

OFFICE OF

MARYLAND HOTEL

CORNER OF MAIN STREET AND CHURCH CIRCLE

WM. H. GORHAM & CO., -----PROPRIETORS.

ANNAPOLIS, MD., June 25th 1876

My dear Mother

I have at last received the reward for my long studying and I am now a Cadet Midshipman, and by the time you get this letter I will be on board the Santee where I will have to remain until suptember# to form a class with the candidates coming in then.

I failed on arithmetic the first day, but was successful the second. I passed on all the English branches on the first examination. We had a very pleasant trip here and enjoyed it very much. We stopped in Baltimore over night and went to a variety Theater and I never saw Father laugh more heartily in my life.

The Cadets have been having a great deal of fun with the candidates although they have not bothered me much. I have not room to tell you all the funny thing# they made some of the candidates do but Father will when he comes home.

They ask you all sorts of rediculous# questions and make you say "sir" after each answer.

We are not obliged to answer of course but it is policy to do so and very respectfully at that because if we are impudent or "gally" as they call it, they will put our

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name down and haze you after you get in.

When I write again I will be able to tell you something about our duties in the Navy.

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

Constellation

June 24th - 77

My dear Father

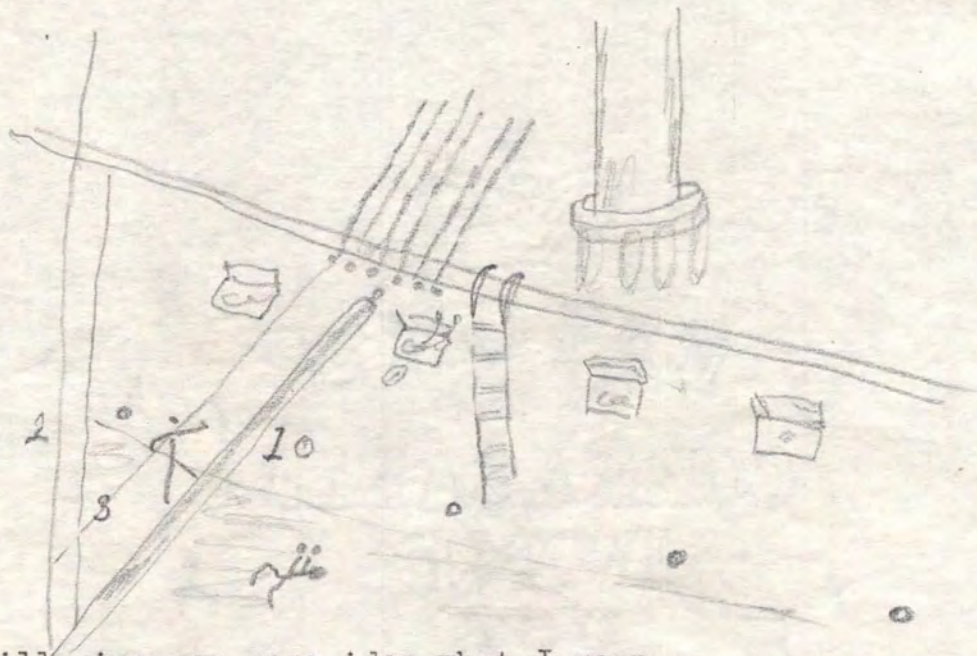
Today is Sunday and we are at anchor out in the bay about five or six miles from Annapolis. We came aboard Friday noon. We will probably sail tomorrow or next day for New York, where we will stop for about a week for repairs of some kinds or other, but I think to have the bottom of the vessel scraped.

This morning we had episcopal service on board and the Admiral and all the officers of the yard came out in the Phlox (a small steamer) to attend the service. We have an episcopal chaplain on board and have prayers every evening just before the call for hammocks.

The Constellation is about as large as the Santee (?) and we are pretty comfortable now that we have got settled. We have a good deal to put up with from the first-classmen as they can do pretty much as they please with us. They all have two lockers and make us shift our things so that they can get them alongside of each other, and swing their hammocks in the best places and let us swing where we can. I was very fortunate in getting a good place to swing mine, and getting a good locker close at hand. We spend most of our time reading, but when we once get started and everything becomes familiar I am going to commence boning for my re exams in Sept.

