

‘ Great Western’ Letters 1840

The letter-bag of the great western ; or, life in a steamer

Thomas Chandler Haliburton

1840

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Letter From A Traveller Before He Had Travelled.

My dear Mac —

My Publisher has had the assurance to make an excuse of my never having been in America, to offer me only half price for my travels, and I have therefore concluded to make a flying visit to that country, so as “ to give a face” to them. It was in vain that I protested that people who had never seen the Colonies, made capital speeches, wrote elegant dispatches, and framed Constitutions for them ; that one man who had only seen Canada from a steam-boat and the Castle windows, described Nova Scotia and the United States, neither of which he had ever been in, and drew a minute comparison of their general appearance and the habits and feelings of the people ; that another was seized in bed in Romney Marsh, and sent out to North America as a Governor ; and in short, that personal knowledge and practical experience were apt only to engender prejudice and cloud the understanding. He admitted it all, but said he wanted to have “ incidents of travel,” striking sketches and living caricatures, to make the work take, to give it effect ; in short, something new, something that would cover untrodden ground.

I am therefore off in the Great Western, and I hope to scour the country in eight weeks, by starting at once, after my arrival, for the extreme points. I shall in a few days reach the prairies by means of rail-roads and canals, from whence I will dash in among the Pawnees, and kill a buffalo, and from the hunters I will get all I want to fill up the detail. I will then visit the scenes of recent disturbance in Canada, and obtain an interview with some of the rebel leaders, and by thus dwelling on opposite points, give a magnificent idea of the extent of ground I have gone over. I have had the book all ready written for some months past, at least all the laborious parts of it, and have nothing to fill in but the jests and the anecdotes. I have avoided the rambling mode adopted by Hall, Hamilton, and Marryat, and have given it an elaborate scientific and analytical division, as follows : 1st Book embraces the geographical position and natural resources, area and population. 2d. Political statistics, including government, revenue and expenditure, civil, military and naval affairs. 3d. Moral statistics, (that is a title will please the rads. vastly) including religion and education. 4th. Medical statistics, including comparative mortality, &c. 5th. Economical statistics, including agriculture, manufactures, navigation, trade, &c. All this is done, and is, in my opinion, devilish well done, for a man who knows nothing about it, but the United States almanacks, road manuals, newspapers and guide books, have furnished abundant, and, I am inclined to think, authentic information.

It is but to hash up the cold collations of my predecessors. The deductions and theories from these facts, I feel I can draw as well in London as in America. In this the publishers agree, but they say they want life ; “ verisimilitude,” is their word, and “ striking incidents.” The politics are on the safe side—ultra-radicals. I have applied a sledge-hammer to the church in the colonies ; blown up the rectories, and clergy reserves, sky-high ; gone the whole figure for responsible governments ; (though between you and me, and the post, I can’t, for the soul of me, understand the difference between that, in the sense demanded, and

independence,) for ballot, universal suffrage, and short parliaments ; and illustrated these things by their practical working in the new states of America. As respects the house of Lords, that is a delicate subject. My friend fell foul of it, and charged it with legislating in ignorance and inattention. This course may do for him, but, for obvious reasons, I think it imprudent in me. His section is the most aristocratic of the parties at present, and I doubt if it would serve my turn to follow him. The church is a different thing. That is fair game ; and I am, in this liberal age, backed by high authority, for giving it no quarter. Besides, it is not a “ church militant.” I have gone beyond Brougham in this, who swears it was the church which was the cause of the rebellion in Canada. As respects the state of slavery in the States, I have gathered anecdotes on board, from some travellers, that are capital, especially of Jefferson selling his own children—flogging others, and playing the very devil ; of a descendant of Washington being a slave and set up at auction ; and of a white wife being compelled to wait upon the black mistress of her husband, and so on. Talking of slaves, reminds me of the Barbadoes Globe of the 15th August, which I send you. Read the sermon of an abolition captain Somebody. It is capital. I wish it served our views to insert it : if it did, I would do so, for it would make an excellent article, particularly where he points to one of their masters, and tells the negroes they must not kill him—must not hate him for his cruelties, and so on ; like the old story of not ducking the pick-pocket. It is magnificent ! That fellow ought to head a commission—the quakers should put him into parliament.

Of lynching, I have got some choice stories ; and will endeavour to pass through the state where they took place, to give them from the spot. Of the bowie-knife—Arkansaw toothpick, and other stillettos, in use among the settlers on the Indian borders, I imported a specimen when I began the work, and had drawings made in London. On waste lands in the colonies, some people we wot of, have made capital speeches, I understand, as I have written my book from official returns, and fancy. I hear they are right in part, and in part wrong ; the right part, every body knew—the wrong, no body ever heard of before. I will “ discuss most learnedly” on this matter. I can boast, now, that I am an eye-witness. *Ego te intus et in cute novi* ; which is more than either of them can say, at any rate. I have made out the following list of subjects for anecdotes, which, like a cork jacket, will make the body of the book float lightly. The appetite of the public is like that of the boa-constrictor, it is not satisfied with less than the whole hog. Lynching—spitting—gouging—steam-boats blown up—slavery—sales and breeding of slaves—licentious manners of the South—slang expressions of the East and West—border doings in Canada—Clay—President—Webster—ignorance of the fine arts—bank frauds—land frauds—stabbing with knives—dinner toasts—flogging in the United States navy—voluntary system—advantage of excluding clergymen from schools, instance, Girard’s College, &c.—cruelty to Indians—ravenous eating—vulgar familiarity—boarding houses—list of names of drink—watering places—legislative anomalies, and tricks of log-rolling bills—anecdotes of Papineau—Sir John Colborne and Lord Durham—and some few of woman, perhaps, the most attractive of all. These I can gather from travellers, and from party-men, who, in all countries, never spare their opponents ; and from country journals, and the speeches of mob orators. It will spice the work, afford passages for newspaper puffs and paragraphs, and season the whole dish.

