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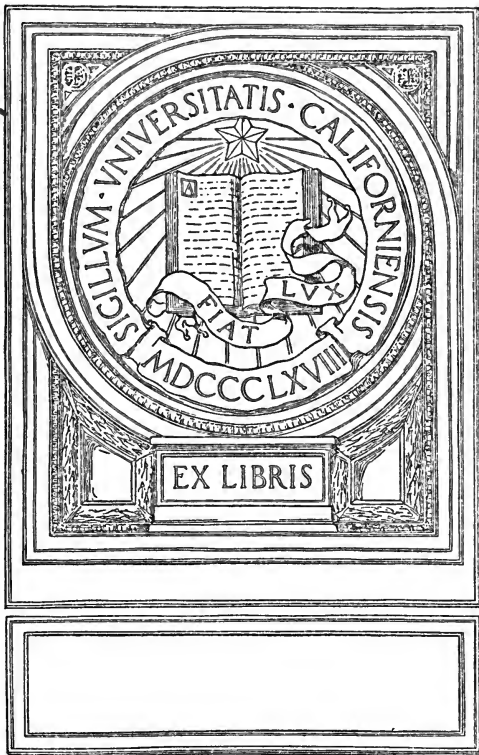
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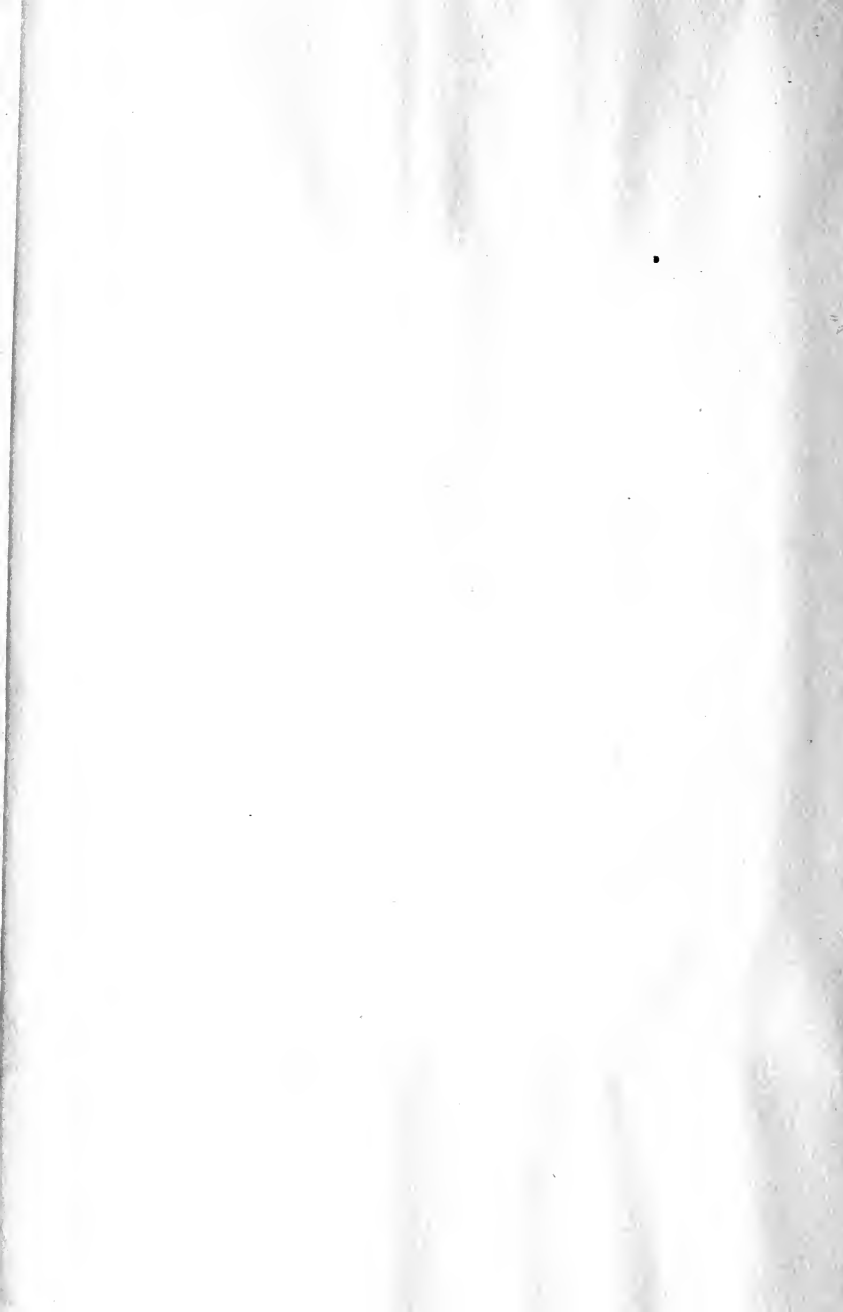
*The* ROMANCE  
*of an* OLD-TIME  
SHIPMASTER

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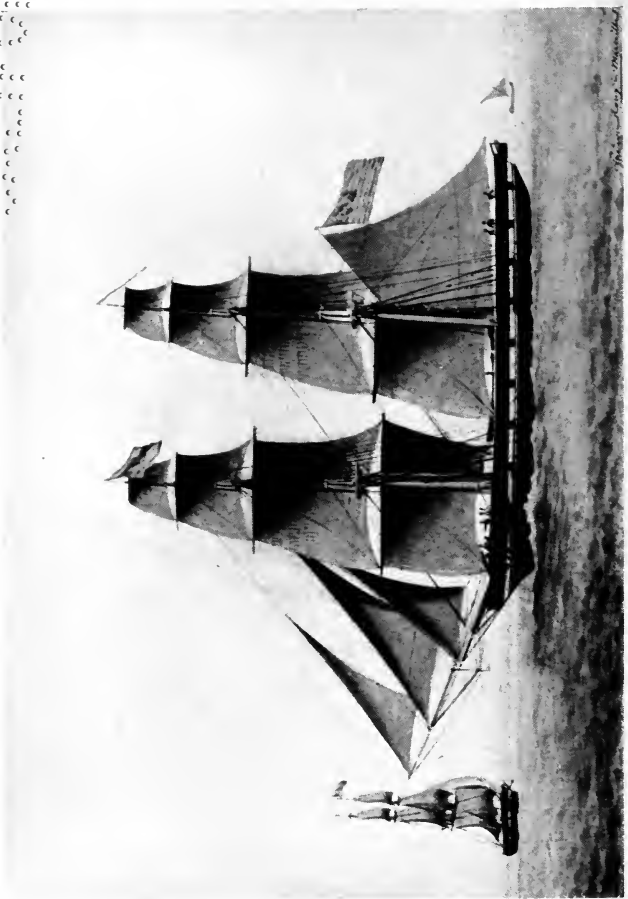


**THE ROMANCE OF AN OLD TIME  
SHIPMASTER**

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# The ROMANCE of an OLD TIME SHIPMASTER

Edited by

**RALPH D. PAINE**

*Author of "The Greater America"*

*"The Story of Martin Coc," etc.*



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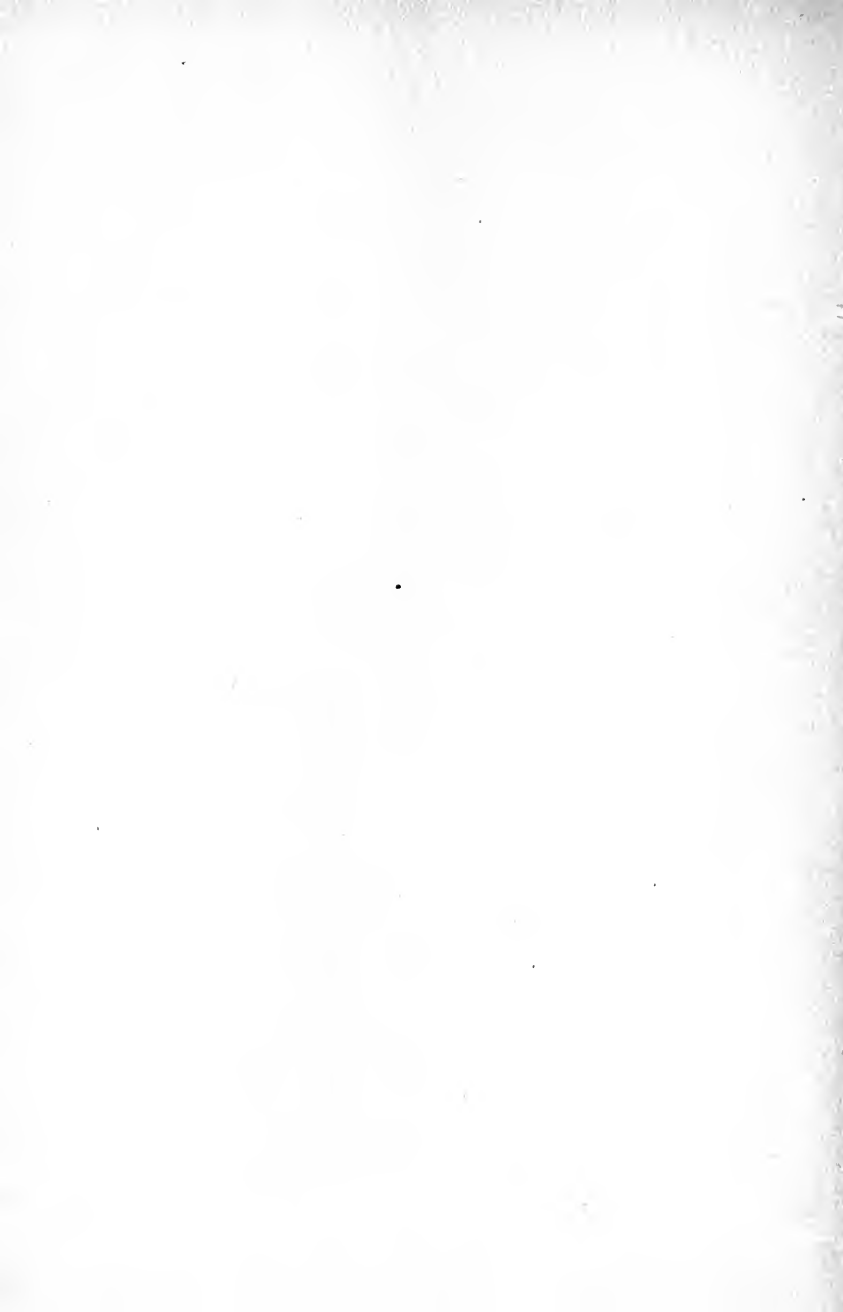
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**THE ROMANCE OF AN OLD TIME  
SHIPMASTER**



# THE ROMANCE OF AN OLD TIME SHIPMASTER

## I

### BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

**F**OR almost a hundred years these letters and sea-journals of an old-fashioned American shipmaster were locked in the battered sea-chest which had voyaged with him in the little schooners and brigs that he courageously navigated to the West Indies, Europe and Africa from 1796 to 1813. This Captain John Willard Russell, mariner of Bristol, R. I., achieved no great distinction in the annals of his time, but he was one of a great company of undaunted Americans who braved such perils as have long since vanished from the seas to play a part in building a mighty commerce for a young nation.

Other briny memoirs of the eighteenth century era have come to light, but in none of them can be found, so far as I have been able to discover, so very intimate and human a portrait of a man who was fairly typical of his time. For the most part, these are love-letters, written during courtship and through the tragically brief years of his married life with Nancy Smith of Bristol. They were

sent to her from fever-stricken ports of the Spanish Main, from the slave coast of Africa and during long and lonely months afloat when this lover and husband unburdened his fond and homesick heart of such a wealth of the truest sentiment and of so genuine a kind of piety that his letters seemed to deserve another fate than mouldering oblivion in the ancient sea-chest.

There are many gaps in this correspondence, and yet this romance of an earlier century is singularly complete. It begins with the memorable day of 1799 when young Captain Russell meets at the home of his employer, Captain Charles DeWolf, his daughter Abby and her "*cousin and friend, Nancy Smith, who have treated me;*" he writes in his old-fashioned way, "with such friendly attention as to recall forcibly to my recollection those halcyon days which I formerly spent in the society of those I loved. While I have sighed at the remembrance of past Happiness, I have been tempted when in their company once more to open the book of Friendship which I thought I had closed forever. . . . Adieu for a while ye kind hearted girls—May guardian Angels protect you from every ill and may ye each meet with Happiness pure as your virtues and exalted as your own benevolent hearts."

Eleven years later he is writing to his father:

"Bowed down by affliction, having been but recently deprived of a beloved Partner of my heart who, after a marriage of eight years, I every day found more and more reason to love and esteem—I am left with four chil-



dren, all almost helpless—God grant I may be able to perform my duty to them.”

Between the beginning and the untimely end of this sailor's romance (for such it never ceased to be) he was most of the time an exile at sea, battling with persistently adverse fortune, always hoping to win his way to a quiet haven with her who was both sweetheart and wife as long as she lived.

Captured by a French privateer in his first voyage he showed that he was made of sterling stuff, and he tells of it with a modesty that is very appealing. He was supercargo of a brig in which he had risked all his capital. What must have been a brilliant essay against huge odds he dismisses in this sentence: “After being ten days on the Privateer—she having weakened herself by manning prizes and having only ten men on board—I with two other prisoners and two boys concerted a plan to take possession of the privateer, in which we happily succeeded and stood for Jamaica.”

For one voyage Captain Russell was a slaver, and his journal describes his venture to the African coast with much detail. In his day the slave-trade was piling up fortunes for the most prominent families of Newport and Bristol, and to send out a cargo of rum to Gambia, Goree, or the Bight of Benin and fetch home a ship-load of blacks was not beneath the commercial dignity of the pious and substantial merchants of Puritan New England. It was not a business to boast of, however, and the tide of adverse sentiment had even then begun to rise against the

activities of the "rum-ships and Guinea-men." Young Captain Russell squared matters with his conscience, but he was not proud of the "hazardous and disagreeable voyage." Nowhere in his narrative of the African cruise can the word "slaves" be found. These parts of his journal, however, are unique, for it is fair to assert that never before or after did a slaver captain write at sea more sincerely religious reflections in which there is not a trace of hypocrisy or cant.

This African venture was ruined by another gang of French privateersmen, and the unlucky skipper describes the loss of ship and fortune in this compact account: "Last night a little sloop from Goree with sixteen men armed with muskets, took possession—and *Huzza for Goree.*"

It is in his letters to his Nancy, however, that one becomes best acquainted with this sturdy seaman of the long ago, and they speak for themselves in more moving and even eloquent language than could any added words. Almost nothing is known of this Bristol maid beyond the sweet and simple pictures of her glimpsed in these love-letters and journals. She had scant opportunity to send letters to him at sea, and these few have been lost. Their circumstances were too humble for portraits of either of them to be handed down to us. We know that she was related to the DeWolfs,\* the wealthiest and most famous shipping merchants of Rhode Island, and that he came

\* The name is spelled DeWolfe by the present day descendants of the sea-faring stock of the eighteenth century.

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of good New England stock in which seafaring men and Puritan clergymen had mingled their blood to an extent which may somewhat account for the character of this shipmaster.

He was of the fifth generation of the Russells in New England since the earliest of them signed the covenant agreement with the "First Settlers and Free Planters of Quinnepiack" (the New Haven Colony) in 1639. The great-grandfather of the mariner was Rev. Noadiah Russell, one of the ten ministers to found Yale College in 1700, described as "a little man in stature, pious and holy, visited *all* his flock round *twice a year*, giving good and holy counsel."

Captain Russell's grandfather was also a minister, of Stepney parish, Connecticut, portrayed in his funeral sermon "as a plain man in his manners, in the deep sense of his responsibility; as a preacher he never stooped to frivolous embellishments of style so popular with some congregations, but attired himself habitually with the simplicity of the Gospel." Captain Russell's father was a soldier of the Revolution with Washington at Valley Forge, and represented the town of Winsted, Conn., in the General Assembly of 1801.

The seafaring descendant of these pioneers of godly lives and worthy deeds proved himself in every way worthy of the name he bore, incongruous as this may sound to modern ears of a slaver out of Bristol and Newport, those twin centers of the roaring traffic in rum and negroes. Most of his maritime years were passed

in the employ of Captain James\* and Captain Charles DeWolfs of Bristol. His papers, of which this book consists, came at length into the hands of his descendant, the late Hamlin Russell, of Newark, N. J., who, had he lived, would have edited them with unusual literary taste and sympathy. In a page of prefatory notes left with these papers in the old sea-chest he wrote well and fairly of this ancestor of his:

“In Captain John W. Russell there lived a man who was brave as he was gentle, a man who loved his friends and did his duty in life faithfully. One who, while longing for a peaceful life passed his days in turmoil and died leaving behind him in these ancient pages a record of which all who bear his name have reason to be proud.”

This verdict carries a wider significance, in my opinion, for there is reason to be proud, also, of this humble sailor and knightly lover as a true-blooded American whose spirit and whose qualities of character cannot be permitted to become old-fashioned if this nation is to endure upon the foundation laid by its builders.

Froude, in his essay, “England’s Forgotten Worthies,”

\* James DeWolf, United States Senator from Rhode Island, and one of the foremost American merchants of his time, was the son of a humble sailor, Mark Antony DeWolf from Guadaloupe. Born in Bristol in 1764, James De Wolf served on privateers during the Revolution while a boy in his teens, and was twice captured. He was a ship-master before he was twenty and at the age of thirty-five had amassed a fortune. During the war of 1812 he sent out a formidable fleet of privateers against British commerce, and from his own shipyard the sloop-of-war, *Chippewa*, was built and delivered to Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry in fifty-seven days after her keel was laid.

pays tribute to the seafaring heroes of the Elizabethan age, and what he says of the ship-captains of that golden era is also true, in a less conspicuous way, of such an old-time American mariner as this Captain John Russell.

“With us the sailor is scarcely himself beyond his quarter-deck. If he is distinguished in his profession, he is professional merely; or if he is more than that, he owes it not to his work as a sailor, but to independent domestic culture. With them their profession was the school of their nature, a high moral education which most brought out what was most nobly human in them; and the wonders of earth, and air, and sea, and sky, were a real intelligible language in which they heard Almighty God speaking to them.”

It may help to acquaint the reader with the man himself if his romance and sea-life are prefaced by sundry quotations from letters written to his father. Modern improvements have not bettered the eighteenth century art of letter writing, nor is it certain that the one-time attitude of filial respect was an undesirable thing in children. From Claremont, N. H., at the age of twenty-three, John Russell addressed his father Nathaniel, at Colebrook, Conn., under date of September 23, 1793:

“DEAR AND RESPECTED SIR:

Bound by the ties of duty, obligation and gratitude to my Honoured Parents, I feel much pleasure whenever I think it is in my power to add to their Happiness. That a letter from me will be pleasing to you I make no Doubt

—the kindness and tenderness I have ever experienced from the best of Fathers forbids me to doubt it. To you, my Dear Sir, I feel myself under every obligation for the care and attention which you bestowed on me while I was under your immediate care—for the pains which you and my dear Mamma have both taken to form my mind and to teach me those things in infancy which might be useful to me through life. However distant or however long we may be separated, I shall still cherish a grateful remembrance of your goodness and shall ever implore the Divine Benediction to rest upon your head. . . . One of my brothers some time since, wrote me that he heard I was chosen Justice of the Peace. In this State the Justices are appointed by the Governor and Council, and not chosen by the Assembly as in Connecticut. But for many reasons I declined accepting—my youth and inexperience and the little relish I have for honorary stations or titles—except I were very sure of filling them with Propriety—these were my principal reasons. My friends, many of them, blame me, but I have seen no cause to repent.”

In 1796, John Russell undertook a western journey, and joined the pioneers who were pushing on into the wilderness of Western New York and Michigan. He selected a tract of land near Presque Isle and wrote his father:

“We are pleased with our situation—are clearing land slowly and expect to sow some wheat. There are many

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people at Presque Isle, but from various causes this year the settlement will be small. The Connecticut Company are on their Reserve only 22 miles beyond us, and all are healthy and in good spirits."

It is to be presumed that this promising prospect proved disappointing, and that John Russell had not the bent of the successful frontiersman. Two years later, in 1798, he is in Virginia and embarking upon the first voyage of a seafaring career which was to continue almost unbroken until his death in 1814 at the early age of forty-four. What were the risks our sailors and merchants faced in the years when the French, in our unofficial war with the "Terrible Republic," were cruelly harassing our feeble marine are pictured in the following letter from John Russell to his father:

CHARLESTON, (S. C.,) Jan. 19th, 1798.

"DEAR AND RESPECTED SIR:

I think it uncertain whether you have heard anything from me since I left Virginia in the month of August. I then informed you of the particulars of my Southern journey and how, to secure my own Debt, I was induced to take a share in a Brig and Cargo—bound to the West Indies. I sailed soon after from the river Potomac bound to Cape Nicholas Mole—the Brig and Cargo worth eleven thousand dollars—one half of which was my own, and the remainder consigned to me as super-cargo. After being out fourteen days we were taken by a French privateer—myself and a boy were put on board the privateer

without being allowed to take any clothes with me. Our Brig was ordered to Cape Francois.

After being ten days on the Privateer—she having weakened herself by manning prizes and having only 10 men on board—I, with two other prisoners and two boys, concerted a plan to take possession of the privateer, in which we happily succeeded, and stood for Jamaica. But twelve hours after we unfortunately fell in with another French Privateer, of large force, who, on sending their boat on board, discovered our situation, and soon turned the tables upon us. I will not attempt to detail the long series of cruel treatment which succeeded.

In three days I was landed and closely confined at Petit Ance, opposite to Cape Francois. Three weeks I was in irons, among filth and dirt, sickness and death; upon a very small allowance of bad provisions. At length I was released on the 27th of Novr. In the mean time the Brig and Cargo were condemned, and when I was liberated, I had no clothes and *not a shilling*. . . .

I took passage in a sloop bound to Norfolk in Virginia, where I arrived on the 30th of Decr. I had reason to expect that the gentleman who owned the other half of the Brig, was now at this place, which induced me to take passage in a packet, which arrived here on the 8th Inst. I was disappointed in not finding him. I felt my situation distressing enough, among strangers—without money and without clothes. To complete my Misfortunes I have been arrested for a debt, due in Phila., and am now in Jail at this place. A Capt. Thomas Bunce, of



Rockyhill—Master of a sloop, very generously furnished me with twenty five Dollars, with which assistance I will be at Liberty in five days from this. For that sum I have ventured to give him an order on you, and hope when you recollect my peculiarly wretched situation, you will not refuse to pay it. Indeed, I believe there is more than that sum due me, as I had a note against you for five pound, which has been many years on interest, and as I never did call on you for any assistance and should be sorry Capt. Bunce should lie out of his money, I hope you will leave that sum with my aunt Robbins, agreeable to Capt. Bunce's request. My brother Benjamin has heard nothing of me since I sailed for the West Indies. Poor Lad! How he has fared in that western country, I know not. Had I made a successful voyage it would have laid the foundation of a fortune for him and me too. I have much anxiety for his situation. But my own misfortunes have well-nigh distracted me. . . .”

(The following mutilated letter is endorsed “March 22nd, 1798,” and addressed as the preceding.)

“. . . have neglected writing until I could inform you what I was going about. I have an offer to go to St. Thomas, one of the Danish W. Indies, and expect to sail this day. I have a prospect of making something if the voyage succeeds, and in my situation I was glad to accept of any business. You may rest assured, my Dear Father, that poor and unfortunate as I am, your son has not disgraced himself. No—though entirely a stranger here, I

have received the countenance and friendship of some of the best men in the place. It would have afforded me the highest satisfaction could I have heard from you before I again quit the Continent—and in particular from my good brother Benjamin. . . . But I never shall think of returning to the Northward until I am enabled to full-fill those engagements into which I have entered and to realize those expectations which my friends have formed of me. This, I have no doubt, I shall do, if I have health, and I never enjoyed better than at present. I have a thousand things to attend to this day. Accept my Duty, and Love to you all, and believe me to be Dear Sir, Your very affectionate son,

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

N. B. I sail in the Schooner called the *Eliza*, of Charleston, Capt. Combs."

ST. THOMAS (W. I.), August 12th, 1798.

“DEAR AND RESPECTED SIR:

I wrote you on my departure from Norfolk and mentioned my destination to this port. I am very happy to have it in my power to inform you of my safe arrival. I have been here about four weeks, and have sold the Schooner I came out in. The present critical situation of affairs is such, and almost every vessel being unwilling to take letters, you will readily conceive why I do not write you more particularly. That I am in good health and have good prospects before me, I am sure will add

to your happiness. And to increase that happiness in any manner, will always be the favorite wish of my heart. Nothing could give me greater pleasure than once more to hear of the welfare of those dear friends I left behind me, but unsettled as I am at present it is a happiness I cannot expect. But my most ardent prayers will always be breathed to Heaven, to crave its protection and blessing on the heads of my dear and respected Parents. I expect to proceed from hence to one of the Windward Islands, and shall lose no opportunity of writing to you. This goes in a Danish Brig by way of Boston. My love to my brothers and sisters. I am, with duty and affection,

Your son,

JOHN W. RUSSELL."

## II

## NANCY SMITH OF BRISTOL

SO much of these early letters as has been quoted was by way of introduction to the following "Journal of Captain John W. Russell, Mariner, of Bristol, R. I.," as he inscribed the title page of the sea-stained book in which he kept a more complete and detailed record than in the ordinary log. With this journal begins the romance which was to color almost every thought of the shipmaster in the years that followed. It is during the voyage to Havana, as described herein, that he drinks his first toast to fair Nancy Smith, and by an odd chance his schooner bears the name of the girl he leaves behind him. Her memory seems to be the one bright picture in a voyage which is amazingly crowded with misfortunes. In his first sea venture of the year before, the fortune of war had snatched his vessel from him. Now he loses his cargo by stress of weather, and later is thrown into a Spanish dungeon and his mate sails off from Cuba without him. The journal reads, for the most part, as follows:

*May 27th, 1799.* I took charge of the Schooner *Nancy*, then lying in Bristol Harbour, State of Rhode Island, having on board 16 horses, some provisions and lumber, and bound to New Providence and Havana—the wind

blowing every day at S.W. prevented our sailing till Friday, May 31st. When the wind suddenly shifting to N.N.E., at meridian, we weighed and made sail. Before we got down to Newport, it rained very hard and became very thick, so that we could scarce see twice the vessel's length, and blowing hard. We ran in and came to anchor just within the U. S. Frigate *Genl. Greene*,\* Capt. Perry—blowing hard and raining all night.

I have now bid adieu, for a while, to Bristol, where I have loitered some time and which I leave with more regret than I expected. I arrived there with feelings soured by a long course of disappointments and with a disposition so fretted by the corroding hand of misfortune as almost wholly to unfit me for the enjoyment of social intercourse—and in fact without a wish to cultivate the acquaintance of anyone—but the free, hospitable manners of many of its inhabitants has imperceptibly brought me to relish their society. To Capt. C. DeWolf and his

\* The frigate *General Greene* was built by James DeWolf, of Bristol, and Gibbs and Channing, of Newport, as a merchantman, but was bought by the Government while still on the stocks. She was put in commission in April, 1799, in command of Capt. Christopher Raymond Perry. The *General Greene* was of 645 tons burden, pierced for 24 twelve-pounders, and carried in all 32 guns and 250 men. On her first cruise Oliver Hazard Perry, later the hero of Lake Erie, was a midshipman. This frigate captured several French prizes, but made an unlucky record. She became infected with a malignant tropical fever which cost the lives of several of her crew. In 1805 she was spoken of as a "sheer hulk," and in 1814 she was burned to prevent her falling into the hands of the British. In later letters Captain Russell tells of meeting her in Havana harbor and of her useful service in convoying American merchant fleets against the attacks of French privateers.

whole family I am under great obligations—his daughter Abby and her cousin and friend, Nancy Smith, have treated me with such friendly attention as to recall forcibly to my recollection those halcyon days which I formerly spent in the society of those I loved. While I have sighed at the remembrance of past happiness, I have been tempted when in their company once more to open the book of friendship, which I thought I had closed forever. But business calls me away—once more I am on the wing—Adieu for a while ye kind hearted Girls—May guardian Angels protect you from every ill, and may ye each meet with happiness pure as your virtues and exalted as your own benevolent hearts.

. . . *Sunday, June 9th (at Sea).* Yesterday and last night we experienced the severest gale of wind I ever knew in these seas, beginning at E.S.E. and ending at N.N.W. preceded and accompanied with heavy rain. After every exertion on my part we were obliged at 4 P. M. yesterday to throw all our horses overboard. A most tremendous sea running and being in imminent danger every moment of upsetting, it was with much difficulty we got clear of the horses. At the time we cut away the lee part of the awning the upper part of the stanchions were under water. For several hours afterwards the gale increased and had the horses remained on board half an hour longer nothing short of Omnipotence could have saved the vessell and our lives. We lost some hay—our oars—jib, &c. and I got severely bruised among the horses—thank God it is no worse.

*Monday, June 10th.* Reflections on the preceding scene.

The Great disposer of events on earth  
 For some unsearchable and unknown purpose  
 Is pleased to mark me for adversity.

Teach me O Thou Parent of the Universe to bow submissive to Thy Will—and teach me to discern the hand of a father amid the chastenings of a God.

“Nor God alone in the great calm we find—  
 He mounts the storm and walks upon the wind.”

I ought to feel peculiarly grateful that during the late tremendous trial my presence of mind never for a moment forsook me—there was no hurry—no confusion—and were the scene to be acted over again I do not recollect anything I *could have* done but what *was done*, nor anything I *did* which I now wish had been left *undone*. It was a melancholy scene to see the horses swimming after us—which many of them did for nearly half an hour—but attention to our immediate safety at that time drove away all the other considerations. We were obliged to lower all sail and lay too under bare poles till next morning.

This event is not only unfortunate for the owners and shippers, but it is peculiarly so for me—not only as the greater part of the little emolument I expected depended on the sale of the horses—but also as it is the first business I have ever done for my present employers and the first

voyage I have ever sailed from that port—but whatever my anxiety may be I have the consolation of reflecting that I have done everything that depended on me.

Let me see—a pair of my Bristol friends\* made me promise to drink their health every Saturday night at 9 o'clock and engaged at that hour to pledge me. What was my situation at 9 o'clock last Saturday night? At 10 I remember that the fury of the elements having somewhat abated I went below for the first time for several hours—dripping with water—having been thoroughly drenched to my skin for 36 hours, and without sleep 42 hours. I then thought that to

“Comfort our hearts with a morsel of dram”

would be good for us all—and though one hour later than the stipulated time, I did not forget to drink

“*To the friends I've left behind me.*”

*Tuesday, June 11th.* What a striking contrast is now exhibited to the scene which presented itself on Saturday last. One would hardly suppose that we are now swimming on the same Sea. *Then* it appeared as if all the elements were rushing together in confusion and that the system of Nature would hardly be able to stand the shock. *Now* everything looks smiling—the morning beautifully serene though calm. Not a cloud to be seen and the face of old Ocean smooth as the bosom of conscious innocence—in the afternoon a fine breeze, and the wind fair

\*Misses Abby DeWolf and Nancy Smith.



makes it, if possible, still more pleasant. *Then* if reflection could have been permitted the prospect of immediate dissolution would have obtruded itself. *Now*—the prospect is fair for a safe and pleasant passage to our destined port. So fares it also in the voyage of Life—the calm succeeds the storm, and probably if we never *endured* the one, we should not so richly *enjoy* the other.

*Sunday, June 16th.* For several days past we have been constantly struggling with a head wind and heavy Sea, which has sent us much out of our course to the Eastw'd.—and allowed us to gain but slowly to the Southw'd. This afternoon, however, the wind has shifted to N.N.E., a light breeze but very fair for us and we once more are cheered with the prospect of seeing an end to our passage; this is the more gratifying as for several days past the vessell has leaked so much as to keep one hand employed at the pump one third of the time.

The prayers of the Church are with us to-day and we are blessed with a fair wind—*Heark ye there—You Bristol Girls—how went the cheerful bottle last night—I fear you have already forgotten your engagement, while I at the appointed hour swigg'd my Saturday night's allowance and religiously toasted—"The friends I've left behind me."*

*While my warm sighs increased the wind  
Looked on the Moon and thought of—*

*Sunday, June 23d.* Yesterday at 4 P.M. made the island of Abaco ahead—ran down for the South end or

Hole-in-the-Wall\*—so-called—and at Sun-set it bore N.W.W. from us distant 3 leagues. Our Main mast is unfortunately sprung—the wind in the night proved scant, not being able to carry a whole Mainsail. This morning we had the mortification to see the town and Harbour of Nassau several miles to windward of us. By this time the Main Mast work'd so badly that we could carry no sail at all on it—expecting every minute it would go over the side. In this situation we were obliged to bear away—and running in for the land, with difficulty and great risk, found our way into a bay and came to anchor in 3 fathom water.