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We are allowed to go in swimming every evening when the weather is fine. We go in off a boom (1) let down from the side of the ship. One end is fast to the ships side and the other it# let down into the water by a rope from the main yard (2) From this rope there is another smaller rope (3) which runs parallel to the boom and high enough for a rail and taking hold of this we can pass up and down if we go one at a time.



This will give you some idea what I mean .

But now I must tell you about the fellows you knew as candidates. Firestone and Cook who both tried to get in when I first tried turned back at the semi annual and about the last of May, finding that they were going to be unsat and bilge at the annual, resigned.

Forsheew (the good looking fellow from New York) turned

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back at the semi annual but was sat the 2nd term and will come back next year as a turnback. Doyne (from Vermont) is in same fix.

Wallace my rrommate was not turned back at semi annual but as he never looked at a book the 2nd term he bilged this June. Brainard (from Chicago) is in the same fix as myself, re exam. But poor Scott had the worst luck of all, he was a good deal over sat in everything - 3.00 in Math 2.88 in English and 2.6 in French and fully expected to go on the cruise and had even drawn his cruise requisition, but he got such a low mark on the exam in French that he only got 2.39 for the year. If he had had 2.40 or .01 more he would have gone on the cruise and had a re exam. But as I heard you say once that they have to draw the line some-  
\*---res. I think that the secretary of Navy will ---  
Scott go on with this class. -----tt is the most popular man ----- class and everybody sympathisis# with him.

I like the life on ship pretty well so far, and expect to like it better when we get to sea, although I expect to be sick for a few days after we sail.

All the letters which you write after this must be addressed to New Bedford Mass. The next time you write send me some postage stamps as I have none and no money to buy any. Give my love to all at home and write soon

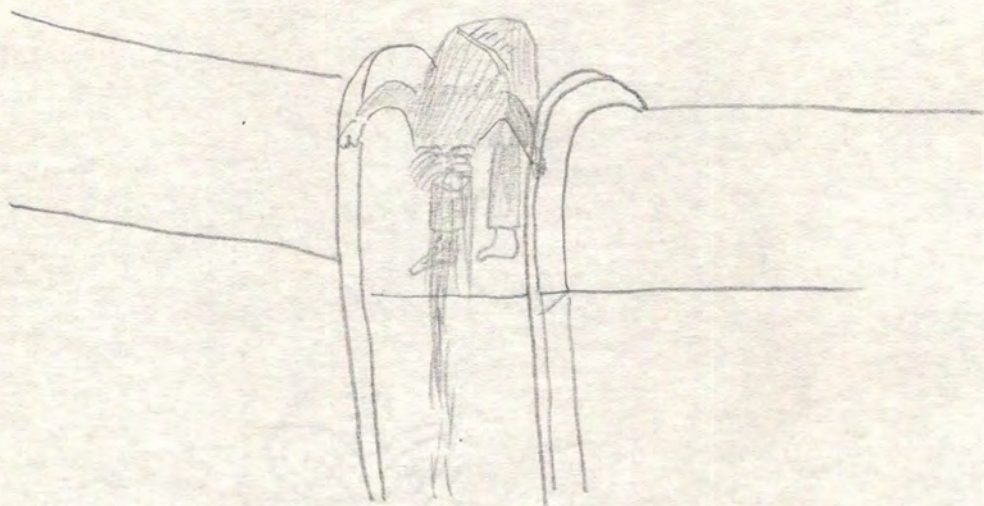
ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

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\*(See preceding page) Corner of letter torn off at -----.

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Looking at the Fishes

Naval Academy,

Jan 2nd 79,

My dear Father

Yesterday was the 1st. of Jan 1879, a date which I will never forget, for yesterday I came nearer losing my life than I ever wish to again.