All this can be accomplished in eight weeks, easily. The Americans live in steam-boats, rail-cars, stage-coaches, and hotels, so that I shall see them at home while travelling, and of their domestic manners, ask freely of any one I meet. It is not necessary to give dates ; no one will know when I arrived, when I departed, or how long I was in the country. Dates are awkward boys, they are constantly getting between your legs and throwing you down. I will give the whole a dash of the democracy of the new school, being both anti-church and anti-tory, in my opinion. I will talk of general progression—of reform measures—of the folly of finality, and so on. It will take, my dear boy—it will do.—I shall go down as well as any ultra-Liberal of the day. I think I see the notices of it already :—

This is a great work.—*Sun*.

This work is eminently entitled to public favour.—*Weekly Dispatch*.

This is at once a profound and entertaining work. We never observed any thing before so remarkably beautiful as the illustrations. The views are distinguished for picturesque effect and importance of subject. The drawings are accurate and exquisite.—*The Town*.

It has been said, that Hogarth's pictures are read, and the same may be said of the prints in the volume before us.—*Examiner*.

Of Mr. Grant's work, it is impossible to speak in terms of sufficient approbation. The enlarged views, varied and accurate information on all topics of general interest, and the liberal and enlightened tone of thinking, that pervades this book, justly entitle him to rank among the most profound thinkers, and successful writers, of the present day. We cordially congratulate him on his eminent success, and the public on so valuable an addition to its literature. More we cannot say.—*Satirist*.

This is decidedly the best book ever written on America.—*Sunday Times*.

Then follow "The Beauties of Grant,"—how well it sounds ! Think of that, master Mac. That—that—is fame. If you could get me made a member of some of the London Societies, during my absence, it would be of great service to me. An F. R. S., or M. L. S., or M. G. S. after one's name on the title-page, looks well, and what you say then, comes ex cathedra as it were. You speak as a man having authority, you are a "most potent, grave, and reverend signior," and entitled to be heard among men. I would not mind the expense of the thing, could it be managed, for the sake of the eclat it would give me and my work, and for the pleasure too of letting all the world know the fact, as my volume, I hope, cannot fail to do.

Murray's book is dedicated to the Queen by special permission, and that alone is a feather in the author's cap. A book that is inscribed in this formal manner, is supposed to be read, at least, by its patron. Now, although I have no pretensions to this honour, my views ought to make my book a favourite with the parties whose cause I so strongly advocate, particularly that portion which demonstrates the necessity of conciliating rival sects, by a total rejection of the Bible from the Common Schools of the nation ; and I confess, I shall entertain the hope that Lord B—— will interest himself to obtain for me, the special permission of the Marquis of Locofoco, to dedicate my travels to him. His "imprimatur" is, I admit, no great advantage in a literary point of view, but politically it is of the first importance. It will give it "the Tower mark,"—it will pass current then as coin. And now, hurrah for the Pawnees—the Texans, and the Canadians—and Yankee town, and then for "Travels in the United States of America, the Texas and British Provinces, with minute and copious details of their geographical, political, moral, medical and economical statistics, including interesting anecdotes of distinguished living characters, incidents of travel, and a description of the habits, feelings, and domestic life of the people. Illustrated by numerous drawings and sketches taken on the spot by the author. By Gregory Grant, F. R. S. and M. L. D. Dedicated, by special permission, to the Marquis of Locofoco."

Here is the pilot on board. All is bustle and confusion. God bless you ! dear Mac. Don't forget the F. R. S. or some other A. S. S. society. Adieu.

Yours always,

Gregory Grant.

Letter From A Stoker.

Dere An —

Last night as ever was in Bristul Captain Claxton ired me for to go to Americka on board this steemer Big West un as a stoker, and them as follered me all along the rode from Lunnun may foller me there two if they likes, and be damned to em and much good may it do them two, for prigging in England aint no sin in the U States were every man is free to do as he pleseth and ax no uns lif neither, and where is no peleise, nor constables, nor fleets, nor new gates, and no need of reforms.

I couldnt sleep all nite for lafeing when I thort ou they'd stare wen they eared i wass off and tuck the plate of Lord Springfield off with me and they looking all round Bristul and ad their panes for their trouble. I haven't wurk so ard sinse I rund away from farmer Doggins the nite he was noked off his orse and made to stand, and lost his purs of munny as he got fur his corn, as I av since I listed for a stoker. Ime blest if it arn't cruel ard wurk ear. I wurks in the cole ole day and nite, a moving cole for the furniss, which never goes out but burns for ever and ever, and there is no hair, it is so ot my mouth is eated so that wat I drinks smox and isses as if it wur a ort iron, and my flesh is as dry as ung beef and the only consholation I av is Ide a bin ung beef in earnest if they ad a nabbed me afore I left Bristul, all owin to Bill Sawyer peachin on me.