*Sunday, June 23d, 1799.* Got our boat out which prov'd very leaky—having lost all our oars but one—made some paddles, and with one man constantly bailing water, made out to reach the shore—being about a mile from the Schooner. This place is called Charlottesville and is 12 miles to the Westw'd. of Nassau—there are some scattering plantations near. Through the politeness of Mr. Wiley I obtained a Horse—and having partook at Mr. Anderson's of a good turtle dinner, proceeded to Nassau.

\* “Their coasting vessel knew the way (to the West Indies) without quadrant or Practical Navigator. Their skippers kept their reckoning with chalk on a shingle which they stowed away in the binnacle; and by way of observations they held up a hand to the sun. When they got him over four fingers they knew they were straight for Hole-in-the-Wall; three fingers gave them their course to the Double-headed-Shot Keys, and two carried them down to Barbadoes.” (Quotation from an old writer of a humorous turn in *The American Merchant Marine* by Winthrop L. Marvin.)

*Monday, June 24th.* Having by Capt. Hunter's assistance procured a black carpenter, went with him to Charlottesville and after examination concluded to try to repair the Mast.

*Thursday, June 27th.* At 10 A.M. weighed anchor from Charlottesville, wind E.S.E. and on Friday at 8 P.M. came to anchor just within the bar at Nassau.

*Nassau, Sunday, June 30th.* I here met Capt. Howland in the Schooner *Neptune* of Bristol, belonging to Capt. C. DeWolf, from the coast of Africa—sent in a few days since by the British Frigate, *Lowestoffe*. He was a stranger to me—but knowing his friends in Bristol, from whom I had letters to him, (expecting to meet him in Havana)—I have made acquaintance with him.

This place appears to me as formerly. Privateering—alias plundering, is the order of the day. A majority of the people are a set of raggamuffins who could not live in any civilized place and are here collected from all quarters. It contains, however, some very worthy characters. Here too I have very unexpectedly met, in the person of Mrs. Ormsby,\* a lovely and unfortunate young woman in whose History I was once deeply Interested—but whom the recent events of a few of the last years had almost driven from my memory.

Having landed and sold what hay and corn I had

\* The editor is unable to cast any light upon the previous acquaintance of the shipmaster with the "lovely Mrs. Ormsby." It is possible that she may have been somewhat responsible for the unhappy condition of mind to which he has referred as clouding his younger years.

left—completed my repairs in the cheapest and best manner possible, I cleared out the Schooner for Havana. I can find no opportunity to write my Northern friends from this place or to forward my protest.

*Havana, July 8th.* I have the pleasure of meeting here Capt. B. Smith with whom I took passage from this place in Feby. last, and who is one of my present owners. From the length of time I have been from Bristol I expected he would have sailed from hence—but it seems there has been an embargo here for some time which has detained him. I feel happy to meet him on many accounts—as a friend whom I esteem—as a man to whom I am under obligations for his civility to me when a stranger—and as an owner of the vessell who will take some trouble off my hands.

*July 11th.* About 50 American vessels sailed under convoy of the *Genl. Greene* frigate who has been some time here, having sprung his foretopmast in the same gale in which I suffered. I waited on Capt. Perry and was received by him with his usual politeness. Capt. Smith sailed with the Convoy—by him I wrote Mr. S. Bourn enclosing a duplicate of my protest—by him too I took the liberty of writing jointly to my friends Miss DeWolf and *Miss Smith*.

*Havana, Sunday, July 14th.* Capt. Smith having left directions with me to proceed to an out port to load, I yesterday hauled up to the *Regla* to repair and take in Casks. Last evening went down in my boat to help get up the *Neptune*, Capt. Howland—a beautiful

still and moonlight evening—and when about 9 o'clock Capt. Howland toasted "*Our Bristol friends*," I pledged and drank it with a double relish from the hope that at that moment I should be remembered by *them*.

*June 17th.* Having completed what repairs I deem absolutely necessary, and recd. on board my empty Casks—this morning early I came in the Schooner from the Regla and receiving on board a Spanish pilot at 6 P.M. weighed and made sail bound to Santa Cruz\*—having had most of the passage a strong Current against us, and part of the time quite calm.

*Santa Cruz, Sunday, July 21st.* The port of Santa Cruz is about  $6\frac{1}{2}$  leagues to the Leeward of the Matanzas and may be easily found by a remarkable white rock about two miles to windward†—a little from the shore on the ascent to the highland resembling the ruins of an old castle—a little to the westward of this and nearer the water is a single white rock resembling a Church steeple with the spire broken off or a sail within land.—As you approach the shore there is the appearance of 3 small rivers at no great distance from each other—the westernmost is Santa Cruz. It is the mouth of a fresh water river—its entrance is not more than 2 hundred yards wide. In going in you steer S.S.E.—Good Anchorage in 2 fathom

\* A Cuban port.

† Charts were imperfect a century ago and navigation as much guesswork as science. Therefore, captains made a habit of carefully describing land-falls in their logs and journals not only for their own future use but also to assist other shipmasters of their acquaintance who might be bound in the same direction.

water—the Harbour is very small and must be unsafe in a Northerly wind—it is entirely surrounded by rocks—there is no settlement, only 3 or 4 low houses or huts in sight—a little inland are some fine plantations at one of which at 2 miles distance we get our Molasses.

Having loaded the vessell with Molasses on Thursday, July 25th I left the Mate and people to water and prepare for Sea—and with a Horse and guide proceeded to Havana to settle my accounts—passed through a fine country and generally good roads—arrived at Havana same evening, the distance 13 leagues.

*Saturday, 27th.* Having compleated my business at Havana at 11 A.M. set out with my guide for St. Cruz. Was stopped by a Civil Magistrate called the Alcade Provincial who pretended not to be satisfied with my papers and after treating me very ill detained me all night. I could not prevail with the rascal either to send me back to Havana for examination or suffer me to write there. Finding he could not extort Money from me, he next morning after robbing me of my Cash, papers, clothes, &c. sent me to prison at the village of Alracore where by his orders we were both put in irons and then *thrown into a Dungeon and confined in the stocks.*

*Sunday, July 28th.* Notwithstanding my wretched situation I found means to send a Letter to Don Pedro Lavondo at Havana who immediately came to see me and offered every assistance in his power. He returned the same evening to Havana and next night came again to Alracore having procured an order from the Governor

for my release and restoration of my property which was effected next morning. I immediately took leave of Don Pedro whose more than brotherly kindness on this occasion I shall never forget. He with every one else that I conversed with reprobated in strong terms the conduct of the scoundrel who stopped me.

*Tuesday, July 30th.* Proceeded with my guide to St. Cruz and arrived there at 5 P.M. and here to my inexpressible surprise and vexation *find the Schooner gone to Sea.* It seems a report of my being detained had reached the Mate—who without staying to investigate the truth of it instantly cut his Cable and made sail. The fellow must have been frightened out of his senses. *I have all the vessell's papers and my clothes &c. are on board*—and I am really left in a pretty situation.

After the cruel scenes I have just been thro'—to find my vessell gone in this manner is almost too much—there is not one chance in ten for her safe arrival. And if raving would do any good I would swear roundly. I believe however it is best to set down and cool myself with the reflection that Whatever is, is right. Having got what information I could at St. Cruz I next morning set out with my old guide for Havana and arrived at 4 P.M. I immediately made a protest before a Spanish Notary and next day took passage on the Schooner *Sphinx*, Capt. Gorham, bound to Boston.

*Friday, August 2d.* The *Sphinx* sailed from Havana. On the 4th day the Mate died of the yellow fever—the vessell weak manned—the Capt. ill and much bad weather

renders the passage very disagreeable. On Saturday, August 24th arrived at Holmes' Hole in Martha's Vineyard having had a pilot on board for 7 days. I now left the *Sphinx* and went aboard the Scr. *Hannah*, Captain Barlow from Machias to Newport. Sailed from Holmes' Hole Sunday, August 25th, wind ahead and on Tuesday at 3 P.M. arrived at Newport. Here to my great joy learned that the *Nancy had safe arrived some days ago*—took passage immediately for Bristol and arrived the same evening.

After an absence of 3 months I have at length reached my destined port. The situation in which I was left in Cuba and the stories reported on the *Nancy's* arrival here had interested the curiosity of every one. I have the pleasure of finding the few friends whom I love all well, and find myself heartily wellcomed by all and my Conduct approved by my owners.

*Wednesday, Sept. 4th.* Went with a small party to attend Commencement at Providence. Was gratified with the exhibition—but more so by attending the theatre in the eveng. to see the performance of *Lovers' Vows*—next day returned to Bristol.

The opinion which I had formed of this place and its inhabitants has not been lessened but rather gained strength by a longer acquaintance. The beautiful situation of the town—the romantic scenes around it—and the variety of pleasing prospects which the adjacent country affords—all furnish an inexhaustible fund of amusement for a contemplative mind. And the agreeable circle with



whom I am on terms of intimacy are always sure to interest my social feelings so far that the heart must be more deadened to social joy than even mine that could not find some pleasure in such society.

## III

## A VOYAGE IN THE SLAVE TRADE

**T**HE particulars which Captain Russell fails to furnish in the following journal of a slave voyage may be readily obtained from other sources. In Munro's "History of the Town of Bristol," for instance, the method of conducting the business is described:

"The early employment of distilleries shows that the people of Bristol must soon have ceased to draw their slaves from the West Indies. Nearly all the owners of the distilleries also owned many vessels. From Cuba a cargo of molasses was procured and quickly converted into New England rum. From the distilleries the great casks went straight to the hold of a schooner or sloop lying at a neighboring wharf. Some light goods suited to the barbaric tastes of the natives of the coast were also placed on board, and the vessel was cleared for the coast of Africa. The voyage was almost always a long one, for the vessels were built to carry freight and not for speed; the stay upon the coast was tedious (depending greatly on the conditions among the inland tribes from whom the captives were mostly obtained). One by one the hogsheads of rum would be bartered for slaves until the desired number was obtained, and then the captain would

sail for Cuba or one of the neighboring islands (of the West Indies) where he was always sure of a ready market for his cargo. There he would load with molasses for Bristol, and so the round voyage would be completed.”

Captain Russell disliked the trade, and in later letters to his wife declared that he would have nothing more to do with it. In this show of scruples he was an exception to the majority of sailors and merchants who were more of the state of mind of the pious Bristol skipper who wrote home:

“We have now been twenty days upon the coast, and by the *blessing of God* shall soon have a good cargo.”

In 1800, Representative Brown, of Rhode Island, said in debate: “We want money; we want a navy; we ought therefore to use the means to obtain it. . . . Why should we see Great Britain getting all the slave trade to themselves—why may not our country be enriched by that lucrative traffic?”

Rhode Island was getting her share of the trade, however, for during the years, 1804–1807, the official returns of the Charleston (S. C.) custom house showed that the slave-ships entering from Africa comprised, “from Connecticut, 1; Boston, 1; Norfolk, 2; Baltimore, 4; *Rhode Island*, 59; Charleston, 61; Sweden, 1; France, 3; Great Britain, 70.” Of sixty-one ships, then, hailing from Northern ports Rhode Island had sent out all but two.

In 1808 the African slave trader was prohibited by law and very shortly after that the leading nations of the world united in efforts to suppress it. But because it at once

became more profitable than ever, men continued to engage in it. Then came the horrors of the Middle Passage, the recital of which even now curdles the blood. The old easy-going and comparatively comfortable vessels (of Captain Russell's time) were abandoned because unfitted to the changed conditions of the business. Ships built for speed took their place. It was the fiendish cruelty of those later voyages which drew upon the accursed traffic the execrations of the civilized world, and which covered those formerly engaged in it, with a load of opprobrium which they did not wholly deserve.

One of James DeWolf's captains wrote him in 1796 from St. Thomas:

"This will inform you of my arrival in this port safe with seventy-eight slaves. I lost two on the passage. I had sixty-two days passage. I found times very bad on the coast. Prime slaves are one hogshead and thirty gallons of rum, or seven Joes gold (8 dol.) and boys one hogshead of rum. I left Capt. Isaac Manchester at Amenebue with ninety slaves on board. I shall do the best I can and without other orders load with molasses and return to Bristol."

This document is proof that in the early days of the American slave trade, captains were humane, and solicitous to land their cargoes without loss. A vessel in which only two slaves died during a voyage of more than two months must have been equipped and laden with scrupulous attention to the health and comfort of its human freight, as contrasted with the later era when the helpless

creatures were packed "spoon fashion" between decks no more than three feet "in the clear."

Captain Russell was a finer type of man than the average shipmaster in the slave trade of his time, and his letters indicate that he was heartily glad to get clear of it, even with the loss of his vessel and cargo for which he mourns almost not at all. In fact, one must read closely between the lines of the following pages to perceive the nature of this voyage of the schooner *Commerce*. The journal begins in this fashion:

*Bristol, Sept. 16th, 1799.* I this day took charge of the *Scr. Commerce*—she is to be new sheathed and repaired. *The voyage contemplated is a hazardous and disagreeable one—but promises great pecuniary advantages—as such I am induced to undertake it.* To Mr. S. Bourn, one of the owners of the *Nancy* I am indebted for this offer—that Gentleman's attention to me when a stranger I shall never forget and I hope by my assiduity in business to show him that I am not ungrateful.

I am a boarder with Mr. Keith and have not felt myself for a long time so much at home as now. The family consists of himself and wife and a little nephew. Mrs. Keith is certainly one of the first of women—The utmost neatness and economy in housekeeping and unremitting industry are among her smallest accomplishments. Cheerful and even in her temper—fond of her friends and with talent to adorn social Life—she seems born to be the delight of those with whom she is connected. How often do

I wish the situation of this couple was more eligible and how often am I tempted in their behalf to rail at fortune—*It surely does not lessen Mrs. Keith in my opinion that she is the particular and intimate friend of Miss S.\* of whom the more that I know the more I find to esteem.* Miss S. is now a resident with her sister lately married to Capt. Munroe. By them both I have been treated with much civility and even friendship and the hours I pass at their house are among the happiest that I spend.

*Were I to draw a picture of Miss S. such as she appears to me—I should say—She is not a beauty—yet in her presence beauties would be discontented with themselves—At first she scarcely appears pretty—but the more she is known the more agreeable she appears—she gains when others lose—and what she gains she never loses—Without much knowledge of the world she is attentive, obliging, and graceful in all she does.*

*If I proceed I may possibly fall in love with the picture—and yet—where can be the danger—any picture that I can possibly draw of this amiable girl must fall far short of the original—*

*Thursday, Octo. 17th, 1799.* Sailed from Bristol in Schooner *Commerce* bound to Boston. Left the Wharf at Bristol at 9 A.M. wind N.W. went thro' Sogkonate passage—fresh breeze all day—At 5 P.M. came to anchor in the Harbour of Holmes' Hole, Martha's Vineyard.

*Saturday, Octor. 19th.* Sailed from Holmes' Hole in company with 26 vessells. Weighed anchor at 9 A.M.

\* Nancy Smith.

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Wind at S. soon hauled to S.W. by S.—pleasant breeze all day and night. At 5 A.M. on Sunday, Octor. 20th came to anchor in the harbor of Boston—being considerably ahead of the fleet. Mr. John Parker to whom I was consigned not being in town, I went to his seat in Roxbury—dined there and in the afternoon returned.

*Boston, Monday, Octor. 21st.* At 5 A.M. hauled in to Long-wharf—but being ebb tide could not get to our place of discharge. Entered at the Custom House—towards night hauled up to a wharf and prepared to discharge. In the evening accompanied Capt. James DeWolf to the Theatre—where I unexpectedly met one of my former Neighbors in New Hampshire—with whom I had a long and interesting conversation and the opportunity it afforded of making particular inquiries concerning my numerous and respected friends in that country afforded me more pleasure than I have for a long time experienced.

*Tuesday, Octor. 22nd.* This evening Capt. Smith and Mr. Bourn arrived by land from Bristol to assist me in fitting out—remainder of the week spent in unloading the Molasses I brought from Bristol and receiving another cargo\*—Went several evenings to the Theatre with

\* What goods were used in the slave trade has been recorded in many official documents. Here is a summary of the bill of lading of the *Sierra Leone*, a Yankee slaver of the middle of the eighteenth century:

“Shipped by the GRACE of God in good Order and well conditioned by William Johnson & Co., owners of the said schooner whereof is master under God for this present voyage, David Lindsay & now riding at Anchor in the harbor of Newport, & by God’s grace bound for the

Messrs. S. and B.—saw the Castle Spectre performed—and “Count Bengowthi” a play of the Celebrated Kotzebue.

*Boston, Thursday, Octor. 31st.* In the morning Messrs. Smith and Bourn took the Stage for Bristol—and the *Commerce* being ready for Sea at 4 P.M. took on board a pilot—weighed and made sail—Wind W.N.W. At half past 6 discharged the pilot opposite the Light house—

At 8 P.M. the light bore West distant 2 leagues. At 11 P.M. carried away our Main gaff—fresh breeze and heavy sea all night. Next day employed in taking the jaws from the old Gaff and fixing on a new one—attended with difficulty for want of proper tools. Fresh breeze and heavy sea—almost every man more or less sea-sick—for several days rainy rough and disagreeable weather—but the wind being so that we can lay our course we do not so much mind other inconveniences.

coast of Africa, etc. The usual list of rum, food and shackles follows with ‘sixty musketts, six half Barrels Powder,’ and so on, the bill ending at last with these words: ‘And so God send the good Schooner to her desired port in safety. Amen.’”—*The American Slave Trade*, by John R. Spears.

In 1801 when the prices on the slave-coast were at the highest, the following goods were given for one prime slave:

“One piece of chintz, 18 yards long; one piece of baft, 18 yards long; one piece of chelloe, 18 yards long; one piece of bandanoe; seven handkerchiefs; one piece of niccanee, 14 yards long; one piece of cushtae, 14 yards long; three pieces of romalls; forty-five handkerchiefs; one large brass pan; two muskets; twenty-five kegs powder; 100 flints; two bags of shots; twenty knives; four iron pots; four hats; four caps; four cutlasses; six bunches beads; fourteen gallons brandy. The total cost of the articles were £25.”—*The American Slave Trade*.



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*At Sea—Tuesday, Novr. 5th.* A fine clear day succeeds to a rainy and boisterous night—towards evening it grows smooth and after Sunset the Moon appears beautifully serene. An evening like this naturally leads my thoughts to my friends on shore. My lovely Niece is perhaps now enjoying herself on the banks of the Lehigh and casting many an anxious thought towards her absent Uncle. May peace and happiness be yours my dear child and may the calm of conscious innocence ever preside in your breast. We have had several delightful nights—the Moon near her full—and the weather in general mild and clear—interspersed however with squalls of wind and rain. Thus it is too in the great voyage of life, our passage is chequered with rough as well as pleasant weather—and our course marked with variety and change. 'Tis to this circumstance that we owe no inconsiderable part of our happiness. If Life was one unvarying scene even of pleasure it would soon clog, and listlessness and languor would depress us. But in this unceasing change there is food for the activity of our Minds, and by passing thro' Difficulty and Danger we are prepared to receive with a higher relish the more pleasureable scenes that may await us. Interest, therefore, as well as the sacred principle of Duty should teach us to receive every allotment in humble submission to Him who ordereth all aright.

*Sunday, Novr. 10th.* The last 24 hours we have had a very fine run—having made on a due East course 156 miles distance. This morning I called all hands aft and read to them some parts of the prayers and morning

service appointed by the Episcopal Church and informed them that it was my intention to repeat the same every Sunday during the Voyage when the necessary avocations on board would permit. This appeared odd to some of my people and probably would appear so to many others. I however never intend to neglect the practice of any Duty for fear of appearing singular—and if the worship of the Deity is a duty it surely does not cease to be so because we are at Sea. And setting aside everything that relates to the religious or moral part of the business—I can find sufficient inducements to this practice at Sea by the obligation that each individual finds himself under of appearing clean and decent once a week. I remember too what Goldsmith said on a similar occasion—that if there is anything ridiculous in the novelty of the attempt, . . . (illegible in MS.)

I found in a late Boston newspaper, the following Ballad, which I very much admire, both for its beautiful simplicity of expression and for the excellent morality which it contains. It is called:

\*FATHER DENNIS' COMFORTS AND HOW HE  
CAME BY THEM

You are old, Father Dennis, the young man said  
Your locks that are left are quite grey  
You are hale Father Dennis, a hearty old man  
Now tell me the reason I pray.

\*This poem was written by Southey in the same year (1799) in which this version of it appeared in a Boston newspaper as quoted by Captain Russell. Oddly enough, and for unknown reasons, the poem had suf-

In the days of my youth, Father Dennis replied  
 I remembered that youth would fly fast  
 And abused not my health and my vigor at *first*  
 That I never might want them at *last*

You are old Father Dennis, the young man said  
 And pleasures with youth pass away  
 And yet you regret not the days that are gone  
 Now tell me the reason I pray.

In the days of my youth Father Dennis replied  
 I remembered that youth could not last  
 So I thought of the *Future* whatever I did  
 That I never might grieve for the *Past*.

You are old Father Dennis, the young man said  
 And life must be hastening away  
 You are cheerful and love to converse upon Death  
 Now tell me the reason I pray.

ferred a sea-change. As Southey wrote it, these well-known verses are called: "The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them." They begin:

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,  
 "The few locks which are left you are gray;  
 You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man;  
 Now tell me the reason, I pray."

Father William became "Father Dennis" during his passage across the Atlantic in 1799, but otherwise the poem is substantially unchanged. Of course the parody in "Alice in Wonderland" is more familiar to modern readers than the extremely didactic verses of Southey. These latter would strongly appeal to Captain John Russell, godly mariner that he was, "for the excellent morality" with which they are surcharged.

I am cheerful indeed Father Dennis replied  
Let the cause thy attention engage.  
In the days of my youth I remembered my God  
And my God has remembered my age.

*Friday, Novr. 15th.* For several days past the wind has been S.E. to S.b.E. and quite light—from observations yesterday and to-day I suspected that there was considerable current—and at 2 P.M. this day lowered down the yawl and on trial find a current setting N.N.E. about one Knot per hour—the wind still unfavorable—but the weather very pleasant. The nights in particular being remarkably fine—I spend a large part of them on Deck walking—viewing the Moon and smoking a segar at intervals—having but few books and little leisure in the day time for reading. I find much satisfaction now in recurring to the store house of my memory and reviewing again what I have formerly read. Nature in this respect has been bountiful to me, my memory rarely failing. I relieve it at times by suffering Imagination to take the reins and sport in Reason's seat. Building castles in the air has often been ridiculed but it is a source whence I think considerable happiness may be drawn. No enjoyments are more free from alloy than those of the imagination for in these cases we throw Nature out of the question and cook the dish according to our own liking. This sportive power frequently leads me back to Bristol *where I have certainly spent some very happy hours.* I fancy myself again in the society of those I love—conversing in the cheerful circle or rambling by the light of the Moon

and chatting upon such subjects as the surrounding scenes naturally excite. Again She wafts me to other climates—at her command Fortune smiles and Wealth pours in upon me in abundance. Kindly then, she conducts me back to my Dear loved country—where manly independence, health, and happiness await me——

Oh enviable, spotless days  
 Dancing in Fancy's giddy maze  
 To care, to guilt unknown.  
 How ill exchanged for real times  
 To feel the follies or the crimes  
 Of others or my own.

*Sunday, Novr. 17th.* Last night the wind changed to N. W. accompanied with squalls of rain and wind which have continued with short intervals ever since—blowing most of the time a severe gale. For 40 hours past we have been running under close reef'd main sail and the head of the jib and frequently obliged to have all the Mainsail down. There is now a very heavy sea running and frequent squalls of wind and rain. Our water Casks on board have broke loose—but we have yet been able to secure them—the wind is mostly at W.N.W. and though such weather is disagreeable yet it enables us to make a fine run. Continued blowing heavy with frequent squalls of rain till Wednesday Novr. 20th. About noon the gale had so far abated as to allow us to set whole mainsail—squaresail and topsail—some squalls of rain afterwards. The wind W.N.W. a fine breeze.

*Saturday, Novr. 23rd.* This is the first time for many days past that we have had moderate weather—last night after an hour or two nearly calm the wind shifted to N.E. and blowing a steady moderate breeze, there is little doubt of our being now in the regular trade wind.

*Monday, Novr. 25th.* This day we crossed the tropic of Cancer and having three hands on board who never crossed it before the usual ceremonies of shaving, ducking &c. were practised—a fine regular breeze still continues.

*Wednesday, Novr. 27th.* Both yesterday and this morning we are on colour'd water but could not get bottom with a line of 50 fathom. Lat. in by obser. this day  $19^{\circ}$  and  $26'$  N. Long. by computation  $27^{\circ} 14'$  W. At 2 P.M. deepened our water—this afternoon we caught 3 large Bonitoes—these are the first fish we have caught on our passage—

*Thursday, 28th.* I had hopes to-day of making the Northernmost of the Cape Verd Islands but have been disappointed—At Meridian hauled our wind and stood S.E. In the evening a large number of porpoises round us—they are the first we have seen since we left the American Coast.

*Friday, 29th.* Again anxiously looking out for land without success—both yesterday and to-day on coloured water. From the courses I have steered since we were first on coloured water I have great hopes of making the main Land to the Northwd. of Cape Verd and not to see the islands at all.

*Saturday, 30th Novr.* Last evening at half past 8 made land ahead—breakers in sight—wore ship and stood off till 11—then hove too. It being low land I am satisfied it is the Continent of Africa. At day break made sail, the land in sight—being low with some sand hills—white sandy beach—stood S.W.b.W. as the land tended. At 9 A.M. were abreast of two round hills or hummucks supposed to be the Little Paps, so called—which are about 40 miles to Windward of Cape Verd—Jibbed ship and stood West—the land tending nearly the same course. At Meridan the Paps near the extreme point of Cape Verd bore S.S.W. distant 3 leagues—these are much higher land than the Lesser Paps and appear to be about 5 miles from the pitch of the Cape.

As you approach Cape Verd from the North—the 2 hummucks called the Paps appear much like those near Havana, the North Mt. lowest. When it bears E.S.E. distant 5 leagues you can see but one hummuck—when it bears East and from that to N.E. you see both—the South Mt. appearing lowest—Soundings do not extend more than 5 leagues west from the Cape.

*Sunday, Decemr. 1st.* At 1 A.M. found we had only 20 fathom water—it being very dark and the Mate confident he saw the land, shortened sail, wore—and stood off W.b.N. under Jib and fore sail. I thought it hardly possible that we could already be in with the land—the wind having been light—but chusing to run safe stood off till 5 A.M. then wore—made sail and stood S.E.b.E. wind light—At 2 P.M. again made land ahead.

Lat. in this day by observ.  $13^{\circ} 28' N.$  At 3 P.M. saw Cape Mary upon our weather bow hauled our wind and stood N.E.b.E. leaving the Tangu rocks about a mile under our lee—At 6 P.M. came to anchor in  $4\frac{1}{2}$  fathom water—Cape St. Marys bearing East distant about  $2\frac{1}{2}$  leagues. Thus after a passage of 31 days from Boston we are at anchor at the entrance of Gambia river.\*

*Monday, Decr. 2nd.* At 6 A.M. got under way—stood E. finding we could not weather Cape St. Marys at 8 tack'd and stood N.W.b.W. and at 10 again tack'd and stood in for the Cape, determined to try the South Channel.

When almost up with Bunyan's Point saw breakers on

\* "The chief source of supply for the devouring slave-market of the West throughout the whole history of the trade and practically the only source during the years when the trade was legal, was found along the Atlantic coast of Africa, between Cape Verd at the north and Benguela or Cape St. Martha at the South. The sea here makes a great scoop into the land as if the Brazilian part of the South American continent had been broken out of the hollow in the African coast. Two great rivers and a host of smaller streams come down to the sea within its limits, and its contour, as a whole is that of a mighty gulf, but there is neither bay nor inlet throughout its whole extent to form a good harbor for shipping. . . . The land at the beach is almost everywhere low, even though hills and mountains may be seen flooded with a dreamy haze, in the distance. The rivers wind about through uncounted channels in low delta lands covered with masses of mangrove and palm trees, and haunted by poisonous and vicious reptiles. The yellowish sand of the sea and the black washings of the uplands mingle to form low, tawny beaches and dunes where the river currents are beaten back by the ever-present and ever-treacherous surf. Goree and Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia, the Bight of Benin, and the Bight of Biafra, Bonny and Calabar, Anamaboe and Ambriz, the Congo and St. Paul de Loango are all familiar names to the students of slave-coast literature."—*The American Slave Trade.*



the middle ground to windwd. The Channel as laid down in the Charts is here very narrow—and bold water close in with the point. Keeping away a little to avoid the breakers, the man in the chains suddenly sung out “quarter less twain,” and *we instantly struck*. The wind not blowing fresh and being very near the beach just to the leeward of Bunyan’s Point—we supposed by the appearance of the shore it was near low water, and of course that we should float at high water. It was 4 P.M. when we struck—saw several Negroes on the beach—lowered the yawl and sounding, we found we had deeper water all around us. At 9 P.M. found the tide, which was setting rapidly in, swung our head fast on shore and that we hung only astern, took in flying jib—fore top-mast stay-sail and top-gallant sail—then jib. She slowly floated.

Stood East a short time—then S.E. half an hour and came to anchor in 6½ fathom water at 10 P.M. rejoicing at our narrow escape.

*Tuesday, Decr. 3rd.* At 6 A.M. got under way. At 4 P.M. came to anchor off the town of Gillfrei, which is on the north side of the river\* and nearly opposite James Island. Just below is the town of Albreda which is called the French town and Gillfrei the English town—both however inhabited only by the natives. Several canoes came off in one of which was a linguister† with whom I went ashore to the head man of the Village, the Alcade, so called, being up the river but is expected tomorrow.

\* Gambia River.

† Interpreter.

James Island is a very small spot of land in the middle of the river—now entirely deserted—but is a place where “moulders many a gallant heart”—having been formerly fortified by the English who stationed there a considerable number of troops, thousands of whom perished owing to the unhealthiness of the Climate.

*Wednesday, Decr. 4th.* The Alcade not arrived though hourly expected—no trade can be made before he comes. Several of the natives on board from Gillfrei and some traders from neighboring villages. Went ashore and walked some distance—the country appears very pleasant, abounding with rice, yams, Guinea corn, pumpkins—plantains and a variety of tropical fruit. Gillfrei is a large village and contains several thousand inhabitants.

*Thursday, 5th.* This day I went by land to Albreda\*—’tis not much more than a mile below Gillfrei and is a larger town. ’Tis surrounded with gardens, in which are pumpkins of various kinds—plantains, limes, sweet potatoes and such quantities of onions as almost to vie with Wethersfield or Bristol.

*Friday, 6th.* In morning went in boat to James Island—viewed the ruins of the fortifications and brought off some brick to set in the Caboose.

*Saturday, 7th.* The Alcade not yet arrived, but the King’s people having come, settled with them the Customs and Duties.

*Sunday, 8th.* In afternoon went in boat to Seca, a

\* Albreda is to-day a trading station of British West Africa, exporting peanuts and copra. The population is about 2,000.

town about 4 miles up the river. A Danish Schooner came down the river and anchored near James Island—

*Monday, 9th Decr.* Went on board the Danish Scr., Capt. Bates—She is nearly ready to leave the river. Discharg'd some of our Cargo to-day. Saw the Alcade who arrived last night.

*Tuesday, 10th.* Employ'd in trading off and discharging part of the Cargo.

*Friday, 13th.* Having compleated what business I intended at Gillfrei—at sunset weighed anchor and made sail up the river—in about an hour dropt anchor opposite Seca.

*Sunday, 15th.* At 9 A.M. weighed and made sail, light breeze down the river—beat up till the flood tide had done and at 2 P.M. dropt anchor just above Vinton Creek. At 10 P.M. made sail again and at 12 came to anchor opposite Tankrowa—

*Monday, Decr. 16th.* Tankrowa—opposite which we now lay is on the South side of the river, about 40 miles above Gillfrei—It is the largest and best situated town that I have seen on the river. I here found an unexpected treat, viz. some fresh Butter, which though without salt is really very good.

*Tuesday, Decr. 17th.* Having made some trade\* at Tankrowa, at 12 this day weighed and proceeded up the river—sometimes with a boat towing ahead, and making sail when the wind would admit. In the night passed the town of Tandebur.

\* Meaning slaves.

*Wednesday, Decr. 18th.* At 8 A.M. the flood tide being spent dropt anchor just above Devil's point. Here are several of the trees called the Monkey-bread-tree, the fruit of which has a very agreeable taste. I measured the body of one of these trees about 4 feet from the ground and found it to be of the enormous size of 10 fathom\* in circumference. When the flood tide made in the afternoon proceeded up—the river grows narrow and our progress is slow—the river being very crooked we rarely have a fair wind.

