

# Diary of a West Coast Sailing Expedition, 1885

From the diary of MRS. JOHN R. GILPIN

with notes by her son, VINCENT

*In January, 1885, my parents joined Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Willcox of Philadelphia to fish, hunt, and explore the Gulf Coast, taking me along, a small boy. Mr. Willcox was a naturalist and collector as well as a sportsman, and made all arrangements. We arrived at the Swanee House, Cedar Keys, on January 14, and the plan was to spend a month at Mr. Jenkins' house on the Homosassa River, forty miles farther south by sailboat, and then cruise to Key West. The diary proceeds.*

Thursday, January 15.

Very warm. Gentlemen busy getting equipment. Mr. W. secured a boat for a coast trip a month hence, also a boat for Homosassa. J. bought a boat for rowing. Mrs. W. and I made a few purchases. Mr. Willard, proprietor of Swanee House, had an oyster roast out on the lot aside of the house, a novel scene, and successful. After the oysters were roasted two persons opened them on a table provided, and the guests ate until satisfied, and found them good.

Friday, Jan. 16.

Awoke to prepare for the start; found the wind "dead ahead, no boats to start out today. Relieved, for a day's rest will be well. Spend the day looking around. Mrs. W. and I found the Episcopal Church in the prettiest part of the town, saw the rector's wife, Mrs. Wilson, and had a pleasant visit. She called on us here in the afternoon. Everything seems ready for a start tomorrow morning.

Saturday, Jan. 17.

Rained during the night, and the wind changed to a *cold* north wind; very cold, thermometer down to 32° a little ice formed. Found the wind had blown the water all out of the harbor and every boat was "high and dry," with no prospect of getting them off bottom today. We hug the fires. Mr. W. tries to secure a loose boat; hears of one after the other. Our boat should have been off last night, but the cautionary signal caused it to be anchored in one of the bayous, and "there it is, and there it will stay." We must give up today, and feel we must start tomorrow, though it is Sunday, if the tide and wind be favorable, lest we be kept away too long.

Sunday, Jan. 18.

Got up and prepared for a start. Made up a luncheon at breakfast. Mr. W. returned to say our boat was still fast; had found several others and settled on one, and was having the baggage moved aboard. We went to look; near noon, rain beginning. No possibility of getting through today, no accommodations for the night. We went back to the hotel. Cold.

Monday, Jan. 19.

Still raining, wind light; gave up the boat altogether and had trunks lifted up to the ware-room. Must hunt another chance. More boats "off" on the tide, now coming in.

Tuesday, Jan. 20.

Still cold and raining, no start today. Frank A. Kennedy from Cambridge, Mass., registered here today with three friends, Mr. Babcock, Mr. Stratten and Mr. Hardy; are prepared for a cruise down the coast in schooner "Norman," to remain 8 or 9 weeks.

Wednesday, Jan. 21.

Found a little boat, the "Meta," willing to take us to Homosassa today. At 10 examined it, found it small and wet; best to take a whole day for the trip. Kennedy party not off today. Still cold and windy.

Thursday, Jan. 22.

Get baggage aboard the "Meta," and were ready for the start at 8½ A.M. Cabin small and damp, but with no prospect for staying all night we will try to manage to get along in it. Wind favorable; start well and make good time, but find the water so shallow that we decide not to take the "cut-off" through St. Martin's Reef, making a distance of 8 or 10 miles *around* necessary. Hope to make the mouth of the river by sunset and pole up by moonlight. Aim for the old Jones barrel-stake; it is not to be seen, and sunset finds us on a shoal, south of the channel, and here we must stay till daylight—uncomfortable prospect. But we anchor and huddle in for the night, making use of our water-proofs as protection against the wet of the boat, thankful for a few mouthfuls to eat, and no rain, which was threatening. We pass an uncomfortable night; a fine rain set in during the night, and the outlook was blue. Mr. W. who was pilot and felt the responsibility was entirely worn out with anxiety and fatigue. A severe nervous headache attacked him. J. kept out of the wind all day and kept warm, but was very tired of the cramped position. Mrs. W. and I sat up nearly all night and slept but little; V. slept pretty well, as well as a severe cold in the head would allow. The hours passed slowly.

Friday, Jan. 23.

Daylight at 6 A.M. Mr. W. on the lookout at once. The men pushed the boat off and sailed toward the now visible channel-stakes, but shoals cut off the passage at every turn, and there was imminent danger of running again aground—a serious matter at high water. Once again we stranded and then pushed off. When within half a mile of Shell Beach and Island decided to anchor and row to Jenkins'. Mr. W. and J. went first with the two men to row. Mrs. W., V. and I remained aboard at anchor. They left us at 9 A.M.; the little boat (ours) returned with three men at 2 o'clock. We loaded in at once with little baggage, and were rowed up on the tide by 4 P.M., happy to be in a place of shelter and free from danger.

Saturday, Jan. 24.

Sent men down with two boats for the trunks and boxes; they returned with everything by 12 o'clock, so here we are, all together, safe and sound, and feel that we are thankful. Have comfortable rooms. V already enjoying his boat and oars. A mail in this evening. Warm today.

Sunday, Jan. 25.

V., J. and I took our boat and rowed down to the old Tigertail Island place, (formerly Jones'.)<sup>1</sup> Saw the orange trees full of fruit, and the ruins of the old house. Rowed back easily to dinner. Afternoon rain set in. Very mild; rested and wrote.

Monday, Jan. 26.

Cold after the rain. Arranged a few things. Mrs. W. and I walked back to the clearing and found some wild jessamine in bloom. Came back full of sand-spurs. J., V. and I walked around the two gardens. Wrote some letters for a chance to Crystal River tomorrow.

Tuesday, Jan. 27

Letters went. Cold in the house; sitting by fires. V. went with Mr. W. to catch sheepshead, and out with his father to test the small rifle. We all walked up the plantation road toward the sugar camp, a pleasant walk.

Wednesday, Jan. 28.

Mr. Hill from the head of the river brought his dogs for a deer hunt. Mr. W's boat with Tat<sup>2</sup> and ours with ourselves, went to Price's Creek to "take a stand." The sun was delightful, so we halted out of the wind and watched Mr. W. catch sheepshead—was very successful; V. enjoyed hauling them in with a net. Could hear neither dogs nor deer before we heard the

<sup>1</sup> We had spent two earlier winters at the delightful sportsmen's boarding-house kept by Mrs. Jones, and always wanted to return to the Homosassa in consequence—but the Jenkins house was a different matter!

horn call the dogs in. Mr. Carroll from Salt River rowed up to tell us a fine buck had swam the river at Hegen Gap, but he had no gun, and we got no deer.