Ko wun would no me now for I am as black as the ace of spades as was and so is my shurt, and as for clene shetes how long wood they be clone and me in them, and my skin is cracked like roasted pig, when tne be not fat enuf to baste it or yu to lazy to du it, which was often your case and well you cort it for it two, when I was out of sorts which was enuf to vex a man as risked his life to get it, and then my eyes is soar with dust as comes from the cole, and so stiff I avent power to shute them because they be so dry, and my mouth tastes sulfur always as bad as them as goes to the devil in earnest as Sally Mander did. I have no pease at all and will not be sorry when its over if i survive it, blow me if I will. I smells like roste beaf and the rats cums smellin round me as if they'd like to ave a cut and cum agin, but they will find it a tuf business and no gravy as the french man said who lived two hull weeks on his shuse and dide wen he cum to the holes, which he said was rather two much, but I can't say I like their company a morsel more nor bill Sawyerses and blast me if i donte be even with him if ever he comes to Americka for that gud turn he did me in blowing on me for the silver wich if he adnt dun ide a bin living at my ease at ome with you and may be marrid you if you and the children ad behaved well and showed yourselvs wurthy of it, as it is i cant say whether we are to mete agin or not, but I will rite to you when I lands the plate and let you no what my prospet is in my line in New York. Then my shuse is baked so ard ; they brake like py crust and my clothes wat with wat cum'd out of me like the rain at fust, and the steme that cums out likewise, which is oncredibill, and wat with the dust as cum out of the cole, is set like mortur and as stiff as sement, and stand up of themselves as strate as a Christian so they do, and if I ad your and in my and it wood melt like butter, and you that is so soft wood run away like a candel with a thief in it, so you are better off where you be than ere till I cool down agin and cum too for Pme blest if I woodnt set a bed on fire I'me so ort. This is orrid wurk for him as has more silver in his bag than arf the passengers as, and is used to do as little wurk as the best of them is.

I got urted in my cheek with a stone that busted arter it got red ort in the grate, an flew out with an exploshun like a busted biler, only I wish it ad been water insted, for it would ave been softer nor it was, for it was as ard as a cannon ball, it noked down to of my teeth, and then noked me down, and made a smell like searin a orse's tail with red ort iron, which is the cause of its not bleeding much, tho it swelld as big as a turnip, which occa shuns me to keep wun eye shut, as its no use to open it, when its swelld all over it, for I cant sea. If thats the

way peopel was stoned to deth, as Ive eard, when I was a boy, when there was profits in religion, it must have been a paneful end, as I no to my cost, who was most drowned, holden my ed in a tub of water to squench the red ort stone, which made the water two ort to bear any longer, and wen I tuked it out, it was two much eated to old in my and. My feet also looks like a tin cullinder, or a sifter all full of small oles, were the red ort sinders have burned into the bone. Them as node me wunce, woodnt sware to me now, with a ole in my face as big as my mouth, that I adn't afore, and too back teeth out, as I adn't afore, and my skin as black as ink, and my flesh like dride cod fish, and my hair dride wite and frizzed with the eat like a neagurs, or goose fethers in ort ashes to make quills ; and I'me able to drink a gallon of Porter without wunce taking breth, and not feel it for ewaporation, and my skin so kivered with dust and grit, you could sharpen a knife on it, and my throte furred up alike a ship's biler ; and me, that cood scarcely scroudge thro a windur, that can now pass out of a kee ole and not tare my clothes in the wards. Wun cumfit is, I was not see-sick, unless being sick of sea, for I have no licked in me, for watever I eat is baked into pot py, and no gravy, which cums off the grate eat in the furniss, and burns rases no blisters, for they aint any watter inside to make wun, only leves a mark as the ort poker does on the floor, and wen my turn cums to sleap, its no longer a turning this side and then that, and then rolling back again, a trying and not being able, for thinking and talking, but sleep cums afore I can ly down, and all the pellise at Bo Street woodnt wake me no more than a corpse, wen I am wunce down in ernest. If I wusn't in a urry I'd stick them up with working like a orse in the mail that runs day and night and never stops. It woodn't be long afore I'd nock off a bolt, or skru or nut or somethink of that kind which ud cans them to let out steam and repair, which wood give half a days rest to wun, but as its th furst and the last of my stoking, why the sunner there is an end to it the better. No man could identical me with a safe consience and no pergury, so if the Yankees spend their money as I ar heard till since I took passidge, on their backs instead of carrying it in their pockets, i may return after a short alibi to you and the children, which will depend on ow you aul up in time and keeps out of Low company, that is barring accidents for there is no noing what may appen, for them as carrys booy nives behind the capes of their coates, and pistuls in their pockets insted of pistoles are ugly customers, and a feller may find himself deliverd of a mistake afore he noeth where he is, for they are apt to save the law a job are them knives, so they are, and I'de rather trust to a jug missing fire or not hitting his man any time than to side arms, for them big wigs oftener ang fire than ang a man. They are bad things them cut and thrusts for both sides, as Tom Hodge used to say,— He who stabbeth with his tung is in no danger of being ung, but he who stabbeth with his nife is damd apt to lose his own life.