*Friday, Decr. 20th.* Continued our course up the river—it grows narrower and is very crooked—passed several Islands to-day—plenty of birds around us of which we shot several. Since passing Devil's Point we are in fresh water—Alligators begin to show themselves along the shore—At 9 P.M. came to anchor opposite the town of Cowa, a large town on the North side of the river. It is about half a league from the water. Between the town and the shore is a large rice swamp to pass through which is difficult and disagreeable. I staid here all this day—endeavoring but in vain to make some trade.†

*Sunday, Decr. 22nd.* Last evening at 7 weighed anchor and proceeded up the river. It grows narrower and is very crooked which makes our progress slow. The land at a distance begins to appear hilly—but near the shore is generally very low. We are visited with swarms of musketoes, and they are by far the worst I ever saw notwithstanding I wear thick cotton stockings

\* 60 feet.

† Bartering cargo for slaves.

and trowsers over them. I am from my hips downward completely scarified—wherever they touch they leave a bunch as large as a pea which continues many days with a most intolerable itching. In addition to the agreeable music which these insects make, we are regaled with the delightful screaming of various kinds of birds—the alligator's hoarse voice too is frequently heard and at night the howling of the wolf and sometimes the roaring of the distant Lion helps to compleat the concert——

*Monday, Decr. 23d.* The river growing very narrow, passed several islands—the banks begin to look pleasanter—and a fair wind most of the day and in the evening came to anchor at Chieye.

*Tuesday, Decr. 24th.* Here I found an English Cutter, Capt. Grandison, who came into the river a few days before me. At this place lives Capt. Tye, an Englishman, who is now the only white man that lives on the river. Here too I met Bob and George Ansel—two mulattoes, who reside farther up the river—with them and Capt. Tye I bargained for my remaining Cargo.

*Wednesday, Decr. 25th.* Being Christmas gave a holiday to all hands. I dined on shore at Capt. Tye's, in company with Capt. Grandison. Spent the day and evening pleasantly, casting however many an anxious thought to my native country and the friends whom this festival will call together.

*Thursday, 26th.* Employ'd in discharging some part of the Cargo &c. Having cleared the forward part of the hold, began to stow our water Casks and fill with water.

*Saturday, 28th.* Employed in discharging more of the Cargo, cleaning the hold, filling water &c. The place where we lay now is about 2 miles above Chieye—properly so called. This being the residence of Capt. Tye, is called the New-Port. On Sunday, 29th, went with Capt. Tye, by land to Chieye, spent the day and had an excellent Dinner, at the house of Aberdeen, a native who together with his wife having mixed much with the English who formerly resided here, now speak the language tolerably and set their table &c. in quite decent style.

*Decr. 30–31st.* Mr. Dean, a mulatto, who lives up the river came down and traded.

IV

A VOYAGE IN THE SLAVE TRADE (*Continued*)

*Wednesday, Jany. 1st. 1800.*

THE commencement of a New Year and a new Century. This is commonly a day of rejoicing among civilized people, a day of greeting and good wishes among friends. But between me and my friends (*if I have any*) rolls the immense Atlantic. Yes, I commence the New Year 500 miles in the interior of Africa. Well—what of that—tho' far distant from the country that gave me birth, tho' separated from *the friends I love*—yet my warmest wishes are with them—and the same Benign Power to whom I commend *them*, I trust will still protect *me*—wherever I wander.

In the evening went with Capt. Tye in his sloop to Tuncacunda—a port about 6 leagues up the river. Was present at a Mundinggo wedding and much diverted with the novelty of the scene.

*Saturday, Jany. 4th.* Early in the morning returned from Tuncacunda—and having received on board several passengers\* prepared to go down the river to-morrow.

*Sunday, Jany. 5th.* At 2 P.M. there being a fresh breeze down the river, weighed and made sail from Newport—flood tide against us. The breeze soon failing dropt

\* Slaves.

anchor and waited till ebb tide—then with a boat ahead proceeded.

*Monday, Jany. 6th.* Proceeded down the river—At day break a Canoe came along-side and brought me a note from Capt. N. Gladding informing me of his arrival in a Sloop from Bristol—that he was proceeding up the river—that *he left our Bristol friends all well &c.*

*Tuesday, Jany. 7th.* Just above Cowa met Capt. Gladding—we both came to—spent several hours in conversation with him. Altho' only one month later than me from Bristol yet it gave me the greatest satisfaction to hear of the welfare of *my friends*. In the evening he proceeded up the river and I went on to Cowa. My Cooper and Cook both unwell, to-day I gave the former an emetic.

*Wednesday, Jany. 8th.* At Meridian weighed and made sail—with a fine breeze, and at 8 P.M. came too off Dumasansa Creek on which is a town where once was a Portugese factory. My Cooper continuing ill and having a high fever I bled him. Three more of my people sick and Mr. Luther, the Mate, beginning to complain.

*Thursday, 9th.* Lying opposite Dumasansa. The Cooper I think a little better. Bled Potter and gave him an Emetic. Job Lawton sick to-day, both he and the Mate have declined being let blood or taking an Emetic. I fear they will suffer for their obstinacy—being in great want of Coin\* went up to the town with my Linguister.

\* "In the earliest days rum was the best article for the purchase of slaves. At the end of the eighteenth century when slaves were obtained



It is about 5 miles up the Creek and returning in the middle of the day against flood tide, not a whisper of air and the direct rays of a vertical sun over my head. By the time I arrived on board I could scarcely stand or see. Determine to sweat to-night. Having but 2 men well I dare not take physic. Our situation is critical, but while I have the smallest portion of health or strength left they shall be exerted for the recovery of my People and the Success of the Voyage. Wrote with a trembling hand and swimming head.

*Friday, Jany. 10th.* Having sweat well last night I this day feel a little better. Gave Job Lawton an Emetic. Last night Louis taken sick, blooded him to-day. *I have but one man now able to come on Deck.* I am hardly able to crawl and have 50 souls on board.\* 'Tis gloomy—yes—but Hope, sweet flatterer still deceives.

*Saturday, 11th Jany.* At day-break sent my Linguister to Dumasansa. Finding myself much worse took an Emetic—not a soul to come near me. Some of my people a little better, but none able to go on Deck.

*Tuesday, 14th.* We are proceeding slowly down the river—how we get along God only knows. Yesterday I mustered strength enough to bleed myself. *My only well Man, James, taken down last night.* Bled and physik'd him this morn'g. Bled Joshua and gave him an emetic.

chiefly by murderous raids, arms were of first consequence. And then when the slavers established great depots and barracoons on the slave-coast a time came when coin was wanted more than any other commodity.”—*The American Slave Trade.*

\* Referring to the consignment of slaves.

I am not able to crawl on Deck but without eating or sleeping I am obliged night and day to attend to those who are sicker than myself.

*Wednesday, 15th—Thursday, 16th.* I think probably lost several days. Dropt anchor at Sea—all alive and that's all.

*Wednesday, Jany. 29th, 1800.* I quitted my journal with an aching head and throbbing heart, and now I renew it, if possible, in a more distressing situation. *My Mate and one man gone to the Shades*—the rest, all but one, able to go on Deck tho' all very weak—and myself can crawl ashore about once in two days, and find about half that is due me ready.\* Flatter myself with sailing in 20 days at furthest—Capt. Gladding came down night before last—on board me yesterday, concerting scheme for my assistance—but *Mark!*—*last night a little sloop from Goree with 16 men, armed with muskets took possession and huzza for Goree!!*† Coming out of the river felt better—but on the passage had a relapse which has left me weak low and feverish. Did not reach Goree till Monday, Feby. 3d. All landed same day—a good room provided and indeed on the passage and ashore every personal attention has been paid us.

*Goree, Thursday, Feby. 6th, 1800.* Met with a Mr. Smith owner and Supercargo of a Danish Brig from St. Thomas last from Senegal—purchasing gum &c.—expect-

\* Slaves.

† The “little sloop” was a French privateer. Goree is still a French colonial settlement. It lies on a rocky island a mile southeast of the point of Cape Verde, and exports some gold dust and ivory.

ing to be long on the coast and then bound for Europe. No vessell here or at Senegal for the West Indies. Mr. S. made me friendly offers of assistance. His brig sails this day down the coast a little, to return in 2 or 3 weeks.

*Friday, Feby. 7th.* Had my second audience of the Governor. Gave in my deposition, prepared by them in French. As the papers must finally go to Senegal I prepared a memorial to the Gov. Genl. to accompany them.

*Saturday, Feby. 8th.* Mr. St. John, a very respectable inhabitant and a noted friend to Americans called to see me—Mr. Pippin a noted merchant sent for me to his house—Myself and people thank God—all getting better. (illegible) . . . by chance perhaps a beef bone to make soup. As to vegetables or fruit of any kind whatever—you might as well look for an honest man. This makes it very hard for Invalids—and an Invalid I fear I shall be long.

Anxious days and wearisome nights are appointed unto me—when I lie down I say when shall I arise and the night be gone; and I am full of tossings to and fro till the dawning of the day, but—wherefore should a living man complain—I am better—I can even walk the streets morning and evening—walk—no—I can *crawl* and drag about with me a poor emaciated frame.

*Tuesday, Feby. 25th.* What can be more tedious than a continual state of suspense and expectation! On the 8th of this month a Courier was despatched from hence to Senegal with my papers. I was taught to expect his return in 10 days—'tis now 17 days and no news of the

scoundrel—well—*patience per force*—Last night Capt. Hyer arrived here, 14 days from Gambia. By him I have the pleasing account that Capt. Gladding and crew were well except the boy—also that he was near to leave the river—having as I wished taken the Schooner which my debtors reserved for me—otherwise 2 months longer at least would have been his fate. . . .

*Goree, Wednesday, March 5th, 1800.* This day two of my people viz. Swan and Joshua set out for Gambia with Capt. Hyer, in hopes to take passage home with Capt. Gladding. Would to God I could go myself—but no return yet from Senegal. My health very low—been confined to the house these 4 days.

*Saturday, 8th.* Yesterday a Brig belonging to the “Terrible Republic” arrived from Senegal, and brought news of the condemnation of the *Commerce*. She was immediately put up at vendue and sold for 1140 Dollars. Nothing now remains for me but to get away as soon as possible—but how—or when—I know not.

*Friday, 14th.* Learning that a boat was to sail this evening for Gambia, I wrote the Commr. requesting permission for the 2 Lawtons to go in her which he refused. I wrote by her to Capt. G. enclosed a letter to Mr. J. W. Bourn covering a copy of my protest.

*Sunday, 16th March.* This day arrived here Capt. Welsh who commanded a small Schooner from Charleston\*—taken off Gambia Bar by 2 (French) boats from

\* Charleston, S. C., was the leading American port of entry for African slaves at this time.

this place. He came here in one of the boats—his Schooner has not yet arrived.

*Tuesday, March 25th.* Yesterday Capt. Welsh's Schooner arrived. She has 4 fine carriage guns. She was taken at the entrance of Betana river, to windward of Gambia. The boats that took him had been up the river trading for corn. About a week since arrived here a large Danish Ship from St. Thomas. The Danish Brig has also returned from Cassamas. With regard to myself—I am able just to drag my swelled legs and emaciated body thro' the streets—and tho' I yet have frequent returns of the fever, on the whole my health is better.

*Friday, April 4th.* I have for several days been anxiously expecting Capt. Hyer from Gambia. There is a Schooner trading in Gambia and I wish to learn what probability there is of obtaining a passage in her and how soon. There is no other prospect of getting from hence except by that Schooner and that Danish Ship, now lying here, and it will be a long time before the Ship sails. Every day I am more sick of this place. My health, I think I never shall regain it till I leave it—tho' on the whole I am getting better 'tis so slow as scarcely to be perceived. *Oh my dear Country when shall I see you!*

*Friday, April 4th.* About 1 o'clock P. M. a squadron of ships hove in sight—immediately the whole island is in commotion. The women and children and all their light movables packed off to the Continent. It proved to be a British fleet under the Command of Commodore Sir Charles Hamilton. About 4 o'clock a flag of truce from

the Commodore came on shore with a summons to the Govr. to surrender the Island. The Capitulation was soon signed, and about 10 the British landed and took possession. Previous to their landing one of the Lieutenants accompanied by nearly all the Soldiers went over to the Mainland to proceed to Senegal.

*Saturday, 5th.* Thomas Holmes Tydy, Esqr. is appointed Govr. for his Britt. Majesty. The fleet consists of the *Ruby* 64 guns, Commodore C. Hamilton, and the *Magnaneme* 44 guns, Capt. Taylor.

*Tuesday, 8th.* In company with Capt. Welsh took passage on board the Ship *Andersons*, Capt. Morley—bound to leeward—in hopes to find some American vessell to take us on board. *Adieu for the present to Goree—I shall long have cause to remember ye—70 days a prisoner on your barren rock—robbed of all my property—with ruined health—with broken constitution, I quit your hated shores.*

We are convoy'd down the coast by the *Magnaneme*, Capt. Taylor—there are 5 more Guinea-men in company.\*

*Saturday, April 12th.* Being in Lat. 9° 10' N. Long. 15° W. At Meridian saw a strange sail to leeward—the Frigate bore down after him and before night we learned that it was the Scr. *Greyhound* of Charleston, Capt. McCall, from Benin's Island bound to Havana. He being an intimate acquaintance of Capt. Welsh, he went on board and obtained a passage for himself, me, and our two sailors. At 3 P.M. left the *Andersons* with many thanks to Capt. Morley for his polite and friendly conduct

\* Slave vessels were called Guinea-men and "rum ships."

and went on board the *Greyhound*. For several days we have calm and light winds—at length are favored with a fine breeze. I find my health much better—appetite very good—tho' my legs and feet are very much swelled—

*April 20th.* A return of fever which continued many days—very violent—much rain and rough weather, and tho' Capt. McCall is all kindness and Capt. W. very attentive to me yet my situation is unpleasant in the extreme, there being more than 200 souls on board.\* I am unable to read or write—deprived of all exercise and appetite—rack'd with pain and scorch'd with fever—yet I live, and a *living Dog*—saith Solomon, *is better than a dead Lion*.

*Saturday, May 3d.* In Lat. 22 N. Long. 59 W. we were boarded by 2 french privateer Schooners, full of men, said they were from Porto Rico—but we suppose from Guadaloupe—they took our boat, charts, liquors, quadrants, watches all our small stock—the Vessel's Medicine chest and mine &c. &c.—we are happy however to escape being sent in as prisoners.

*Sunday, May 4th.* Spoke a sloop from New Haven bound to Antigua with Horses—from whom we procured some bread—potatoes—2 pigs and a few fowls.

*Thursday 15th.* Made Watland's† Island—light winds ahead—On Saturday, May 17th, anchored in Napan Harbour, Nassau. Went ashore but find myself too weak to stir much. Next day James Lawton who came from

\* Of these 200 souls, probably 180 were slaves.

† Watling's Island or San Salvador.

Goree with me, took passage in a small Schooner bound to New London. Calling on Mrs. Ormsby I received a very distressing piece of intelligence—the Death of my dear little niece. Poor Betsey—and art thou gone—yes, and with thee are buried my last earthly hopes.

Oh Power Supreme Whose mighty scheme  
 These woes of mine fullfill.  
 Here firm I rest—they must be best  
 Because they are Thy Will.

Then all I want—(Oh do Thou grant  
 This one request of mine)  
 Since to enjoy Thou dost deny  
*Assist me to resign.*

*Tuesday, May 20th.* We expected to have left Nassau last eveg. but being calm remained in port till 7 this mornng. then made sail. Light variable winds and calms—and I have a severe return of fever which confines me mostly to my berth. I feel a kind of stupor upon me—the Death of my dear little niece has rendered me incapable of enjoyment or even of exertion. We did not arrive in Havana till Monday, May 26th. Here I found Capt. Manchester of Bristol, arrived yesterday from the Coast and I learn that a fleet sails to-morrow mornng. for America. Among them is the *Fair Eliza*—Capt. Littlefield bound to Bristol—with whom I determine to take passage, tho' it leaves me no chance to procure any clothes or even to get washing done, which I much want. Don Pedro is very kind to me furnished me with stores



for my passage and a little Cash. A fine breeze and current with us. We are 12 sail in company—convoed by the *Warren* sloop of war, Capt. Newman.

*Sunday, June 8th.* At 6 P.M. made the light house on Montock\* Point, light winds all night. Next day at 11 A.M. were abreast of Newport light house—light breeze at S. W. Ran in and at 4 P. M. landed at Bristol—put up at the house of Mr. Aaron Bourn, found my friends well and apparently glad to see me.

For a long period found my health very precarious—repeatedly confined for a week or more to my room—at length I begin gradually to recover. I find that riding is of great service to me, and practice it every pleasant morning.

*June 20th.* Received letters from New Haven and had the joyful surprise of learning that the intelligence received in Napan of the Death of my dear Niece was premature. Soon after had the pleasure of receiving letters from her. My lovely girl—long—very long, may you continue to bless him who has felt so much anxiety for you.

. . . *August, 1800.* Mr. and Mrs. Keith preparing to remove to Boston—concluded to accompany them to Taunton—Mr. and Mrs. Mosher also go and with me my *amiable friend Miss Smith.* Tarried the first night in Dighton—the second in Taunton and returned the third day. Had pleasant weather and tho' not yet recovered my health and strength had a most delightful ride. *The*

\* Montauk.

*agreeable company of that worthy girl would make any situation enviable—'tis many years since I have had an excursion so pleasant.* Capt. Munroe being absent at Sea I spend much of my time at their house, and could anything reconcile me again to mankind or fill that void in my heart which Death has made it would be the friendship and society of *Miss S.* In her lov'd society hours glide unheeded past—"while converse sweet the passing hours secures and marks them down for wisdom." My mind is soothed by every endearing and friendly attention—the gentle voice of friendship and confidence to which I have so long been a stranger administers consolation to me, and while listening to the accents of pity, my declining health, my ruined fortune is forgotten *and I remember my miseries no more.*

## V

## LETTERS TO A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART

CAPTAIN JOHN RUSSELL had first met Nancy Smith in the spring of 1799, after which he was almost continuously at sea, bound to the West Indies and Africa, until the summer of the following year. After his return from the ill-starred voyage to the slave coast in which he lost both ship and cargo, he must have remained at home long enough to woo and win the "amiable girl" of whom he had written, "If I proceed I may possibly fall in love with the picture—and yet—where can be the danger—any picture that I can possibly draw must fall far short of the original."

We know that she had promised to marry him before he went to sea again, late in 1800. At that time she was twenty-six and he was thirty years of age, young enough to find an absorbing joy in each other, old enough to have found their bearings and to chart a mutual course of unwavering devotion. Few of his letters written during the period of their betrothal were found in the old sea-chest. The first of them was written in December, 1800, and it is known that their marriage took place on June 1, 1802, or a year and a half later. She is his "Dear Friend" in these letters of a lover, and he continues thus to call her in all his sea-borne messages through ten years of devo-

tion as a husband and father. The letters written during courtship are as follows:

*To Miss Ann Smith, Bristol, R. I.*

PORT ANTONIO,\* Decr. 27th, 1800.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I hope it will afford you some satisfaction to learn that I arrived at this Port, after a passage of twenty days from Bristol, having experienced much rough and stormy weather, and with many additional circumstances that combined to make our whole passage extremely disagreeable. I found it necessary on my first landing, to proceed immediately, on horse back, to Kingston—the distance of eighty miles, through rain, rivers and mud—over rocks, hills and mountains. This, however, has afforded me an opportunity to see a considerable part of the Island, and to visit the largest town in the British West Indies—which in a more favourable time, might have yielded me much pleasure. From this excursion I am just returned and have seized the first moment of leisure to converse by letter with the *Friend of my Heart*, and thus far, you see I have scribbled on, in as plain a style as any other honest Jonathan could possibly have done. For instance—

Arriv'd safe in port—stormy weather—bad passage—been to Kingston by land—bad roads—plenty rain—horrid travelling—just got back—am very well—hope you are &c. &c.

Now this would have been shorter and just as good as

\* Jamaica.

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the manner in which I have expressed the same thing. It is much easier to laugh at the style of others than to mend it ourselves, but what have I to do with style?—You, I hope my good girl, will expect nothing more from me than the plain expressions of a plain sailor, for in truth, I have learned no other language than the language of the heart. Indeed I fear you paid a Compliment to me at the expense of your own Satisfaction when you so generously expressed your permission that I might write to you. Yet I do not wish, for my own sake, to call your sincerity in question, when you not only gave permission, but kindly made it a request that I *would* write to you. Flattered as I certainly felt by such a mark of your indulgence and confidence, I trust I know my Nancy's heart so well as to believe that anything, however trivial, from the pen of her friend will be perused with candour, and I hope *with some Pleasure*.

You certainly would not expect much either of amusement or instruction from me. Nurs'd in the cradle of Affliction, tutor'd in the school of Adversity and long inured to Misfortune, my sources for contributing to the amusement of others—(if I ever possessed any) have been long since exhausted. And as to instruction, I wish you, my lovely Friend, to receive it from a School that shall give far less pain to your heart than to take lessons from the misfortunes of others. Yet there is one point in which I most sincerely wish I could instruct you. I wish I could teach you to feel that pleasure which I feel at this moment, when I recollect to whom I am writing.

I wish I could teach you that pleasure which I have felt in reflecting that I have a *Friend*, who, wherever I may be, will still feel an interest in my welfare. I wish I could teach you to feel that pure and serene Satisfaction which I have felt when Memory has led me back to the happy—truly happy hours that I have passed in your lov'd Society.

Yes, my dearest friend, if anything can soften the painful remembrance of past misfortunes 'tis the recollection that my Nancy is still left. If anything can smooth a passage across the rough Ocean—compose me to sleep in the horrors of a storm, or dissipate the anxiety of absence—'tis the hope that I am still dear to my lovely friend. Such—if I were your Tutor, would be the lessons you would hear from me. And separated as I am from you, I still wish to impress them on your Mind—unless you can substitute others in their stead more useful or productive of more satisfaction to yourself, for I am not quite so selfish as to wish your thoughts to be employed on any painful subject—and I think I have a right to hope that my Nancy will sometimes lose a thought on her absent friend: that she will sometimes reflect, and not without pleasure, on the hours in which she has blest him with her society.

Few as my own sources of happiness are, I flatter myself, that you, my charming friend, enjoy many. You have probably, ere this, seen the return of Capt. Monroe and had the pleasure of again seeing a smile brighten the countenance of your good sister—perhaps you have visited

Boston, and been happy in the society of your truly valuable Mrs. Keith. Wherever you have been, or whatever has been your employment, if I only know you are happy, the first wish of my heart will be gratified.

I hope the time may not be long before I shall be able to assure you in person of the sincerity of those wishes—to be happy once more in your loved society and tell you how dear—how very dear you are to the heart of

Your friend,

RUSSELL.

*To Miss Ann Smith, Bristol, R. I.*

ANNOTTO BAY, Feby. 24th, 1801.

I feel much satisfaction, my Dear Friend, at the prospect of quitting this Island within a very few days and of shaping my course once more for Bristol. The place from which I now write is thirty miles from Port Antonio—where we discharged our cargo. I have been here about four weeks and last evening returned from a journey by land to Port Antonio, to which place I went to clear out the Vessel. My ride back was a very unpleasant one, it raining violently the whole day and the roads, which are commonly bad enough, were now almost impassable. The rivers too were swoln to a great degree, and as there are no bridges, I had to swim my horse over several of them where the current was extremely rapid. So that had you seen me when I arrived here last evening, as finely drenched as rain and swimming could make me, and

almost bruised to a jelly from the effects of a hard trotting horse—I am sure you would either have laughed at or pitied me—perhaps both. However, the comforts of dry clothes and a good cup of Coffee soon made all right again, and what not a little contributed to make me forget my fatigues, was the reflection that my business was in such a train as to enable me so soon to leave this place, of which, I assure you, I am heartily tired. Not but there are some enjoyments here—the natural beauties of the country being particularly interesting. But what are commonly called pleasures here, I confess afford me very little satisfaction.

I have heard much of Jamaica hospitality, and if the utmost profusion in eating and drinking, and a fondness of having strangers to gorge and get drunk with them—if this is hospitality—they certainly deserve that character. I have no reason to complain of inattention—for I have had many more invitations to dine than I have accepted. For altho' I liked good eating and drinking—yet when too much is sacrificed to it, where pride destroys the ease, and formal regularity all the pleasurable enjoyment of the entertainment—where one must out of complaisance to the master of the house drink more than the head can bear and eat more than the stomach can digest—I turn from them in disgust and exclaim with the royal preacher “Better is a dinner of herbs where love is—than a plentiful table and hatred therewith.”

There is something too in the general manners of the People, notwithstanding all their civility, which is to me



extremely disgusting. It has long been my opinion that persons bred in the midst of slaves, accustomed from infancy to see hundreds of miserable wretches trembling at their nod and indulging them in every caprice, that such persons can never be agreeable companions to their equals or a valuable acquisition as friends. No Person resides here with any other intention than to make a Fortune as quick as possible and then run *home* (as they emphatically style England) to spend it. Consequently they do not think it worth while to form those social connections which give a zest to the pleasures of Society and form so large a portion of the joys of life. I hope hereafter to relate to you some curious anecdotes concerning the manners of these people. At present I turn from them in disgust and I return to contemplate with heartfelt pleasure the different scenes which await my arrival in my Native Country. Yes, my Charming Friend I can not only look forward and anticipate happiness—but I can look back and enjoy again in remembrance the scenes of pleasure I have had in the society of those I esteem and the truly delightful hours I have passed in the company of my dear Nancy—

“While converse sweet the  
 Stealing hours secured,  
 And marked them down for wisdom.”

Do you ever, my Dear Friend, when taking a walk by moonlight—while you enjoy the stillness and beauty of the scene—do you ever call to remembrance those delight-

ful evenings, when your now absent Friend was bless'd in your lov'd society—and happy when you could point out and enjoy with him, the beautiful prospect around us? If you ever, in such a moment, spare a solitary thought to your absent Friend, remember that he is probably even then engaged in the same contemplations—that while he walks the decks by moonlight, and views the shadows of the distant mountains in the water, he almost fancies his friend is by his side and engaged in pointing out to him the awful Grandeur of the surrounding Scenery. Wherever you may be, or whatever may employ your thoughts, may your contemplations be happy as your Heart is pure and innocent. Adieu—and believe me to be Dear Nancy, yours in all sincerity—

RUSSELL.

*To Miss Ann Smith, Bristol, R. I.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

PORT ANTONIO, June 26th, 1801.

About two weeks since I wrote you by way of Providence and perhaps you will think that one Letter during a West India voyage is quite sufficient. Yet surely if you know how scanty are my sources of enjoyment here and how little there is to interest my Feelings—how insipid is everything to me that here passes for Amusement—how irksome the manners of those with whom I am obliged to associate, and how tedious the Hours roll on while I am detained here—you would be disposed to believe me when I tell you that I set down as to a feast when I am writing to my Charming Friend, and if you receive no amusement

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or satisfaction in reading, you will yet, I hope, feel disposed to be indulgent for the Pleasure it gave your Friend when writing.

Why, however should I write thus—or why express a doubt whether My Nancy will feel any pleasure on hearing from her friend. Let me, for once, judge of your heart by my own, and then I will believe that however uninteresting a Letter of this kind may be in itself, yet it will not be destitute of Interest, as coming from a Friend—it will be perused with indulgence and perhaps with Pleasure. When I wrote you last, I had hopes, My Dear Girl, that I should ere this have been on my passage to America, but we are not yet half loaded, and I fear shall be detained some time longer.

If my wishes could prevail how soon would I leave this hated hole—how soon again be happy in the society of all I hold dear in life. But alas! these are idle wishes—fruitless is all my anxiety—I am still at a great distance from my *Sweet Friend*. I am still among People whose morals I detest, and *whose manners I despise*. How differently do I flatter myself that you are situated; surrounded by those you Love and who you know are worthy of your Esteem and interested in your Wellfare. If you are sometimes in the Society of those not quite so congenial to your feelings—you can soon be relieved; soon run to your good sisters, or laugh away an hour with Abby DeWolf or else ramble a little further and talk over old times at Friend Moshers, or indulge in all the confidence of Friendship and Family affection with cousin Nancy.

The summer season is fast approaching in your country. If blackberries are ripe before my return, will you not, my Charming Friend, gather and eat some for me as well as for yourself? Will you, as you ramble towards evening below Sammy Smith's—will you remember the ground over which you used slowly to crawl when supporting the exhausted frame of your poor debilitated Friend—will you recognize again the shades where you used to oblige him to rest, while you kindly endeavored to smile away his pain—when with the sweet voice of Pity you cheered him with hopes of returning Health, and soothed his exhausted spirits with the cheering animating accents of Friendship.

The remembrance of these scenes, my Sweet Friend, are deeply engraven on my Heart; they will be reviewed with pleasure and recollected with gratitude “while my memory holds her seat.” I have ventured to enclose this to Capt. Mosher. I beg you will remember me with every expression of Friendship to all those whom you know and esteem, and to whom you can venture to speak of me at all. I hope to sail from this in about a fortnight and that it will not be very long before I shall again be restored to happiness and to You. Till then, and ever may good Angels guard and protect you from every ill, and shield you from every Danger! May peace and happiness ever reside in your breast—in one corner of which, reserve a little berth—will you—for

Your friend,

J. W. RUSSELL.

P. S.

Do you not think, my dear Nancy, that two sides of a large sheet will pass very well for a long letter? Yet you see there is one spare side still left—then why should I not improve it? 'Tis not yet late bed time—I have just been walking the deck for half an hour, smoking my segar—admiring the serenity of the evening and contemplating the beautiful splendour of the Moon—now near her full. My People are all asleep around me, and I have just finished a letter to our common friend Capt. Mosher, to whom I shall enclose this. I never wrote to him before. I hope he will not think it wrong. He is a man whose friendship and good opinion I value highly and among *real* Friends I have no idea of much ceremony and formality. Do not, however, my good girl mistake me. While I contend that the most unreserved confidence should take place with those whom we think worthy of our friendship, I am by no means an advocate for that gross Familiarity which I have sometimes seen—which has always disgusted me, and which I never can think becoming even in the most intimate connexion. The human heart, my Friend, is so constituted as to love respect. It would indeed be unnatural in very intimate friends to behave to each other with stiffness; but there is a delicacy of manners and a flattering deference that tend to preserve that degree of esteem which is necessary to support affection, and which is lost in Contempt when it deviates into excessive Familiarity.

I did not intend to preach when I began this post-

script. When I converse with, or write to you I never know when to have done. But you may rejoice now that I am near the bottom of my paper. Good night, my lovely Friend—sweet sleep and pleasant dreams to you.

R.

*To Miss Ann Smith, Bristol, R. I.*

PORT ANTONIO, April 8th, 1802.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I arrived at this port yesterday, having been eight weeks in the harbour of St. Ann's Bay which is seventy miles below this. I have touch'd in here to receive a little rum. Having completed all my other business, I hope in a very few days to sail for home. From St. Anns I wrote you twice. One vessell by which I wrote I know was lost, and I fear you have heard nothing from me. I will not however believe that you could for a moment suspect me of neglect—No, I hope my sweet Friend knows me better. During the unexpected and tedious stay which I have made in this Island, your lov'd ideal has never for a moment left me.

There is a kind of melancholy in thus reviewing departed Joys—yet it is a melancholy of so soothing and pleasing a Nature that I would not exchange it for any scene of Mirth or Gaiety. At the Bay of St. Anns I found a set of people very different from my former Jamaica acquaintance. Altho' quite a stranger and without any letters of introduction I was treated with every civility and attention. I became acquainted with several

ladies—was quite domesticated in two or three families, and if I had nothing to interest my feelings elsewhere—I might have made myself happy. But the idea of being happy where my Nancy is not concerned, is with me quite out of the question. So long accustomed, my charming friend, to center all my hopes and wishes in you, that my heart now rejects with loathing every enjoyment that has not you for its center.

Well, *my sweet girl*, how have you passed the time away? You have many truly valuable Friends, and I hope among them you have been happy—with your new aunt, I trust you spend many hours. She is, or I am much deceived, one of those better order of beings whose friendship is “more valuable than rubies.” One of those very few whose good opinion I am ambitious of obtaining and whose friendship when obtained, may console one for the neglect of all the buzzing insects of the day.

As you walk up and down the lane do you not sometimes remember how often we have walked together there? When you call at good friend Moshers, will not my name be sometimes mentioned? And when you visit Sister Hannah, will not something remind you that it was once my home? Yes, my sweet Girl, I hope many things will remind you of your absent friend. I hope too that you will think of him with pleasure and do not indulge yourself in anxiety for his safety. Soon, my dear Ann, we shall meet.

I presume you have heard from Allen Munroe’s friends that we met at Kingston, when I went to enter the vessel.

Our meeting was very unexpected, and I can assure you a very interesting one. I don't remember when I have been so much affected. He wrote me several times before he left Kingston. I have very much to say to you about him when we meet. When I began this letter I thought I was in a hurry, as I have others to write and the Vessell that carries them is to sail this evening. But as when blest in your society I never know when to leave you—so when writing to you I never know where to stop. Remember me to all friends. Adieu, my dear Nancy. I commit you to the protection of Him who ordereth all aright and hope very soon to tell you in person how much I am yours,

RUSSELL.