Thursday, Jan. 29.

Mrs. W. Keeps her room with a severe cold in her head and chest. V. fishing near the house. Wrote Kate, asking her to send us some beef extract, thinking to get letter off by Carroll's boat from Tigertail, but Mr. Jones goes to Brooksville tomorrow, and it will be sent there.

Friday, Jan. 30.

V. out fishing in a heavy shower, with Mr. W.; saw a deer swim the river and were almost near enough to catch it with a crab-net—boat stuck in a shallow. After dinner took guns and rowed up to Hall River. Saw a number of water-turkeys, chased them but got none. Rain began and we rowed to the house in a heavy shower. Evening wrote, and read aloud from Henshall's "Cruise of the Blue-Wing." Mail in from Crystal River, none for us.

Saturday, Jan. 31.

Wind from the west—high tide. After dinner took Mrs. W. with Tat to row down to Tigertail for oranges, now in charge of Mr. Smith. Amazed to see at anchor there Mr. Jones' boats, the "Little," the "Vanessa" and the "Annie R.," with gentlemen and servants, here for a week's hunting and fishing. Spake to Mr. Jones and Mr. Dimmock.<sup>4</sup> Bought 100 oranges for \$1.50. Returned soon, for Mr. W. wanted Tat for an up-river expedition. He went up and returned after sunset with 3 water-turkeys and a white heron.

Sunday, Feb. 1.

Beautiful day. Mr. W. gave me a water-turkey, which I skinned across the river. Old "Uncle Jesse" brought in the mail from Crystal River with his ox-cart load of various supplies—six letters for us; we read them under the palmettoes and enjoyed them. Took a row down-river toward sunset with Mrs. W.; she still has an oppressive cold on her chest.

Monday, Feb. 2.

Beautiful day. Bud appeared this morning prepared for the day's work—glad to see him. Mr. W. proposed going for ducks together, but painted his boat. J., V. and Bud went fishing. I rested and read all morning. After din-

<sup>2</sup> Tat O'Neill was the small but efficient boatman for Mr. Willcox, and his brother Bud served us. They had been with us at Jones' and were the then equivalent of an out-board motor.

<sup>3</sup> Mail was always a sketchy business, going out by anyone who happened to be leaving, in any direction.

<sup>4</sup> This was A. W. Dimmock, who pays affectionate tribute to the Jones establishment at Tigertain in the opening chapter of his book, "Florida Enchantments." The place was the ante-bellum summer home of Senator Yulee.

ner we all went up to the head of the river. Tested the sights of the new rifle. Met Mr. Hill, who is clearing land there. Poled up to the little spring-head. Returned at sunset with 5 water-turkeys—all have beautiful plumes.<sup>5</sup> Appreciated Bud's strong arms on the homeward row. To bed tired as usual.

Tuesday, Feb. 3.

Skinned water-turkeys all morning. Wrote letters. After dinner we rowed up to the "little spring-head" of the river, to find Mr. Hill and his clearing and give him letters to mail at Crystal River tomorrow; could not find him. Returned in the sunset. Shot two water-turkeys and a hooting owl. Weather pleasant.

Wednesday, Feb. 4.

Morning took V. and small rifle and rods up the river. Afternoon J. went up with V. Shot a hawk—it fell among palmettoes and could not be found. A Mr. Unger from Newark, N. J., here from Brooksville to fish—pleased with the river.

Thursday, Feb. 5.

Weather pleasant. Went up Price's Creek, saw a few ducks, had one shot, but obtained no birds—cartridges too light. Windy in the afternoon. Went over to the old plantation to get some dried moss for pillows and mattresses for our cruise.

Friday, Feb. 6.

Loaned Bud to Mr. Jenkins to repair his wind-blown fence; heavy thunder-storm last night. We went over to the plantation road, came upon Mr. Smith on a deer-stand. Heard the dogs barking near the river. We waited near while the hunters went toward the river. They discovered that the deer had taken to the river, and recalled their dogs and returned home. We arranged a target and tested the rifles very satisfactorily. When we returned to dinner we found that the wounded deer had swam the river near Mr. Willcox; he and Tat chased it into Mr. Jenkins' cow-yard and called for help; Bud came with a hoe, and killed it with a blow.<sup>6</sup>

Saturday, Feb. 7.

Three gentlemen here last night looking for locations on this river for summer residences, ex-governor Chamberlain of Maine, Mr. Lane of Maine, and Mr. Bemiston of Philadelphia. The first has an orange-grove at Ocala, and wants a summer home on the coast. We went down to Tigertail, looked

<sup>5</sup> Plumes and feathers of all kinds were in general use for hat-trimming and other ornaments; there was neither law nor sentiment to conserve game until many years later, and all wild creatures were so immensely plentiful that it seemed impossible to reduce their numbers.

<sup>6</sup> Neither sport nor cruelty—but filling the larder! Game was the only meat to be had.

about, and engaged oranges for our cruise. Returning to dinner shot a water-turkey. At three went up Price's Creek for a shot at the ducks. Shot a hawk and frightened away all the ducks. Water too low to get up high. On the way back shot and got a pretty little brown backed hawk. John Jenkins came home from his place at Mt. Lee and brought our mail.

Sunday, Feb. 8.

Both boats with Bud and Tat took us all down to the Little Homosassa to old man Welsh's place, one of the most beautiful spots on the river, a high shell mound crowned with immense live-oaks and other trees, occupied by a man of 87, with no family. He wants \$2000 for his tract of 160 acres—would be a good place to have a winter home. The three gentlemen returned today to Ocala and took our letters. Evening rowed up Otter Creek with Chloe and family.

Monday, Feb. 9.

All planned for a duck-hunt today, but the wind is blowing a gale up the river, and we stay at home doing little things. V. happy about the wharf and boats. Made three mattresses for our boat "Curry." Wrapped my water-turkey plumes, cut V's and J's hair, and lounged. Wind wild. Rain set in after noon, rains all evening. Read aloud Henshall's "Cruise of the Rambler." Has been very oppressively warm today.

Tuesday, Feb. 10.