When you receive this letter, go to Blackfriars, to the Swimmers, and in the four foot of the bed, in the left room, in the garrit, as I used to use, when bisnis called, you will find the same oiler as in yours bedstead, and take the gold sneezer as is there, which will raise the wind ; and be careful, as there is no noin when we may meet, or whether I will av time to send you any blunt or no, which will depend on how you conduct behind my back ; I don't mene this by way of discouragement, but to int you are too fond of drink, and keping company with needy mizlers, to kepe secrets for any wun without bringhig him to the crap. And, now that I'me in another wurld, I expect you will give luse to your own inwenshuns, which will be the ruin of you, yet, as well as them as has the plessure of your ackwaintance, in wich case you don't ear agin from me ; and I will luk for sum wun as nose how to place a proper valy on adwice when they gets it, which wasn't your case for sum tim gone. My present sitivashin as all cum of not noing how to be silent, or bill Sawyer cudn't av ruined me in my bisnis—but, never mind, its a long lane that has no turn in it, as the chap sed to conshole himself in the treadmill.

Remember me to Jim Spriggins, who is the primest ruffing cove I ever shared a swag with. Tell him I'me no transport, though I'me bound over the water, for I'me just visitin furrin parts, as the gents do, on account of having lived too free at home, and that I ope to nap many

a reader with him yet, if Providence blesses our undertakings. So, no more at present time,
from

Your loving friend,

Bill Holmes.

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Letter from A Stockholder of The Great Western to The Secretary.

I DULY received your favour, under date of the 30th ult. per Mr. Scribe, the clerk, which came to hand at time of sailing, and note its contents. I notice your request that I should forward to you, per first ship, via New York, that leaves after our arrival, touching at an English port, such suggestions and alterations as occur in a careful review of the fixtures, stock in hand, and miscellaneous articles on board, and have great pleasure in executing your order, and hope that the manner will prove satisfactory. The first remark on the catalogue I would offer, is upon the alarming preponderance of Americans on board, they being one moiety or half part of the assortment of passengers mentioned in the bills of lading of the line cargo, the balance being made up of foreigners, provincials, and English.

In the event of any sudden breaking out of hostilities, while on the passage between the two nations, as was recently feared, the provincials might sympathise with the Americans, who are troublesome customers ; and the Poles, I would stake my existence, as natural friends of liberty, having served an apprenticeship to the business, would side with them ; and the French, from their known antipathy to what they call their antiquarian enemies, the British, together with the steward and his body-guard, who are all A-freco-Americans, and whose home, if they can be said to have any, who are in bondage abroad, is the United States, would be ditto, and not *neutral*. Reinforced by this extensive additional supply of auxiliaries against us, they would be enabled to make a run upon the English captain and his brave countrymen, the stokers, and, perhaps lynch them, and seize the steamer, which is too fast to be overtaken, or too strong to be retaken, or else I am much mistaken. It is not easy to contemplate such a stoppage in our line, without feelings of consternation and panic, and I submit it with all due deference to your honourable board, for some premonitory measure, that shall obviate such an alarming occurrence, as a total loss. Yesterday, when we thought of making a deviation, and putting into Halifax to ascertain whether Maine and New Brunswick had declared war, the Americans put us all into bodily fear, that they would put us into confinement, and make prisoners of us without ransom ; and such fears should be removed by removing the moving cause.

Another serious item, serious from the consequences as well as the magnitude, is that of the number of lights on board, whereby not to mention waste, the safety of the ship, comprising a very extensive assortment of valuable articles not necessary to enumerate, and of the passengers, is endangered, as well as that of other vessels and passengers. We have now two actions pending against us at New York, for the loss of two ships, that, mistaking our immense volume of light for a light-house mentioned in the coast-book, steered accordingly, and were wrecked on the rocky shore, which in their vainglorious and boasting language, they call ‘ iron-bound.’—I have suggested to Mr. Ogden, who is the most eminent counsel in New York, whether we might not plead or aver, that, if the coast is ‘ iron-bound,’ it was magnetic attraction, and not excess of light, that caused them to be lost in the darkness of the night. If this idea prevails, it will cure them of making a selection of such high-sounding words to denote ordinary things, and teach them to substitute facts for poetic fiction of imagination, in transacting business.—I consider there is great danger of fire, and prospect of immense sacrifice of entire stock, if the strictest regard to economy in the distribution of it, is

not attended to ; for although the fire of the engine falls into water, it would not be so easy to make water fall upon the fire ; and fire, as you used to say, sir, very forcibly and appropriately, is a bad master, though a good servant. I would, with your kind indulgence, obviate the danger to the premises, by refusing to supply the passengers individually with a lamp or candle or ignition of any kind, and order, that when they close the concern and shut up for the night to go to bed, they should be accompanied by a waiter, who should stand by them with a dark lantern in his hand, open for the men, but held behind him for the ladies. Premium of insurance would be reduced by underwriters on the policy by this means, and brokerage saved also, as well as the amount of petty average of anxiety.

