

Smithsonian Institution. March 8th 1883.

My dear Father

I cry peccavi to part of your accusation, as I have had your letter of Jan. 4th in hand for several weeks without answering. But I was so desirous of writing you a long time some letter, and of telling all the news possible, and impossible, that I resolved to take some quiet Sunday when Mary and the other baggage had cleared out, and left me to my quiet. Well - this quiet has not come, and so I sit down this Tuesday evening to the labor of exceeding here, determined to buckle to it like bricks. What can, however, have become of my long letter written you early in January: has it never reached, or is it perhaps lying perdu in the State Department, or somewhere in Con - stan - ti - no - ple. It was a big letter, with not much in it, except love to dear Mrs. M. which I was expected you would resolutely skip.

Well, I have been rather hard at work, & can deny it but am now getting tolerably well through. I fear me I have much to answer for, in the way of deluding unsuspecting young (and even old) men to possible destruction from bite of Snake, scorpion & centipede, suffocating in caverns while in search of fossil bones, embrace of Krakens, when catching star fishes on the sea, or some other undiscussed species of calamity the genus, even, of which is not yet known. The string of scientific expeditions which I have succeeded in starting is perfectly preposterous. Have you any idea of the activity of our Navy and Army at present date? expeditions by field and flood: well, you nearly all, I have a finger, and in several, two hands. Let me recount:

Capt. Ringgold sails in a week or two for the North Pacific and Behring Straits: In command of four vessels he expects to make great discoveries of all sorts of things. I thank to our liberal past Secretary of the Navy, Mr. J. P. Kimmel, I had full authority to prepare at expense of the Department