjoy to the utmost the delicious air and the intensely foreign aspect of everything about me.

As the steamers leave only once a fortnight, I shall have ample time to observe, and to digest my observations, before sending off another letter to you. Think of being two weeks without getting a letter or a newspaper!

II.

HAMILTON, Bermuda, Jan. 20, 1875.

MESSRS. EDITORS: By this time I suppose you have received my first letter from Bermuda, written, I think, on the twelfth, announcing our safe arrival on this enchanted shore.

We have now been here more than a week, and already begin to feel quite at home. Every time we walk out we meet some pleasant acquaintance that we have made, whose

kindly greetings lead us to forget that we are "strangers in a strange land." In fact, the fashion here seems to be to bow and speak to every one you meet, be they gentlemen, ladies, or what in ordinary parlance are called "common people." There are a great many black people on the island. Though slavery was abolished here in 1834, it is said that sixty-one per cent. of the inhabitants are more or less of African descent. Many of them own a little patch of land which they cultivate with care, and, as far as I know, are industrious and frugal. Some say they are lazy. I dare say they may be. My experience is, that there is a vast deal of laziness in the world, and, of course, a warm climate tends to develop it more than a cold one. The black women are tall and straight, and walk through the streets carrying upon their heads immense bundles which they bear with extreme ease, balancing them by the motion of the body without the touch of the hand. It is not uncommon to meet a woman having on her head a large tub filled with water, and, although she may be going up or down a hill, so evenly does she walk that not a drop of the liquid overflows. They do a great deal of work, too, in the fields, and as for the children, they are playing round everywhere, and are just as bright and cunning (I do not mean by this word sly) as they can be. The men are sociable, ever ready to answer any questions put to them, and are uniformly respectful and polite. At least we have found them so, for we have not received an impertinent or saucy word or look from any one to whom we have spoken,—man, woman, or child.

And now permit me to speak a little in detail of this island, or cluster of islands, rather. Some say there are more than three hundred islands in all, but as many of these consist of only a single rock or hill, they are not of much account.

A chart lies before me, made in 1872, which gives at least one hundred islands, about twenty of which are inhabited. The five largest islands are St. David, St. George, Bermuda