Very cold, high wind and tide. We are looking for Capt. Archer and his schooner to be outside for us today. Mr. W. thinks it best to go outside and see him, if there; he and Tat take the sailboat and start out. J. and Bud take our boat and row up Price's Creek to look for ducks. Mrs. W., V. and I go over to the landing and gather cushion moss, and walk on to Chloe's house, a long mile, and back. Meet J. and Bud at the landing, returning with no success, wind very high, and the few ducks out of reach. Shortly after Mr. W. and Tat return, reporting a head wind and no progress possible. Eat dinner, and Mr. W. takes our boat with Bud and Tat to row, and goes out again to Shell Island, but sees no boat outside; returns very cold. Temperature in our rooms during the night 45°!

Wednesday, Feb. 11.

Down to freezing outside this morning. Mr. W. goes out fishing, the rest of us go with Mr. Jenkins to the head of Otter Creek and walk the road a mile and a half to a new house built on the old Wheeler Point on Mason's Creek. Cut some canes on the way back. Are all quite ready for dinner when we get here at two o'clock. After dinner Mrs. W., V. and I go up with Mr. W.

to see him shoot an alligator he had seen lying out on the bank, but it was too cool for his lordship—he had gone. Saw a little one swimming, but did not shoot at him for fear of startling the old one. Very cool. Return to bed early.

Thursday, Feb. 12

45° in the rooms at night, warmer outside; sun bright, east wind, low tide. Mr. W. starts for another look outside for our Captain and boat; takes sail. We stayed in all day, busy; rained all afternoon and night. Mr. W. returned in the middle of the afternoon; had seen Capt. Archer and his schooner outside of Shell Island.<sup>7</sup> Went to packing up immediately, finished by bedtime. Paid Mr. J's bill of \$2 per day. Rained hard with thunder and lightning all night; outlook for an early start not promising. Sleep rather uneasily.

Friday, Feb. 13.

Morning broke dull, pouring rain. Gave up all idea of a start. Took our breakfast liesurely and rearranged some of our belongings. At half past nine the skies promised better things, and we resolved to make our start. Soon we were loaded up in three boats, our boat the "Swanee," Mr. W's boat, the "Water-Witch," and a sailboat of Mr. Carroll's, the "Rena." At half past ten we started. Stopped at Tigertail for our oranges and lemons; J. cut some sweet lemon and fig sticks. Started from there. The Carroll boat could not sail for want of wind; Bud tried to tow it, but wind and tide were ahead, and we could make no progress. Gave it up, and we rowed on, leaving Mr. W. and Mrs. Jenkins anchored in the Carroll boat. After a hard row we reached the schooner, "Curry," and at once sent Tat, Bud and Russell back with two boats to bring the rest of the baggage. They found there was too much, so the boys rowed out with the Carroll boat. We had some hot supper for all, and we managed to find a bed for each, though imperfectly provided. Not long after we had settled into quiet and were trying to get to sleep among our novel surroundings, the outside elements put in a voice. The warm damp air of the day had induced thunder-clouds to form and the lightning played

<sup>7</sup> This was an old and rather dilapidated Key West schooner, the "Benjamin S. Curry," owned by Wesley Archer, well known as a blacksmith, especially skilled in making grains, spears and sponge-hooks. He brought with him as mate David Russell, a likeable chap, who really was more of a sailor than Archer, which led to some amusing disagreements on tactics. The boat was a small freighter with a cuddy aft offering a berth on either side for the ladies, and a little nook under the companion for me. Forward was open hold, reached by a large hatch, where crew and gentlemen set up cots. We learned later that she had been recently sunk and was well soaked with salt water, and worst of all, her centerboard had been sprung and could not be lowered, so that she could go to windward only under the best conditions, and very slowly at that. We were to go first to Cedar Keys for supplies.

about the horizon for a while, soon followed by a light sprinkle of rain which grew to a deluge, with a great blow. We roused to protect ourselves from the water pouring in around the windows. Captain Archer and his mate were soon on deck to fasten things. The heavy anchor was dropped to help the light one hold the vessel. The wind had swept oberboard the heavy tarpaulin which covered the forward hatch, and the rain poured in. Shortly, the heavy anchor, which had had a fluke bent out two nights previous, dragged, and we found the vessel moving. Captain thought the small anchor had been lost. The worst of the squall soon over, but the storm continued around us for hours. Dawn found us aground on a shoal— low tide.

Saturday, Feb. 14.

Daylight. The wind is favorable, but we are aground. Mr. Jenkins and Bud get a breakfast and hurry off to get advantage of the wind; they were soon out of sight around Shell Island. Very soon, and while the tide was rising, the wind veered about to a regular norther; we were off the shoal and floating, but the dead head wind kept us quietly at anchor, now in the channel. Nothing to be done. Very cold, rough wind, provisions giving out. After dinner decided that we had better go back to Jenkins' for the night and for more provisions, not knowing how long we would be detained. Tat sailed Mr. & Mrs. W., Captain rowed for us. A long, cold row— got in at 6 P.M. Had supper, a good warming at the open fire, and a comfortable bed for the night.

Sunday, Feb. 15.

Breakfast about seven. All ready for start. Wind, tide and skies favorable. In two hours we were out at the schooner and aboard. Wind sprang up favorably from southeast, and with hoisted sails we were soon riding toward Cedar Keys at a comfortable and quiet rate. Without any mishap we reached it at six P.M. and took rooms at the Swanee House. Mr. W. was quite sick; had a chill last night and fever today.

Monday, Feb. 16.

Took clothes to Sophie to be washed today. Called on Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, the clergyman here. Busy all morning gathering our supplies for the cruise. Mr. W. still very sick. Sunset found nearly all gathered together, but nothing aboard. Has been very cool again today. Call from Mrs. Wilson this afternoon. Beautiful sunset with new moon, promise of fair weather at last. All Florida has been feeling the continued cold very much. Had letters, and the pot of beef tea came safely. Last night met Mr. and Mrs. Frank Darlington, our neighbors at home, on their way to Jenkins'; have been here



since Wednesday, much dispirited, and would wait no longer for the Caroll boat, "Rena," which Mr. Jenkins was to send for them. They had engaged another sailboat to take them to Crystal River and thence to Jenkins, and were ready to start then, at night. We held a consultation as to what we had better tell them about the place, feeling sure of their coming disappointment. Told them of plain table, dangers of sailing at night, advised against taking the boat route between Crystal River and the Homosassa. Mrs. D. much discontented—wants to go to Lake Santa Fe. They started, and during the night we had a hard rain and blow. They will be sickened out; we await reports, sure they will be unfavorable. Meet Mr. Alfred Jones today; he is equipping his boats now for another coast cruise with Mr. Dimmock and others. Was cordial and agreeable; hoped we would look in at Tarpon Springs before our return. Business very dull at Cedar Keys, nearly dead; hardly any guests at the Swanee. Mr. Willard proposes to give it up if not soon better. Railroad now connects Jacksonville with both New Orleans and Tampa—leaves Cedar Keys out, almost.