VI

A SAILOR'S LETTERS TO HIS BRIDE

**A**FTER a honeymoon of almost two months ashore the young husband went to sea in July, 1802, and from Havana wrote his first letters to "Mrs. Ann Russell, Bristol, R. I." While in that port he, for the first time "feasted on a letter from his wife." Communication was uncertain and broken. There were no regular mails and Captain Russell was always on the alert to find an American vessel homeward-bound by which he might send his packet to the wife who sometimes had to wait several months for any word from sea. The following letters need no more preface than this. They cover the first year of their wedded but cruelly separated lives.

*To Mrs. Ann Russell, Bristol, R. I.*

HAVANA, Aug. 24th, 1802.

MY DEAR NANCY:

After a passage of twenty-nine days I am safe in this Port, and most heartily wish I was safe out of it again. Every kind of business is very dull. My horses not yet half of them sold and molasses not to be procured. But amid the fatigues of a very irksome and disagreeable voy-

age, I have been hitherto, thank God, favoured with health—and by the safe arrival of Capt. Eddy I have been blessed with a letter from the dear Friend and *partner of my heart*. You my dear wife, who have often described to me the pleasure you have felt when you opened a letter from your absent Friend—you can have some idea of my sensations when for the first time I feasted on a letter from *my wife*. Next to the happiness of seeing you—of being blessed by your smiles and soothed by your tenderness—is that of knowing, from under your own dear hand, that you still think of me with Kindness. I hope, my dear friend, that you did not suffer much from the swelling in your face and I hope too that you have not indulged too much anxiety on my account. I do not ask you not to feel for me—the knowledge that you do feel for me—that you are interested in everything that concerns me—that you take part in all my cares, as well as in all my joys—'tis this, my dear girl, that supports me in every situation, 'tis “my daily comfort and my nightly dreams.”

I flatter myself, my dear, that your little preparations for housekeeping will afford you much pleasure. I think that in making your little arrangements I can often hear you whispering, “This is for my husband and me.” Whatever you do will certainly be satisfactory to your *Friend*. There are doubtless many things which I neglected during the hurry of my flitting away so suddenly. If you want more of Mr. Bourn than I paid him, or if you want *anything* of anybody, as far as my credit will go, surely, my dear, you will not hesitate. You will know the

unlimited Confidence I place both in your Judgment and your Prudence. You know too my ideas upon the subject of setting out in life—that we may have things comfortable, but on a small scale, and within our means. I hope, my lovely friend, soon—very soon to join you, and I fondly flatter myself that our mutual expectations of Happiness in the society of each other will not be disappointed. I left you my dear friend, with a heart oppressed with Gloom and a mind clouded with Sorrow; but do not, my best, my only friend, tax me with want of confidence. I had lost a dear and amiable relation; one in whose welfare I had long felt an unbounded interest—but at a time when I was to part with you so suddenly and so soon after our union, knowing how much you would feel our separation, I wished not to overburden your tenderness. Perhaps I was wrong. If I was, my *best Friend* will forgive me.

My best respects to your parents, and all whom you think I love. Adieu, for the present, my dear Ann. May angels guard you, and every attendant happiness be yours—so wishes in deed and in truth your

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

HAVA., Augt. 27th, 1802.

As Capt. Munroe does not sail quite so soon as I expected—I have set down to chat a few minutes longer with my dearest, best of Friends—I wish, my sweet Girl, I could tell you when I should sail from hence. It *must*, it *shall* be soon. You know we are told that time wears

off the pangs of separation and blunts all the stings of regret. If this is true, whence comes it, that the longer I am absent from you, the more I feel the deprivation of your society, and every hour that I hear the Clock strike and think my Nancy is far from me—seems longer and more tedious than the Hour that preceded it. Think not, that I am gloomy and give way too much to complaining. My health is good—thank God, my spirits so so—but indeed my feelings are very different from what I ever experienced when abroad. Yet while my thoughts are continually reverting to the Dear Partner of my Heart, while Memory leads me back to scenes of past delights, Hope, sweet enchantress, points me forward to scenes of domestic bliss with my Nancy; Imagination lends her airy pencil and in vivid colours portrays my little peaceful Fireside—my cheerful, happy home. Yes, our hopes shall be realized—we shall soon meet and be happy—for awhile we will bid adieu to corroding care, and in heartfelt enjoyment forget the past.

Hope of my life—dear Partner of my Heart,  
That Faithful Heart, still to my Nancy true,  
Still longs to her its Feelings to impart  
And more—Oh transport—meet its home and you.

Tell sister Ellen that since I wrote my letter Capt. Wilbor has arrived from the Coast.\* He left Sierra Leona river the 2nd of July, at which time Capt. Munroe was there. He was purchasing rice, and was to proceed

\* Africa.

to Cape Mount to make his trade. Markets dull on the coast.

Adieu my dear little Ann—try to be cheerful, and may the best of Beings ever protect you.

J. W. RUSSELL.

HAVANA, Sepr. 2nd, 1802.

MY DEAREST AND BEST FRIEND:

By Capt. Wardle, who is about sailing for Newport, I embrace the chance of scribbling a hasty line. He sails sooner than I expected, and I have but little leisure—but I could not forgive myself should I forego any opportunity that happens, to let you hear from me. Five days ago I received your *second* letter from Capt. Estabrooks of Warren. I wish you knew how truly grateful I feel, my dear girl, for these instances of your attention to the anxiety of your absent Partner. The anxieties of Absence, I hope soon to be relieved of. I have been hitherto detained, contrary to my wishes and expectations—but I have begun to take in molasses, and am daily expecting a droger, or coaster, with some for me. As I do not intend to load fully, if the droger brings sufficient to ballast the Brig I shall sail immediately. I wish I could tell you *when* exactly that I expected to sail. That however is not in my power, and you must not be *too anxious* if I do not arrive *quite* so soon as you expect. You have no occasion to be alarmed about the unhealthiness of this place at present. There is little complaint of sickness among the shipping and 'tis daily growing better. Three days ago

John Hathaway was suddenly taken very ill—he is much better—has been on deck most of the day, and I think with proper care, will be well in a day or two. He is my best, steadiest man, and I have done all in my power for him.

Again, let me beg of you, my dear Nancy, not to give way to your too great anxiety for me. My voyage, 'tis true, has been thus far a disagreeable one, and the event of it will disappoint the hopes and expectations of the owners. But comfort yourself, my sweet Friend, with the hope that we soon shall meet and be happy together. If fortune has not smiled this time—she may hereafter be more propitious—and indulge, with me, the pleasing idea that you and I are not dependent on her fickle favours for happiness.

Be careful of yourself, my dear girl, of your health, and your spirits—for *my sake*, as well as your own. Remember that all that is left to your friend to hope for in this life, is dependent on you. Adieu, my dearest Nancy, and rest ever assured of the unalterable Affection of your own

RUSSELL.

Per Brig *Juno*, Capt. Richmond.

HAVANA, Feby. 10th, 1803.

MY DEAR ANN:

I have just time by this opportunity to say that I am safe in port after a passage of twenty-one days. In a very heavy gale of wind I lost the greater part of my horses and the remainder are much injured. I have this day landed them and having been but thirty hours in port I could not

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set down to write you till this moment, and 'tis now past Midnight and so nearly worn down do I feel, that nothing but writing to you, my dear girl, could keep my eyes open for a moment. I had the pleasure to see, in a few minutes after I anchored—B. J. Munroe—J. Wardwell—together with Nat. Gladding and twenty more old acquaintances in my Cabin. You can imagine what a meeting—what a feast it was to me. I am sure I cannot describe it. For myself—my health never was better, and I have no reason to apprehend any difficulty about any part of my business; but how long I shall be detained is uncertain, as I have yet made no calculation respecting my future proceedings in the voyage.

My dear little friend, do let this find you cheerful, and try to support and keep up your spirits. Do not say that it reads too much like a letter on *mere* business. You know the heart of your husband too well to suspect him for a moment of coldness towards you, but I am really almost exhausted with fatigue. Capt. Wardwell's Schooner is to sail in about four days, when I hope I shall have time to say a *part* of what I wish to you. Again let me repeat, my sweet friend, that you must keep up your spirits and trust in that Kind Power which has hitherto protected me, and who will doubtless, in due time, restore me to you and to happiness.

Good night my dear Ann, and may every blessing be yours.

So prays in *deed* and in *truth*

Your J. W. RUSSELL.

Per Schooner *Joseph*, Capt. Thurston.

HAVANA, Feby. 14th, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I wrote you a few days since by Capt. Richmond who sailed for N. York, which I hope came safely to hand—as it would inform you of my safe arrival and I am sure would remove a weight of anxiety from your mind. To keep you, my dear Ann, from being over anxious will always be my principal anxiety when absent from you, for if I can think that you are Safe and Happy, I shall in almost any situation feel tolerable easy. The misfortune of losing a great part of my horses on my passage and the injury which the others sustained has been a great misfortune to my voyage—but I still hope, on the whole to do well. The other part of my business will turn out tolerably well, although not equal to my expectations, and the *risk*, which has given you so much uneasiness, is now thank God, at an end.

Sometimes I harass myself with thinking whether I have omitted to do everything that was in my power for your comfort and convenience; and whether I have done all that I could to save you trouble and anxiety in my absence, I *hope* I have. But still I cannot help being anxious—fearful too that your situation might more than ever require the fond attentions of your husband. Should it be so, my love, take every care of yourself, and may every good angel guard you. I hope you have Mrs. Keith with you, and had much enjoyment in her valued society. I persuade myself that Mr. and Miss Russell will, for both



our sakes, continue their friendly attentions. Mr. and Mrs. Mosher I am sure will not forget you. I am hourly looking for Capt. Eddy, by whom I hope to have a letter.

I hardly knew, my dear Ann, how happy I had been with you till I find myself alone, after having been so long blessed with your Society—but that Happiness will I trust again be mine. I shall now have frequent opportunities of writing, and I hope soon to be able to tell you when to expect me. My love to all who *deserve* it, and especially to your respected father.

I am, as ever, dear Ann, your own

RUSSELL.

Per Capt. W. S. Brown, via Providence.

HAVANA, March 8th, 1803.

MY DEAR NANCY:

Six days ago by an accidental misstep on my Deck I turned my ankle and spread the bones of my foot badly. It immediately swell'd to near twice the size of the other foot and has proved a painful, ugly business. I have been closely confined to my cabin till yesterday. How much I have missed you, how much I have wanted your kind attentions, let your own heart tell you, my love. Yesterday I went in my boat to Havana, (My Brig is lying at Regla 3 miles from town) saw a ship coming in, went on board and to my great joy it proved to be Capt. Eddy, the bearer of a Letter from my dear Ann. It was only 8 days date after I left you, but yet my love, you had already miss'd me, and could find many good tender things to say

to your friend. To hear from you—to hear you were well, was a feast which those only, can relish who have been in similar situations and who possess feelings like mine. It was a luxury, my Friend, which to me, was a *treat* indeed.

I feel very grateful to Mr. and Miss Russell for the continuance of their kind attentions to you and that you find more rational enjoyment in their Society than any where else, I can readily believe. You mention our good aunt DeWolf, and your intention of spending a day with her, as if you *almost* thought I should not think it was right. Surely, my love, you had no reason for a doubt of that kind, you well know how highly I think of that best of women, and I well know how richly she deserves the large share which I know she possesses in your affections. Why then should you deprive yourself of the society of one so deservedly dear to you.

I have a thousand things, my dear girl to say to you, and had I time to say them all I should then find a thousand more to say. Since the receipt of your letter I am more than ever solicitous for your health and safety. Think, my Love, what I should say to you; by and by I shall come and whisper it in your ear. Be not anxious on my account, my health was never better. My foot tho' still swell'd and painful, is daily getting better and will soon be well. I have this day begun to load and expect to sail about the last of this month.

Capt. E. Bourn, of Iverton, will sail in a few days when I shall again write, and I hope be more at leisure; this

opportunity is unexpected. But I let no opportunity slip without dropping at least a line to you. I hope you will not be tired with my so frequent scribbling. I have a mind to blot out the last sentence, the thought is unworthy of us both. Friend Bourn wrote me that Barnard Smith's sloop was preparing for this port, and I am hourly looking for another letter by her. Adieu, my love, my best—my only friend, be careful of yourself. Rest satisfied on my account. I shall yet do well, and again I trust be happy with my Nancy. Your own  
RUSSELL.

Per Schooner *John*, Capt. E. Brown.

HAVANA, March 12th, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I regret extremely that I miss'd the opportunity of sending the enclosed, I regret it, not for the intrinsic value of the letter—but as knowing that every line from your absent husband will be gratifying to his dear Ann. Since writing the enclosed, Capt. Spaulding has arrived from the Coast. He sailed from Gambia on the 8th of January, at which time our friend, Wm. Bradford, had not arrived, nor was there any news from him. I know not what to think on this business—his situation is at least very doubtful. Should any accident have happened to him it will be a dreadful stroke to his family. To our good sister Polly what shall I say—comfort her, my sweet friend, cheer her with hopes, for still there is room to *hope* he is safe. Tell her that I shall get all the information in my power, from every arrival, and that I *hope* to bring her good news.

My dearest, best friend, the hours of my absence begin to roll tediously. I had hoped ere this to have heard again from you and am hourly looking for some R. I. vessel, when I expect again to be gratified with a line from the dear friend of my heart. You may be assured that I shall sail as soon as I mentioned in the enclosed, unless some accident prevents. My lameness is better, altho' my foot is still swell'd and painful. I begin now to count the days when I shall shape my course again to my native shore—to the arms of my love and to happiness.

My love to all our friends—I hope before this, you are in possession of half a score of my letters, and I earnestly pray that this may find you in health and happiness.

Adieu my love.

May God bless you. J. W. R.

HAVANA, March 27th, 1803.

Friend Jack intending to sail this day and I not being quite ready, once more I scribble a few lines to my dear Nancy. I expected to be the bearer of the next letter myself, but a disappointment in 20 Hhds. Molasses has detained me a little—in 4 days at furthest, I expect to sail. Capt. Munroe will tell you how things go here better than I can write. Poor Allen's misfortunes you have doubtless heard before now. I have hitherto foreborne to mention it, as I could write nothing satisfactory, and even now I know not what to say. My heart bleeds for him, and I have interested myself as far as my influence could

extend, in his favour. He will, I hope, be soon released,\* but how soon is uncertain. Wardwell and Gladding have found difficulty in getting their property, but I think it is not so bad as you will probably hear it represented. I have much pleasure in hearing by a ship from the Coast, that Bradford had arrived in Sierra Leona, after a very long passage. I believe the truth of it may be depended upon.

What further shall I say, my love—could I pour out my whole heart on this sheet I should only tell you that my thoughts and my wishes are continually with you, absent from you I am absent from all that constitutes my felicity, but soon, my sweet wife I hope to join you—again to meet your smiles and be happy together, and should Providence spare our lives, I trust my Love, there is much good in store for us, that hand in hand we shall walk the path of life, with no discord to mar our Peace, no clouds to obscure the Horizon of our affection.

Do, my sweet friend, *try to be cheerly and preserve your health, for my sake as well as your own.*

Adieu my dear Ann. My love to our friends.

Your own

RUSSELL.

\* During the decade before the War of 1812 American vessels were seized, literally by the hundred, in the ports and waters of the West Indies by the English and French, under pretext of violating paper blockades and confiscatory navigation laws.

BOSTON, Sunday Even'g, May 8th, 1803.

MY DEAR NANCY:

When I left my own dear fireside I hoped ere this to again feel its enlivening influence. I have almost exhausted my patience in waiting for Lincoln. As I was now on the spot I wished to close the business of her sales. The Sloop arriv'd this day, and luckily—for several hours since her arrival it has snowed heavily. We have on mature deliberation postponed our business for a few days till we learn the event of these rumors of war. You will, of course, my dear, say nothing to anyone on that subject.

Have you not missed me very much, my love? As for me, I never passed a few days from home with half so much regret. I have tried to be amused and to be busy, Dear, but it all wont do—my thoughts are continually with you, and I feel that Happiness is not to be found when absent from the dear Wife of my heart. I shall hurry my business as fast as possible, and again on the wings of affection fly to meet the Joy of my heart. Excuse my abruptness, the mail closes in five minutes. I hope to be with you very soon after you receive this, till when, and ever, my dear Ann

May God bless you.

Your J. W. RUSSELL.

Per. Brig *Little Ann*

Capt. Townsend.

HAVANA, July 20th, 1803.

MY DEAR NANCY:

I enclose the very earliest opportunity to inform the dear Wife of my Heart that I am once more safe in this

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port after a tedious passage of twenty seven days. My Brig is entered at the Custom House, and I yesterday began to discharge. It is a very bad time to transact any business here. Money is very scarce, and in fact an almost total stagnation in every branch of Commerce. It is however more healthy than I had reason to expect at this season.

I have met here many R. Island acquaintances, Young Charles DeWolf among the rest. Charles has made himself social with me, and I have treated him as civilly as my feelings would allow me. But nothing *here* can compensate for the loss of Allen; with him I could have cheerly passed the lonely, lingering hours, with him I could have chatted about old times and talked—with rapture talk'd of old friends, and he only could enter into my feelings when I talk'd of *all I hold dear on earth*. Yet I think it best that he has taken this trip—he was doing *nothing here*, and a little is better than nothing. I had the great satisfaction on the day I parted with you of meeting our mutual friend Mosher. The certainty of his being so soon at home was a source of much pleasure to me, as I know there are few whom you will more rejoice to see. And very few indeed who will so well enter into your Feelings—sooth Your anxiety, and pay all those friendly little Attentions to you—alas, that I should be obliged to mention any other person as paying them but myself. My heart tells me 'tis from *me*, and me only, that those kindnesses and attentions would be truly gratifying to you. But obliged as I am to separate so often from

you, it is a matter of much Consolation to me that you have other friends in whom you can place confidence and whom you sincerely love. I hope you have, ere this, got over the fatigue of removal, and under the same roof with your good sister, and so near your kind indulgent Father, I hope you will try to be happy.

You cannot conceive, my Dear, how much anxiety I have felt from the fear that I have neglected many things which I now can remember I ought to have done for your Comfort and convenience. Yet you, my love, I know will do me Justice. The little time I spent at home last, blest with you and too happy in your ever dear society, I fear that I too much neglected to look forward. Yet I thank God that I was able to leave you in a situation to procure whatever your Comfort or Convenience may require. You well know my wishes in that respect and I hope will act accordingly.

I hope our good and respected friend, Mr. Russell, will continue to call often upon you. Tell him that if he is in any way remiss in his Attentions, or grudges in the least, a little longer walk for the purpose of seeing you, that I will, on my return, use my utmost endeavors to get him ousted from the Collectorship, and I know very well who, (besides Doctor B) has an eye on that office.

I am anxiously looking for the arrival of Capt. Salisbury, by whom I confidently expect to hear from you. Do not, my dear girl, neglect any possible chance of writing to me. All I shall have to support my spirits, will be The Hope of hearing often from you. *Hope*—sweet



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soother of the mind—to Her benign influence we owe very much of what we call Happiness in this world. When Memory, faithful to departed joys, leads me back to the scenes of real bliss—of happiness unalloyed which I have enjoyed with my dear wife, Hope kindly smiles and bids me to believe those scenes will again be realized. Trust me, my Love, they *will* again be realized.

I expect with confidence, my love, that you will exercise all your Fortitude—that you will call the rich resources of your good heart to your aid, and not give way to Dependancy *at this time—when of all others*—I know you will be subject to alarming apprehensions. In this expectation, my lovely Ann, I again bid you adieu—commending you to the Protection of that kind Power who has hitherto befriended us. My love to all those whom I love in *truth*. When you remember me to friend Mosher and wife do not forget little Ruth Ann. Tell her I long to Kiss her dear little intelligent Face. Our good sisters are very warmly remember'd in my heart, and will be while I am

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

## VII

## TO THE MOTHER OF LITTLE BETSY

**T**HE first mention in the shipmaster's letters of an expected "pledge of their mutual love," is found in the following pages under date of July 28th, 1803. He is again in Cuban waters, more than ever tormented by absence from her whom he loved. "Alas I am far removed from you," he writes straight from the heart, ". . . at the moment when you want my tenderness most." He fancies her half-anxious smile as she busies herself with her "miniature needle-work," and yearns to be able to divert her attention from "thinking too anxiously on the expected critical hour."

The object of this sweet solicitude, little Elizabeth Bourne Russell, first child of its parents, was born on September 11th, 1803, and it is to be feared that Captain Russell did not reach Bristol in time to welcome his "little Betsy" into the world. Less than three weeks before that date he was still in Havana, "hoping to be ready to sail in six days at the farthest."

How long he remained ashore with his Nancy and their "babe" is not known, and his next letters, after her birth, are written from Demerara in January of the following year, 1804. Now his thoughts are chiefly of small Betsy and he shows the most serious concern about her training,

even while the precious mite is still in long clothes. Much so-called literature would suffer if compared, for thought and manner of expression, with many of the passages in the following letters of a self-taught, plodding Yankee skipper of a rough school in a rude era.

*To Mrs. Ann Russell, Bristol, R. I.*

MY DEAR FRIEND:

It is only a week since I wrote you by the *Little Ann*. yet I feel great Pleasure that another opportunity has occurred so soon, believing as I do that you will not be tired of my scribbling if I write ever so often. I had hopes ere this to have finished discharging my Cargo, but three or four holidays have intervened, and we have to boat it all to a considerable distance. In two days more I expect to have all out. I am not yet certain whether I shall purchase any molasses—it is scarce and high. I may possibly get a little, and shall get the remainder in sugars and leave here as quickly as possible. I have been much disappointed at Capt. Salisbury's not arriving, and fear that he has altered his voyage. It was the only Chance by which I expected to hear direct from *Home*, and every hour of my Absence, my anxiety for you, my love, increases.

Why could I not be with you at *this Period*, when the voice of Love and Tenderness would be so soothing to you. Ah, my sweet Ann, I am continually with you in *imagination*. I see you with a half-anxious smile busy yourself

over *your little, miniature needle work*—while I clasp you in my arms to kiss away the starting tear. Why does the dear delightful vision fade so soon?

Why, my dear Nancy—why is it that I cannot be with you, to chase the gloom of thoughtfulness from your mind, and to divert your attention from thinking too anxiously *on the expected critical hour*. Why is it that I cannot whisper to you in the accents of tenderness—in the language of the heart and say, “be not alarmed my lovely wife, I have confidence in the kind protecting Care of Providence that you will do well.” Hitherto, my love, we have been suffered to live together in real, substantial, domestic happiness—no Jealousy has disturbed our repose—no Discord has marr’d our peace. Let us then, confidently hope, that should heaven bless us with a pledge of our mutual love—that it will be a new and lasting cement to that kindred Affection which has hitherto united us. Let us call to Mind the new and serious duties which such an event will lay open to us.

*Parents and heads of a family.* It is indeed a serious and important charge—the welfare and the future well-being of an helpless individual intrusted to our care will call for all our attention and occupy much of our time. But will it not, my love, be a pleasing occupation? Trust me, I think that when fulfilling this Duty, we shall taste and realize such Joys as the world knoweth not of, neither intermeddleth with. What was it that I sought in my Nancy—and why did I woo an interest in her heart? It was as a partner for *Life*. A partaker of my joys—a

soother of my cares in all the various and trying scenes—one with whom I could lay up in season a fund of rational Pleasure the reflexion of which would be our comfort in adversity, our joy in prosperity, and would sooth and support us in the down-hill of Life and “gild with smiling beams the evening of our days.” Such my love, would be the language which my affection would prompt me continually to whisper to you. At this distance I can only pray for you, and send you my best and warmest wishes.

I hope this will find you calmly settled in your new habitation, and anxious for nothing but my safety. Again and again let me remind you to be careful of yourself, and not to be anxious for me. Adieu my Dear. Heaven’s best blessings on you.

RUSSELL.

Per. Brig *Lion*, via Boston.

HAVANA, Aug. 6th, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I have at length had the pleasure of hearing from you. Capt. Salisbury arrived last Sunday after a very long passage and though your letter was wrote so short a time after I sailed, yet it gave me more satisfaction by far, than anything that has occurred since I parted with you. I have had two men sick, but they are both recovered, and we are all, thank God in good health. Capt. Comall has been peculiarly unfortunate having buried three here, one of them a black boy of Col. Church’s.

It is excessively hot here at this season and I am extremely anxious to get away. Anxious, my love, on many

accounts, but chiefly on *yours*. I know you will endeavor to keep up your spirits, but I fear the Exertion will be too much for you.

The pathetic manner in which you described your feelings after I had sail'd, has drawn tears from eyes that are not often wet. Yet your natural fortitude aided by the kind attentions which I know you will receive from a few good hearts will, I hope, enable you to pass the time with some degree of cheerfulness till we meet again.

Tho' fools spurn Hymen's gentle powers,  
We—who improve his golden hours  
By sweet experience know  
That marriage rightly understood  
Gives to the tender and the good  
A Paradise below.

Be careful of yourself, my dearest Nancy. Remember it is a duty you owe both to me and yourself, *at this time* to keep your mind as easy as possible. That you will do so my love, I hope and trust, and may God protect and bless you. Adieu. Your R.

Per. Brig *Bayard*,  
via Newport.

HAVANA, Augt. 11th, 1803.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I wrote you on the 6th inst. by Brig *Lion*, bound to Boston, but as she did not sail till Yesterday I think it probable that this may reach you first. Although in this

dull round of business here, nothing new or material has occurred—for each succeeding day brings only a repetition of the perplexities of the preceding, yet I feel it my bounden duty to inform my lovely wife how I am, by every possible opportunity. I have this day begun to take Molasses for the first time; as I expect to take but little, and a few sugars. I hope it will not be many days before I shall be ready to leave this odious, detested place. My anxiety has of late been in some measure alleviated by the society of our friend Wm. Bradford. He is the only Person here with whom I can chat of old times and talk of those *we love best*, who while he listens can enter into my Feelings. Last evening as we took our coffee together I could see the tears of Pleasure glisten in his eye when I observed, how happy it would be if our friends could know at that moment that we were seated at the same table, both in health and both calling up former scenes to recollection.

You, my love, have many friends with you who, I trust when they talk of your husband can enter into your feelings, and some of them whom I hope, will speak of him sometimes for his own sake. It is a very great comfort to me that you have such friends with you, sensible as I am that you, *at this period*,\* will want all their Attention, and will doubly feel every instance of their Goodness. Yet I cannot reconcile it to myself that I am not with you. The soothing voice of your husband, *at this time*, I know, would be more dear to you than anything else.

\* Referring to the expected birth of their first infant.

I bid you good night my love, and for the present  
 Adieu. Your own RUSSELL.

HAVANA, Augt. 13th, 1803.

MY DEAR NANCY:

. . . I hope very soon to be away. I have one man, Danl. Greer, by name, who is very sick, but I think he will recover, the rest of us all well. But I ought not to conceal from you, my dear, that it is quite sickly in the fleet. Capt. Salisbury has three men sick on shore—two of them probably past recovery, and scarce a vessel escapes. Thus far we have been highly favoured. This goes by Capt. Wm. Sanford Brown, of Providence, an old friend of mine, who has promised, if he passes through Bristol to call on you. I know you will rejoice to see any person who has seen me, and as an esteemed Friend of mine I am sure you will welcome him. Not having time to write to any other person, you will shew this to those concerned in my business, and with my love to all,

Am etc.

J. W. RUSSELL.

A cold letter of business—my love—No, tho' the Capt. is waiting it wont do—for I have a thousand things to say to you, but I cannot commit them to paper. Very soon, I shall, God willing, be with you. Again to see you and be happy! Again to speak to you in the accents of tenderness and love; this hope, my dear girl, is all that supports me in this truly horrid place.

Adieu my dear. Your

J. W. R.



Per. Sloop *Caroline*,  
 Capt. Cornell.

HAVANA, Augt. 22nd, 1803.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

Tomorrow Capt. Cornell will sail. It has been a busy day with me, yet I feel a Pleasure in stealing a few moments from sleep to write my dear Nancy. I have this day begun to take sugars, and if the weather should be good I expect this day *week* to shape my course for home. I have now reason to hope that my absence from you will not be longer than the time I set when I sailed, yet it has been much too long to answer the impatience of my feelings, for never did I feel half so much anxiety to be at home, and never had I more reason to be disgusted with a voyage than the present. Yet I have some reasons to reckon myself fortunate; while others are daily burying their men, my crew have been thus far preserved. My sick man, whom I mentioned in my last, is now, I believe, out of danger, tho' he has had a hard struggle and is still weak and low. Captain Cornell has promised to call on you for my sake, and I am certain you will be glad to see him. Yet—I cannot help reflecting that you may be in a situation not to be able to see him. This is continually in my thoughts. Could I be with you, my love, to chase the tear of anxiety from your face—to check your anxious forebodings, and sooth your trembling heart with hope—to take part in all your cares and lull your anxious fears to rest—I should then be happy. But, Alas! I am far removed from you; the Friend—the Husband—the Partner

of your Heart, is not near you at the moment when you want his tenderness most. Yet, soon, my sweet girl, he will be with you, again to hold you in his arms—again to seek your Happiness and again to be happy in finding you so.

A Schooner arrived a few days since, Capt. Thayer, from Newport. I was much-disappointed at having no Letters, especially as Capt. Thayer told me he saw Col. Wardwell a few days previous to sailing and informed him of his destination. Yet the want of a letter from you I never can impute to want of inclination, and if I chuse to scold you I hope soon to be in a situation to do it face to face. In the mean time, My dear Nancy, may the Almighty's choicest blessings rest upon you and may you rest safe under his holy protection.

Yours ever

JOHN W. R——.

Per. Brig *Joseph*,  
Capt. Salter.

DEMERARA, Jany. 19th, 1804.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I hope you received a hasty line which I wrote you from Surinam by Capt. Wheaton of Providence. I arrived here three days since and have come to a worse market by far than ever I yet brought a Cargo to. I am selling off my Deck load and shall then leave this place immediately and try my luck among some of the Islands, but with very little encouragement of anything better than a mere ruinous voyage. I would most cheerfully sacrifice five hundred Dollars, for my own part, if I and my prop-

erty were withdrawn from it. But though I cannot help sensibly feeling the very great loss which I know I must suffer, yet I endeavor not to be too much depressed, and often console myself that I have still a *home* to fly to in adversity. I have still a lovely wife who will receive me with open arms, even when fortune frowns, I have still—I hope—a *darling Infant*, who will smile in my face, and *look* Delight to my heart when oppressed with care and misfortune. If I could at this moment only know of the well-fare of you and our sweet Betsy,\* I think I could be comparatively happy. I fear you will think, my Love, that I am in a complaining mood—'tis true I have enough to make me so—but I assure you I have kept up my spirits hitherto *tolerably* well. And now have you not found in the caresses of our darling Babe a solace, that has made you nearly forget our Separation?

I need not caution you, my love, to be tender of the sweet Innocent—but there is such a thing, my Nancy, as a false tenderness and I am not certain but I ought to caution even you against it. Whenever Tenderness—even the tenderness of a Mother degenerates into weakness, it is no longer a Virtue. You may rely upon it, that the seeds of virtuous and vicious Habits are much earlier sown than we generally imagine, and even at this tender age our little Betsey might from a false and over refined tenderness on your part, contract habits which may hereafter cost you many tears to eradicate, and the effects of

\* Elizabeth or "Betsy," the baby about whom Captain Russell has been writing, was born Sept. 11, 1803.

which may remain *through Life*. Again this foolish weakness—improperly called Tenderness—I would caution you, my love. Yet I hope and believe that your good Sense will predominate, and that you will never forget that whether *our child* shall be a Blessing or a curse to us depends—greatly depends on *you*. I should like to know if you are not at this moment hovering over a warm fire, while I am sitting in my gown and trowsers, my cabin windows all open, and wiping the sweat from my forehead. But recollect that we are twenty-five hundred miles apart. No distance however, can ever separate me in *mind* from my lovely *family*. With *them* all my best Wishes are centered, and to *them* all my Contemplations tend. You may expect to hear from me again soon, as the Yankees swarm here like bees. God bless you, my dear Ann and *our little Betsey*.

Yours ever, J. W. RUSSELL.

Per. Brig *Harriot* via Norwich.

DEMARARA, January 1st, 1804.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

A Brig is now under sail for New London, an opportunity which I did not know before of—and though I have written you both from Surinam and this place, yet I wish by every possible chance to have you hear from me. Having disposed of my Deck load I shall leave this place in a few days for some of the Islands. I have no prospect before me but of a very bad voyage, but thank God—I have my health and hope I shall live through it—live once

more to embrace *my dear Nancy and her sweet Babe*. With your many valuable Friends around you, I trust you find sources of happiness unknown in this *swamp-surrounded, Heaven-forgotten Country*.

Your own

J. W. RUSSELL.

Per. Capt. Walker.

DEMERARA, Feby. 7th, 1804.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

When I wrote you last I was in hopes ere this time to have sailed from hence, but here I still am, and shall probably be a week longer.