The event was as follows: we were all out skating on the river, or rather a large creek running into the Severn, when one of my classmates#, who is expecially# noted for his foolhardiness, attempted to skate over some new ice near the mouth of the creek and broke in, and, being a considerable distance from the firm ice, and the water being about 20 ft. deep, he was in great danger. I was a good distance off when it occurred, and when I got there, a cadet was laying on his stomach and holding a pea-coat to the one in the water, and seeing that he was about to break in I laid down and held on to the irons of his skates and someone behind me had a hold of my skates, and if there had been enough Midshipmen around at the time we might have all been dragged out. But before enough came we broke in one after another until, instead of one there was five all in equal danger of being drownd.# The ice was only about an inch thick and broke as soon as you put any weight on the edge, and we had to support ourselves by swimming, and it was only by using our utmost exertions that we could keep up, as we had all our clothes on and heavy iron skates besides and worst of all

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the salt water was so intensely# cold that it seemed to exhaust you more than your exertions.

Finally two were got out and a board thrown to the other on which they could rest but I was too far off to make use of it. They soon got the other two out by fastening coats together. But, by that time, thinking of nothing but keeping afloat, I found myself at the opposite side of the hole, which was now about 30 or 40 ft across, and I had to swim back when I heard them calling me to come to the other side. My strength was nearly gone, and when I got about two thirds of the way I thought I could not go any further, and told the fellows "it was no use "I could not make it," but they encouraged me to stick to it and finally I got hold of a branch of a tree and was pulled out. I was a little out of my head for a few minutes, but was soon all right and insisted on walking home, which I did as fast as possible.

I got some brandy at the hospital and went to my room and stripped and Nibs and some others rubbed me with rough towels and I turned in, had my bed pulled down to the steam heater and then drank about half a mug of whiskey, and in a little while I felt all right. I got in the water about 11.30 and was well enough to go to dinner at 1.00.

Of course I was not in a position to judge, but I think the affair was conducted very well. In the first place



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nobody made any noise and those # the water did not sing out, and still more remarkable they did not hold on to each other.

As an example of this and also as an example of politeness a 3rd Classman named Dashield, seized one of my arms when we were in the water, and, when I told him to let go he said, "I beg your pardon Sims." I did not mean to." My watch, which I had on at the time, was completely filled with water, and strange to say the first thing I thought of when I got out was the watch. I told one of the fellows to take it out of my pocket and go right to a jeweler and before it had been wet 15 minutes it was taken to pieces and put in alcohol, so that it will not be damaged.

I predicted that someone would get in by going on the new ice, and I proposed getting a plank or something of the kind in readiness, but they only laughed at me.

However it will teach Phelps the one who first went in, and all others who are inclined to be reckless to be more careful.

I must now close here as I have to bone for an exam tomorrow.

Give my love to all at home.

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

P. S. I am none the worse for my wetting, excepting a cold, a little stiffness and my hands cut a little on the ice.

U. S. S. Constellation.

At anchor off Portland

July 23 - 79.

My dear Lou,

I wrote a letter to Mother when we were leaving Portland and promised to write again when we got into port, but as we have been delayed so long I write this letter, without being sure that I can post it before we do make another port.

We intended to leave Portland on Monday morning but had a strong head wind and a very narrow channel to beat out of: besides the danger and storm flags were flying from the tower of the signal stations. On Tuesday we got up anchor and beat out of the harbor with a light breeze but could not quite make it, for, when we were just at the mouth of the harbor, the wind died out and we had to anchor. This morning dawned wet and foggy and this afternoon the barometer commenced to fall, indicating heavy weather, and as we were in a very unsafe place we got up anchor and stood out to sea and up the coast and took shelter a few miles above Portland in a very snug little harbor where we are now anchored, and safe from the stiffest blows. I dont know how long we will lay here but it may be a couple of days.

I dont know either where we will go next but we are instructed to have our letters addressed to New Port, but I

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think we will stop at the "Isle of Shoals" on the way down.

As I told you in my last letter we had a grand time at Portland, and I wish you could have been at the ball for I know you would have enjoyed it as you would have received plenty of attention, as all pretty girls do. We will have some hops at New Port and will probably give one aboard there: But the best time will be when we all have leave; a whole month.

I have no more news to tell you so I will close here.  
Give my love to all at home and write occasionally.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will.