As to the stock of provision on board, I would materially alter the assortment of solids and fluids. In this line I would mention the article of soda, four thousand bottles of which were drunk during the voyage, which is an immense consumption, notwithstanding the price at which it was laid in was un-rivalled for cheapness, on account of the liberal discount allowed for prompt pay. Such a quantity is injurious to health, being a system of diet that lowers the system of body—occupies the time of the waiters in drawing corks, and is very expensive. It is called for chiefly among the Americans, who, I may say, are the only customers, and they order it by wholesale ; their principal pleasure, I believe, arising from the explosion resembling that of a rifle ; but this is only another way of rifling your pockets as they would serve your bodies. I would order the consignees at New York, not to lay in so heavy a stock of the article, the very freight of which runs up to a considerable sum. I would have fewer sorts of dishes and of a better sort, and fewer kinds of wines and of a better kind. A great deal of meat is now wasted besides what is put under the waist, in trying which they give a preference to. This makes the passengers sick, and keeps them with empty stomachs ready to empty the dishes as well as the bottles. I humbly conceive this want of apportionment, is bad economy or rather no economy. I should prefer a selection of heavy wines, as less would do by 50 per cent. It takes a vast deal of light wines to make a man light-headed, and weak wines a man may drink for a week and feel no stronger for the stowage. One excellent expedient to prevent excessive drinking would be to engage a doctor on reasonable terms, who could sing well—a good song and a long song between the glasses prevents wasting liquid by its lien on the decanters, and every turn of the bottle among one hundred and ten passengers costs in exact computation one hundred and ten glasses of wine, which amounts to more than seven bottles, a heavy item in the account. There is, it appears to me, an advantageous opening here for an improvement. The article too should be imported direct, so as to save commissions and retail profits, and laid in at costs and charges only, to do business to advantage. I would observe shipping charges at Bristol are too high, especially dockage, wharfage, lighterage, and primage, and therefore laying in at New York is preferable ; and, to save custom-house expenses, every thing should be included in one cockpit.

There should also be a lieutenant on board ; I do not mean tenants that have left, for there are always enough of them ; but an officer so called, independent of the mates. This officer should have charge of the cabin and the cabin charges, and of the passengers and their baggages, all of whom ought to be in his convoy. He should preside over the table and relieve the captain of this department, who, never being brought up to this line of business, is unacquainted with particulars, although emulous to merit public approbation and patronage by assiduous attention. In addition to this, the captain is a ‘ Chartist,’ and consequently not so well fitted for large assemblies. As to the decorations of the saloons, they are most costly, though the prime cost is not to be complained of ; but they produce no return. The fabrics are elegant and of durable materials, and warranted of first quality, especially the drapery, which is of the newest pattern and fashion. They are now much damaged and stand at the reduced value of remnants, especially the paintings. Now, although a mere daub can never become a good picture, yet a fine painting may easily become a mere daub, as is proved on board of this vessel, for the servants are constantly rubbing their dirty hands on them. A touchy servant is the most disagreeable of all attendants, and although I detest one that is thievish, I make no

objection at all to one that is light fingered. I would intimate therefore as an addition to your orders, that there should be no more black servants, for it is obvious that a hand that is always black must be dirtier than one that is only occasionally so. Although there is no supper laid, yet judging from the quantity drunk, there are some tolerable suppers on board ; and anchovies, sardines and salt fish should be carefully excluded from the invoice and considered contraband, as well as all provoking things. He who thirsts after drink soon becomes bloody thirsty, and is a dangerous customer. This is the more unsafe, because in these premises we are constantly kept in hot water. Another improvement would be to remove the tube that runs the whole length of the cabin under the table, and answers no purpose but steaming calves' feet into jelly, and to place it on the table, where it might run counter to the dishes and be useful in keeping the dinners warm, as well as to make articles show to advantage. I have no objection to cold meat, but I like hot soup ; and fish that comes to table not warmed is out of " plaice," — and T like to hear young ladies' tongues chatter, but not their teeth.

Two saloons would be better than one, and give more satisfaction, on an average, to those who favour us with their custom ; for though I admire a mob cap, I detest a mob of caps. The side paths between the tables and side walls being scant ell wide, are too narrow for two to pass and repass without trespassing on each others' feet. A lady told me to-day she never knew before the pain of being " Sir-passed," and though she had no objection to the " freedom of the press," she had great repugnance to a " press gang" and had no idea of being " pressed on board ship."

But the most beneficial alteration that has occurred to me to make on board the ship, so as to make it yield a good dividend to proprietors and command an extensive run of patronage, would be to subject the passengers to animal magnetism. As soon as they come on board they should be put to sleep and disposed of by being packed carefully into their respective beds, and left there as on shelves, until the steamer performs her voyage, when they could all be handed down, un-animal-magnetized, and sent ashore. It would save much that now swells up the account current for the table and attendants, spare them the pain and suffering of seasickness, and prevent all noise and confusion. You could then afford to make a great reduction in the passage money by this means ; for a long voyage would be no more expensive, as far as the cabin disbursements are concerned, than a short one, and you could book double the number of insides and fill your way-bill up handsomely.

A magnetizer would have to be employed of known skill, so as to render advertising attractive and profitable. He should be a pupil of doctor Elliotson, or some such distinguished man, a person in well established business, well known to the nobility and gentry generally of his vicinity, and one in whom the public at large has great confidence. Whether so strong an assemblage of magnetic influence would affect the compass deserves consideration, and experimental trips should first be tried on the Thames and other places. For this invention you might obtain a patent, and the Great Western would thereby have a monopoly in her line of business, and defy all rival competition by driving others out of the field, or at least out of the sea.

What a sea of trouble it would save ! what an era it would form in naval history ! what a blessing to mankind ! crying children put to sleep—scolding wives set at rest—grumblers silenced—drunkards sobered—hungry people quieted—agitators calmed.