Tuesday, Feb. 17.

Mr. W. has been very ill with chill and fever; very weak this morning, keeps his room. J., Mrs. W. and I go around and make remaining purchases for the trip, including an oil stove for the cabin. Have all taken aboard. The day is cool but very delightful, sunny and cheery. Captain ready and waiting. Evening at sunset so pleasant that we lowered our boat and V. rowed us over to Cedar Island and about the Faber Mills boat. A hard tug to get back against a hard tide.

Wednesday, Feb. 18.

Mr. W. better but still weak. We decide, after breakfast, to take all things on board the schooner and be ready for a start. Day fine, but wind light. Remove baggage and go to make a few more purchases. Take our dinner aboard out of our stores. About four the captain and his assistant decide that the wind will take them out of the harbor. We hasten away to secure some fresh meat and bread and oysters at the last moment. When we return to the wharf with our stores find the little boat awaiting us, and the "Ben S. Curry," with hoisted sails, out a little, ready for the start; our boat, the "Swanee," on deck, Mr. W's boat the "Water Witch," and the "Scurry" in tow.<sup>a</sup> We start away, leaving the strange little town of Cedar Keys, looking very picturesque in the afternoon light. At sunset, when about five miles

<sup>a</sup> A wood stove had been set up in the hold to dry and warm it, and in the hurried departure it was somehow upset, scattering glowing coals in all directions; when the mess was cleared up, a paper bag containing five pounds of gunpowder lay near; it might have made a really exciting start!

away, the schooner went on the side of a bank and stuck! Anchor was lowered and we all settled for the night, the sailors to await the rising of the tide. Rested a little uneasily for the first night on our new beds. About midnight the men got started and sailed all night, past Crystal River, St. Martin's Reef, Homosassa and Chesawiska.

Thursday, Feb. 19.

Wind favorable for our course to the southeast. North wind very cold on deck and in cabin. Light cabin stove and have recourse to various devices. Mr. W. and J. both feel it. Tat, as cook, does very well—feels the cold on deck very much. Sail on past Wicheewachee Bay, Bayport, inside Anclote Keys, past the mouth of Anclote River, into St. Joseph Bay, inside Hog Island, to Dunedin, about 1 P.M., 87 miles from midnight before. Land at Dunedin by Douglas & Somerville wharf. Go to store and get ten dozen eggs at 15¢ a dozen and fifty grape fruit. Look at boarding house and grounds of Mr. Jones. Walk up the beach and look at a saw-mill cutting the yellow pine of the region. Leave Dunedin at five to be able to reach Clearwater, four miles below. Channel staked out by steamboat men, etc., confusing for larger boats. Soon ran aground, waited for the tide and pulled into the channel, where we anchored for the night. All feel the cold.

Friday, Feb. 20.

Sail to Clearwater by eight o'clock; stop here because we want especially to see it. As wind and tide suit to go on to John's Pass, we hasten ashore to see the place. It impresses us as decidedly the prettiest place we have seen on the Gulf Coast. A road from the wharf leads directly up a steep hill of sand past a store and a private house. We go to see "Dwight's," and find a combination of small houses in one, on a high plateau, neatly laid out and planted—orange trees, etc. In the sitting room, which was neat and clean, was burning a nice wood fire, a friend on such a day. Terms \$15 per week, \$50 per month, V. half price. Very few boarders. Go across the plateau to the "Sea View House," hardly finished, built high above the trees with an outlook commanding Clearwater Harbor and the Gulf beyond; kept by one Mao Dak, not very clean, unfurnished, and—worse—well, or spring water to drink, which they make a card of, but which we avoid; terms \$10 per week, \$35 per month. Leave the place favorably impressed with Clearwater. Go aboard. I go to bed with a throbbing headache, from want of proper rest. Sail on to John's Pass, twelve miles, wind favorable, day fine but cold. All enjoy the sail, so close to either shore, except myself. The continued cold is a great drawback to the comfort of the party and makes us all gloomy;

feel as it was a most unreasonable venture. At best there must be discomforts to encounter, but to have winter cold envelope "summer seas" is most chilling to spirit and senses. J. took a chill sitting out and suffered all night from the effects.

Saturday, Feb. 21.

Were anchored last night near the Captain's home. J. miserable all night—much disheartened by the cold. He and I take a hasty breakfast and hasten ashore to try the effect of exercise and sunshine. Everyone feels the cold from captain down. We feel as if we must abandon the boat—a serious step now with all preparations made, and so far on the way. I could only hope and trust for warmer weather. All the residents talk of the unprecedentedly long-continued cold. Think of returning to Clearwater, where at least a stove could be had, and await results. Captain proposes Manatee as a good stopping place. We consent to go on that far and await a turn in the weather, fearing all would be sick of cold and discomforts. Good wind after us. Sail out of John's Pass very close to beaches; sail on into the mouth of Tampa Bay between Mullet and Egmont Keys. The latter has a large white lighthouse. Felt much unsettled in plans all day, and are at a loss to know what course to pursue. Rough over Tampa Bay to the mouth of the Manatee River. Anchor at the first settlement, Palma Sola, about middle of afternoon. Go ashore and look at the boarding house; not a fire-place or chimney in the house except the kitchen—matronized by a nice young eastern girl, just come with father and brother. It seems milder. An afternoon's rest makes J. feel better and we decide to stay aboard tonight. Captain takes vessel up to the next settlement on the river—Braidentown. It seems quite alive; fresh new houses, with young people rowing and sailing around in the wide river. The houses are all built on a high sand bluff. We land and walk through the settlement. Sand looks poor but very healthy. See the older settlement up the river farther, said to be abandoned more or less because the waters there are so shoal. Today's sail about twenty-five miles. Bought some chickens from a huckster's boat which came alongside. Evening much milder. We are now having a new moon and beautiful sunsets and nights; very clear until tonight, when the sky is quite overcast, owing probably to the milder temperature.