July 25 (morning)

P. S. I did not get a chance to post this letter at Portland before we sailed for the Isle of Shoals and I open the envelope at the end to add a little more news. - - - About 10 o'clock last # we sailed into the harbor at the Isle of Shoals with a light breeze, furling all sail as we went through the entrance, and when we got inside we dropped anchor while we had to# much way on (were going too fast) and the first anchor did not hold us but the cable parted and sent rattling overboard, so we dropped our other bow anchor and that also failed to hold us and went overboard like the other so there was nothing else to do but make sail again and stand on until we could get a new chain up from the hold

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and bend it to our sheet anchor which is carried in the waist. We finally got it bent and when we reached water shallow enough we anchored and turned in, about one o'clock thoroughly tired out.

I dont have any work to do now and no night watch as I am tracing a chart for the Captain, and I have nothing to do but work on the chart and I like that work very much.

I don't know whether we will try try# to pick our anchor up or not. If we do will have hard work of it for you must know that anchor weighs about 8000 lbs. and together with 45 or 50 fathoms of chain would weigh about 11000 or 12000 lbs.

I have no more news of any importance to tell you.

We will probably sail for New Port and we are now under weigh.

We only wished to stop at the Isle of Shoals to put Mrs. McNair the Captains wife ashore.

I will write again when I get into port.

Give my love to all at home

Ever your loving brother

(Signed) Will

Naval Academy

Oct 18 - 79

My dear Father and Mother,

I received Fathers letter of the 16th acknowledging my release from parental authority, but let me assure you that it will never be considered by me as anything but a nominal release, for I shall always think of myself and have you think of me as your boy, and I will always come for comfort and advice to the best and truest friends that any man can have on this earth.

May the memories of my parents and the happy home of my boyhood be a barrier between me and temptation in the future; and finally may you live long and may I be instrumental in rendering your old age comfortable and happy.

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Tennessee"

Kingstown

Jamaica

Jan 24 '81

My dear Father and Mother,

I received your letters dated Jan 3 - 81 yesterday (23) and they had been here since the 13th.

We came here from St. Croix, as you will know by this time from the letters that I wrote from that island.

We left there on the 17 and arrived here on the 23, and as it is only a week since I wrote, and that time spent at sea I have, like you, very little to write about. The sea trip was unusually monotonous for we got under way from St Croix under sail and sailed all the way with the trade winds behind us, the weather being beautifully clear but rather warm.

Yesterday morning (Sunday) we sighted Jamaica as soon as it was daylight and, the fires having been lighted we steamed along the coast with a stiff breeze behind us and all sail set, making 10 or 11 knots. The sun was shining brightly and the island (which is very mountainous#) looked beautiful. The sea water around these "diggins" is beautifully clear and by looking over the stern when we are sailing the screw and rudder can be distinctly seen, and at St Croix, where we anchored in over 40 feet of water, the coral bottom was plainly visible and schools of little fish could

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be seen scudding away from larger ones, I have often watched the poor little fellows out of a port where I would be reading, but it dont require much watching for they make a great splash when they come to the top of the water, some of the large fish jumping entirely out of the water.

I had the satisfaction afterwards of seeing two small ground sharks get after the big fish.



The harbor of Kingston is perfectly beautiful. As we steamed down the coast the city could be plainly seen at the foot of the mountain over the narrow neck of land stretching out in front of it and in passing into the harbor we had to pass between two small islands, one of which is covered at high water. The water was a beautiful blue and along the beach or wherever a bar stretched out into the water it was of a beautiful green which gradually blended into white as it rolled onto the white sand.

We found the "Kearsarge" here when we arrived and I got your letters from her. I have not been ashore yet and

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dont know what sort of a place it is, but will write again before we leave which will, I think be about Feb. 1 for New Orleans where we will have fun in the "Ad" will give us half a chance, for he is very miserly and seldom does any entertaining. The "Kearsarge" will be there with us and I should not wonder if the "Ad" took a trip up the river in her, for the "Tennessee" draws too much water. In case the "old duffer" does go he may take it into his head to take me, for he will probably take his barge and crew, but time will tell: at all events I am going to have a good time for a man-of-war seldom goes up the river and very seldom such a beauty as the "Tennessee."

It will take us about 10 days to reach N. O. which will bring us in there about Feb. the 10 where we will stay until after the Mardigras when we will knock around Havana and the Coast of Cuba, perhaps Florida keys unless we are ordered north to go into the docks, and have our bottom scraped for we have been overboard for more than a year.