The cabin would then be fitted up like a museum, every specimen marked, numbered, parcelled, and shelved, and order and regularity restored, while economy and comfort (the you tilly dull sea) would pervade the whole assortment. It is the best expedient I know of to remedy all evils and ensure lasting custom and a safe investment for capital as well as please principals. Trusting that this enumeration of items, I have now the pleasure to forward in executing your commission, will arrive safe to hand and give satisfaction.

I am, sir, respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
William Wisdom.

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Letter from A Servant in Search of A Place.

Dear Tummus —

Curnel Rackilt having thort proper to stop Sherry in the servants hall, and give porter in sted, I give him warning that such improper conduct wouldnt do no longer, as I had been always used to live with Gentlemen, and to be treated as a footman ort, and besides livery I wont wear no longer, for no man breathing.—It arnt fit one man should wear bondage clothes to another man, and so I go to Americka where there is no such word as servant, but assistance and helps, and where talents is rewarded as it deserves, and there is no distinctions to be found.

I av engaged with Captain Haltfront to help him during the voyage and he is to pay my passage, but I didn't engage not to be sea sick, which of course I av thort proper to be, whenever he is on deck, which is not often and consequentially av nothing to do, but eat and drink my allowance which, thank God, I can do very well, and he av the Steward and Ships servants to wait upon him, which is enuf in all conscience without me. In Americka, as I hear, Servants is called Misters, and wine and vegetables being on the table and the company handing dishes, helps has nothing to do but sit down on cheers and read the papers, unless it be to change a plate now and agin, which is only per former like, and is often taken into business and marries into the family ; and wearing no livery can dine at Hotels at public places, if not on duty, and has money to pay for it. Little offences aint thort nothing of where public officers do the like as I hear, and where munny is so plenty, people make a fortен sometimes by failing in business, which the Steward says, is not uncommon by no manner of means. Howsumever I must say I pities Miss Rackilt Curnels dorter, poor thing, for she was unkimmen fond of me, that's a clear case, and would have absconded as quick as wink with me, if I had but thort proper to av sed the wurd, but being dependant upon her father, couldn't keep an establishment, which wouldn't do for me, as I couldn't afford to marry a poor girl, let her beautiful charms be ever so conspikious—I wunder who will tie on her clogs and squeeze her ankles now I am gone, and a prettier foot and ankle aint this day in all Lundun, though perhaps it don't become me to boast of my nolegs in this pint. Her waiting wummun Jane (you node Jane, she that had the fine black eyes) well, Jane was always jealous of her, and I ad enuf to do, I can telly, to pacify her, inting to her it was all her hone imagination, and that I wouldn't touch her mistress with a pair of tongs, and that hartificial flowers like she had no sweetness in them like the real roses of her lips and cheeks ; but wummun do find things out astonishing, and it aint easy to deceive them in matters of the art and eyes, though to my mind she aint no more to be compared to Miss than Sider is to Champagne.

Indeed, missus, herself, wouldn't av had no objections to go off, neither, I can tell you, if I ad consented to lift up my and, and whistled, if it warnt for fear of the curnel ; for she tuk great notis of me, and was proper vexed when I gin her warning, and told me, herself, I was a fool, and didn't know how to valy my place, and complained bitterly she was deceived in me, which she wouldn't av done, at no rate, if she warnt cross at losing me in such a sudden manner, for ever. But I never did deceive her—never give her no encouragement, on no occasion, whatsumever, for I perfered miss, by a great deal. Second-and pieces of furniture isnt to my taste, by no manner of means ; and, if she ad pesisted in saying much more, I should av told her so to her face ; for I didnt like her, for she was old—wore false curls, and

ad some teeth that wasnt her hone, and wasnt at all fit for a fancy-wum-mun for any young man like me.

If ever I marrys for muney, I must av good luks, too, or I am off the bargain—thats flat.

They has the ballad and universal suffering, as I am informed, in Amerika, and I shall have a vote, in course ; but its no use, as I hear, for voting is considered low, where its so common, and theres no thanks when no wun nose how you votes. So, reform, it seems, is no great shakes, arter all Lord John's flams about it. Public service I should much prefer to private, as I understands they gets eight dollars a-day, at a place they calls Washington, and great vails, too, besides rising of your tail is large, like O'Connell's, who has the biggest in all Ireland ; for I hear, Stevenson, the Yankee minister, was only a public servant, and no better, and rose by his tail, too, as our monkey used to hold-on by his tail, and help himself up. I shall try my luck there ; and if I gets up in the world, who knows but I may come back as a tatchy, or somethink of that sort, to England, some of these days, and show Curnel Rackit what service in Amerika is. One think I av seen, myself, an officer dine at our table, at master's, who ad seen service in his younger days, himself, and was made as much of, as if he had never stood behind a cheer in his life ; and, so far from being ashamed of it, as some people as I nose of would be, boasted of it, which showed his sense. Poverty aint no sin or disgrace, neither ; and barbers' sons have riz afore now to be pears ; whereas, my real father, as I av heard sai, is a reform member, and high up in office, though my mother had the misfortune to be a servant, which is more than sum can boast of, whose parents was low people on fathers and mothers side, both. If I was so fortunate, as to make a fortin by marriage, or public service, or become a curnel, myself, which, I hear, is quite common in Amerika, for servants to rise to be curnels, and even generals sometimes, I would cum back, in course to London, to spend it, where life is certainly understood to be spent, andsumly and becoming a man of fortin ; and theatres, and operas is open every nite ; and andsum girls and good wine only wants the means ; and perfessing reform opinions gives good interest. Breaking lamps and driving over people on side-paths, and nocking down policemen, is easy learned ; and so is not paying tradesmen's bills, and then running off with another man's wife, would be worth while—it would make a person fashionable, and a great favourite with the wimmen.

