Reading the “Scrap” Letter

The full text of Clemens’s letter can only be revealed by reading the front and—in some cases—the back of the scraps, as shown here. (The scraps are numbered in the order in which they should be read.) Since some of the scraps were torn from letters he had received, they contain unrelated text, which is rendered here in gray type.

[Text of the letter is depicted in a visual format, showing the sequence of the scraps and their contents.]

1. Elmera June 11
   Dear Mother—
   I saw Pamela
   yesterday. She seemed
   to me about the same
   she has been all the time
   since she came here. I
   cannot discover that she
   improves any great deal,
   though I believe they’ve
   been out of bed
   improved.

2. received yours & Annes letters a
   bore the debate & the “Dunk gerts.”
   We are glad indeed that Anne acquired
   herself so well & received such or
   dial praise. Where
   the other side man
   to find argu

3. looks a good deal bet
   to me that he looks
   healthy, healthy &
   strong. I know
   perfectly well that
   some of that

4. nervous twitching about the muscles of the face has
   subsided.1 They have
   moved into a room on the
   first floor, & Pamela says
   it was nearly necessary, too.

5. perhaps entirely so, that
   she got on the lower
   floor & save her strength
   the ten of climbing the
   stairs. Yesterday when
   I was there she had just

6. the umpire let spread-eagle
   declaration run away with his
   calm judgment. I sent three
   letters to Orion, & also those
   giving an account of the two
   was mess proceedings of the
   “Dunk gerts”—or was it
   the “Dunk”

7. the “Dunk gerts”? Where is Dunk?
   I cannot find anything
   though ours is an old map, & has
   many places left out & no
   doubt this is one of them.
   I am going. Your police
   are doubtless like the po

8. convinced as to or so
   capable of able hand
   ling is to make
   the negative of so
   lame a question
   win, is beyond my
   comprehension.
   They had not the ghost of a
   chance. I thought.
   half
   to the belief that

9. decided that it was
   best for him to peg
   on along on this one
   just as he is doing
   until I see how
   my new book is
   going to run out.
   So he is working
   away just the same
   as before.3
   Ma I think it
   likely that some men
   are not consti

10. P. S. Livy &
   the baby are well &
   send their love.
   The cable was
   threatened with the
   measles but its wa

11. world—mean, lazy,
   worthless, cowardly thieves.
   They acted, during & after your
   out, just as they would have
   done in New York or any
   other city in America.4
   I am going to start in

12. October & lecture
   I am at least
   about 3 months or
   three
   & a half. My subject is:
   d space

13. with several people about it, & they say it is the best sub
   ject before the country to-day, & that if I can’t do it
   happy justice I can’t do any subject justice.
   Ma I will help Orion with any machine
   he wants help on. When I was there the other day, we

14. they will, instead cir
   cumstances of an
   irregular nature, mani
   sied idiosyn
   cracies of an ir
   refragile & and
   even pragmatic & latitudinarian
   character, but oth
   erwise & differently
   situated the reverse
   is too often the case.
   How does it strike you?
   Yr Son
   Sam.