I must try and get a months leave next summer and be home at the "silver wedding." I thing# I will be detached from this craft about next March "a year" and ordered home before being ordered up for examination and after the examination then, stand by for some fun, for I am going to save money and have plenty of it to go to Canada with etc. etc. etc. Now I will stop for this time and write some more before



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we leave.

Friday Jan 28 - 81

Four days ago I started this letter when we were off Port Royal. Now we are off Kindston Ja. Today the steamer from New York arrived and I got letters from Alf, Hal, Lou Addie, Father & Mother, more than any one else on the ship. You dont know how much pleasure it gives me to get so many letters every mail, and if mine afford you as much pleasure I am very well satisfied.

I was very glad to hear that everybody is enjoying such good health and having a good time (although a rather cool one) Lou, particularly seems to be having a splendid time in Phila. & Mt. Holly.

Alf. writes bully letters in which I can see the old d---l sticking out in every line. He sent me some tin types; one of them with a moustache on. He is going to be very handsome but dont tell him that I said so. He tells me that he is 5 ft. 11 in high so you must encourage him to smoke and not let him get more than 7 or 8 ft. tall. But I am wasting good paper. Dear little Addies letters, I have enjoyed very much and intend to keep them and show them to her some day when she grows up.

I have been ashore here and find it quite a place (40,000) having even a line of street cars, but all the streets are very dirty, and there are no decent Hotels or restaurants in

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the place. Strange to say there is a theatre here which is sometimes run by "traveling troops." There is a troupe here now from New York and last night I went with a lot of fellows to see it and I was agreeably and very much surprised to find the performance so good, for some of the acting was very good. The curtain rose at 7.45 and they kept things humming until 12.00. First they played an emotional piece lasting about an hour, and to which the native audience listened with breathless suspense. I did not pay enough attention# to catch the plot as I was looking around the audience for pretty girls (of which there was quite a number present) There was about 12 or 15 of us Yankees sitting in a bunch and as we did not care much for the acting we amused ourselves by making remarks about actors and audience some of which were so good that I nearly cracked my sides laughing quietly of course.

When this play was over and all the heavy villains had met with violent deaths; daughters been reconciled to their parents, and lovers to sweethearts; and everything straightened out amid a general swop spits all around; we had the funny part of the program which was a burlesque in the time of Charles of France and Henry of England, together with little sketches by the different members of the troupe in the intervals in which many very good local hits were gotten off.

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Jan 28 (evening)

I stopped here on hearing that the manager of the troupe was on board and in the Steerage. We found him to be a very respectable and very entertaining fellow, so we set up the wine and chatted for a long time and he spun us quite a number of very amusing yarns.

They have been here about six or seven weeks and are doing very well.

This afternoon I went to see some of the troupe play baseball with some of the natives and it was certainly amusing for the Jamaica fellows knew very little about baseball and made some very amusing mistakes, for example one fellow threw the ball at another when he was running and struck him in the stomach.

We will leave here (I think) about next Tues. the 1st. of Feb. and will arrive in N. O. about the 10th of Feb. so that I can write again quite soon; and as I have not much to tell you I will close here, but first I will say that I am very sorry indeed to hear such stories about Harry James. I suppose he acquired his passion for liquor while in Phila. while with a lot of young fellows. He is to be pitied. Now I must close as I have to write to Hall Lou, Alf, etc. etc.

Give my love to all at home

And believe me ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Tennessee"

New Orleans, La.

March 19, '82

My dear Mother,

Have you written since we arrived in New Orleans? When I arrived here I found a letter from Father, Mary and yourself. I think that something must be wrong with the mails, for I have not heard from Hampton Roads since we left. We are to leave here for Havana on next Thursday (23rd) this is Sunday. We will remain in Havana but a few days, after which we sail for Hampton Roads, stopping at Port Royal (S. C.) on our way up. The "Ad." has received orders from the Department saying that we (the class of '80) will be available for duty until June 1st, which means that our "exam" will not take place earlier than that date. He (the "Ad.") says that he is going to detach us on May the first, when we will be ordered to Annapolis for exam. The orders will read, "You are hereby detached and you will report at Annapolis on June 1st for examination," & so you see, I can come home about May 1st and go from home to Annapolis any time before June 1st. So you will not see anything of me until after May 1st. Of course the time from May until June will be put in in hard "boning." I think I will stay home until about May 20 then go to Annapolis to finish "boning."