It would be a great relief to me amid the fatigues of a ruinous Voyage if I could hear from home and once more learn the situation of my dear wife and child, but of this I have very little reason to expect for among the shoals of American Vessels that arrive—sometimes 8 or 10 in a day—not one but the *Little Ann* is from R. Island. And lucky it is for my Neighbors that they avoid this market at this moment, except they should come with cargoes of Lumber, which are still in good demand. I returned last night from a fatiguing trip up the river in my Boat—and must set out again this morning, so that before sunrise I am writing this hasty line. There will be several vessells to sail in a few days for the Northwd. To our dear little Betsey you must talk often—very often of her Papa. Teach her to be good, teach her to be like yourself. She will then make us happy—truly so. Nat sends his love to his friends, he is very hearty, behaves well,

and is quite useful. I wish I could say the same of all my crew.

I must bid you good bye for the present. God bless you, my dear Nancy, so wishes in all Sincerity

your own

RUSSELL.

Per. Capt. Gilman, via Portsmouth.

DEMERARA, Feby. 12th, 1804.

From the fatigue and anxiety of a dull and perplexing business—from the noise and unmeaning bustle of the Crowd—I am retired to my cabin for a moment, with the dear friend of my heart. How very different, my love, I used to pass the “Sabbath’s peaceful day,” when after attending the solemn duties of publick worship, my own tranquil abode received me; my smiling Infant and cheerful Wife welcomed my returning steps. When I compare my present situation with the happiness of my dear home I could almost wish at times, that Memory would not be so faithful to joys departed. Yet *such* a wish were ungrateful, for though a review of the happiness which is gone and past always calls forth a tender melancholy, yet there is a luxury in the mental repast of such Review that I would not forego for the world. And no doubt this Principle, this Faculty was implanted in us by the Author of our being for the best of purposes—namely to add to our happiness. For we are in a great measure the creatures of imagination; and if our reasoning powers are sufficiently strong to dispel gloomy ideas and introduce in

their stead those of an agreeable cast, we can, as it were, at pleasure make our own Happiness. For instance—when I walk my deck on a lonely evening and recall to mind the scenes of domestic happiness which have been mine, how natural for imagination to step in and paint to my mind's eye the figure of my Nancy and her lovely Babe. I view each feature of the little Innocent with rapture, I catch with pleasure each opening smile, and while I look forward to the uncertainty of her future Destiny, I very often pursue the idea in imagination till I feel the tear of paternal Anxiety starting in my eye. But I trust, my lovely friend, that the period is not very distant when I shall, in delightful reality again enjoy in the bosom of my family.

What nothing earthly gives or can destroy,—  
The home's calm sunshine and the perfect joy.

You have often told me, my Dear, that you think I feel too much for you when absent. I know not how I can prize you *too much*—*but this I know, that the longer our Union has been, the stronger I find the ties that bind me to you and to Happiness, and that the frequency of being separated from you, so far from lessening the pain, only adds to its poignancy.* 'Tis true that I now feel an additional tie. When I think of our dear little Betsey, the sensation is very different from anything I ever knew before. 'Tis a Pleasure which though mingled with painful anxiety, I would not exchange for any other sensation. Do, my dear Nancy, be careful of our sweet babe

—be careful too of yourself. Indulge no unnecessary anxiety for me, but trust that I shall still do well. \* \* \*

Adieu my own dear friend, with  
*all* my best wishes, your

J. W. RUSSELL.

Per. Schooner *Patty* via Boston.

BASSE TERRE, Guadaloupe March 5th, 1804.

MY DEAR NANCY:

Once more I have it in my power to inform my lovely friend of my safety. I sailed from Demerara Feby. 25th and arrived here on the 29th. When I left the river I had two men sick of a fever, and one entirely useless by being lame. The day after I came out Mr. Tew, the mate, was taken down with the fever—so bad that at one time I quite gave him over, but thank God, he is now apparently out of danger, tho' very weak and low. The others are recovered. On my passage up I was boarded by 2 British ships, who put an officer and 4 men on board and ordered me to Antigua, under *pretense* that I was attempting to enter Martinique, which is blockaded, but after detaining me 24 hours, they thought proper in the plentitude of their goodness to suffer me to proceed. From this detail you will judge my friend, that I had a very unpleasant passage, in truth so much so, that on my arrival here, I was quite worn down with watching, anxiety and fatigue. Here too I find the markets very bad, but have determined for many reasons to sell the remainder of cargo without trying any further.



In the midst of my troubles, you will rejoice to hear that I have met with a very unexpected pleasure by finding at this place my old friend, Nat. Gladding. He sailed from home five weeks after me, and assures me that my Nancy and our dear little one were then well. You know that he ranks high in my esteem, but you can hardly conceive what a luxury it is to have for the first time in nearly three months, a friend with me to whom I can talk with confidence of my family, and who is capable of entering into my feelings. His society has been indeed a very great relief to me. But as I think not to be detained here long, I hope very soon to be with that society where alone I can be truly happy. Dear little Betsy! You can hardly imagine, my friend, how much of my time has been occupied by the image of that Innocent. If Heaven has been pleased to continue you both in health, I think she must have been a source of much comfort to you in my absence. May she long continue to be all that a fond Parent's warmest affection can wish.

It has so frequently, my love, been my lot to be obliged to inform you of my ill success when abroad and to recount to you my Troubles and Perplexities that I fear you will think I am always in a complaining mood. Yet I do not mean ever to court or encourage a gloomy and complaining disposition. And I most sincerely wish I had no cause, but when I have before me the certainty of a very losing voyage and know I have done all in my power to render it otherwise I cannot help *feeling* my Disappointment, and to whom should I go to express my feelings, if

not to the friend and partner of my heart? Are you not interested in everything that concerns me? And will not your affection lead you to kindly hear all my complaints? Do not however believe that I feel too much depressed—that kind Power that has hitherto preserved me in Difficulties, will, I trust, be still my Protector, and again restore me to my home and to happiness. Kiss our sweet baby for me and believe me, my dear Ann, ever yours

J. W. RUSSELL.

VIII

THE INTIMATE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO EUROPE

(The letters of Capt. Russell to his wife after the dates of the foregoing chapter, until the close of the year 1804, were written in the form of a journal.)

Brig MINERVA, at Sea, June 1 4th, 1804.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

You may remember that in our laughing moments I have frequently threatened that in my next voyage I would make no remarks in my journal but ordinary sea occurrences. You always told me that you did not believe this, as you were sure I would not deprive you of the Pleasure which you were pleased to say the perusal of my old Journals afforded you. If I live to return, however, you will find that in this instance I have kept my word and put my threats in execution. But as it has often been a great relief to me to put down the thoughts and feelings of the moment on paper, and as I wish to believe that you take some Pleasure in reading, as well as I in writing them—I shall now take another Method. Confining my journal strictly to ship affairs, I shall occasionally express my feelings *to* you and *for you* in the form of Letters, of which you will consider this as a beginning of a series. Should a good opportunity occur of forwarding any packet to you when abroad, I shall improve it. If not, you will

have them to peruse when I return, and to lay by for the perusal of our dear Betsey, should she live to feel that lively interest in all that concerns her Parents which I hope and trust that she will.

At the mention of our lovely Babe, *Home*, with all its pleasure rushes on my Imagination. It is now five days since I left you, but I still feel the warm kiss of conjugal affection on my lips; still see the smile of my Infant, unconscious of our Separation, and feel the soft pressure of her gentle hand.

You, my love, will have our Betsey with you, a source, I hope, of hourly and increasing satisfaction. Be comforted then, and let me not have, added to the unavoidable pangs of separation, the corroding thought that you do not bear it as you ought; but, my dear, you *will* bear it as you ought. You will reflect that our separation was needful, and that *if prosperous now for a few voyages, I may then be able to remain at home*, when you and our child may much more require my presence, and perhaps be enabled—*God grant that I may*—to spend the evening of my days in peace and competence, in the bosom of those I love.

AT SEA, June 17th, 1804.

This day is Sunday. A week since I had parted from you, and while attending the solemn exercises of the day a thousand things recalled to my mind my dear Nancy and her Babe. Two hours' ride would then have carried me to you, now many—very many leagues of Ocean sep-

arate us. Yet the day is remarkably pleasant, and more so as we now have a fair wind—and it has constantly been right ahead for five days past. I hope, my Love, you have been able to spend this day to better Purpose, and more congenial to your Feelings than I have. You will probably attend Public Worship—some part of the day at least. You will see those you love and when you return home while you kiss our Betsey, you will ask her—“where’s her Papa”—sweet little Innocent! I truly envy you the pleasure you will take with her. *Envy*—no, that I dont. I rejoice my love, that you have such a consolation—I rejoice and am thankful that you will have such a source of enjoyment and such a treasure of happiness to sooth your feelings in my absence. May health, innocence, and all Heaven’s best blessings be yours and hers, my love. Good night.

AT SEA, June 24th, 1804.

Tedious and slow the hours move on when absent from those I love. When blessed with your society, my sweet Wife—time, unfelt, uncounted, glided by. I have now been thirteen days at sea, the whole of which time, with an exception of only thirty hours the wind has been ahead. In consequence of which I have gone further North than I otherwise should have done—so that it is quite cold. Last night we had excessive heavy rains, then entirely calm, now a light breeze from the Westward has sprung up. Once more we have a fair wind—but so very foggy that we cannot see twice the vessell’s length. One day

of the week past we caught two fine porpusses\*—this has afforded us plenty of oil and some excellent meals. We expect soon to be on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland—when in all probability we shall have plenty of fish. But while I am thus detailing to you my situation and my prospects, what are you about my love, and how do you spend your time? But at this distance I can only waft you my blessing, and say to both—Adieu. J. W. R.

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, July 1st, 1804.

This is the third Sunday I have spent on board. This day we are twenty days out and have made but a small part of our Passage, having had constant head winds with the exception of thirty hours only, since we left Newport. Every day has been foggy but for a week past it has been so thick that at mid-day we frequently could not see the vessell's length. The cold too has been very uncomfortable. We have now been five days on the Grand Bank of Newfoundland—have made several attempts to fish—but have caught only four Cod. Yesterday we had a very heavy gale of wind from S. E. with violent rains, wet, cold and uncomfortable. but today it is moderate and were it not for the thick fog it would be pleasant. I have put on a clean shirt, dry clothes, have shav'd myself and have set down for a few moments to say a word to the dear friend of my heart. Why is it, my dear, that I am not permitted in reality to sit down by you and happy in the smile of my wife and the innocent endearments of

\* The shipmaster's own spelling.

our sweet child to pass again “the Sabbath’s peaceful day.” Why is it that one who enjoys himself so well with his friends—who appreciates so highly the endearing joys of social and domestic life—why is it that he should be obliged to pass so large a portion of his time in a manner so discordant to his feelings, and so far removed from all he holds dear? Alas! these enquiries are fruitless—they cannot be answered.

“The ways of Heaven are dark and intricate;  
Puzzled with mazes and perplexed with errors,  
Our understanding traces them in vain  
Nor sees with how much art the windings run  
Nor where the regular confusion ends.”

The dealings of Providence towards us are certainly dark and mysterious—but it is our bounden duty never to forget that our concerns are in the hands of HIM who “seeth not as man seeth.”—and “Where we cant unriddle learn to trust.” And perhaps it would be no very difficult matter to demonstrate that the dealings of Providence even in the allotment of the things of this Life, are more equal than we are at first view disposed to believe. The fair way of doing this would be, when we are disposed to murmur at our particular allotment, to compare our situation with that of others—not of Strangers, but of those whom we know best. And when we have well weighed all their enjoyments, cast into the other scale what we know of their anxieties, of their secret griefs, to *then* say—“who is there with whom we would exchange

situations?" If none—then instead of murmuring, we ought to bless God for our portion of happiness and be content. May His blessing ever rest on my dear wife and child.

AT SEA, July 4th, 1804.

This is the great National Holiday throughout the United States. A day of feasting and rejoicing, firing of cannon and rabbling of drums, a day for drinking, carousing and all kinds of tipsy mirth, a day for Republican spouters and Republican bawlers to regale the ears of Republican fools with republican nonsense. Yet I mean not to ridicule the occasion of this festival. No, far from it. It is—it ought to be a proud day in American annals, and long I trust will the memory of the Heroes and Sages of *this day* be held in grateful veneration by every genuine American. But the mushroom patriots and politicians of our times—headed by those of foreign growth with which our country so plentifully abounds—who will bawl in our ears this day the wondrous blessings of the present administration, and talk loudly of the spirit of '76—they know as little about what *that spirit* means as I do of the Chinese language, or the wonders of the new Utopia—the delightful Louisiana.

Were I on shore, I should probably be sick of the hubbub of the day. Indeed I am sick of talking of it—away with it! Yet I should like to know how you, my love, get through it. I think you will not stay at home. It will be too near the scene of action. And Cousin Becca



is not there to protect you. How much my dear friend, you will miss that honest, worthy girl, especially when I am absent, but I hope some time or other again to have her with us.—But the *day*—how are you getting through it? I remember your telling me that you spent it last year with your Aunt DeWolf. Perhaps you will take little Betsey in your arms and again pass the time with that good and amiable woman. Alas—she deserves a better fate. I fear her trials have been too much for her and that she is almost broken-hearted. Formed to be the delight of her friends—to do honor to society, and to enjoy social and domestic life in its most refin'd state—I still have *hopes* that tranquility and happiness may yet be hers. If you are with her this day I know it will be a comfort to her. Wherever you spend it my love, may it be in peace and happiness, and at evening may the cheering smiles of our darling Babe make you forget, for the moment the absence of your husband

J. W. R.

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, July 11th, 1804.

One month has now elap'ed since I sailed from Newport. The first three weeks we had almost constant head winds, but for eight days past we have had a very fine run—indeed the best that I ever made in the same space of time, and we are now drawing something near to soundings on the European Coast. The weather has been for the most part foggy, rainy, cold and uncomfortable, not a single pleasant dry day have we had on the Passage. At this

moment the fog is so thick that we cannot see twice the vessel's length. This weather has been very unfavorable for my poor Danish sailor who was sick when we sail'd. He has been very ill the whole time, has a constant distressing cough, and there is but little probability that he will ever be better. I am however favour'd with a good Crew—at least thus far they have pleased me very much—which is a very great relief in a long voyage. How do you think I contrive to pass away the time on such a lengthy passage? Indeed, my sweet friend, I hardly know how myself. Keeping my people employed in the day time takes up much of my time, I read some—though I have but few Books. The Bible which your kind attention put up for me is often in my hands. After dinner I generally sleep an hour, my mind being then most at ease as all the people are then on Deck. This is the best rest that I have. “Then sweet is my sleep—and my dreams are of those whom I love best.” But who my sweet friend in my absence shall watch by the cradle of our sleeping Child—shall wellcome the opening eyes and catch her endearing smile? Ah, no one can, at least, not with a Parents' feelings. Yet this privilege is *yours* and grateful it must be to your Heart. While then you view our Infant with a Mother's fondness—never, Oh! never for a moment forget a Mother's *duty*. Great and important is your charge, my love. May you fullfill it wisely and faithfully. Adieu.

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AT SEA, July 16th, 1804.

We have had a head wind for three days past—part of the time laying too—rainy, cold and disagreeable—today it is more favourable and very moderate. The sun has shone out for eight hours this day, and that is more than we have had of Sunshine at one time on our passage. Last night I got soundings in 85 fathom water; this morning we spoke the ship *Columbian*—packet, Capt. Hunt, twenty eight days from Philadelphia bound to Amsterdam. I have been on board and dined there; it being almost calm. There is a Gentleman and his wife passengers on board—but they were not very conversable—the captain, however was social and having been last year in Antwerp, I obtained some information from him. It is some satisfaction my dear Nancy, to speak with any ship when we have been many days at Sea, but it is quite a treat when we are thus situated and can meet and converse with a countryman. It seems almost like meeting an old friend. Friends! Ah, dear friend of my heart where are you—do you not sometimes cast an anxious thought “on him that’s far awa’”—Often do *his* thoughts revert to you and his dear Betsey.

AT SEA, July 17th, 1804.

I cannot help communicating to my dear Nancy the pleasure I experienced last night. Altho’ we have had no very bad weather yet the whole passage it has been cloudy, rainy, foggy and cold. The Moon is now nine days old,

last night I saw it for the first time—the air mild and serene—light breeze and sea very smooth. I staid on Deck till 10 o'clock admiring the beauty of the scene. As the sun does not set till 8 o'clock it was a beautiful twilight at ten. At midnight I again came on deck, at half past one the daylight began to show itself in the N. E., there being now about only three hours of the night that Daylight is not perceptible. Everything around seemed quiet and tranquil. I walk'd the Deck and enjoyed all the luxury of the scene. Ah, if my sweet friend was now by my side—said I—how richly indeed I could enjoy it—I hope however that she and our lovely babe are safe in peaceful slumber at this hour.

*July 18th.*—This morn'g. at 1 o'clock we saw Scilly light and at 9 o'clock descried the Lands End. Once more the fog-surrounded Island of Great Britain is in sight—several fishermen came off with plenty of fresh fish—new potatoes, onions, etc., etc. With these we are making merry.

J. W. R.

CAMPOERE, July 23d, 1804.

DEAR NANCY:

I have had a remarkable pleasant run through the British Channel and along the coast of Flanders, and now after a passage of 42 days I am safely anchored in one of the mouths of the River Scheld. I have been on shore here. It is a neat little town, belonging to the Dutch. Tomorrow I expect to proceed up the river.

FLUSHING, July 24th, 1804.

This day we came up from Campoere and anchored off this place. This is a large and handsome Town—belonging also to the Dutch, the houses are most of them very elegant—canals along the principal streets—bordered with Walks of beautiful trees—and the Pavements as neat and clean as Mrs. Bosworth's parlour. An American Consul, Mr. Sigory, resides here, who has treated me very politely. I found here also two American ships from Antwerp, but neither of them bound home, so that I can as yet find no opportunity to let my sweet friend know of my safety. I hope however soon to find some mode of conveyance. To-morrow I expect to proceed up the river to Antwerp—it is ninety miles from hence.

ANTWERP, July 26th, 1804.

Yesterday morning we left Flushing and having a fair wind at 5 in the afternoon we anchor'd off this town. The river is a noble one and passes through one of the finest and best cultivated countries in the world. At the distance of 50 miles we descried one of the steeples of Antwerp, said to be the highest but one in Europe. but I must defer a description of the town until I have seen more of it. Here then I am in my destined port, with a prospect of making a tolerable voyage. At the distance of four thousand miles from me you are perhaps counting the days of my absence and calculating the probability of my being in port. Our little Betsey too—by this time I suppose she begins to totter about—and perhaps to

prattle. Will you teach her, my love, to lisp Papa's name in his absence—will you teach her to talk of him and teach her to love him—God bless you both and for the present

Adieu.

ANTWERP, July 29th, 1804.

At a late hour on Sunday night I have set down to the employment most congenial to my feelings, to dedicate a few moments to my wife. I went this morning to the Great Church. It is a very noble and very ancient Building, but now much out of repair, having suffered much when this place was taken in the last war by its present owners, but it is now repairing. It is very high and finished in the ancient Gothic style, being arched to the roof and supported at small distances by immense marble pillars. There are a few good paintings, but most of them I am told are taken away. There are several other large Churches here, but most of them are now used for public or private Stores etc. The Dwelling houses are all of stone, mostly from four to eight stories high, most of them handsome, and many very elegant.

I din'd this day on board a Philadelphia Brig, Capt. Hawthorne, we having come into Campoere and up the river together. Towards night we walked out of town and strolled into several of the beautiful Gardens, with which this vicinity abounds. In this walk we probably saw at least four thousand people—strolling like ourselves. It is impossible for any description of mine to do justice

to a scene like this, the beauty of the harbours all over—shadowed with thick arched trees; the neatness of the gravel walks; the variety and elegance of the flower gardens by which they are surrounded; the plenty and cheapness of all kinds of refreshments and the whimsical groups of mortals which were hunting for the phantom Pleasure in these Elysian Fields—all together presented a scene peculiarly adapted to the romantic taste of your Russell. And you may be sure it was highly enjoyed by him. But how often my love, did I say to myself with a sigh—Ah! how richly indeed could I enjoy all this were my Nancy by my side. To catch the animation from your speaking countenance and to point out to you the endless variety of beauties by which we were surrounded, would have been a luxurious treat to me. But it cannot be—far distant from you I write unknowing whether my Nancy's eye will ever trace the lines.—but *Hope* whispers me, she will. May angels guard you and our sweet babe. Good night.

J. W. R.

ANTWERP, Aug. 3d, 1804.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

We this day finish unloading our cargo, and expect shortly to leave this port. I have been today in company with all the American masters here—say, four of us—to view the steeple of the Grand Church of Antwerp, and enjoy the fine view from its top. The steeple itself is an object worthy of attention. It is built of stone and is six hundred and fifty feet high. It contains eighty two bells,

the largest of which weighs eighteen thousand pounds. The face of the Clock is twenty six feet in diameter. It strikes the quarters as well as the hours, and the bells chime every seven and a half minutes—so that we have music almost constantly. But the view of the town, the river and the adjoining country (which with the help of our glasses we could overlook to a great distance) exceed by far anything of the kind that I ever yet beheld. The town is mostly surrounded by meadows watered by innumerable canals, and covered by flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. From the top of this steeple we counted in the adjoining country the spires of sixty three steeples.

Can you not figure to yourself, my love, my situation and feelings at that moment, elevated many hundred feet above the tops of the houses—having the whole of a large and populous city under my eye, and an extensive view of a most beautiful and highly cultivated country in every direction. One thing only was wanting in the prospect. I wish'd to extend my glass so as to take a peep at my much lov'd home, to see our good cousin Becca sitting little Betsy on the mantle piece and view her Mother's smiles as she caught the features of her darling babe. Yet, as it was I had much to interest my feelings.

This church was erected by Spaniards, when Spain, then in her glory—possess'd the Sovereignty of all this delightful country. We are told it was one hundred years in building. I called to mind the many Revolutions that have taken place since this stupendous fabric rose. Spain—the once lordly possessor of this domain is



sunk in lethargy and insignificance, Austria—your late master—weak and indecisive, was unable to preserve you—and—after many eventful revolutions—after ages of blood-shed and carnage—you are become an Appendage to grasping France, another feather in the cap of Bounaparte—

“Alas! poor human Nature”

I have several times visited Mr. Van Bree, said to be one of the finest painters now in Europe, and as he has been very attentive to me, I have had a rich feast in viewing and admiring his beautiful and interesting works. His wife too excels in that noble art. I have set by her side and seen her, in ten minutes sketch the features of a face so accurately that I should know it among a thousand.

I had not forgotten that this place has produced some of the most celebrated painters in the world. Rubens and Vandyke were natives of Antwerp, and their names will be repeated with enthusiasm so long as a taste for the fine arts remains. Do not laugh now, my sweet friend, and call me an enthusiast.

I have much more to say to you but being near my departure from this I shall now be busily engaged. At my next leisure I shall again resume my favorite employment. Till then and ever, my love, may God bless you.

Your own, J. W. R.

## IX

THE INTIMATE JOURNAL OF A VOYAGE TO EUROPE  
(Continued)

MINERVA—OFF WILLIAMSTAD, Aug. 14th, 1804.

I have, my sweet friend, been thro' such a scene of bustle and confusion since I wrote you last that I could not bring myself to set quietly down and chat with my Nancy. At Antwerp I had the misfortune to have the whole of mine and the mate's adventures\* seized by the Custom House, and tho' I have good hopes of their being released yet I was obliged to leave there in a state of uncertainty, determined as I was not to detain the vessell a moment on that account.

I left Antwerp on the eighth inst. and on my arrival at Flushing found an Embargo laid on the vessells bound to sea. I at length obtained permission to take the Brig thro' an inland passage to Helvoetsluys in Holland and thence to sea. 'Tis a tedious and difficult navigation of 150 miles distant. We have had these five days dreadful gales of wind, but tis now once more moderate and I am anchored within 18 miles of Helvoetsluys. I hope from thence to proceed immediately to sea.

I have been on shore to-day at this little town—and again had occasion to remark and admire the extreme neatness

\*Their personal share of, or investment in, the vessel's cargo.

of every Dutch settlement. Indeed this inland passage has given me an opportunity to see the finest part of Holland, certainly one of the pleasantest and best cultivated countries in the world. But, "the eye is never satisfied with seeing—nor the ear with hearing"—and I would give up in a moment all the enchanting views in this country for a stroll on Bristol Common, or a scramble over the rocks at Dighton, with my dear Nancy at my side. Yes, my love, were I with you and our sweet babe, I should no more think on the neat streets, the canals, and the beauteous groves of Holland. How often have I, my love, within a few weeks past taken some playful infant in my arms, and thought on our dear Betsey. Does the little cherub begin to prattle yet—does she begin to totter about? When once she begins to talk to you I often figure to myself that her innocent chat will serve to beguile many an uneasy hour. But your hours, my love, I hope, will not many of them be uneasy. May they be tranquil and happy as you deserve, and soon, very soon may you share them with your own

R—.

HELVOETSLUYS, Aug. 15th, 1804.

MY DEAR NANCY:

I wrote you after my arrival at Antwerp which I hope came safely to hand. I left that place on the 8th inst. and shall be ready to sail to-morrow intending to reach St. Petersburg if possible. I have yet had no direct opportunity of writing home, and this goes by port to Amster-

dam, so that by this round-about way I cannot say any of the good things to you of which my heart is full. Nor will I now forward a large packet of letters which I have written to you, but wait some direct conveyance. Yet my Nancy will not think from this hasty note that she is for a moment forgotten.

May this find you, my Nancy, enjoying every blessing which health and innocence can bestow, embrace our dear Betsey for me. My cordial love to all our old friends.

Adieu and God bless you.

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

HELVOETSLUYS, Augt. 18th, 1804.

DEAR FRIEND OF MY HEART:

I was in hopes ere this to have been as far as Copenhagen—and so indeed I should be if we could have gone direct to sea from Antwerp. But here we are still wind bound. Have made three attempts to get out, but without success. I can as yet find no direct Opportunity to write you, but since my arrival here I wrote you a hasty line, and enclos'd it to a merchant in Amsterdam—which I hope will reach you.

I have here taken on board a passenger for Copenhagen, a Danish Captain who left his ship at Antwerp. He is a man of information—is sociable, and I trust his society will be a relief to me. With the gentleman for my companion, I have been on shore this afternoon and purchased some fresh provisions and vegetables, which are now very plenty in every town of Holland. But our best

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treat was to come on board and over a glass of warm punch to toast *our Wives and Sweethearts* and talk of our families and the pleasures of domestic life.

Good night my love.

HELVOETSLUYS, Augt. 20th, 1804.

I sometimes think, my dear friend, that there is a spell laid upon us, and that we are doomed to spend the season in Holland. Ever since I left Antwerp it has been heavy, blowing weather and here we are still wind-bound. What adds to the disappointment is that if I could get out to sea the winds have always been fair for me. So that if the Embargo had not prevented my sailing from Flushing, I should, before this time, have been in Copenhagen—indeed much further if I concluded to proceed further. *Now* the season is fast wearing away so that there is no probability of my being able to go beyond Copenhagen, and whether I can procure my cargo there, is very uncertain. I really begin to grow peevish and fretful, but still endeavor to keep quiet.

I picked up a Dutch newspaper the other day—I know nothing of the language—and could find no one to read it in English for me. But I saw an article under New York head, which—by what I could make out—related to the death of General Hamilton, and that he was killed, in a duel, by Col. Burr. Is it possible this can be so? Genl. Hamilton was, beyond all question the first political Character in the U. S. and after our ever-regretted Washington, America could not have sustained a heavier loss.

And is this man dead—killed by the V. Prest. of the U. S.? Shame on these false notions of Honor—Shame on the men who countenance such principles!

But I am sick of this dreadful subject. We will quit it, and say once more adieu—

J. W. R.

HELVOETSLUYS, Augt. 23d, 1804.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I am almost distracted with our long detention here—'tis now nine days since I first anchor'd in this place, and it has not been possible to get to Sea. The whole period, and indeed ever since I left Antwerp it has been blowing hard gales, and cold like the November winds in America. The Season is fast wearing away—by this time I should have been nearly or quite to St. Petersburg. Now I expect I must give up all thoughts of going further than Copenhagen.

This day arrived here the ship *Hope*, in twenty six days from Providence—but not a word can I hear from my dear Home. Only think, my love, a Ship that came from a place so near you—and I have been so long absent—and yet can hear nothing from my wife! Yet I had no right to expect letters. You would as soon have thought of writing to me by way of Canton, but how easy would it have been for me to receive letters, had I left proper directions with you! Had you wrote to Amsterdam, Rotterdam or any port in Holland they would have been sent by post to Antwerp in two days; and had I sailed from

thence, they would be forwarded on by post to Copenhagen or even to Petersburg. What a treat now, at this moment, would be a letter from my dear Nancy! When I am fretted and full of anxiety—to hear the soothing accents of affection, and read the heart-felt effusions of the dear wife of my heart, would be a luxury indeed.

The Danish Captn. whom I have on board is a man of sense and information. He has been sixteen years Master of a ship and so long a married man—he has several children. It gives me much pleasure to trace the glow of affection in his face, when he looks at his embroidered waistcoat, and says, “This was done by my daughter,” or when he displays his neatly worked pocket-book and exclaims, “This was the work of another of my children.” With him I sometimes go on shore here, but we are sure to get a wetting, and there is neither amusement nor information to compensate for the trouble of going. We spend our time, therefore, on board between eating, drinking, sleeping, walking the Deck—viewing the squalls as they rise and fretting at our ill luck. But you, my love, are much better employed. Could I, at this moment, take little Betsey in my arms and see you smile—I would promise not to fret again for a week.

Good night.

HELVOETSLUTS, Augt. 24th, 1804.

Ever since I left Bristol I have been at intervals scribbling to you, my dear Nancy, but have yet had no direct opportunity of forwarding a letter to you. But last night

several ships came down from Rotterdam, and among them one bound to Boston and one to Newbury Port. By one or other of these my GREAT packet must go. Should it come safe to your hands—as I hope it will—do not be frightened at its size. You can, if you please, be a month in perusing it, but if you feel one half the pleasure in looking it over that I have in thus unbosoming myself to you at leisure moments I shall be amply gratified. You will find this bundle, my love, a little history of my feelings, and in some measure an account of my progress and transactions during the voyage. Ah, if I could see you as you open it, could hear you say to our dear babe—“This came from your Papa.” But this pleasure cannot be mine. Still I have good hopes of finding Letters from you at Copenhagen—if I ever can clear of this detested place. Well—good bye—and God bless you, my sweet Ann—Remember me particularly to all our valued friends.

Yours ever,

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, Augt. 29th, 1804.

Congratulate me, my Nancy, I am once more clear from Embargoes and head winds. The fog-surrounded shores of Holland are out of sight, and I am again floating in the open ocean. The day before yesterday we succeeded in getting out from Helvoetsluys—tho' with much trouble—having two men sick, the wind right ahead, and having to beat out in a narrow passage, about as wide as Bristol street, for more than five hours. I was eight days



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in coming from Antwerp to Helvoetsluys, and detained in this last place twelve days more.

You may well think that my Quaker-like patience was about exhausted, thus to see the best of the season wear away, as by it all hopes of reaching St. Petersburg are irretrievable lost, and thereby I much fear that the great object of my Voyage will be defeated. Well, I cannot help it—the Causes have been such as no human Power could control. What has made my long detention harder to bear is, that it should happen to be in such a horrid place. I have been in many towns of Holland and whether large or small have always been pleased, and found something to admire, except at Helvoetsluys. There everything was the reverse of pleasant, and there I wore away twelve of the most anxious days of my life. Blessed be God—I have escaped.

The day before I sailed from Helvoetsluys, I forwarded by a Boston ship a large packet to you. Should it reach you, my love, I am persuaded you will be gratified to find how often you occupy the thoughts of your absent friend. The best feelings of my heart my dear are ever with you, and when, in my mind's eye I hold sweet converse with my Nancy and look at our lovely, smiling babe—I forget for the moment, my anxiety and my cares. My Danish passenger has already taught me some bad tricks—what think you, of my drinking a cup of tea every morning at 6 o'clock—that is—two hours before breakfast—and again in the afternoon. This is now my constant habit. I fear that I shall become quite a *tea-sipper*.

The weather is remarkably fine, and with a favourable breeze for thirty hours, we expect to see the land on the coast of Norway.

COPENHAGEN, Sept. 2nd, 1804.

Well, my dear friend, I am safe and anchor'd in this harbour. A pleasant passage of six days only has brought us from Helvoetsluys. Last night we anchor'd at Elsinore—from whence I wrote a hasty line to Mr. DeWolf. We are not yet allowed to go on shore, as we must first be examined as to sickness, etc. And it being Sunday the officers did not come to us. Tired and fatigued I have only time before I sleep, to say one word to my love, and remember at the same time, our dear Babe.

COPENHAGEN, Sept. 4th, 1804.