Sunday, Feb. 22.

Washington's Birthday. We were grateful to feel it milder this morning, and decide to go on to Key West; the winds still favor, and the skies also. We leave Braidentown about seven-thirty; sail out of the river, which looks

very pretty with its numerous settlements. There are several regular steamers touching here, and a daily mail from Tampa. Go out of the river and around into the head of Sarasota Bay behind Anna Maria or Palm Key. Soon we strike shoals and are aground; wait for the tide to lift us off, about an hour. Then take course for an outside passage to save time with a very fair wind after us. Go out by Longboat Key and down "wing and wing" past Long Sarasota and Chaise Key and Casey's Pass before night. The continued wind after us, from the north, made the water very rough, though we did not feel it much until morning. Decide to sail all night; everything mild and bright. Sit out on deck until bed-time, to avoid "qualms" inside, and to enjoy the night. The captains take turns sailing. Tat is very seasick after dinner and cannot cook supper. During the night we pass Gasparilla Pass and Island, Boca Grande Pass, La Costa and Sanibel Islands. Very rough—tumbled over some of our crockery. Reach Caximbas Bay by morning. None rest very comfortably.

Monday, Feb. 23.

Still a good wind. Sail on to Cape Romano by noon, from Manatee River 138 miles. As all were a little shaken up last night, decide to put in toward shore and anchor for a rest. Go ashore and find a beach of beautiful and plentiful shells; spent the afternoon gathering shells and sunning ourselves. It grows much milder—is very warm in the sun on the beach. Collect our novelties from among the innumerable shells and go back about five; go out about a mile to anchor for part of the night. The beautiful skies and fair winds continue, and the moon is growing in delightful brightness. The plan is to start after midnight for Key West in direct course, 75 miles if all is well. All to bed and asleep early tonight except myself. Hope to feel better tomorrow. The first warm evening we have had in the cabin. As we are so near the Gulf Stream and the air from the north is still fresh, it must still be cold at the north. Barometer rising and good.

Tuesday, Feb. 24.

Captain and mate roused at two A.M. to start from our anchorage off Cape Romano. A swing of the vessel grounded her on a sand-bank, and they had to wait two hours before they got her pushed off. A course due south for Key West was laid and taken. The wind was lively from the east and took us scudding along. After noon, as it grew rougher, put in southeast so as to find a smoother sea. V. seasick for a short time, others a little uncomfortable. Sunset found us abreast of Key West and sailing toward Northwest Light to get into the channel. Turned as the sun was setting to "beat" in to the town, seven miles; took us till half past eight. Very rough. Took

dinner and supper both off the cabin floor today; had a spill of crockery last night. Moonlight beautiful over the harbor. Find anchorage near the wharf. Do not go ashore tonight. See many boats and lights about us. All quiet except chickens and dogs. Captain goes ashore to see his sick mother.

Wednesday, Feb. 25.

Wind from south, very warm and sultry, extreme change from yesterday. Go out for the mail; none there for either family. Mrs. W. and I keep quiet. Engage a carriage for a view around the town at \$1 per hour for each carriage. The island is seven by three miles in extent, prettily built in places with frame houses, with green blinds, surrounded by thick luxuriant growths of tropical trees and flowers. Streets narrow; rather hard roads on the bed of natural limestone rock, unpaved sidewalks curbed off, a great many pools of stagnant water in the streets. Many Spanish faces and voices; strange hotels with strange fruits and customs. The tropical cocoanut palm is all prevalent and very striking; some house yards have numbers of them. The laurel tree is a favorite shade tree for the sidewalks. Almond trees just budding afresh and casting their leaves of the last growth. Tamarinds full of their bean-like fruit. Many varieties of the acacia family with new names. The sappadillo, a dark green thickly growing tree full of fruit. Lime trees; date palms; sugar apples; pride of India; banyans, and many others. Drove over to the empty fort commanding the harbor, and down the beach, on which were washed up a good many cup sponges. Past the sponge-drying yards, and back to the boat for supper. Beautiful evening; all sat on deck until late, enjoying the warmth, the setting sun glow, and the moonlight. After the drive J., V. and I went over to the tower of Mr. Philbrick, to take the outlook, which was well worth the climb to the top. Had a good glass, with which vessels are recognized at a long distance. The town and waters and keys lay below us beautifully, and the blue-green waters of the Gulf were even prettier from the height. Hot in the night.

Thursday, Feb. 26.

Very warm this morning. Get mail from Tampa steamer, in last evening. Our boat close to the wharf, makes it very warm. Go ashore and hunt a cool place to read our letters. J. and Mr. W. make a few purchases; anxious now to get off. Had the vessel pulled out from the wharf where the mosquitoes are thick and the afternoon heat great. Go around to the fish boats and watch the sale of live fish out of the hold of the vessel. Cannot go out this afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. W. go out to a hotel for a night's comfort. We air the boat, put up nets, and sleep very comfortably.

Friday, Feb. 27.

A "norther" blowing this morning; cautionary "off-shore" signal flying; we cannot start. Wind disagreeable after great heat of yesterday—discouraging. Think we ought to take steamer for Tampa to ensure any comfort. J. not feeling well, after the great changes, and overheating. Temperature today only fresh, but wind very high. Visited the Signal Service officer today, and had a long chat about Pike's Peak and Mt. Washington stations. Go to Tampa steamer office, and back to boat. Wind high all evening and weather cooler. Wait for morning for our final decision.

Saturday, Feb. 28.

Wind still ahead, no start for the boat today. Rough out of the harbor. V. very anxious to go back on this boat; J. feels better, and I think he may be able to go back at least part way. He and Mr. W. call on Dr. R. J. Lewis, who is here for a month's cruising on the coast; takes the steamer for Punta Rasa tonight. We walk about the town. Had letters and papers today, latter only four days old. Beautiful weather with sun and moon, very mild notwithstanding a norther.

Sunday, March 1.

Start about four-thirty A.M. with a light wind. Day beautiful, air fresh. Sail quickly all day, but do not reach Cape Sable. Evening finds us in deep water, no land in sight. Sail slowly on. We all sit on deck until bed time. Skies are very propitious. Breeze from the northwest sprang up during night; the boat sailed swiftly on and anchored at Cap Sable, the extreme southwest point of Florida, a little after daylight.

Monday, March 2.