I av heard missus (or rather I should say Mrs. Rackitt,) often call Markiss Blowhard, a villain behind his back, for his love affairs, and that he ort to be shut out of families, for too bad, and be as civil to him next day as if he was Archbishop of Canterbury ; but wimmen always pertend to be shocked at what pleases them most—and carrying two faces aint confined to no station. Half-seas over to Amerika, makes me feel more nor half free, already ; at all events, I practises making free when opportunity hoffers.

Says the skipper to me one day (he is a leftenant in the navy), says he, ' are you Captain Haltfront's servant ?' Without getting up or touching hats, but setting at ease, sais I, I didnt know he had a servant, sir. ' Didnt know he had one, sir,' said he, ' pray what the devil do you call yourself if you are not his servant ?' Why, sir, said I, cocking my head a one side, and trying to come Yankee over him, he receives the Queen's pay, sir, and wears her regimentals ; he has an allowance for an assistant, which I receive and wear her majesty's cockade, too. We serve her majesty, sir and I am under the Captain's command—do you take, sir ? ' Why you infernal conceited rascal !' said he, ' if you were under my command, sir, instead of his, Ide let you know dam quick whose servant you were.' Ah ! very like, sir, said I, keeping my seat, and crossing one leg over the other free and easy, and swinging my foot, very like, sir, but you dont happen to have that honour, sir, and my passage money is paid to your masters the owners of this boat at Bristol, which happens to alter the case a bit,—you can go, sir. ' Go, sir,' said he, ' why dam your eyes, sir, what do you mean ? do you want to be triced up, sir ?' and he walked away in a devil of a hurry, as if he was going to do something, but he didnt honour me again with his company.

I have put up with a good deal in my time, Tummus, but I puts up with no more. No man calls me servant again, unless at eight dollars a day, as a public one at Washington or Van Buren or Webster or some of the large cities, where, as I here, no one lives, but every one passes through, and dont no you again. If that dont do, some other line must. Wine, wimmen and cigars is my motter, and she what bids for me, bids high, Tummus, or she dont av the honour of belonging to the establishment of

Your old cumpanion and friend,

Robert Cooper.

P. S. When you write to me write this way—

A Mister

Mister Cooper

Poste-restornte

New York, Amerika.

I dont know as I av spelt poste-restornte rite or no, its the french for let it stop in the Office till called for. Curnel's letters, when he and me was on the Contenent travelling, had it on, and it looks knowing. The Governess will tell you how to spell it, and you may kiss her for thanks, and get another kiss for change. Dont forget the two misters, for these little things mark the gentleman, and it might do me good such letters coming to me, especially among females whose curiosity is always on the key-veave, and takes such forrin looking letters for Billy duxes or assassinations of some fair one or another. If the governess would rite the back of the letter herself it would be better, for then the hande-writing would be feminine gender, as Miss Rackitt used to call the Spanish lap dog bitch.

Yours again,
R. C.

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Letter from A French Passenger to His Friend in London

My Dear Sare —

I have vary mush pleasure to you inform, I evakuete England on bord de Great Western, on de 22d ultimo, wid vary little wind and smooth watere, and next day it dropt astarne, and was lost to de view altogedare. I cannot tell if I speak de truth, I was soary to leave it behind me. De smooth watere did not long remain, but soon became onraged and terrifique, and I grew vary sick, and was brought to bed with nausea and de acke in de head, where I was confined myself, and could not prevent for several days, my being delivered of all I eat. Whatever I take I refuse, and what I swallow I throw away. De sweet is vary sour, and noting good likes my stomach.

By and by I became round again, and get up, and den vate spectacles for de eyes ; de cabin gives one hunder and ten passengare at de table at one and de same time, and no confusione but de confusione of de tongs. One ting on board of de steam boat I vary much do admire, you are not troobled with wind. Blow which ever way he will, backward or foreward, it is all same as one, you go right by de head all de time.