I have concluded to try to procure my cargo here, and have this day entered at the Custom House, and expect tomorrow to discharge my ballast. There is only one American ship in port. The Capt. I have not yet seen, but I understand she sails soon, when I again hope that my dear Nancy will have an opportunity to hear from me. I have yet seen but little of this great city, the Capital of Denmark, but I shall probably be able to give you some description of it during my stay here. I dined this day with my passenger, Capt. Ferguson—quite in the family way. His wife is a very decent and respectable looking woman; they have three fine daughters, the eldest four-

teen years old; one son of four years, and a fine, fat boy exactly the age of our little Cherub.

I promise myself much pleasure with this fine family—true it is that they none of them speak or understand English except the Father, but the language of affection and kindness, my love, is a universal one, and is easily comprehended by all nations, so that I am already a great favourite with all the children, and especially the youngest. When I see this child tottering across the floor, in its first attempts to walk, how can I help thinking that probably my sweet wife is *now* engaged in teaching our little Betsey, her *first steps*. May her first and latest steps, my love, be in the path of virtue—and long may she be a blessing to you and to her and your affectionate

J. W. RUSSELL.

COPENHAGEN, Sepr. 9th, 1804.

I have often remarked how very ready the human Mind is to seize upon every trivial circumstance that can yield us pleasure; and especially when we have long been among foreigners, whose manners as well as language are uncouth to us. At such a time, a trifle that would pass unnoticed at any other period, is then seized upon with avidity, and the return of social and friendly intercourse, tho' with strangers, affords a Pleasure which those only can describe who have felt it.

Since my arrival here I fell in with a Mr. Cartwright, an Englishman, who keeps a store here. Having called

on him for the purchase of some necessaries I was invited into his house to take tea. His wife I found was a mantau maker, and had with her three girls who had all been apprentices to her—but the eldest was now out of her time. As they were all very social, and the eldest girl, as I thought, uncommonly agreeable, I entered into the spirit of the conversation and soon forgot that I was a stranger.

The next afternoon, accident or *design*, found me again with them at tea time. And after tea I joined them in a walk on the Battery—a most romantic and delightful place. It was not the less interesting to me for having another married Lady and two lovely children of the party. In this walk, which was prolonged to a late hour, I felt more and more pleased with Polly, the girl whom I spoke of. I found her sensible and well informed, and there was something peculiarly modest and interesting in her manners. I even fancied that she greatly resembled my Nancy, and this idea, you may be sure, did not make her less interesting to me.

Having called on them next morning, Mr. Cartwright asked me if I would come in the evening to Polly's wedding. Supposing him to be in jest, I told him No—unless I was to be a party concerned. He informed me that I was too late for that, and turning round, introduced me to Capt. Browering, of an English ship, and seriously assured me that Capt. B. and Polly were to be married that evening. Polly herself to whom I applied confirmed the intelligence, and having had my invitation

warmly renewed—you may be sure that I did not fail to call in the evening.

I was accompanied by Capt. Treadwell, the only American now here. The ceremony was over before we came in—but we found a clever, tho' not a large party assembled—had a very decent supper, and you will judge whether the time passed agreeably or not when I tell you that we did not leave there till two o'clock in the morning. As the Bride was next day to set out with her husband for England, I called in the forenoon to take leave. What think you my dear, of this, for an acquaintance of forty eight hours—heigh ho.

COPENHAGEN, Sept. 10th, 1804.

As I wish my Nancy to participate in all that gives me pleasure, as soon as I find anything amusing or interesting, I wish to communicate it at once to you. One of my late excursions was greatly interesting to me and no doubt, would have been so to you my love, but you can form but a faint idea of it from any description of mine. I mean, a visit which I paid to the King's Cabinet of Natural History, his collection of rare and curious things, and a noble set of valuable paintings—but why should I tell you that I sat in a large, old fashioned arm chair made of solid Gold—that I saw many curious and heavy ancient vessells of the same metal? Why should I mention the numerous monsters which have been collected from all parts of the world, some of which excited Wonder and the others Horror? There was nothing so gratifying

to me, in any of the rooms, as the Gallery of paintings. Among these the first that caught the attention of my companions (our party consisted of six) was a painting of the finest Statue in the world. I mean the *Venus de Medicis*,—but the one which interested my feelings most, was the Crucifixion, by Paul Veronese. I could not have thought it possible for Art to exhibit anything so wonderfully natural as the countenance of our Savior—where the different emotions of extreme Agony and exemplary Patience are so blended, that it is hard to tell which prevails. The painter has chosen to represent this dreadful scene at the precise moment when our blessed Redeemer so pathetically recommends his Mother to the care of the beloved disciple, as recorded in John 19th Ch. 26th and 27th ver. The Disciple is represented at the foot of the cross, supporting the fainting Mary and looking up with humble Reverence to catch the expiring accents of his beloved Master. The whole together forms a group, which I think can never be viewed without emotion.

The next most interesting, and by many thought to be the first, is Adam and Eve weeping over the murdered body of Abel. The painter has succeeded admirably in describing the different emotions of grief in the manly features of Adam and the softer form of Eve. And both their countenances exhibit strong marks of that awful *Horror* which they must have felt on viewing the first Execution of that *dreadful* Sentence which their disobedience had drawn down.

Are you tired, my love, with all this rant? Well, I assure you that I was not tired, after spending three hours in that place, and nothing but the night's coming on, could have induced me to leave it so soon. But you see I have exhausted my paper, if I have not your patience, so once more my best and dearest friend, adieu.

COPENHAGEN, Sept. 12th, 1804.

Do you remember, my dear friend, that when I left home you put up for me a lock of your hair and another of our sweet little Betsey's, for the purpose of being set in a locket? At Antwerp I could not find an artist to my mind, but here I was directed to a good one. I gave him my directions and this day I have received it, and am extremely pleased with the execution. While viewing these precious relics of all I hold dear on earth—while kissing, with rapture, this memento of a beloved wife and child—it occurred to my recollection that this day is the birthday of our little darling. I shall keep it as a day of rejoicing on that account and shall close it with my humble petition to the giver of all good that his choicest blessings may descend and rest upon our sweet Babe.

Do you think my love, that we reflect sufficiently on the great and important duty which we owe to our God—to our Country—and to our innocent offspring, in the capacity of Parents? I fear my dear, that we do not. As there is no character so respectable in life as that of a good Parent,

so there is no Duty of so much consequence to Society as the right Management and Education of our children.

It has long been my opinion that there is not that difference in the natural disposition of children which many suppose. I allow there may be *some*, but I believe far the greater part depends on Instruction. Hear the words of the wisest man. "Train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it." One of the best English moral writers too, has told us, when speaking of a child, "Watch the bent of his inclination—set him right in his youth—and let no evil habit gain strength with his years—so shall he encrease in virtue as he encreases in years, and the fruits of Parental instruction in youth, shall be a middle age of Usefulness and an old age of Respectability."

As the care and instruction of our sweet Betsey must for the most part my love, devolve on you—I cannot too often mention this subject, I cannot too forcibly enjoin it upon you. Do not imagine, my dear, that I distrust your judgment—No—my fears are that you may sometimes permit your Affections to mislead your better Judgment. And perhaps too, you have not considered with the attention that I have, how very early it is necessary to check, guide and govern the disposition of an infant. A system of severity, I certainly shall never practice, or recommend to you—but a system of firmness I would enjoin with all the eloquence I could muster.

Above all things, my love, let me caution you against *lying* to our Child. Do not start at the harshness of this



phrase. What but lying can I call it when I hear a parent tell a child "You *shall* do such a thing—you *must not* have such a thing," and yet in a few moments, rather than hear the cries or importunities of the pet—say, "Here, do take it." There is no way so effectual as this to teach a child that they can have their own way, when they chuse to teaze for it. And I believe they always, and very early in life, take care to profit by it.

Indeed I am apt to think that half the trouble we have with our Children—if not half the Mischief that takes place in society, arises from this single source of thus lying to our children. I would have the word of a Parent to a Child, even on the most trivial occasion, be as sacred as an oath, and having once said—"You shall not do thus—You shall not have this"—*let no whining or crying, let no Importunity ever tempt you to recede.* A child very early learns whether they can get anything by teasing or not, and when they once find that they never can succeed by it, trust me, they will soon be tired of trying it.

I believe you know my Sentiments too well, my love, to think that I shall ever be an Advocate for a system of Severity with my child. No, Firmness in doing our duty towards her I would always inculcate, but severity I abhor. I think it much easier to keep a child in the path of duty without being severe, than it is with severity. The strongest of all fears which I would inculcate, would be the fear of offending its Parents, and that, not because they must expect to be corrected—but because they will thereby lose the Affection of the Parent, and as a child

certainly should be taught that its Parents, love is the greatest Earthly blessing—if duly impressed with that sentiment, surely the fear of losing or lessening that love will be the strongest motive to do well.

Forgive me, my wife, these hasty observations—they are dictated as I said before, not from any distrust of you my love, but from the warmest solicitude for the welfare of my Child. It is a subject that dwells near my heart, and you will doubtless hear often of it from me. For the present, good bye, my Nancy. May angels guard you and our sweet babe. May every succeeding Birthday find her increasing in virtue and goodness and long may she live to bless my Nancy and her affectionate

J. W. RUSSELL.

X

HOMEWARD BOUND!

*(The Journal of the European Voyage Concluded)*

COPENHAGEN, Sepr. 23rd, 1804.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

We have finished loading the Brig and expect very shortly to set sail. Think you that my heart does not bound at the prospect! When next we set sail we are bound directly home—to that *dear home* which contains all my treasures.

Even now I seem to hear my Nancy's voice  
 Welcome my safe return with accents bland,  
 And see my lovely smiling little babe  
 Draw near to share my kiss, and clasp my hand.

Soon, my dear, I hope the dear delightful Vision will be realized. Soon may the period arrive when safe from the toils of the sea, I shall again find peace and happiness by my own fireside. Not but I have found in this place much to entertain me. I have also visited Fredericksburg two miles without the gates, which is the summer residence of the King, and there I had the honor of seeing His Majesty of Denmark. He is a poor unhappy being—having been affected in his brain ever since his separation from the Queen—which was twenty four years ago. It was a melancholy and tragic event which I have often read with tears. If you do not remember it I will tell it

you when we meet. Adjoining the palace of Fredericksburg is an extensive park, and a large Garden, in which all strangers are permitted to walk. I spent several hours there very pleasantly. There are some artificial ponds which contain a variety of scarce and curious fowls. There are also many rare animals, and among the rest a Zebra, which you know is said to be the handsomest animal in the world.

But it would take up too much paper to describe to you half the interesting things in that Garden. It may serve sometime for tea table talk when my Nancy and I are together. I have visited the China fabric here, at which they boast of making the finest porcelain in the world. It may be so—for it certainly exceeds anything that I ever saw from China. The ornamental things were curious and elegant beyond conception; but they were excessively dear, as was indeed all their fine ware—much too dear for my purse. I fell in love with a very elegant Coffee pot, but was obliged to leave it behind me—as it was estimated at the moderate sum of fifty Dollars. There are certainly a great many things in this City worthy the attention of a curious Stranger—I have had leisure to see but little in a very cursory manner. Yet I have seen much to give me pleasure, and that pleasure, I wish my sweet friend to share with me.

COPENHAGEN, Sept. 30th, 1804.

My business here being all completed, I have now been several days waiting for a fair wind. We have left the Harbour and are now anchor'd in the King's Road, anx-

iously watching the weather and chiding the westerly wind. Yet I have been something relieved by the company of two American Captains, from Petersburg, who stopped here a few days since, and like me, are waiting for a fair wind. They are Capt. Rodman and Capt. Page, both belonging to Providence. Being so near neighbors, we have soon become acquainted, and though we never saw each other before—yet we find much to talk about that is interesting to us all. You can hardly conceive, what a pleasure it is when at a great distance from *Home*, to meet with a Countryman, especially if he happens to live near us, as we then can talk of Persons and Things that are known to us both. We soon forget, that we met, a few hours before, as total strangers. *This* is one of those cordials, my love, which Heaven has kindly scattered in all our paths, as we wander through this Vale of Tears; if we had but the gratitude, and I may say, the *sense* to find and taste them as we pass along. Goldsmith says that there is no possible situation in life but has its peculiar comforts attending it. But hear what says another favourite Author on this subject, “I pity the man that can travel from Dan to Beersheba, and cry ’tis all barren, ’tis all bare. And so it is—and so is all the World to him who is not disposed to gather the flowers as he passes along.”\*

I sometimes think that in the keenness of my regret for those enjoyments of which I am deprived, I am really ungrateful to Providence for the many blessings which

\*From “A Sentimental Journey,” by Lawrence Sterne, quoted by Captain Russell from memory and slightly amended.

are still left me. This however, is a disposition of heart which ought to be carefully guarded against. And though I can never cease regretting when separated from my dear wife and child—yet I hope I shall never be insensible to the Favours which Heaven has pleased to bestow on me.

Soon, very soon, my sweet friend, I trust I shall again see you, again in your lov'd society and the smiles of our sweet Betsey find that delight "which the stranger knoweth not of, nor intermeddleth with"—that joy "which the world besides, can neither give nor take away."

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, Octr. 9th, 1804.

A week has now elapsed, my lovely friend, since I sail'd from Copenhagen. A disagreeable week it has been indeed! We came out with a fair wind and in company *with more than five hundred sail*. The next morning the Wind came right ahead, and so has continued ever since, at times blowing very heavy, a rough sea and frequent rains—surrounded by rocks and shoals—in the midst of so large a fleet—the nights long and horribly dark. Add to this, that we were now in the most critical and dangerous navigation in all Europe and I am sure then you will not wonder that I have had neither time nor spirits to write. But thank God we are clear of the dangers of the Cattegat; and though the wind is still ahead, yet having room to work the vessell, we feel more safe, and have hopes in a few days more to be clear of the coast of Europe. Already, my love, do I begin to measure the lessening distance be-

tween us. Already do I begin to count the days, when *hope* bids me to expect again to embrace my Nancy—again with tears of joy, to kiss my smiling babe. I have now, my friend, been four months from home. This is the longest period that we have ever been separated since our Fates were united. *And in all this time not a word have I heard from you.* I have, however, written to you, very often, and ere this I think you must have heard more than once from me. But soon, my love, I hope to be the bearer of my own letters.

MINERVA, At Sea, Octr. 17th, 1804.

If ever a poor devil could say with propriety, “A sailor’s life is a Dog’s life”—surely I can. We are not yet clear of the land—having had constant furious gales, and continued head winds, together with *rain—rain—rain.* Not a man on board has had his clothes dry since the day after we left Copenhagen. To help us on too, our cabin is full of dry Goods, so that we have barely room to creep to our nests, and cannot bring wet clothes below. The sea being so rough our cabin windows are closed fast, our Cabin doors, too, constantly shut, so that when we can get below even at noon day, we have only the pale, sickly light of a lamp by which to eat our raw pork or dry fish and bread; for it is much too bad weather to cook. And altho’ it is not freezing cold yet when you recollect that we are now further north from R. Island than R. Island is from Havana—you will easily guess that it is cold enough. Truth is, I am almost worn out. I have now

been (what I never was before since I went to sea) ten days without shaving. To-day I have tried the razor. It has been quite calm for 18 hours and everybody on board thought the *next* breeze would be favorable—*now* it has sprung up at West; that is, right ahead,—heigh ho!—Well my sweet friend, my dear, dear Nancy—may you never know nor feel half the anxiety that now fills the heart of your

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AT SEA, OCTR. 29th, 1804.

Four weeks we have been at sea—and have now for the first time a fair wind. Four weeks we have been at sea and have had only one day without rain; only one day in which we could possibly dry our clothes. As it has been blowing like a hurricane a great part of the time, so our Decks have been almost constantly under water, our Passage thus far has indeed been uncomfortable in the extreme.

Rejoice then with me, my lovely friend, at the pleasure of once more beholding a fair wind—of again viewing a clear and serene sky. I know my dear, your heart would indeed rejoice, could you see, how I, at this moment enjoy the Comforts of a smooth face and a clean shirt,—Comforts to which I have been many days a Stranger.

Would you not take pleasure in seeing that, to display my gratitude I have killed my only remaining pig and ordered a sumptuous dinner for all hands? I hope indeed that I shall never lack Gratitude; for I have certainly many—very many things to be grateful for. I have been preserved and protected through all the dangers and



troubles that surrounded me. I have a Prospect of soon reaching that Home where I have enjoyed so much happiness, of soon embracing the dear wife of my bosom, and the darling child of my affections—I cannot too often mention this subject—for my thoughts are perpetually recurring to it.

I cannot be *too* grateful that “the lines have fallen to me in so pleasant places—that I have so goodly an heritage.” Yes, my love, *a happy union ours has been*. No discord has marred our peace—no coldness has poisoned our domestic felicity. We were neither of us so *young* as to form romantic and chimerical ideas of happiness. We were neither of us so old as to have lost a relish for the dear delights of Mutual Love, and that truly rational plan of Domestic Enjoyment which Heaven has ordained for congenial souls.

Our lovely Betsey too—the pleasure—the fond pride of our hearts—how often, in idea, is the little Innocent present to my imagination. How often does my busy fancy picture her out—as I watch her growing attractions—as I catch her endearing smile. Alas! Where would busy imagination lead me! perhaps—even now—I have no child—perhaps too—that child has no Mother. *Heaven avert the Thought!* Yes—I will still believe that these Blessings are yet mine, still will I daily pray to heaven for their continuance and for every blessing to rest on the head of those so dear to me. May the time soon arrive my sweet friend, when these air built castles of imagination shall be lost in delightful reality.

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, Nov. 4th, 1804.

We have just experienced another severe and heavy gale of wind. Our fair wind and fine weather of which I boasted so much a few days ago, lasted us only twelve hours. The wind is now, as usual, ahead, but it does not, as usual, blow a Gale. On the contrary, the return of "Sabbath's peaceful day," has brought us a return of fair and pleasant weather. I have been overhauling my Accounts and arranging my papers; for as yet, notwithstanding the length of time that I have been at sea we have had no Weather in which I could complete that *necessary* business. I wish I could take a peep at a certain fireside now, and see what my dear Nancy is about. Can you leave our little one and attend the solemn exercises of Devotion? You have no cousin Becca with you now to take care of the little cherub. Good sister Ellen, however, is at hand, and Ellen, I hope, loves my child. With her, my love, I think you can sometimes intrust her, and step out to see a good old friend, Cousin Nancy, for instance, or good Aunt DeWolf—or our friendly Mrs. Mosher. I hope Capt. Munroe is now at home. He I know, will be kind and neighborly to you. Our good brother Wm. perhaps he too is at home, and Polly may sometimes spare him for a moment to look in upon you. Wardwell, will I know, sometimes call and say a cheerful thing, and the Count, I set down as a constant and ever welcome visitor. So that what with your good and kind Father, who is always

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ready with his offices of kindness I hope the time will not pass too heavily till I again see you.

AT SEA, Nov. 11th, 1804.

I have dragg'd through another heavy week, with the old story of constant head Winds and one Gale which was by far the heaviest we have yet experienced on this unlucky Passage. Our sails are continually splitting in pieces; our water and provisions beginning to be scant, so that our prospect on the whole is truly discouraging. Yet, to-day we have been much enlivened, having after 24 hours calm, felt a fair wind. Yes, a fine, fair breeze. We crowded all sail, and it did not come ahead in almost three hours.

Only think of that, after being forty days at sea. We have had a fair wind *almost three hours*. Indeed it is worth remarking, as it is the best we have had in the whole forty days. And even now the wind is not directly in our teeth, nor does it blow a gale. Heigh—ho—Do you think, my sweet friend, that I have got quite into the complaining mood? I would not wish to think so myself, tho' I have had many little things on this passage to vex and torment me.

My second mate is a continual thorn in my flesh. One good man's jacket would be worth a dozen of him. I have lost, overboard two of the handsomest *puppies* which you ever saw. As they were born on board and were just beginning to be very playful, I had promised myself much amusement with them. Their mother, too, is lost, so

that my fine breed of Dogs are all gone. But my dear, there is one thing that has given me much Pleasure, and I wonder that I have not mentioned it to you before. At Copenhagen I took a little Danish boy, just in his twelfth year. This little fellow could neither speak nor understand a word of English; but being docile and tractable it has been a pleasure to instruct him. He is apparently of a lively and good disposition and already begins to speak considerable English, and understands almost all that is said to him.

AT SEA, Novr. 21st, 1804.

We have now been *fifty days at sea*. When we left Copenhagen I hoped by this time to embrace my sweet friend. Alas! there is yet a great, a very great Distance between us. Who could foretell that we should have such horrid weather? Twenty days ago we expected to find soundings on the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, but have not been able yet to reach it, altho' the last two days have been the most favourable we have had for many weeks. Yesterday we spoke the ship *Cotton Planter*, from Liverpool bound to New York. On board that ship is Mr. Boothe. We were so near that we knew each other, and conversed together, and I assure you it gave me much pleasure to behold once more his smutty face. Pshaw! Why do I talk of complexion—he is a *man*, and what is more he is a man of Merit, as such I esteem him—tho' in truth I should be glad at this time to see anybody that I knew before. When I shall be indulged with

the pleasure of seeing those I love, I know not. Our provisions and water begin to be scant, and our prospect on the whole borders on the gloomy—but “Why art thou cast down Oh! my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? *Hope thou in God*—He will yet preserve thee and restore thee to thy dear wife and child.

Your own,

J. W. RUSSELL.

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, Novr. 22nd, 1804.

Rejoice with me—my dear Nancy—I have unexpectedly got rid of one of my troubles. Have a little patience and I will explain to you.

At Copenhagen at the request of the American Consul, I took aboard three American sailors to give them a passage home. When American seamen are left destitute abroad, it is the duty of the Consuls to furnish them a passage by the first ship, and it is always expected—in fact the law makes it their duty—to work on board the ship which takes them, the same as other men. Well, of these three men two had been taken from the Wreck of a Virginia Brig at sea, and brought in to Copenhagen. These poor fellows were destitute of everything but the clothes on their Backs. I furnished them with a few necessaries from my own purse—and, to do them justice, they have behaved well and been first and foremost in their Duty.

The third sailor was one landed at Copenhagen from a Portsmouth ship and left there sick in the Hospital, having

however, entirely recovered before I took him on board. This last had plenty of clothes and plenty of money. They all promised me to work like other seamen—and with this addition to our number you will easily judge that our ship's duty was not hard. The two first performed their Promise without grumbling—the other kept half drunk for the first fortnight until his own jugs of rum were gone. This you may be sure made much quarreling and trouble on board, and after that, as I would only give him his daily allowance of rum with the rest, he would do nothing without being forced to. And as his name was not on my shipping bill, he well knew that I could not lawfully oblige him.

Now altho' we had plenty of help—yet the other two cheerfully did their Duty, and as this was a great two fisted fellow, who would eat three men's allowance and was besides continually grumbling at his living, etc. you may be sure this kept a constant uneasiness on board. I have had to give him one severe flogging and know not to what lengths I might have been driven, by the rascal,—but thank God—this morning we spoke a Brig from Malaga, bound to Salem, who at my earnest request, took him on board, to the great joy of all my Crew, not one of whom took him by the hand or wished him Good bye. Only think—Sailors, you know, when shipmates, soon forget their little quarrels, especially when on the point of separating. This fellow had been their shipmate for two months and not a man out of twelve, would even go to the ship's side, to see him go in the boat, so com-

pletely had he gotten the ill will of every one. Well, he is gone—and again I say—God be thanked.

AT SEA, Decemr. 1st, 1804.

MY DEAR NANCY.

I little thought when I left Copenhagen to be now at this distance from you. *Sixty days we have been at sea*, and thirty days ago we were nigher home than we are now. Our passage has indeed thus far been a horrid one. For these two days it has been blowing a furious gale at North-west, and I am steering as fast as possible to the Southwd., expecting if practicable to run to some West Indian port for supplies. We are continually wet and the Weather is so rough, that it is with the utmost difficulty we can cook once a day. I am writing this my sweet friend, while the water is dripping from every part of my dress and cramped up, where I cannot even stretch my short legs. But my fingers grow stiff and cold—I must throw by the pen and light my pipe to warm my nose—

*Decr. 2nd.*—Again we hail the return of “Sabbath’s peaceful day”—but not to me returns its accustomed delights. We are still driving away to the Southwd., the wind hanging to Westwd. more regular and longer than ever I knew a Trade Wind to do at the Eastwd. But the weather begins to be warmer, and it does not now blow quite a gale—though the water is still flying over our Decks—but we are used to it—heigh—ho!!!—

AT SEA, Decemr. 9th, 1804.

We are now, my dear friend, almost as far south as Charleston. Of course, the weather is warm enough to be comfortable, but we make so slow a passage to the Westwd. that it is more than probable that we shall have to try some other port for supplies before we reach Bristol. But we ought not now to grumble, for these last 24 hours, we have made more Westing than we have in any *one* day for forty days past. Grumble, no—I do not mean to grumble; altho' I have enough to make me uneasy. Yet believe me my sweet wife, my greatest source of uneasiness is on your account. When I reflect, to how many accidents, difficulties and perplexities you may be liable, in my absence, and above *all*, when I reflect that you probably now begin to feel uneasy for my safety, and anxious at my long delay—When I think of you weeping over our little darling and asking her “Where’s her Papa”—the thought almost unmans me. Dry up your tears my love, and do not give way to despondency. Soon, very soon I trust, I shall again be with you, and embrace all on earth that’s dear to your

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

BRIG MINERVA, At Sea, Decr. 11th, 1804.

Why, my dear Nancy, would you marry a sailor? Why did you not join your fate with some deserving man who could stay at home and cherish the Wife of his bosom in the lap of Ease and Competence? How many anxious days and sleepless nights might such a choice have saved



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you! Now you must bear the pain of Separation a great part of the time, while your ill-starr'd husband roves from clime to clime to earn a scanty subsistence.

This day, my love, completes six months since I sail'd from Newport. We have now *been seventy days at sea*, and are still at a great distance from our Port. Indeed we now begin to despair of being able to celebrate Christmas on shore. For myself, I hardly dare cast my thought towards Home, lest I see you anxious and uneasy at my long detention. When I begin to grow quite melancholy with such contemplations I steal down to my trunk—take out my favourite locket which contains a dear memento of my wife and child, and having given it a sly kiss—compose my troubled thoughts to rest.

AT SEA, Decr. 19th, 1804.

My dear friend, while the snow is descending in clouds on my deck I have crawled to my uncomfortable and dreary cabin wet, shivering and cold, to converse for a moment with my Nancy. Yet, I will not, my love, be always in the complaining mood, for since I wrote the last page we have had a week of tolerable weather, the Wind sometimes ahead—sometimes fair, but no gales, it has wafted us well on towards our Port, and on the whole has been by far the pleasantest week we have had during the whole Passage.

We had begun to flatter ourselves with soon being able to reach dear Bristol—but—last Saturday night and Sunday came on a very heavy Gale, with violent Rains, and

the Wind at length coming right ahead, we hove to and lay thirty hours, our decks being continually drenched with the heavy seas and rain, our cabin and all in it almost afloat, and the cold very severe. You may guess how it felt to us, who, five days ago were in a W. India climate.

But stop—I promised not to complain. Indeed I am obliged to stifle my own complaints in order to encourage my Crew, many of who, for want of the necessary shifts of clothes, are much worse off than myself. While I have been writing this, the snow storm, which had lasted six hours is over—the Sun again shines out, and the wind blows moderate, but cold at N. N. W. We are standing on to Westwd. all hands, *as usual* busy repairing our sails, which are continually splitting to pieces. When—Oh—when my sweet friend, shall I be able to enfold you again in my arms? When again shall I kiss my smiling babe? I most earnestly hope and pray that you may not know how long I have been at sea, till I meet you. May that time soon, very soon arrive. Good bye.

AT SEA, Decr. 22nd, 1804.

Your poor little husband, my dear friend, is almost discouraged. Yesterday morning we saw the land for the first time. Being very thick weather, we could not determine precisely where we were. The wind being N. E. we hoped it might prove to be the Vineyard, and stood along it to the Westward till noon, when we found it to be Long Island. We then wore ship, but by this time it blew furiously at N. E. which is right ahead. It still continues a

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Gale from the same Quarter. Our sails mostly split to pieces. Our rigging continually parting. So, after being almost in sight of our Port, we are drifting off again to Sea. The Decks continually covered with water, and of course, all hands wet. The cold severe. Our comforts and our immediate prospects are small indeed. Heigh—ho!!!—

AT SEA, Decr. 25th, 1804.

Who would have thought, my Love, when I sailed from Copenhagen on the 2nd of October that my passage would be unfinished and that I should be still tossing on the ocean *on Christmas Day*. I had flattered myself to have been at my own dear Home, to have joined in the solemn exercises of the Church in commemoration of a Saviour's birth—to have assembled a small party of family friends at my own table, and happy in the smiles of my Nancy and the playful sport of my child to have rejoiced and made merry on the Anniversary of that Day which proclaimed "Peace on Earth and Good Will to all Men."

How uncertain are all human prospects. Since I wrote the last page after a calm, which we all flattered ourselves was the harbinger of a fair Wind, we have again felt a N. E. gale. It began yesterday morning, accompanied with heavy rain, which wetting every man to the skin at this cold season, has almost perished my crew. Last night it was again calm, and this morning *again* a northerly wind, with snow, hail and rain. Tis now almost N. W. which is a little better for us.

I intend my dear, to drink a glass of wine after Dinner—when I shall wish you—not a Merry Christmas, but a tranquil and happy one. Whatever may betide me, may every blessing rest on my Wife and Child—this is the first wish of my heart and will be ever the last of your

J. W. R.

## XI

## THE WEST INDIA TRADE IN 1805-6

SCHOONER ANGENORA, At Sea, April 14th, 1805.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Once more I find myself removed from those I love—and tossed on that rude and boisterous element which long habit has rendered familiar to me. Six days have elapsed since I parted with my weeping wife and smiling babe, unconscious that pale disease lowered on her features, unconscious of those feelings which agonized the breasts of her Parents. Never my love, did I feel so much dependency at parting with you as at this time, weak, and hardly able to crawl myself—torn with anxiety for the safety of my beloved Child and a witness of the uncommon anguish which you, my dear wife, suffered—*it was indeed too much.*

I tried to dissipate all reflection, but it was some time before I could bring myself to think or act rationally. One of the first reflections that occurred to console me, was the reasonable ground I had to conclude that our sweet Child was better and that the cause of her Illness was removed. My own health is renovated surprisingly, my appetite has returned with such violence that salt beef and pork stand but little chance with me. The weather has been extremely cold—winds mostly ahead—with

plenty of rain. I hunted a long time for a pair of mittens or gloves but could find none. I suppose I was a little tender from having been so long shut up; but certain it is that I suffered more from having my hands exposed to the cold during the first three days of being out, than I ever did at any former period of my life.

The whole of last night we had continued squalls of rain with heavy thunder and lightning. It has cleared off pleasant, with a light head wind. Thus you see I am spending the Sabbath in chatting to my *Friend*. You, I hope, are spending it better.

AT SEA, April 18th.

After a pretty brisk gale at N. E. which however, being fair has wafted us on finely—we have now a beautiful, warm and pleasant day—it is almost calm. To-day I have for the first time on this passage exchanged my thick dress for a thin one. We have made many attempts on this passage to catch fish without success, but to-day I have caught a fine large Dolphin, and am preparing to feast myself with a supper of it this evening.

Having mentioned our frequent ineffectual attempts to take Fish, and knowing that my own carelessness was the cause of that failure, having felt the effects of that careless Inattention in several instances already since I left home, I have thought best to make a memorandum of such things as now escaped my memory that I may provide for the deficiency when preparing for any future voyage—thereby making the best use of present miscon-

duct, by holding it up as a beacon, and a warning to avoid the like in time to come.

*Memorandum for Capt. Russell.*

*Never leave Home for sea, at any season, but especially at the first of April without taking woolen mittens with you, as you severely felt the want of them this time.*

*Never leave three hats in the Hatter's shop and one in the Garret and go to sea with only the one on your head—lest, as in the present case—by losing that one—you should be reduced to a silk handkerchief turban.*

*Never leave your fishing lines in the Garret to hang clothes on, and go to sea without any, lest when the fish come round, and you have nothing to catch them with, you should fret more than they are worth.*

*Never leave spike Gimblets and other such tools at home, the want of them at sea is often more than ten times their value. This memm. will doubtless be enlarged in the course of the voyage.*

—Adieu my love. Good bye my babe, “Go way Pa’  
—go way Kitty”——

AT SEA, April 25th, 1805.

We have now for three days had the wind right ahead. For the last twenty four hours we have gained only three miles to the Southwd. but the weather is quite pleasant, and I have this day tried to be comfortable, with the assistance of a smooth face and a clean shirt.

How often my Dear, have I had occasion to remark that we never rightly appreciate our enjoyments until we feel their deprivation. The three Months which I have lately spent at Home—"have unfelt, uncounted glided by" but I trust, not wholly unenjoyed. The pleasures which I have tasted by my own fireside, and the satisfaction I have felt when seated with my lov'd Wife and darling Child are such pleasures as will bear reflection; they will be an abundant source of consolation to me wherever I may wander, while the power of reflection remains. True, my love, I cannot on this Holy Day attend you to the solemn services of the Temple, and catch the features of our smiling Babe watching our return at the window; but I can feast upon past scenes like these, and in my mind's eye, I can view you and good Rebecca as you carry my babe to the window, and bid her call her Papa.