Strong northwest wind blowing, but a bright sun makes the day beautiful and we anchor in a sheltered bay, south of an east and west stretch of this extreme point of Florida mainland from Cape Sable to Palm Point. A solitary date palm and a solitary house with doors and windows nailed shut are on this beach of shells. Back a short distance is a growth of thick trees, mangroves, palmettos and others. Two solitary pigs prove the existence of some human beings. We find at anchor here a schooner for Key West and two small sail boats, put in for wood. One small boat appeared after the departure of the others, from a point twenty miles up the coast, laden with vegetables for the markets of Key West. We buy six heads of cabbage and a half bushel of tomatoes, each fifty cents. New potatoes very high. Land after breakfast and walk a long way up against a strong north wind. We think another "norther" is prevailing, but it only freshens up a sunny day. Mr. W. and J. hear of a pond in from the shore where birds are plentiful;

take guns and boats, but find the distance to be five or six miles, and decide not to go. We return, and gather shells on the way, enjoying the sun and air. Our umbrella flew out over the water, opened, and had a long rolling sea bath before we succeeded in catching it, by means of our boat. Return with good appetites to a very good dinner. After dinner I wash and sort my shells. Each takes a nap and enjoys the deck until supper. See the phosphorescence in the water tonight, before the moon rises. Moon full last night; has served us well, and continues so to do. Hard wind died down with the sun, and at bed time an east wind prevails.

Tuesday, March 3.

At daybreak we hoist sail and sail around a point into a bay above, where a family has settled, and planted a garden of white potatoes, sweet potatoes and tomatoes; started a grove of palm cocoanuts—they look very yellow and puny. Looks as if the cold had hurt them, but the wife said it was the drought. They are entertaining now a taxidermist who has collected a few white herons and roseate spoonbills. The gentlemen walked back through swamps for half a mile to a lake where there were said to be some birds. Mr. W. fired three shots but got nothing. No shells on this beach. We take the boat and sail about twenty-eight miles up the coast to Harney River, where we anchor. Mr. W. rigs up his sailboat, takes Tat, and goes to hunt a rookery. We take our boat and go to the shore. See pelicans quite near—no gun. Mulletts jumping. Go back to schooner and tell Captain to take his net and go and get some. Does so, and returns again in a little while with fifteen; have them hot for supper. Mr. W. returns with a beautiful brown pelican. Mosquitoes very thick. Set the shark-hook; caught in the ground and anchored the vessel. Weather remarkably fine.

Wednesday, March 4.

Inauguration Day at Washington today; Cleveland placed in the presidential chair by the Democrats. Weather here very fine, promising to be very warm. Decide to take an exploring party up the river before us. Tat takes the W.s in their sailboat, David takes us and our boat. Row up the river about two miles or more to the solitary plantation of the one man living on the stream. Sun very hot, tide and wind against us both ways. No birds seen near. Stop at a small rookery of brown pelicans near the mouth of the river; see a dozen on the trees as we approach. All fly off when we come. J. gets out of boat and waits while David and I pull out of sight in the boat, but the pelicans do not return. Push off. See the birds when we come to the point of land below; J. takes a shot on the wing at one and he falls on the water and is picked up by the W. boat, which has V. in it.



J. shot two snipe before reaching the boat. Wind changed to southwest, rain threatening. Wait to see whether it is wise for a bird-hunt this evening, the object of staying at this point another 24 hours. Mr. W. starts out; J. went some time after, but no pelicans appear and the mosquitoes are very numerous. Return to the boat and arrange to leave in the morning. Thunder in distance.

Thursday, March 5.

The mosquitoes were very thick last night, making sleep impossible to those who would not use nets. Mr. and Mrs. W. on deck nearly all night. We did pretty well behind out bars; V's feet badly bitten because his net was partly open. Start away from the river, marked Harney on the map, but called by the coast men Lost-man's River. Very little wind, very hot sun, muttering thunder all around us, but we have only a few sprinkling showers. Sail lazily all day, but make only a slight progress, possibly fifteen miles all day. When near Pavilion Key, the northernmost of the Ten Thousand Islands, decide to run in and anchor for the night. Many flying and feeding birds all around us; a rookery in one of the near islands. We keep well out to avoid mosquitoes for the night. A shower coming up prevents any exploring. See what we take to be the "Norman" with the Kennedy party in the distance anchored off one of the islands, and a small boat looking like the "Annie R." off the south end of Pavilion Key. Night brings swarms of mosquitoes, but as the wind is fresh they are not quite so troublesome as last night. All sleep pretty well. Entertained all evening watching the pelicans and gulls feed, and the man-of-war hawk or frigate bird steal from the gulls.

Friday, March 6.

Start for Marco Inlet with a very light wind which finally dies away altogether; when in sight of Cape Romano are drifting back badly and obliged to anchor for the night. Feel much discouraged over the probable termination of the journey. The centerboard of the vessel is bent and cannot be used to beat to windward, and makes progress under such circumstances impossible nearly. J. feels quite decided about paying ourselves off the "Curry" at Punta Rassa, and there taking the Sunday steamer for Tampa.

Saturday, March 7.

Start for Punta Rassa, intending to avoid Marco Inlet entirely, and try to make the steamer. The wind is almost ahead, and an effort to beat is made. The run is made as far as Marco, but after that beating seems unavailing, and we keep one shore in sight all afternoon, though getting a little above Marco. The Captain thought we would make Punta Rassa sometime during the night. Toward evening the wind fails so much that it is decided best to



run back to Marco Inlet, which is immediately done. We see the "Norman" near by intent upon the same anchorage. Run in by dark. J. much disappointed because we must now give up the steamer, and he feels too uncomfortable on this trip to continue it farther if we can get off at all.

Sunday, March 8.

The sun is bright, the "Norman" near by. I am glad to get a cheery greeting from Frank Kennedy with the old pleasant familiarity; strange to meet him and be reminded of so many long-ago scenes, away down here. How I wish we were more happily comfortable. Intended to see Mr. K. and have a talk with him, but while we were eating breakfast the "Norman" hoisted sail and started for Punta Rassa where we would see them later. We watched them "make their course" against the wind up the coast; their vessel sits deeper in the water and sails close to the wind, ours is shallow draft and has no use of her centerboard, so it is no use to attempt to sail "close-hauled." The wind kept from the north all day, so we kept quietly at anchor, and went over on the beaches on the north and south to gather shells. Had a pleasant and quiet Sunday. The Captain and David took V. out in their boat to get some fish, as we are nearly out of meat provisions. They saw no mullet to net, but "gigged" a tarpon, a jew-fish and two large sheephead; found the jew-fish good for supper. Found a government survey schooner at anchor here, and a man's homestead nearby.