I find de English tonge varry tuff, and I am hard to understand. De meaning of de words is so scattared, it is not easy for to gadare dem all at de same time to chuse dat what fits de best to de right place. Dere is “look out,” which is put out your head and see, and “look out,” which is to haul in your head and not for to sea, just contraire. To day, steward took hold of de sky light, and said “look out,” well, I put up my head for to “look out,” and he shut down de sash on it, and gave me a cut almost all over my face with pains of glass, and said dat is not de way to “look out,” you should have took your head in. Dat is peating de English into de head wid de devil to it likewise. It keeps me in de boiling watare all de time. When I make in de English Tong mistake, de company all laugh in my countenance, which is vary disagreeable and barbare, but to avoid consequence hostile, I join in de laugh meself, and bark out too at my own blundares so loud as the loudest of dem all, but dere is no much pleasure in de practice, but when you shall find yourself in a Rome, you must do as it is done in de Rome. Politeness cannot be hoped have on ship board, where dere of men are many kinds, for you cannot look to make a silk purse out of de ear of one big pig. De wedare has been very onfair, and de sea so tall as a mountain, so dat de glasses no more cannot stand up, nor de soup sit still in de plate, but slide about as on de ice when it is slippare, and roll over in one united states of confusione, passengare, dinner, and all. We have one dreadful flare up every night in de cabin, which fill me varry full brim of fear, all de same as one light house. What would become of us, if we were to be burned in de watare wid fire? I do not know, so many peoples, and so few gigs and boots to get in, and so great way off is de land. Candles and lamps, and ceegars, in every man’s mouth widout nombre, and de furnace in de belly of the ship, all burning at de same instant time, make it dangerouse every where, and tho the Captain order one general blow up of dem all at ten o’clock, yet I vary much fear some onderminded person, like de English Lawyer, shall put de candle not under de bushel but onder de bed. As de English shall be vary fond of fires in de night, burning barns, and stacks of hay, and of corn, to produce one grand effect politique of reform, so I would take de liberty to send you one sketch imaginatif of dat horreable event, de burning of de Great Western in de sea, which will give you, I hope, mush pleasure to see, as it do me to prepare it for you wid pencil. When I was well, I spend my time vary agreeable wid de ladies in de promenade on deck, when de wedare shall give leave, and in making game at cards with snatches of musich, and in de evening in de sheets sketching de figures grotesque of de passengare estrangare, and in ventriloquism, which produce effect vary comique, but de passage shall come over almost so fast as my illness was, which no gave me mush time for company. So soon as we will slip our cable at New York, I was land, and come visit de Yankee of New England—de Frenchman of Canada—de savage of de wood—de black of de sout—and backwoodsman wat shoot wit de rifle—in succession, and study de democracy of de government. It is a country, unique, I believe, with abundance of food. Philosophique for refleclione. It is only no more as one-half so grand a conetry as de Americans on board was boast, it will be de finest conetry in de whole universe globe, for to all tings dey say splendid — magnifique —suparbe. Certain, dey appear one people drole. Niagra is, widout dout, one grand spectacle, but clumsy, widout shape or elegance, and not to be compared to de sublime water-works of Versailles, which is the bouquet of all—de first in de world. But to estrangares, who was not visit France, and been so good fortunate as to see that grand artificial work of de great natione, Niagra may, perhaps, appear wonderful. So it is with Vesuve, in like manner. In realita, it fall vary far to de behind of de immaginatif, in fire-works in de Champs de Mars, in de glorious days of July, at Paris. He who is not seen dat city, my good sare, has seen just noting at all where nature and art form one alliance, intimate, graceful, and unique. It is de one place only in de world, for a man vot has taste-literaire, imaginatif, and gastronomique. What dey can boast with truth, goot right, in Amerique, if dey only had de taste culinaire, which dey are so misfortunate as not for to be, is de grand reservoirs, de great lakes, and immense rivares of fresh watare, make for dat most delicate morceaux, de frog, which I hear are in great abundance dare, and very fine, sporting demselves, and singing night and day, like veritable birds, though de musich is not so good as dey eat, which is fit for a king. I make to myself one promise, dey shall compensare for a great deal of de miseraire in de table, but

at present, I hear it is so much throw away upon dem, as pearls before de swine-pigs, dey are so ignorant, and barbare, as not even to know de dish, but for make laugh.

In England, also, is one vary great ting wanted in de educatione of de houses commons of de people, is to have de knowledge of de art to cook de fare, so as to make it fit to eat for de palate and stomach—and, what is more, to de pockeet, and to make de one-half food dan de whole go furdare. Den you will hear of starving peoples again no more, as before, which cannot be oderwise when more is consumed in waste, in one day, by ignorance, den shall render for de whole week, entire, in consumptione necessaire. It is more better, as cheaper, and let goot cooking of de vitals last only for five year in de conetry, it shall wipe up the nationale debt, till it shall be no more seen, and noting remain. Farte else have enabled France to support de army of Napoleon, or wate is called of occupation, which was of Prusse and Russe, and Anglaix, when combined in round Paris, but de art to cook ? or farte now hold up de grand militaire and navy, or defray de debt of de natione, which is not commerciale, or manufacture, but de art to cook ? It is de single ting necessaire to general happiness, riches and health, and widout it, man is no more as a savage, who was waste more as he eats, and eats more as a pig, den human being.

Lord Brougham (who is distinguish more for what goes out of his mout, den what goes into it) have gone boast, “ de schoolmaster is abroad.” Veil ! farte of all dat ? de schoolmaster is not de right man, aftare all ; but if he will say “ de cook is abroad,” den he shall speak sense, for once, ondeniable. De cook is de gentleman dat shall make von grand reform in de English natione, more better as ballot or universal sufferage, or de Lord John Russell all in one pile, heap up togedare. De John Bull vat is poor, is so savage as a blood-hound—for why ? because he feeds on raw meet ; de chartist is wacked, because his stomach is out of de order ; and so is de radical vary cross and sour, because he is dispeptic, bilious and troubled wid wind ; and de rish man, what you call whig, go hang and drown himself for noting at all, but because his digestion is bad. Ah ! my dear sare, my goot friend, de cook is de doctare — de statesman—de true patriot. Speak of educatione nationale, mon dieu ! it is cooking nationale vat you shall vant ; and dis do put mind in me to go talk to de steward about de dinnair, so I must have take de honore to subscribe to you

Myself, wid great respect,

Your obedient servant,

Frederick Frelin.

The letter-bag of the great western ; or, life in a steamer (1840)

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