HAVANA, 4 o'clock P.M., April 28th.

I am safe in port my love, surrounded with my Bristol friends. I have your letter—*our dear Betsey almost well—God be thanked*—I hope you will not be sick. I trust my dear, that you will not be over-anxious about me. My health is very good, neither is it sickly here. and I think I shall very soon be with you—again to be truly happy with the friend of my heart—and to have that happiness doubled in the innocent endearments of our darling—our dear Bess. How I long again to kiss her sweet cheek, again to listen for hours to her harmless



Prattle. You have that comfort, my Love, at all times, yet I do not grudge it to you, on the contrary I rejoice from my heart that you have such a source of comfort when deprived of those kind and delicate attentions which my feelings have always prompted me to bestow on you.

I have but little leisure now, my friend, and must once more say God bless you.

*To Mrs. Ann Russell, Bristol, R. I.*

Per S. *Eliza*, Capt. Phillips.

HAVANA. May 19th 1805.

MY DEAR NANCY:

I am almost ready for sea and set down now to say a word to you, I hope for the last time, untill I once more shape my course for my dear home. Unless something unforeseen should prevent me, I shall sail from hence in three or four days. \* \* \* Sweet little Betsey! Who now will take you to the Garden in a morning? Who now will call the fowls to the door while you feed them, and watch with exulting pleasure, every movement of your animated countenance? Soon, my dear little One, I hope to be with you, and again share with the best of Mothers, the pleasure of attending to our darling. Since I wrote you last the Brig *Warren*, Capt. Coggeshall, has arrived here from Warren. As she must have cleared out at Bristol I certainly felt disappointed at not receiving any letters. But I well know my love, that it could not be owing to neglect on your part. Would to Heaven

however that I could know at this moment, that you and our dear babe were well.

I expect Capt. Swan to go home with me. He is meagre and low in health, but I think will soon be better. *This Africa, my friend, ruins the health or takes the lives of nine tenths who are concerned in it, and poisons the morals of most of the survivors.\** But away with the disgusting idea! I will not dwell upon it. \* \* \*

SCHOONER ANGENORA, At Sea, May 25th, 1805.

Once more my dearest friend, I date to you from sea. Yesterday morning we sailed from Havana, and though we have had but little wind and it is now quite calm—yet we are ahead to windward of Matanzas—the current being greatly in our favor. Capt. Swan, who is with me is quite weak and low. Mr. Boothe, who is also with me, is groaning with rheumatic pains, but for myself, I have, thank God, excellent health, and my spirits are quite raised with the prospects of soon embracing the loved wife of my bosom, of soon beholding my darling Child. I had, as usual, got quite sick and tired of Havana, although I met with no uncommon trouble or detention—and the place is, in many respects delightful, but there is little to interest the feelings—there is nothing for the mind to feast upon.

There all Religion's but a name,  
And sacred Friendship's much the same—  
There Slavery clanks her chains.

\* The Slave Trade.

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From scenes like these I turn, my love, with pleasure to the anticipation of our scenes of dear domestic felicity at home. May they soon be realized.

AT SEA, May 27th, 1805.

We have as yet, my dear Nancy, made but slow progress toward our wish'd for port. We are now just clear of Florida passage. Yesterday had the wind ahead and to-day entirely calm; the sun being right over our heads—no shade—no shelter—and not a breath of air. The heat is intolerable almost to suffocation. We have had fine amusement in catching fish—having caught three times as many large dolphins as we could eat fresh, and have salted them down. To-day we took a very large shark—it was a female—and on opening it, we took out seven young ones—nearly a foot long each. On putting them into the water they swam off as readily as if they had taken their own time for making their appearance. Jacob\* is very busy in overhauling the oranges—as they were scarce, I bought but few, and as he is continually throwing overboard rotten ones—he is very fearful that he shall not get any home for little Betsey. *Dear sweet Betsey!* How I long to clasp you in my arms—to kiss your lovely cheek and see your Mother smile upon us.

At my leisure hours I am amusing myself in making two floor mats—one of which I intend for our much esteemed friend, Cousin Nancy. I hope she will be pleased with it. My friend Swan is apparently better, but is very weak and low. I sometimes have doubts how it will turn with him.

\* The twelve year old Danish boy shipped in Copenhagen (see page 150).

AT SEA, June 1st, 1805.

This day whate'er the fates decree  
Shall still be kept with joy by me—  
The day when to her lover's arms  
My Nancy gave, for life, her charms.

You see, my dear that the anniversary of *our Wedding Day* has almost made me a Poet. This day, were I with you my love, should have been a little holiday, a treat to our family friends. But though painfully separated from you, I trust I shall always remember with renewed pleasure *that day which gave birth to our blissful Union*. *Long—very long may it continue to add encreasing happiness to me in the endearing names of Husband and Father*. Sweet little Bess! Where are you my darling? Alas you see not your Pa' wet, cold and fatigued with wet weather, 'Tis too rough to write.

AT SEA, June 6th, 1805.

Slow and tedious, my dear Nancy is our progress on this passage. It does not half keep pace with my wishes which are continually reaching forward and striving for a peep at my much lov'd home. We have been drenched with very heavy rains, and becalm'd at least half the time, since we left Havana. But thank God, we are past the most dangerous part of our Passage, being now as far north as Cape Henry. A good wind now for two days would take us to Rhode Island, but from present appearances it will take us I fear a great many days. Well, patience perforce!

It gives me much pleasure to find my friend, Swan, daily gaining health and strength. His company and that of Mr. Boothe are a great relief to me. The later is a man of sense with a pretty large share of acquired knowledge, and modest and unassuming in his manners. Are you not beginning to look for my arrival, my love? Methinks I see you sending our little cherub to the window to watch for her Papa. I hope she has not forgotten me. May heaven bless you both my dear, and soon again bless in being with you, your own.

ANGENORA, At Sea, June 9th, 1805.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

A few days since I flattered myself to have spent this day—Sunday—in happiness and peace with you and our sweet Babe, but far different is now my situation. Yesterday morning we saw the land. It was Long Island and not more than three hours sail from the Passage, but the wind being easterly could not fetch by. At 11 o'clock when near the land we carried away our fore yard which rendered the topsail useless. We wore ship and stood off—the wind now blowing furiously right on shore, a very heavy sea and raining like a deluge. Add to this that the water has been continually pouring into our cabin thro' the cracks of the dead lights, so that bed clothes and in short everything is afloat. You will judge then that our situation is quite disagreeable enough. True my love, it is so. But 'tis not like last winter, we are not perishing with cold. But when almost in sight of Home such a

head storm is vexatious, but fretting, I find, does no good. I will try to bear it and lean for consolation on *hope*. Hope, sweet soother of the soul, much do I need thy smiles.

\* ST. DOMINGO, Augt. 2nd, 1806.

Dearest and best of Friends—I wish you could see and know what pleasure I feel at this moment—when I can sit down and uninterrupted, dedicate half an hour to my Nancy. Much indeed do I need some little relaxation and much do I lack your friendly aid, much do I miss the soothing and consoling voice of Sympathy and Love. I have liv'd on shore ever since I arriv'd here, in good quarters indeed, but the excessive heat and daily rains make the climate almost intolerable. My business is of a critical and perplexing nature, and I am obliged to take every step with the most cautious circumspection. My little crew are sick. Mr. Reed, my mate, has not been well since we left Bristol, and although a very good young man, he is now drooping and good for nothing.

Having had two men impressed by the British before my arrival here, I have now only black Isaac and little Jacob who are well. None however are dangerous. Every morning at six o'clock I go on board to cheer them and give directions, and again in the afternoon, for none will consent to have a Doctor, or receive advice from any person but me.

When I leave here I shall be obliged to take French sailors, of whom the City is full, that escaped when the

\* With this letter begins the narrative of another West India voyage.

French fleet was destroyed last winter. No other can be obtained.

From the foregoing statement you will readily conclude my love, that my time does not pass very pleasantly, far otherwise—far otherwise indeed was it, when on entering my doors, I was welcomed by a smile from the Friend of my Heart, and cheered by the innocent endearments of our Little Ones.\* Sweet innocents! How often are ye present to my Imagination. How often do ye deck my waking hours with Fancy's fairest wreaths, how often do ye visit my nightly slumbers with dreams of delight. Yes, my dear Nancy, I trust that if we perform our duty to them

Our babes shall richest comforts bring;  
 If tutored right they'll prove a spring  
 Whence pleasures ever rise.  
 We'll train their minds with studious care  
 To all that's manly, good and fair  
 And train them for the skies.

While they our happiest hours engage  
 They'll joy our youth, support our age  
 And crown our hoary hairs;  
 They'll grow in virtue every day  
 And thus our fondest loves repay  
 And recompense our cares.

Our Betsey I hope will continue at School all summer. Tell her, if she learns well and is good, I shall certainly bring her a pretty Present. I will not promise a Parrot, although there are thousands here—for I hate the noise of them

\* A second daughter, named Parnell, had been born Oct. 1, 1805.

myself. I have become acquainted with two French families here where there are decent white women. At one of these places I sometimes dine, and as they both have young children I frequently call in and amuse myself half an hour with the little Innocents, which in fact is the only amusement or recreation that I have here. \* \* \*

ST. DOMINGO, Augt. 12th 1806.

My dearest Nancy—It gives me great pleasure to inform my sweet friend that I hope to leave this place tomorrow. I shall touch at Baracoa, but expect to have no detention there. Shall then proceed to Havana, and soon, *very* soon I hope again to be in the bosom of my much lov'd family. My business here has kept me in a continual state of perplexity and anxiety. The Americans are all sick and dying around me. Mr. Reed, my Mate, altho' able to walk about will probably never be well. Black Isaac and Jacob, the boy, are all I have to depend on. The sickness here generally commences with an intermitting fever. I have this morning had a severe attack of it; but have at length been relieved by a very profuse perspiration; and if the fatigue of closing my business and getting away is not too much for me, I think I shall have no more of it.

You would laugh to see me at this moment. I was put in a warm bath three hours ago, and so much has the *juice* run from every part of my body, that I have been obliged to shift myself twice since. I feel now much relieved; so



much so that I am going to wait on the General—if he can be spoken with—for he too has the fever.

Be not alarmed for me, my dear Nancy, I shall soon be better when I can get to Sea. For your sake and that of our dear Babes I shall take every care of myself. Sweet little ones! When you kiss them, tell them they are my “daily visions and my nightly dreams.” My best love to our friends, especially to all under our roof. To your good Father and Mamma, to Brother Nat, and tell him I want much to write him, but have no spare strength at this moment. Bradford I don’t name because I think he must be gone to Sea. But to his wife and dear little boy say how d’do for me. May heaven ever preserve you and our dear babes.

*To Mrs. Ann Russell, Bristol, R. I.*

AT SEA, off Cape Tiberoon,  
Augt. 16th, 1806.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

I am now 48 hours from the City of St. Domingo and have thus far had a charming run. I left letters for you and others on board the Brig *Industry*, Capt. Wheeler, to sail for Boston the day after I left St. Domingo; but having just spoken the Schooner *Larater*, bound from Curacoa to Baltimore, I intend putting this on board her, as it is possible it may reach you before the *Industry* arrives. It gives me great pleasure, my dear Nancy, to tell you that my health is much better than when I wrote you by the *Industry*. When we sailed I was scarcely able

to walk the deck; but necessity obliged me to stir. I had that day a slight attack of fever and ague; I am now every hour growing stronger. Mr. Lincoln, black Isaac and the boy are still on their legs; for the rest I have five Frenchmen—shipped as passengers—call themselves sailors, but can neither steer or hand a sail—yet are willing to work. As our whole passage will be near the land—having no one to depend on but myself it keeps me in continual anxiety. I shall touch at Baracoa and thence to Havana, where I hope to hear from you.

Per *Caroline*, Capt. Reed.

HAVANA, Oct. 3d, 1806.

DEAREST AND BEST OF FRIENDS:

The *Caroline* is now ready for Sea, bound to New York, and your "little Friend" must still remain a short time behind. I hope within 10 or 12 days at furthest to take my passage. Mr. Reed, who goes master of the *Caroline*, will see you when he arrives in Bristol. He carries my chest and some of my old things. As to the rest of my clothes, they are like your husband almost worn out. Mr. Reed has promised immediately to see you. He will be able to answer all your enquiries. He has been long sick, but is now well. He is faithful and clever and on many accounts ranks high in my esteem.

Don't, my dear, let my sweet prattlers forget me. *Be cautious, my love, and watch every bent of their Minds; losing no possible opportunity to impress them with such principles as will stand the test of their future progress*

*through life.* But these cautions, my dear Nancy are unnecessary. Your own good Sense, your own warm Heart will be the best guide.

via. Boston.

HAVANA, Octr. 4th, 1806.

MY DEAR NANCY:

The *Caroline* sailed from hence yesterday, bound to New York, and I assure you it gave me many uneasy Sensations to see her depart without me, but it has been impossible for me as yet to close my business here. I had the offer of a room at the house of Mr. Green, an American friend, but have preferred taking up my abode at present in the cabin of the Brig, *German Peggy*, Capt. Davis, of Newport. Capt. D. has this day begun to load with sugars for New York, and expects to sail in 10 days. If possible, I shall take my passage with him, and a happy day it will be to me, when I can once more shape my course for *my dear home*. I hope I may hold out to the end, and again be blessed with the Society of all I hold dear on Earth. Capt. Reed will call on you when the *Caroline* arrives in Bristol, and will answer the many enquiries which I suppose your solicitude will induce you to make. Mr. Isaac Gardner will also call to see you, and though a black man—he has been almost my only stand by, when sickness and troubles surrounded me. You will have Jacob with you, and I expect, will find the little fellow almost naked; but this is not to be wondered at, for I am almost in the same situation myself. You will, I suppose, think it best

for him to go immediately to School. The School reminds me at once of our little darlings. I hope you found some place for Betsey to go to, as I think it would have been a relief to you, and an advantage to her. Tell her I have retained her present till I bring it myself—but whether she will be entitled to it or not, will depend on the account which her Mother gives me. Little Parnell is too young to think of Presents—but not too young to receive her full share of my warmest affection.

The lateness of the season will I suppose, my dearest Friend, induce you to think of some preparations for winter, which I had hoped to be home in time to attend to myself—especially the article of wood &c. I hope you will have the *means* of doing so—though I am not without my fears that my long absence may occasion you some Embarrassment. I often turn my attention to your garden, and flatter myself that you have sometimes viewed with pleasure the plants growing from seeds planted by my hand. I hope with you, my love, still to enjoy some of the produce—by our own dear fireside.

HAVANA, October 21st, 1806.

DEAREST AND BEST OF FRIENDS:

By my other letter of this date you will find that I am detained here much longer than I expected. Your own Heart, my love, will best teach you the Regret which this causes me, but I flatter myself that but few days more will elapse before I shall again shape my course towards my dear native Land, and to the Friends I hold so dear. My

other letter will give you some faint idea of the perplexities and anxiety which my business has caused me. You may, if you think proper, shew it to my employers, though perhaps they, like the rest, have forgotten while tending their gardens and eating their fresh fish, that all their Insurance stock lies at the mercy of a set of Pirates.\*

My time here has passed unpleasant enough. It still continues very sickly—and scarce a day passes, without my being called to assist in the last offices to some poor American. My mornings are usually spent with my lawyer, Doct. Ayala. Ask friend Allen, if he is with you, and he will describe *the Animal* to you. A man of great talents, *but*— I ought before to have informed you that I have had much satisfaction in the company and friendship of a Mr. Howell, who came from Baracoa in the *Caroline* with me. He had been in Baracoa ten months on the same kind of business which brought me out—being agent for a respectable mercantile house in St. Bartholomews, where he belongs. He has purchased half a new Coffee Estate in the neighborhood of Baracoa, and is going to reside there. He will accompany me to America and to Bristol. He is sensible—well informed—well acquainted with the French and Spanish languages—easy in his manners—modest in his deportment—and as far as I can judge, firmly rooted in virtuous principles. You will easily believe that such a friend is a great acquisition to me, indeed. I feel very much attached to him, and hope shortly to have you share in the pleasure of his acquaintance.

\* French and British privateers.

HAVANA, Oct. 29th, 1806.

You will be quite tired, my Friend, with this being continually teased with my letters. Bear with me, my love, a little longer. I hope to leave this place before Christmas, and in the mean time you are the only one that shall be teased with my importunity. Two days ago I had the satisfaction of meeting Capt. Cornell. You know I have formerly enjoyed much satisfaction in his society at this place, but that satisfaction would have been much heightened at this time if he had been the bearer of a line from you, or from any of those who once *professed* themselves my friends. But that is a blessing, it seems, too great for me to expect. I try to bear these unaccountable disappointments without murmuring—but to bear without feeling is impossible. I think my Dear, that I have learned some lessons during this Voyage which will be of much service to me in my future progress through Life. I dare say you will recollect that when some of those whom I esteemed as near Friends, have been absent, how extremely solicitous *I* have always been to let their families know of every possible chance to forward letters, as well as writing myself—and I know too the full force of the obligations I am under to these same families and near Friends, (Heaven forgive me for prostituting the name of Friend) who have been sauntering at home and picking their teeth in peace. They have taught me at least this one lesson that—when ever and wherever *my* friends are absent, and it happens to be my good fortune to remain at home, I will quietly smoke my segar and let those who are absent, and their

families, do as I have done—go to the Moon for intelligence.

Mr. Howell, the friend whom I have before mentioned to you, and myself, are keeping Bachelor's Hall together. We live very snug and quite retired. He will accompany me to America, and I hope my love, to find you and our dear family in a situation to make a short stay with us agreeable to him. If my business here was not protracted to such an unaccountable length as at times quite to exhaust my patience, I might find some Enjoyment. Necessity has compelled me to pay close attention to the Spanish language, in which I begin to express myself with some fluency.

## XII

## A SEA LOG OF A CENTURY AGO

The following pages are from the log of a West India voyage. This log is the routine record of the vessel's progress day by day, her official diary, and differs from the journals previously quoted which were written wholly at the option of the captain. They were his private and personal records of events. The log, however, he was expected to post daily as one of the master's duties.

Even this book of routine record so vividly reflects the personality of its author that he has made it a document almost unique of its kind. While a number of pages of wholly technical ship's business have been omitted in editing the log, some of this matter has been retained in order to inform the landsman how a log is kept at sea. The entries begin with leaving port:

*Saturday, Decr. 24th, 1808.* At half past 2 P. M. made sail and ran down the river. Fresh breeze at No, and N. by E. plenty of rain. Past the lighthouse at 5 P. M. At 8 P. M. suppos'd ourselves past Block Island. weather very thick and wind increasing. Reef'd foresail and mainsail, at 12 took in topsail and foresail, and bonnet of jib.

*Sunday, 25th.* Continues fresh breeze at N.N.E. No observations to be depended on. Lat. by acct. 39° 19' N. Long. by Do. 70° 25' W.



*Monday, Decr. 26th.* Lat. by D.R. 37° 36' Long. 69° 20'. Steer'd same course as before.—weather dull and gloomy.—some rain—later part light wind, towards meridian almost calm and bad irregular sea. No observation.

*Tuesday, 27th.* Lat. by D.R. 35° 34' Long. 68° 16'. Begins calm. at  $\frac{1}{2}$  4 P. M. light breeze at S.S.W. which soon freshened and hauled to the westward, and nortwd.—at 7 P. M. shortened sail—blowing a furious gale and heavy sea the remainder of the 24 hours.

*Wednesday, 28th.* Lat. by obsv. 34°—02' Long. 67° 4'. First part fresh breeze at N.E. At 8 P. M. set topsail,—out reefs—later part almost calm. had an observation for the first time on this passage. At 1 P. M. passed a Brig showing English colours, she steering N.N.E.

*Thursday, Decr. 29th.* Lat. by observ. 33—21' Long. 67—4'. First part nearly calm, the light winds baffling between S.E. and So.—tack'd ship several times, steering sometimes S.W. b. W. and then E.b.N.

*Friday, Decr. 30th.* Lat. by D.R. 33—18' Long. 66—53'. Strong breeze from the S.S.E. steered E. & E. b.N.—at 6 P. M. jibed ship—reefed foretopsail, mainsail and foresail, steered S.W.b.W.—gale increasing—very heavy sea. At 4 A. M. again tack'd, handed topsail and left no sail standing, mainsail and head of the jib—head S.E.b.E. hard gale and heavy sea.

*Saturday, Decr. 31st.* Lat. by observ. 31—41'. Long. corrected 64—555'. At 4 P. M. the gale abated, at 6 made more sail—steered S.S.E. having then only 8 fathom

water, tacked and steered No. close hauled shoaled the water to 4 fathom—tacked again, and after rubbing the rocks three or four times without stopping our way got clear into deep water, steered S.W. till 4 A. M. when S. till 8—then S.E.

*Sunday, Janry. 1st, 1809.* Lat. by obs. 29—36' N. Long. 62—42' W. With a fine pleasant breeze to the northward and eastwd. we steered S.E. the whole 24 hours.

This ushers in the beginning of a new year, the old One is forever past. Its moments “are with the years beyond the flood.” I have set down to review my conduct through the past year. I find many errors and frailties to deplore, many weaknesses to make me feel humble—Many—very many mercies and favours to make me feel truly thankful.

I have prayed to God to forgive my Errors—to pardon My sins—to strengthen and confirm my good resolutions for the Future, that with the New Year I may begin a new Life, a life of Obedience to his Laws and the precepts of his holy Gospel. I have craved his blessing on my dear Family, on my much lov'd Wife and Children. Where are you now my best and dearest friend—It is only eight days since I parted with you, can you realize that we are now almost one thousand miles apart—I left you my love, pale and almost sick—but cheering Hope whispers me that you are better, and that on this sacred Day you will be with those who give thanks to God in his holy Temple, that your prayers will ascend from that place where we have often joined heart and hand in our devotions.

To Him who ruleth all aright, I commit you and our dear little ones. May he guide us in safety through time and at last receive us to himself in glory—Amen——

*Monday, Jan. 2nd.* Lat. 27—57'. Long. 61—48', W. Continues a very pleasant breeze from the Eastwd. Steered at first S.E.b.S. but towards meridian headed us off to S.— passed a ship at 3 P. M. standing to the northwd, and westwd.

*Tuesday, 3d.* Lat. 26—49' Long. 41—46'.

*Sunday, 8th.* Lat. 19—2' Long. 60—37'. Begins calm. At 3 P. M. a light breeze at N.W. which gradually hauled to N. and then to N.E. We steered S. the whole 24 hours—frequent squalls of rain. Again I am spending the Sabbath's peaceful day on the wide ocean; at a distance from those I love. At a great distance from where any Temple is dedicated to the worship of the Most High. But, is not the whole Universe His temple? And will not the humble prayer of the contrite heart be heard from a little bark in the midst of the Sea? "Thy way O God is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known." Yet with him who has clean hands and a contrite heart Thou wilt delight to dwell. Hear us then, O! God of our Salvation, cause Thy face to shine upon us, and we shall be saved.——

My dearest Nancy—may I hope that the colour is restored to your pale cheek—that returning health has again smiled upon, so that you may be able on this sacred Day to attend the solemn services of our holy Religion. Your husband I trust, will not be forgotten in your Devo-

tion. I am sure you cannot be in mine. How would the pangs of Absence be softened, if I could be assured of the safety of you and our dear little ones. Sweet smiling babes—my affectionate Bess, my pleasant prattling Parnell, and my lovely little Nancy. May God bless you all, preserve you in health, guide your feet in the way of Truth, and at last receive you to Glory.

*Monday, Jan. 9th.* With a pleasant breeze we steered S.b.W. till 8 P. M. when judging that we drew near the land—hove too till 4 A. M. then made sail and steered S.b.W. at 6 A. M. saw land, which proved to be St. Martin's and St. Bartholomews'. Ran round the south of the latter and at 11 A. M. took a pilot on board. In beating in—being very squally—a sudden flaw carried away our foretopsail just above the cap—cleared the wreck, and at 1 P. M. anchor'd in the road.

*Tuesday, 10th.* The master reported and entered at the Custom House. The government suffers no provisions to be exported, all must be sold here. For several days doing little—protest noted—survey appointed by the government to examine the state of the vessel, &c.

*Sunday, 15th.* I am still idle in this barren and dismal place—dismal and cheerless by Nature—more so by Manners and Habit—How differently would this sacred Day have been spent had I continued at my much lov'd home. I should, with a delighted and gladdened heart, had my little Ones around me at my Fireside, to read and to receive instruction in the first rudiments of our holy Religion. While listening to their improvement, I might perhaps see

the tear of joy glistening in the eyes of the best and fondest of Mothers.

*Tuesday, January 31st.* Having three days been ready to go to windwd. but detained by the bad weather—I this day sailed at 2 P. M. in a small British Sloop, bound to Dominico. The next morning by daylight were off Basse Terre, S. Kitts. At 8 A. M. Mr. Nisbet, a fellow passenger went ashore, while the Sloop stood off and on. At 12 he came on board—we immediately made sail. Heavy sea and disagreeable weather. Off Basse Terre Gaudalope were chased four hours by a privateer schooner—during which time we steered N.N.W. and out sailed the Pirate. This chase has put us back one day at least.

At length, after a wet and very disagreeable passage, we anchor'd in the road of Roseau, Dominique at 7 A. M. Saturday, Feb. 4th, 1809.

*Monday, Feb. 6th.* Finding that the business which led me here would not be attended to till the 15th inst. I concluded, in the interim, to proceed to Antigua. Took passage in the British Sloop *Charming Ann*, Capt. Wilson, and sailed from Roseau at 7 P. M. A dull time over—without any accident anchor'd in St. John's, Antigua, on Wednesday, Feb. 8th, at 6 P. M.

*Thursday, 9th.* Once more, my dear Ann, I am among my old acquaintances. I landed at a late hour last evening and walked up to the house of Mr. Rose, the American agent. By him and Mrs. Rose I was received with politeness. This day I took my lodgings at a tavern on shore, and have spent the day without effect, in trying

to close the business that brought me here. This evening, tired and disgusted, I walked to Mr. Rose's—he was absent. With Mrs. and Miss Rose I chatted a half hour, and retired, solitary to my lodgings. What would I give could I spend the rest of the evening by my own dear fire-side!

*Saturday, Feb. 11th.* At 2 P. M. parted with my friends here and went on board a schooner bound to Dominico; and after a very disagreeable passage—owing to high winds and calms—I again landed at Roseau in Dominica on Monday.

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*Monday, April 24th.* St. Bart. After a long and anxious detention here,\* I this day sailed at 3 P. M. in the Swedish Brig *Charlotta* Capt. Duncken, bound to St. Domingo, expecting to be followed in a day or two by the Brig *Adolphus*, belonging to the same concern.

*Wednesday, 26th.* Brig. *Charlotta* At Sea, Lat. by observ. 17—26' N. With a pleasant breeze continued our course to the Westwd. the whole 24 hours. At 10 A. M. were abreast of some high land bearing north just discernible in the smoke of the Horizon, which we take to be the western part of Porto Rico.

*Friday, April 28th.* Lat. 17—26' N. At 8 P. M. shortened sail. At 12 tacked and stood off and on, under our topsails. At daylight squally and very thick, with heavy rain. Saw no land and at 6 again stood off. At

\* A detention of more than two months.

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8 A. M. discovered the land, which proved to be Beala Island, and at 10 saw Altevela—passed without it and at Meridian it bore W.b.N. distant three leagues. When passing Altevela saw a sail a great distance astern—proved to be a schooner. We crowded all sail, but at 6 P. M. she came up with us and brought us too. She proved to be a French Schooner from the City of St. Domingo—called the *Beau Narcisse*, Louis Ouray, Master, mounting eight guns, and having about 70 men. Took possession of us and attempted to beat up to the city.

*Saturday, 29th.* Chased a large English merchant ship, and engaged her some time—attempting to board her—carried away the Schooner's bowsprit. Then sheered off—and after repairing continued to beat up, and on Monday May 1st anchor'd under Beata Island, where we found the brig. At 3 P. M. the privateer got under way and chased a schooner, then in sight—brought her too—and anchor'd near the Brig. The Schooner now commenced unloading our Brig, and taking on board as much as they could carry.

*Tuesday, May 2nd.* The other Schooner having taken part of our Cargo, they both left us and got under way at 3 P. M. taking Capt. Duncken,—the Mate and Crew.

*Wednesday, May 3rd, 1809.* A Prisoner at Beata Island. In the afternoon we were alarmed at the sight of an armed Schooner running down. Mr. Dupont, our Prize Master, immediately prepared to go on shore. The Schooner tack'd and stood off, but after dark she came and anchor'd near us proved to be *La Superieure*, Capt. Forrest, from St.

Domingo. I learn from him that he has captured the Brig *Adolphus*, Capt. Englehart—but he has ransomed him and he proceeds to Jacquemel. The privateer soon left us and at 10 P. M. we got under way, and continued beating up between Beata Island and St. Domingo all night.

*Thursday, 4th.* Anchor'd at sunrise under Beata Island, about 4 leagues to windwr'd. of our former berth. At 9 A. M. a Brig appeared in sight to Windwd. which alarmed our Prize Master so much that he and his Crew hustled all their things—with some provisions—all our small arms, powder, &c. into the boat and on shore. At length the cause of the fright disappeared by stretching on to Windwd. probably not having seen us. Our topsail yards were now sent down, the topmasts struck and another anchor let go, &c.

*Friday, 5th.* Another day—gloomy and tedious—has passed over. This completes a week since my unfortunate capture; since my air castles were demolished by the stroke of the Enchanter. Why was I not content with small earnings? Why did I not return with my *little* to the bosom of my lov'd Family? Alas—have I not by aiming at too much let slip what was safe and certain. But I thought I was doing right. The prospect was good and I eagerly embraced any laudable plan that promised to secure competence to my loved Wife and Children. Disappointment has blasted my expectations. My fond hopes are withered and destroyed. Yet—O! Father of Mercies Thy dispensations are just. Thou seest not as man seeth. Teach me to bow submissive to Thy holy



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Will, teach me to check all murmuring and repining thoughts and to say with heartfelt sincerity "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

*Saturday, May 6th, 1809.* Brig *Charlotta* at anchor under Beata Island. At noon, we discovered over the land, a Brig at anchor, where the *Charlotta* first lay. Mr. Dupont, the Prize Master, immediately loaded the boat with stores, sails, clothes, &c., and going to shore in her, himself, he went down by land to discover what the Brig was. In his absence we saw a schooner coming down from Windwd. and soon after a large ship, and then a smaller one, both beating up from leeward, and before night they came to an anchor, near the first mentioned Brig.

At 5 P. M. Mr. Dupont returned, and when dark he went on shore with the remainder of his people, and the two men belonging to the *Charlotta*, leaving me only with the boy Jacob. Between 10 and 11 we were boarded by 3 boats, from the above named (British) vessels, the largest of which is the *Polyphemus* of 64 guns, Capt. Cumby, last from Jamaica. They took possession of the Brig—got her topmasts up, bent some sails, &c. and, Sunday the 7th at sunrise weighed the anchor and made sail. At 8 A. M. anchor'd near the *Polyphemus* and in our old berth. Thus—to my great joy—am I at last relieved. But, it would be injustice not to remember that M. Ouray, the Commander of the Privateer, and Mr. Dupont, the Prize master, have uniformly behaved to me like gentlemen—everything of my *private* property has been respected,

and everything that was in their power, has been done for my personal accommodation. Every exertion was made to get the *Charlotta* ready for Sea—she having been well stripped by the Frenchmen. I dined aboard the *Polyphemus*, and having, in vain, attempted to persuade Capt. Cumby to send us to Jacquemel, at 4 P. M. I went on board the *Charlotta* and sailed for Jamaica, under the direction of Mr. Morell, a Master's Mate.

*Tuesday, May 9th.* Brig *Charlotta*, at sea, steering for Jamaica. At daybreak saw Capt. Tiberon. Continued our course to the westward, and hope to-morrow to see Jamaica. But when shall I see my native land? Great Parent of Mercies! it is thy Property to bring good out of evil; it is thine to remember mercy in the midst of Judgments. May Thy fatherly corrections be the means of drawing me nearer to Thee, of detaching my thoughts and affections from this vain and empty World, and placing them on things heavenly and divine, and—"Though no chastening for the present be joyous but grievous, yet, afterwards, may it in me bring forth the peaceable fruits of righteousness and joy"—Amen!—

*Wednesday, 10th.* At 10 A. M. saw the N.E. end of Jamaica. Steered W.S.W. with a very light breeze. At sunset were abreast of Point Morant. Steer'd for Yallah's Point—light wind all night.

*Thursday, 11th.* At sunrise were just below Yallah's Point—at 7 A. M. took a pilot on board. The wind very light and not being able to get up to Kingston—at 1 P. M. we anchor'd at Port Royal.