Monday, March 9.

All slept quickly last night; woke to the rattling of the sails overhead, being made ready for the start out. Sailed out of the inlet beautifully, for a northeast wind suited. Very rough past the bar and also outside, an immense sea on; could not think of breakfast. V. seasick, all uncomfortable. Vessel obliged to tack, wind almost north, no prospect of making Punta Rassa. Turn back and reach Marco easily, but find it almost impossible to go in the inlet; after a long beating get inside enough to anchor in comparatively smooth water. Have breakfast and go over to beach. Mr. W. and Tat go to house for Indian relics and fish. We have a nice hunt on a pelican sand island. J. shot a pelican, but it fell on the water outside and floated out toward the gulf. Come back and get dinner while the men work the schooner farther into the inlet to get into smooth water. Mr. W. returns with some egg-plants raised by a Mr. Collier, who ships them to New York via Key West; got \$19 a barrel last shipment.<sup>9</sup> Wind seems changed at last, more easterly. Air very cool today, can bear all our wraps this evening.

A pioneer in the great winter vegetable business of Florida.

Tuesday, March 10.

Decide after a general consultation to try again to leave Marco Inlet for Punta Rassa. Set sail and go out easily with northeast wind. Find it much smoother than yesterday, and wind veering more easterly, allowing the captain to "lay his course" up the coast. Sail smoothly and pleasantly until afternoon, skies beautiful and air pleasant. Nearly becalmed, wind more northerly, must beat, make little progress. Take the little boats and go ashore and hunt shells. See a devil-fish ten feet across; some very perfect shells. Schooner goes on quietly, and we catch her farther up the coast. Breeze comes out a little stronger. Sail on, and see the Sanibel lighthouse at sunset. After supper anchor near the lighthouse for the night.

Wednesday, March 11.

Awake after a sound night's sleep to hear Mrs. W. say that the men of the "Norman" had boarded us during the night, thinking we were the revenue vessel (with a doctor aboard) and told us that Mr. Babcock, the oldest of the party from Boston, had been bitten by a rattlesnake while taking a shot at a deer on Pine Island. His man and dog were with him. The man sucked the wound at once, and they tried to walk out to the shore, three and a half miles. Mr. Babcock grew dizzy after about a half-mile, when Jack had to leave him and run for the shore, blazing his path with palmetto leaves. His companions went back and managed to carry him out of the thicket after hours of hard work. Took him to the schooner and tried to sail to Punta Rassa. Beat down to near the lighthouse and sent a man and small boat with telegram for the Fort Myers doctor; found the telegraph lines down. Thought Mr. Babcock was getting better and would recover. We turned bow toward Punta Rassa and beat up the channel while breakfast was in preparation. "Norman" beat in just head of us. Before we landed the word reached us that Mr. Babcock was dead! Died at six A.M. When they landed they found a telegram here for him summoning him to Jacksonville to his wife who was very ill. Dr. Levis of Philadelphia, was ashore and viewed the body, and hasty and sorrowful preparations were made to have the burial at once. The sad-hearted party were Messrs. F. Kennedy, T. Hardy and F. Stratton. There was no ice to preserve the body, no way of taking it away quickly, and it must be buried here, and at once. How terrible! The box was made, and we followed him to the new grave dug in the sands, near two others that were there. Mr. Willcox read the burial service. Sorrowful tears were shed, flowers were thrown in the grave, the redbirds sang a requiem, and at eleven o'clock all was over. Twenty-four hours before he was alive and hunting a deer, and now he is "beyond the ever and the never." His sorrow-

ing friends are crushed and bewildered. Two more telegrams came in requesting a search for Mr. Babcock to return to his wife; their children were on the way to her from Boston. Truly, in the midst of life we are in death.<sup>10</sup>

We get letters remailed to us here from Key West; look over the principal ones hastily and write some notes to mail here. We make no inquiries about accommodations here — there seems to be no chance — but decide to lay in provisions and go on with the "Curry," hoping that the end of the journey is near. Say goodbye to the Boston party and set off on the tide; beat out slowly to Sanibel Island, two and a half miles; stop there to see the lighthouse, get water and gather shells. J., V. and I go up to the top of the light, a new one, built in Wilmington, and finished only last August. Light variable— flashes; seen fifteen to eighteen miles. Two snug houses for the keepers, who relieve each other. Found some shells. Return to the wharf and catch some sheepshead. The "Norman" is anchored close by with its saddened party tonight. Mosquitoes threatening. Go to bed early, and pass a very uncomfortable night with insects. Strong winds and warm bunks.<sup>11</sup>

Thursday, March 12.

Strong east wind favors an early start from Sanibel wharf. Sail up the beautiful Charlotte Harbor past Pine Island, Sanibel, La Costa, Joseppa, Boca Grande and Gasparilla Islands to Gasparilla Pass. Day perfect, wind favorable. Reached pass about two. Landed on island, hoping to find new varieties of shells, none there. See many brown and white pelicans, gulls, snipe, curlews and cormorants all about us on the shoals. A pleasure boat and party, "Cora Lee," from Tampa, are near by. One of the party, with gun, stays on a reef until quite late— got very little; pelicans very wild. Captain and V. get the grains and go after fish; struck a young shark, four feet eight inches long. Ran about with the boat a while, had a "sucker," (remora) fastened on it. Brought it aboard and took a piece of its rasp-like skin, and baited the shark-hook with its liver, but no sharks were tempted. Tat brought in a sting-ray. Had a few sand-flies this evening. Beautiful sunset.

<sup>10</sup> We learned that Mr. Babcock saw deer and snake at the same time, and shot the deer, feeling safe in tall boots, but the snake struck above them, and one fang penetrated a large vein, making treatment impossible, and the action of the poison very rapid.

<sup>11</sup> The endless delays and even dangers of travelling in a boat which could not sail to windward were vividly emphasized in these last few days, and crystallized the determination to end the cruise as soon as possible. Such a craft should not have been offered or accepted for the trip, but choice was limited; and of course the auxiliary power now universal was unknown for a quarter-century afterward.

Friday, March 13.

