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My dearest Arthur,

I was so vexed last night at finding, when I left my somewhat long-staying relatives - that you had gone - As my wife had been to see you, I felt confident that her power of persuasion would have kept you to a cup of tea & a pleasant chat - for you, dear A. are never in the way - which is more than can be said of everybody. However there is no other remedy than what a few lines before our starting may supply.

Mars still "prods" me with the end of his fiery spear - I can't get over it. What if these little slaves of his should be part of the great Asteroid or rather Planetoid family who have lost their independence by coming within his reach?

On looking further at my report in Times - which the Webb's sent for to look at - I see it is diversely blundered - but the fault was partly my own from inexperience in telegraphy (excepting "chambre à deux lits au premier Samedi" &c. &c.) which led me to send ^{compressed} sentences, the meaning of which would