*Friday, 12th.* At nine A. M. got under way and at 1 P. M. anchor'd in Kingston harbour. I went on shore immediately, with Mr. Morell to the agents, Atkinson, Boyle & Co. Mr. E. H. Adams, the acting partner, received us, and with all the hauteur pertaining to a purse-proud Briton, he *ordered* me to bring *all* my papers, of every description on shore to be inspected by him and then to be lodged in the files of the Admiralty Court. As the Capt. of the *Charlotta* had given up all the ship's papers to the French captors, and I had already handed to the Captain of the *Polyphemus*, my Charter party and Invoice—which was all that related to the vessel—I peremptorily refused to give up my private papers—unless forced from me—and being informed that I had friends here I was told that I must not see them till I had been examined. I disregarded the injunction and called on Henry West & Co.

KINGSTON, Jamaica, Saturday, May 13th, 1809.

This morning I attended at the Surrogate's Office, and went through the usual examination by making answers, under oath, to the customary Interrogations, &c. Messrs. Henry West & Co. have undertaken to assist me. I noted a protest. Mr. Moull, who conducted the Brig from Beata here, left me this day, being appointed a Lieutenant since our arrival. He is a worthy young man and has behaved like a gentleman on board the Brig.

*Sunday, 14th.* Our Brig still laying at a distance from the Wharf. An old man—a native Greek—74 years old

is appointed to stay on board. As we have no boat I have spent the whole day in reading, writing &c. I have no opportunity to attend divine Worship in Any Temple dedicated to the service of the Most High. Eternal Source of all Worship, adoration and Praise! the whole Universe is Thy Temple—yet thou hast graciously promised to dwell with those who have clean hands and a contrite heart. Deign then, from Heaven, thy holy Throne to hear my prayers—and when thou hearest, forgive. May Thy holy Spirit enlighten my mind and inhabit my heart, and make me wholly thine—Amen and Amen—

*Tuesday, 16th.* I was agreeably surprised at the sight of Mr. Hale—the late Mate of the *Charlotta*, and five of the Crew, who arrived in an English Brig. Mr. Hale informs me that he went to the City of St. Domingo, in the privateer, where she discharg'd and immediately returned to Beta for the rest of our Cargo.

*Tuesday, 23rd.* Having yesterday heard that the Admiralty Court will set to-day, I exerted myself among the lawyers to have everything ready for our trial which came on this day. Decree—one eighth Salvage to the recaptors—the residue of cargo to be given up to me—the Brig sold and proceeds retained till a power of Attorney is received from the owner, or given up to me on bond.

*Sunday, 28th.* The Schooner *Union*, Capt. Paul, via Havana, has remained here till this day. To the care of Mr. O'Hara, on board her, I gave my Letters. I had purposed to attend divine Service to-day, but it has been squally and rainy all day, and I have spent the Sabbath

on board, having the company of Capt. Whittlesey, of Saybrook, an old man from the land of "Steady Habits."

*Friday, June 2nd.* By an arrival from Philadelphia we this day received the interesting news that the trade to all British ports will be renewed after the 10th inst.\*

*Sunday, June 4th.* This forenoon I attended Divine Service at Church and heard a very good discourse from these words of the apostle, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." It is now a long time since I have joined in the Divine services of Devotion. How often, to-day, has my memory pointed back to the happy times when with my dear lov'd family I went to the house of God, to hear the Word of Life.

*Sunday, June 11th.* Yesterday I finished all my business in Kingston, and to my great joy having the *Charlotte* ready for Sea, in ballast. Capt. Hale, to whom I had given the command, cleared at the Custom House, and at 5 P. M. we got under way and anchor'd last evening at Port Royal.

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I had accepted an invitation to ride into the country and spend the day in company with Mr. Hayes, and his amiable wife, but the morning proved rainy and I amused myself with reading St. Pierre's interesting work "Studies of Nature." While thus engaged about twelve o'clock, a servant cried out, "Little Jim has hung himself." Jim was a fine black boy, not twelve years old, active and faithful—beloved by his Master and

\* The lifting of the embargo ordered by President Jefferson.

Mistress, and the favourite of all who frequented the house.

On hearing the cry I ran eagerly to the yard and ascending to the room pointed out—found the door fastened which we instantly burst open, and to our horror and surprise found the poor lad, hanging by the neck. We instantly cut him down, but alas! too late, the fatal Deed was consummated and Life had forever flown. Dreadful and heartrending was the scene, his poor mistress screaming and crying, joined by her little daughter. The crowd that flocking round us—the Coroner's inquest, of which I was one—as well as a witness—the, whole together—has truly been a shocking scene. From such—and from all evil—Good Lord deliver us.

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Once more, weary and fatigued, I am spending the Sabbath's peaceful day at sea, far from those I love, far from all the endearing intercourses of Civil, Social and domestic life; far from the means of joining in the solemn assembly of the Saints. Though deprived of these endearing Privileges, may my heart—Oh! Eternal Parent, look up to Thee—as to the Giver of every good and perfect Gift. May I feel humble and penitent for my Transgressions—truly and deeply grateful for Thy mercies—and may I be enabled with heartfelt Sincerity to commend to thy gracious care and Protection all who are near and dear to me. Oh! bless my family, I humbly beseech Thee, with the choicest of Thy blessings. Be Thou to them a Husband and a Father—and soon may I again be restored to

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them and to my wonted happiness, and Thine be all the glory! Amen.

*Monday, July 3rd.* In the Brig *Delight*, Capt. Mosher arrived this day. On the wings of friendship I flew to meet him. And, blessed be God, I learn that he left my lov'd wife and my darling children well. But he has told me things that cut me to the soul. Time, however, must develop what I ought to do. I know and value Mosher's friendship, but I know too his ardent and irritable temper. As for myself—proud in conscious integrity, I can hurl defiance on the wretch who meanly dares to stab my honest character.

*Tuesday, July 4th.* On the Birth of my Country's Independence I ought to rejoice—for this day I have sailed in the Brig *Adeline*, Captain Christian, bound to N. York—huzza!!

This is a day of rejoicing throughout America, and it ought surely to be a day of rejoicing with me, my face is set once more towards my native country, and soon I hope to rejoice with those I love.

*Sunday, July 9th.* Lat. by obsr. 29—50'. *Adeline* at Sea. Our passage has hitherto been favourable and pleasant, and we now think our prospect good for reaching soon our desired port. Our Captain does all he can to make us comfortable, but my thoughts are continually anticipating the moment of meeting with the best of Wives and our loved Children. Is it possible my love, that those in whom you place the highest confidence should have wounded your peace of Mind, by meanly and assassin-like

stabbing the reputation of your absent husband. No, I will suspend my opinion till I can have certainties. But should it be so—adieu to Friendship—adieu to Confidence—at least in Bristol!

*Sunday, July 16th.* Another week of our passage has passed away pleasantly enough, but the winds have been very light—or we should have been in port before this. We are now to the Northwd. of Cape May, surrounded by several sail, and were this morning boarded by a Delaware pilot. I am anxiously looking for the time when I shall again set foot on my native shore, and once more embrace the best of women and our lov'd children. May we soon join in the solemn exercises of Devotion, *and may our united orisons ascend like grateful incenses to the Throne of the most high.*

*Monday, 17th.* The morning begins rainy and thick. Wind at East—we stood in under all sail and at 10 A. M. saw the lighthouse on Sandy Hook. At 12 being within a mile of the light house a lazy pilot came on board, and in one hour brought us to anchor at Quarantine Ground. Blows fresh and rains violently but we are at anchor, safe, on our own native shore—God be thanked!



## XIII

## THE SHIPMASTER'S LAST LOVE LETTERS

The last letters written to Mrs. Ann Russell by her husband, as preserved in the old sea chest, were sent from sea and the West Indies in 1809. In them he refers to the misfortune of his capture by Frenchmen and to other events more fully described in the log which comprises the preceding chapter. It is to be hoped that he was permitted to spend a good part of the next year ashore and that a longed-for visit with his family accounts for the dearth of letters after this return from sea. There were three girl babies in the Bristol home in 1809, Betsy and Parnell and Nancy, the eldest six years old. Their father was still struggling and hoping for a shift in the tide of fortune that had set so strongly against him year after year. These last letters read as follows:

*To Mrs. Ann Russell, Bristol, R. I.*

JANY. 18th, 1809.

The best thing I can tell you my Love, is that I enjoy excellent health, I desire to be thankful to the Giver of all good for it, and constantly and earnestly pray that you and our dear little Ones may through His Blessing be preserved and protected. I have had some perplexing scenes to go through here, but this world is a state of

perplexity and trial, and as respects myself—I have little reason ever to expect to gather the rose without feeling the thorn.

I think the Islands were never fuller of Americans. I have been here but eight days, and have had two letters from Antigua, which is also full of Yankees. I expect the first American port I shall reach will be Charleston. I wish you to write me there. Good Aunt Becca, you must write me too, and if I make a fortune this voyage, I will on my return escort you in style to Barnstable. Which of the children shall go with us? You must settle that among yourselves, after kissing them all for me.

ST. BARTHS, March 11th, 1809.

MY DEAREST FRIEND:

Capt. Taylor sailed yesterday for New York in the Swedish Schooner *Jane*. I wrote you a hasty line yesterday, and though now at leisure—what can I add—Ah! my lov'd Friend! Could I say all that my feelings dictate—could I unburthen my whole Soul to you—could I explain what I suffer when a temporary suspension from the perplexities of business allows me a little time for Reflection—I say—could I *then* explain how much I need the kind and faithful friend of my heart, to whom I may open myself without reserve—whose smiles would sooth my cares;—this sheet would be a scanty beginning and as I would never know when to end—so I shall not make the attempt.

Here, my love there is no such thing as that charming

domestic Society, that endearing social intercourse which is the zest of life. The gentlemen here are very friendly to me but in all the houses where I visit, I am sure to be surrounded by mulatto children—the Mother of which generally takes care to shew herself. In Dominico it was otherwise. I had a social, smart and kind Landlady, who kept an excellent house and paid every attention to her Guests. The Gentleman to whom I had letters of introduction there had a wife who was not the less interesting for being young and very handsome; but she was at the same time, frank and agreeable in her manners and truly amiable in her disposition.

At that home I became quite domesticated—and nothing that I have ever seen in the West Indies appeared so much like rational society—so much like my much lov'd Home. In a few days I expect letters from the Windward and then I shall be able to inform you when to expect me. If I am not in time to make arrangements for the garden you must consult with your father and do what you think best. I hope and trust that you will not stand in need of cash, as the arrangements I made with the cashier I suppose would meet everything necessary. Adams and Lothrop will owe me about \$400 for Goods which they sold for me, I think it falls due the last of this month. I need not caution you to hold that and everything else *fast*, for some accident may deprive me of my prospects and render me the poorer for this voyage.

Charge the little ones to remember me and behave well as they value my blessing.

ST. BARTHS, April 14th, 1809.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

I have been so long detained in this place that I have lately begun to flatter myself with the fond hope of hearing from you before leaving this—but notwithstanding the daily and hourly arrivals from America, and many from Rhode Island, yet I have hitherto been disappointed. I however, persuade myself, my Love, that you could not possibly calculate for a Letter to reach me here, at so late a period as this; for indeed my stay has been prolonged very far beyond my intention. The hundreds of Americans that have poured in here in consequence of the unexpected raising of the Embargo—has so totally altered the face of things, and deranged all former Calculations, that we had as it were to begin anew, but I am at last so near ready as to expect to sail in three or four days. You will have learned by my former letters, what is the intention of the voyage, and I have great hopes of being in the United States within forty days after leaving this. My long absence—so very unexpected to you, I fear has caused you too much concern—but I trust you have been supported, together with our dear little ones, and preserved in safety by Him in Whom our breath is, and Whose are all our ways. Through His Goodness I have enjoyed uninterrupted health. To His holy Protection I daily and I hope sincerely commit you.

I am much disappointed that I shall not have the pleasure of attending my little garden this spring. If little Parnell is blest with returning health, Betsey must now

have her for a constant companion at school. I hope the only strife between them will be, who shall learn fastest and behave best. The dear little Nancy, I suppose, begins to talk, and then Aunt Becca as well as you, will have a new source of delight, I wish I could partake it with you. In the mean time, dearest and best of Friends, keep up your spirits and be careful of yourself for his sake, who lives but for you. Ever affectionate

R.

ST. BARTHS, April 22nd, 1809.

My dearest friend. After a tedious detention here, I am now prepared to sail to-morrow, in the Swedish Brig *Charlotta*, Capt. Duncken. We are to be accompanied by the Swedish Brig *Adolphus* Capt. Englehart, both bound to St. Domingo, and thence to the United States—if permitted. I have chartered one-fifth of each of these vessells and have advanced towards my part, seven thousand five hundred dollars, I enclose you an agreement showing how far I am interested, which you will take *particular care of*, and together with this Letter, *keep to yourself*.

If I am not almost worn out myself, by so long driving about among these Islands, I have certainly almost worn out my clothes, although I have been obliged to spend more than 60 Dollars to recruit my small wardrobe. But think not, my love, that I am leaning towards extravagance; on the contrary, I think I am more economical than ever, and begin to fear that I shall, bye and bye, grow too worldly and avaricious. With the assistance of some

Friends I have made some handsome speculations since I have been out here—by which I have realized something. Whether I shall lose all by pushing further is yet to be determined. But we have been careful to write for Insurance on the whole property—so that in all events I hope to have something left.

I have thought it necessary to be thus explicit with you, my lov'd friend, concerning my business, in order to lessen as much as is in my power, your uneasiness at my absence. I need not caution you to keep your *own counsel*. I think the time will not be long 'ere I shall be happy in the bosom of my much lov'd family.

For while my memory holds her seat  
The fire so brisk—the hearth so neat  
The smiling wife, the Children's play  
Shall never from my memory stray,  
Nor howsoe'r by fortune tos'd  
Shall these fond scenes be ever lost.

I hope our much revered Pastor calls often to see you, that you may have the benefit of his pious private counsels—as well as the rich consolations of his public ministrations. These are privileges—these are blessings from which I am debarred. But I trust you remember me when humbly imploring Divine Mercy, whether in public or private that you make our children constant Partakers with you in the solemnities of religious Worship; as far as circumstances and health will permit. Arduous and important is the task my Nancy—the *double* task that devolves on you—from my long absence, of rearing aright

those tender plants, at this critical age; of instilling into them, not only suitable ideas of firm reliance on the Divine Goodness, but that He ordereth all aright.

I had provided myself with some books while at Windwd. My British friends have *borrowed* them from me, as well as some other articles, entirely *without leave*, but they have left me the best of Books, and in its Divine pages I daily find abundant sources of consolation, "which the world can neither give nor take away."

When I review my Misfortunes and feel oppressed with solicitude for the future Maintenance of my lov'd Wife and Children, I open the sacred volume and receive consolation from the affectionate promises of our Blessed Redeemer. I read Matthew, 6th Chapter, from the 26th verse to the end. I ponder on the words of Life and my throbbing bosom is still.

Again, when I reflect that all my best laid plans are rendered abortive by some unforeseen and fatal Disappointment, while *Fools* and *Boobies* around me are basking in the sunshine of fortune's favor and wallowing in the luxuries of this life, my *Pride* takes the alarm, and I say to myself, "surely it requires neither virtues, talents or abilities to obtain the smiles of fortune, since such *Animals* as these can succeed." I again open the inspired volume—and even my *Pride* is soothed, by finding that the wisest of men, thought on this subject as I do. I read Eccles. 11th Chap. and 11th verse, and fortify my mind with the same opinion which Solomon formed and promulgated three thousand years ago.

MAY 18th, 1809.

The Mate and five of the Crew of the *Charlotta* have just arrived here from St. Domingo. I am rejoiced to see them, as I can now provide for them and soon put them in a way to reach their respective homes. I have this day also the pleasure of a letter from my friend, Mr. Ogden, informing me of his arrival at his destined port, having lost by falling in with the Frenchmen, about Eight thousand Dollars—which however the underwriters must pay. Mr. Ogden has already made sale of the residue of his Cargo and I hope will soon be in America. When he arrives you will hear from him, having family of his own that are very dear to him, he will feel it a Duty to give you all the information he can.

I hope and trust my lov'd Friend, that the unexpected length of my absence will not cause you any embarrassment for money. I shall *endeavor* by means of Mr. Ogden to remit you something before long. Be not too much disheartened, my dearest Nancy. Notwithstanding all my Misfortunes, I shall still have something left, and though it would be idle to say that I do not feel—and very sensibly too—these unlucky tricks of Dame Fortune—yet I firmly trust that I shall rise superior to them all.

Betsey, you are almost a little woman by this time. I hope you are attentive to your School and that I shall find you have greatly improved. Do you take Parnell with you? Be careful of her, and always be very kind to both your sisters, my love. You must learn little Nancy her letters at home. Let me have the pleasure of hearing that



you are dutiful and good to the best of Mothers and I shall love you more and more.

My dearest and best friend—you see I am scribbling away to you all; as if I knew that Life and Health was still continued to you. God only knows what changes may have happened in my absence. But 'tis our duty to say in all events "His will be done." To His holy protection I commit you.

Per Schr. *Eliza* Capt. Thayer.

HAVANA, July 3d, 1809.

MY DEAREST LOVE:

Since I last wrote you from this place I have been anxiously waiting for the arrival of friend Mosher, having heard when he sailed from R. I. by Capt. Thayer of the Schr. *Eliza*. But Mosher has not yet arrived, and my anxious feelings for the situation of my dear family are still in full force. I have taken Passage in the Brig *Adeline*, Capt. Christian, and expect to sail for N. York this evening or to-morrow. I prefer going by way of N. York on account of my business there, which would otherwise compel me to go there from Bristol very soon. I shall doubtless be in N. York before you will receive this, but as Capt. Thayer was going direct to Bristol, I have entrusted to his care a piece of linen which I bought in Jamaica (my shirts are almost done for) also a brass coffee pot and four bottles of Castor Oil, which he will deliver to you.

BRIG ADELINÉ, Quarantine Ground  
Below N. York, July 17th, 1809.

My ever dear Nancy. My last letter from Havana will have informed you that I should probably take passage from thence soon. Have this moment anchor'd here, where we must remain four days performing quarantine. Well, my sweet Friend, with sensations of delight I am once more at anchor on my native coast and with a mind much more at rest than I have been for many months, as I had the day before I left Havana the pleasure of meeting our friend, Capt. Mosher, and of being assured that he left you all in good health. As this was my first intelligence from *you for more than 6 months* I leave you to judge my feelings on the occasion. I shall not attempt to describe them. But my Love, he told me things that made my heart ache, but stop! I shall soon see you. In the mean time, my Nancy, rest assured that *if 'tis possible for human nature should be so base, as that those you lov'd and trusted should meanly attempt to wound your feelings, by stabbing the reputation of your absent husband, that husband—strong in conscious integrity, feels as much above such rascally attempts as the authors of them are below contempt.* Pray keep this letter to yourself. I wish you had done so by all that I have wrote in my absence. I hope my business will detain me but a few days in N. York, when on the wings of love and impatience I shall fly to meet you. May that gracious Being who has hitherto protected us in our long separation still continue His goodness to us, and enable us to meet in safety. Your affectionate

RUSSELL.

## XIV

## THE DEATH OF HIS "DEAR FRIEND AND PARTNER"

On the 25th of May, 1810, the first son was born to Captain and Nancy Russell. Her life was the price the mother paid, and less than four months later "she departed in peace—calm, composed—and entirely resigned to the Will of her Maker—having lived the life of the righteous." The husband and father has left his own record of his loss in the following letters to his father and brother which bring to a close the romance of Captain John Willard Russell, mariner of Bristol, who was to survive his Nancy no more than four years.

For sometime there had been an estrangement between the sailor and his father. The why and wherefore of it are buried with their dust, but in these last letters of this series, bereavement bridged all differences and a great sorrow reunited the wandering son with his kindred. The following pages complete the story of an old-fashioned American shipmaster as he wrote it from the heart, a hundred years and more ago:

*To Nathaniel Russell, Esquire, Winchester, Conn.*

BRISTOL, Oct. 9th, 1810.

Will my dear and highly honoured Parents once more condescend to receive a Line from their long lost son—

who has long thought himself entirely thrown from your Affection and Remembrance. It is utterly impossible for me to tell you what I felt on once more beholding a Brother, and hearing from him that I still had a place in your Hearts. To him I refer you for an explanation of the past—and—if I have conducted myself unseemly towards you—may God and you—my beloved Parents—forgive me.

My dear Brother has been with me when I was bowed down with affliction, *having been but recently deprived of a beloved Partner of my heart, who, after a Marriage of eight years—I every day found more and more reason to love and esteem. I am left with four children—all almost helpless—God grant I may be able to perform my duty to them.*

If circumstances can render it possible, I shall very soon see you. In the mean time I again refer you to my worthy Brother—whom I can never sufficiently thank for his kindness. I remain your affectionate

JOHN W. RUSSELL.

*To Mr. Giles Russell, Winchester, Conn.*

BRISTOL, Nov. 2nd, 1810.

Your very friendly Letter of the 12th ult. my dear Brother, came safe to hand, and I feel greatly rejoiced that you had the satisfaction of finding your Family well, and especially that our venerable Parent was so much more comfortable than your Fears had anticipated. I participate with you in the Happiness of again meeting our eldest brother, and hope you will have much Enjoyment while together. You found me my beloved brother,

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in a state of mind from my recent loss—almost dead to all joy and the Avenue to every earthly happiness, as it were, closed up—but if anything in my Widowed state could find its way to my heart—could again lighten up the almost extinguished fires of social feeling—it would be accomplished on again beholding a beloved brother; on again hearing—(thanks be to God) that my respected and beloved Parents—and *all* those once so dear to me, still lived. I feel very grateful, my dear Brother, to you, in particular, for the pains you have taken to restore our long interrupted intercourse. May nothing but Death put an end to it.

My dear little children talk much of you, and about your children. Oh! could their lamented Mother, whose Heart was all alive to social bliss, could *she* have shared this joy with me—how happy we should all have been—but—God's Will be done.

I have delayed writing you so long that I might inform you of my removal to my new house—where we are now settled. It was a trying scene to me—but time—reflection—and above all “those consolations which are neither few nor small” will, I trust, enable me better to sustain my mournful situation.

I shall probably sail very soon on some Winter's Voyage, though I have not exactly yet determined where. I shall write you again soon and expect to hear from you often. Good Aunt Becca desires her love. Remember me with warmest love to *all* and believe me ever your affectionate brother

J. W. RUSSELL.

To Mr. Giles Russell, Winchester, Conn.

BRISTOL, Dec. 29th, 1810.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

I wrote a few lines last week to sister Betsey—and have been particularly anxious since to hear from some of you, on account of the critical situation of my respected Father's health. I have been disappointed—but I flatter myself that, had he been worse you would have wrote me. God grant that my *hopes* and not my *fears* may be realized. I had the pleasure of finding my little family all well, and they still continue so. My dear little boy—who never knew a Mother's fondness or a Mother's care—is yet a charming Child. The other children are continually talking of yours, and reminded me of the Pleasure I felt in being a short time with them.

I have not yet determined on my voyage circumstances made me wish to put it off as long as possible; and the gloomy prospect of Affairs abroad makes me shudder at the thoughts of risking anything. I think it pretty certain that the non-intercourse will again be in force, as respects England. In the mean time there is no prospect of a restoration of any of the Millions taken from us by our *loving* friend\*, nor do I see any shadow of security for better treatment from that quarter in future.

The seizure of West Florida, by force at this critical juncture, by our valiant and energetic Administration, will very probably lead to unpleasant consequences. On the whole, notwithstanding the pleasant picture drawn by

\* France.

Mr. Madison, *I* think our situation, as respects foreign Commerce was never more gloomy. . . .

Remember my duty and best respects to our beloved Parents. My love to your amiable wife—whom I shall always delight to call by the endearing name of *Sister*.

To Betsey and the children say every kind thing for me, and believe me ever Your affectionate Brother

J. W. RUSSELL.

*To Mr. Marshall Keith, Strafford, Norwich, Vermont.*

To be left at the Post-office.

BRISTOL, April 13th, 1811.

DEAR KEITH:

Your friendly Letter of the 24th ult. did not reach me till two days ago. Amid the gloom of my own sorrow, my heart still participates in the joys and sorrows of my friends. And very great indeed was my satisfaction to hear once more from you and Mrs. K. after so long a silence. I am much rejoiced to learn that you feel so happily settled. May your anticipations of calm Serenity and decent Competence through after life be amply realized.

On the 25th of May last my dear Nancy was safely delivered of a fine boy—her first son and fourth child. At the moment of childbed illness she was attacked with a severe pleurisy. The double shock was too much for her—a violent Fever ensued. The strength of her excellent constitution long struggled with disease and pain, and she so far recovered as to ride out two or three times. But,

alas! the die was cast, medical aid and anxious attentions availed nothing. She languished till Sept. 5th and then departed in Peace—calm, composed—and entirely resigned to the Will of Her Maker.

Having lived the “life of the righteous—her latter end was eminently like His.”

I am left with four infant children—but I need not speak to you and Mrs. K. about my loss—you knew her worth—you knew how necessary she was, almost to my existence—and I have no doubt of your kind sympathy.

Early last spring I commenced building a new house, on the lot I own north of the Church, nearly opposite the dwelling of James DeWolf. It progressed rapidly, and in July it was ready to go into. But, alas! She for whom I built it—She who assisted in all my little plans for making it convenient—She, who fondly anticipated many happy days beneath its roof with her husband and children was now fast hastening to “the house appointed for all living.”

After my loss I long hesitated what to do with my house. I could not bring myself to remove into it—and I did not wish to sell or rent it. At length a sense of the Duty I owed my Children enabled me to struggle with my feelings, and in November we occupied the new Mansion. An elderly maiden lady—a near relation and intimate of Mrs. Russell—who had been an inmate of our family for the last seven years, kindly stays to superintend my family. The infant, at a few weeks old—was put out to nurse;



has had an excellent place—we are about weaning and taking it home.

Some time since I was pretty largely interested in a shipment of coffee to Tonningen—you know how things are managed lately in Continental Europe, and I have great reason to fear that the great personage who “loves the Americans”\* will never suffer me to have my property again; if so—it will absorb the greater part of the hard earnings of many years.

Many of your old friends still remain and often speak of you with affection. Our friend Mosher is at Havana, in which trade he has done well lately. During his absence—his wife, in her old age—has another daughter.

This place has greatly altered since you were here, you would be almost lost among the numerous new wharves and stores. I presume you would not know one in ten of the persons you meet. Many too, of your old acquaintances, whom you never would have suspected of such things (Jacob Babbit, for instance), have become *great men*.

Society here is not so good as it was formerly; owing to the continued influx of strangers, and it being a kind of city of *Refuge*. A large proportion of our newcomers are related to rag-tag-and-bobtail. Party politics, too, have poisoned the peace of our social circles—but this is in some measure wearing off.

Do let me hear often from you, and should you come *near* here, you must not fail of making us a visit. Remember

\* Napoleon I.

ber that when you are here my house must be your home. My respectful love to Mrs. Keith, and believe me to be with affectionate regard your old friend

J. W. RUSSELL.

*To Mr. Giles Russell, Winchester, Conn.*

NEW HAVEN, May 25th, 1811.

DEAR GILES:

The Convention which I have been attending here, having now completed their business, I am preparing to return to my dear family, anxiety for which has alone prevented me from enjoying myself well while here. There were delegates from every State, from Maryland northward and I may venture to assert that a more respectable body of Clergy were never convened in the United States. The Lay Delegation was composed of *some* of our first characters, among whom were the Hon. Rufus King, from New York, and several former members of Congress, from several states. This Convention meets but once in three years. Their deliberations and doings have been conducted with much harmony, and I hope through the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, may conduce to the strengthening and advancing of his cause and Kingdom.

When I wrote you the other day I mentioned something of our good sister's coming to see me this summer, if consistent with her engagements. Such an event would be very desirable to me on many accounts; as I much fear that good Aunt Rebecca's precarious state of health will make it absolutely necessary for her to leave me for a few

months—and it would be impossible almost to find any person willing to take charge of my infant family, and with whom I should be willing to entrust them; or who could feel and do for them as Aunt Rebecca has done.

*To Mr. Giles Russell, Winchester, Conn.*

BRISTOL, Dec. 11th, 1811.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

You have been a long time silent, but I have had the satisfaction of hearing several times from you and yours. I need not tell you what Pleasure I received from the unexpected visit of my Brother Benjamin. My Satisfaction was much enhanced on receiving his Letter, when leaving you, in which he informs me that he returns prepared as he hopes to save his farm. I wish you to write me the Particulars.

Our little Boy has been very gradually recovering and is now pretty smart, but he has not yet gained his former stand. He was reduced very low, even to Death's door, I desire to be truly grateful to Him who has restored him to me. The rest of us are all well. Sister Betsey has been for some time quite smart for her. Our good Aunt Becca has returned sooner than we expected. Some of our Barnstable friends were coming here on a visit, and she took the opportunity to accompany them, greatly I assure you, to my satisfaction. Her health is much better since her return. Our little ones are very often talking about yours, planning future schemes of happiness with them and wondering why we have no letters from you. Our

old complaint of dull times not only remains but increases. As to anything of a public nature—you have the same means of seeing and judging that I have. I think however, that the gloom thickens, and in regard to business I am almost discouraged. My respects and duty to our honour'd Mother, my love to all the little ones. Let me hear soon and often from you. and believe me your ever affectionate brother

J. W. RUSSELL.

*To Mr. Giles Russell, Winchester, Conn.*

BRISTOL, Nov. 9th, 1813.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

Your favour of the 3rd inst. from Hartford I received in due course of mail, and am very happy once more to hear of the welfare of those so dear to me. My friends, that went to the Westwd. have returned—they came through Lenox, which route prevented their calling on you. I have all along had hopes of seeing you here this fall, but you must be the best judge whether it would answer. You made enquiry respecting clocks—this would be no time to sell any, on account of the great scarcity of money, and the peculiar pressure of the times\*, which is already severely felt in a place situated like this—when corn-meal is scarce at \$1.50 per bushel; and flour from \$12 to 13 per bbl.; when the common labourer, who would always through the season, have his six dollars every Saturday night for his week's work, and has now probably not

\* During the War of 1812.

earned 10 dollars in the summer; when the crop of onions, which has usually sold for \$60,000 in a year is now worth 0000; when the honest sailor who supported his family well and laid up a little every year, has now been three years almost out of employ—and living on his former little savings; when added to this we view the *hopeful* prospect before us, you will judge that it is not without reason, that we complain of hard times.

. . . My little flock are all well. The boy grows finely and is greatly attached to his Aunt Betsey. My situation ought perhaps to make me feel melancholy—but I *think*, at times at least, that my Confidence in the goodness of our Heavenly Father is unshaken, and I know that I still possess many blessings—yea, many more than I deserve. Our little Ones were delighted to hear from you and send their love. Mine to my dear and honoured Mother, and to all yours. Believe me your affectionate Brother

J. W. RUSSELL.

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING, NOV. 26, 1812

*Dedicated to Parnell Russell.\**

BY CAPTAIN JOHN W. RUSSELL

When God, in anger lifts his arm  
And hurls the frowning dart;  
When the bar'd bosom feels the stroke,  
That rends the aching heart—

When Parents, children, brothers, friends,  
Resign this mortal breath;  
*Or the dear partner of each joy*  
Lies pale and cold in Death—

Though all creation then may smile  
And songful groves be glad  
The very music of the groves,  
The very smiles seem sad.

Drear looks the face of cheerfull day  
More drear the gloom of night,  
And frolic scenes of harmless joy,  
Are anguish to the sight.

If then, mid frowns—such killing frowns  
(While virtue mourning lies)  
The grief fraught soul, serene looks out  
From sorrow streaming eyes—

\*The second daughter of Captain Russell.

Resigned—looks up, to heaven's high throne,  
 And *feels* the strokes were *right*,  
 On those deep wounds—Jesus shall pour  
 The balm of sweet delight.

Consoling angels lend the hand  
 To guide the wanderer home—  
 And sing—the wanderer too shall sing  
 My God, I come—I come.

All Heaven's bright host shall tune the lyre  
 To praise a glorious God;  
 All passing glorious when he smiles,  
 And glorious in the rod.

From Heaven's bright host let mortals lean  
 To join the angelic lays;  
 And know no time—though clad in gloom  
 But brings some cause for praise.

Then let the voice of praise resound,  
 In love's harmonious strains;  
 Glad tidings hear, Jesus has come,  
 The Lord Jehovah reigns.

Come—nature's offspring all unite  
 Let men begin the theme;  
 Yes—recent mourners, you may aid  
 This rapt, seraphic hymn.

I, too, would add my feeble voice,  
Self-severed though I mourn,  
Though all—near all, my earthly joy  
Is flown, forever flown.

My soul shall still rejoice in God,  
And still his succour crave—  
Who's nigh to heal the broken heart,  
The contrite spirit save.

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*Captain John Willard Russell died in Bristol, Aug. 20,  
1814—Aged forty-four years.*

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