Dead calm this morning, no prospect of getting out of Gasparilla Pass, for the tide is strong against us; must only sit and wait. V. persuades David to go after mullet; they row in and around a point, J. goes in the boat for something to do. Just afterward the wind springs up from the southeast. Captain hoists sail and waits for David, but the little boat is around the point and does not feel the wind. After nearly an hour they come, and we push off at once, but the tide is too strong, and drives our boat, without a centerboard, back. Nothing to do but drop anchor and wait. We go to the beach and find some Panama shells. Return at noon and try to get out on the now slackening tide; succeed after a good deal of tacking. Cross a bar successfully, and go on with a very good wind. Progress well until four o'clock, when there are rain clouds appearing, a little depression of the barometer and no near harbor. Mr. W. suggests putting back and into Stump Pass for the night. Turn about to retrace eight miles. Wind dies out, sunset approaches, no progress, must tack to keep from drifting to shore. Wind more favorable, from southwest. Decide that it is part of wisdom to keep on all night, which would probably take us to Egmont Light by sunrise. Reach Sarasota Pass by ten P.M., too dark to put in. Wind comes out northwest, and boat makes but ten miles by morning. Approaching Long Boat Key. No storm, rain clouds driven off, barometer rising, not much wind.

Saturday, March 14.

Beautiful day, sun bright. Wind not favorable for rapid progress in this schooner. Mr. W. suggests running back to Sarasota Pass, but Long Boat Pass being in sight, decide on it and work up to it by beating a little, wind more and more ahead. After a long beating made the inlet, and soon pass into Sarasota Bay, higher up than Mr. W. desired for several projects he had on hand. By a little tacking we progress up the bay toward Manatee, where we have decided to leave the schooner to Mr. W. that he may take his Sarasota trip. While gathering our things Mrs. W. meets with a little accident which might have been much more. The boom of the mainsail struck her against the hatchway in such a manner as to bruise her nose severely, causing it to bleed profusely and to swell. Immediate applications of cold water and Pond's Extract relieve it a good deal. Mr. W. thinks he would rather go on to Tampa if we are willing; we are, and before the vessel turns in to Manatee the order is given for Tampa. The wind favors admirably, and we sail along and make half of the forty miles of distance before anchoring, off Gadsden's Point, eighteen miles from Tampa.

Sunday, March 15.

Calm, hazy morning. Sail up Hillsboro Bay toward Tampa with the tide and little wind. Go ashore at Ballast Point to enable Mr. W. to get specimens of chalcedony, which forms here, the only place in the state, I think. The tide takes us up to the town by 1 P.M. Take our dinner. J. goes out to hunt a boarding house; decide on the Baldwin House, where we are all provided for at very moderate terms for the balance of the season. A dray is hired, our boxes are taken ashore, and our cruise is ended! I am glad to be safely ashore again. The new cars and narrow-gauge track of the South Florida Railroad are very near the wharf, seeming like civilization. Hear at the wharf that an air-tight casket had been sent to Punta Rassa for the remains of Mr. Babcock, which were expected on Monday's or Sunday's steamer. Glad to have the comfort of a room again. A rain sets in quietly and steadily this evening, giving its additional cause of thanksgiving for a safe landing off the vessel, which would leak somewhat; no rain for the four weeks we were aboard.

Monday, March 16.

Still raining. Mail brings us letters. After breakfast J. goes down to schooner with Mr. W. and settles with Captain Archer. Has our boat put in charge at another wharf, and padlocked. I try to arrange our clothes a little. Go out rowing in the afternoon, and walk over the old garrison grounds, upon which are some magnificent moss-covered oaks. We are delighted with the mocking birds that fill the air with their melody, and martins and black-birds. The orange trees are in blossom, and many house flowers are blooming. The town and site are far prettier than I had always supposed; they promise well for a sojourn here. At dinner time we saw the "Curry" sailing slowly down the river; we went to our little boat pier and waved goodbye to the captains. David sent me two pineapples, and Captain Archer sent me a message saying he had bought a new *pipe* in remembrance of me. We felt sorry to see the home of a month leave us. Perhaps we will never see either of the men again, and so life runs on and on. Vincent's eyes filled with tears as he spoke of the going of the boat; he has enjoyed every incident and has been very happy. We are all well, and all is well that ends well.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This dismal picture of Florida climate and cruising is perhaps unfair to both, yet it was not entirely untypical of travel of that time, beyond the railroads, where water was the only road, and wind the only power, save for large steamers. The combination of a winter colder than usual and a boat unable to sail normally to windward brought extra delays and discomforts, but all these things happened to many such "explorers." Passengers between Cedar Keys and Homosassa were actually wrecked and drowned on at least one occasion, and delays and frustrations were the common lot of yachtsmen until the gasoline engine was perfected, about 1900. Now that such places as Marco and Cape Sable are linked to the world by motor bus, it is perhaps well to preserve a picture of their previous age-long isolation.

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To Doctor Glover No 2 Ann St. New York

Indras Key, T. F. 12<sup>th</sup> June 1839. 5 P.M.

Dear Sir. The only opportunity direct to New York since the 25<sup>th</sup> Dec last is now presented by the wrecking ship Elena Coatherine, Joshua Smith Master; and as he stopped only to take in a little freight, I have had barely time to scrawl a few lines to a few persons, and to put up a small box of shells &c (No 53) for Mr. Board's care, which the Captain has promised to deliver personally without fail.

At this moment it has just occurred to me to send you a small sample of those two kinds of bottons which you saw growing on personal shrubs in small boxes in Mr. Board's yard, the plants of two of which have been transplanted on Matacumber, and survive although transplanted while covered with foliage blossoms, pods & ripe bottons! My the unexpressed left in the sample of Campeachy black seed bottons you will see it is extracted fresh from the plant this afternoon; but the 9 conglomerated seeds in the sample of Mexican Kidney seed bottons, are original Mexican seeds as the Kidney seeds Mass of this date raised here in two scales & two values to be thrown away, in remittance to the North. Now for your own sake as well as for the sake of Tropical Florida, I trust that you will obtain all possible information of its fair market value both among the Merchants of the U.S. States, and the Manufacturers of Longlands. Very resp<sup>t</sup>ly J. C. Perrine.

P.S. On the contents of your replies to my last long letter will depend the decision of all questions of further intercourse. You will have learned that the circumstances of the premature rains will probably prevent my bringing a large cargo of living Plants from the Bahamas where I shall nevertheless proceed during the latter part of this month. I have spent 10 days at Key West, ending the 3<sup>rd</sup> inst.