I am very glad to hear that the new house is so near-

March 19, '82

ly finished and I think I shall like it from what I can hear about it. I particularly like the idea of stained woodwork instead of white paint. - I suppose "you all" will be quite settled when I get home, and somewhat used to our new home. As we are to leave in four or five days, you will not have time to answer this letter, but I hope that some are now on the way. We found the "lovely city" quite the same, but of course we were too late for all the brilliant gaiety of the aarnival season.

The "Kearsarge" has been here for about three months and, as we saw by the papers, she had a very gay time, and we rather feared that she had cut us out, but we found that they had gotten into another clique of New Orleans' society and by no means into the A. No. 1. clique that we knew.

We find them the same lovely hospitable people that they were last year, they are apparently very glad to see us back, and if one could believe half they say (especially the girls) one would have to believe that they had pined for us ever since last winter, but I am inclined to think that they are stuffing us. You should see them keep Lent here, they have "high tea," "Low tea," dinners etc., etc., and dancing "on the qui-ete."

Three parties of ladies have already been off to the ship, and three more are coming on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

March 19, '82

Yesterday, quite a large party was on board, and, among the ladies, was the "belle" of Memphis, one of the most beautiful blondes I have ever seen, also Miss Davis the daughter of Jeff Davis, Ex. President of the Ex. Confederacy (so called). She is a very amiable and sweet girl, notwithstanding the rebellious parent.

You should have seen the "send-off" that we gave the belle of Memphis, when she left on the boat today. The steamers all land directly opposite the ship, and when the Memphis boat backed out we had the band on deck playing "The Girl I left behind me," - "Sweet by and bye," etc., etc., about a dozen and a half of the Officers were on deck waving handkerchiefs, caps, etc., while the steamer steamed slowly by the ship. The Capt. and Admiral were on deck too. The beautiful belle stood on top of the hurricane deck waving her handkerchief, and keeping time with the music; - and all for our girl, don't you think that was enough to turn almost any girl's head. - If I was she I would come back on the next boat. Such is the homage men pay to beauty, without regard to merit or anything else.

Now I think I have told you about all the news, except a very sad accident that happened on board, - Several days ago. While lowering a boat one of the tackles burned the man's fingers, and he let it go, throwing

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the man stationed in the boat overboard. It was very dark, being about 8 P.M., and the current runs about five miles per hour so that the poor fellow had little chance for his life, and was drowned. Everything th at was possible was done to save him, the life buoys were let go, immediately and the boats followed them. The buoys are so arranged that when they drop, a chemical compound attached to the top of the buoy is ignited and burns with a brilliant white light for about 15 minutes. If the man had been able to swim he could have saved himself for the buoys were dropped right alongside of him, but like a large per cent of people who spend their lives at sea, he could not swim a stroke. - Our list of horrors is nearly complete, we lack only a murder and shipwreck.

Now I must close. Give my love to all at home.

Your loving son -

(Signed) Will

You had better address your next letters to Port Royal (S.C.)

U.S.R.S. "Colorado"

Sept. 7, '82

My dear Hal,

I have just read your letter of the 5th of Sept. and I must say that I am not very favorably impressed with the prospects although I should like the work. I have not the slightest intention of going into the shops as Murray Forbes has done, for I have a pretty good education, and a very fair knowledge of steam engineering, and if with my present knowledge of steam and a years experience I can accomplish something I will take hold of it and give it a trial, but I will under no consideration let go of the Navy until after next Congress.

I have just received a letter from John Sims telling me that he has sent the Naval Academy Register and steam examinations to Mr. Ely, Supt. of Motive Power and I am now waiting to hear through John what offer Mr. Ely will make.

He ought to be rather favorably impressed with the register, for I hear he has had a scientific education, but, "all the same" the register will make him scratch his head for the exams published therein in mathematics and the sciences are three times harder than in any college in this country and the steam exam is very hard, considering the fact that we only studied steam for one year.



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I don't think much of the Altoona scheme and I will not take it unless the prospect is very encouraging.

I still think as I have always thought that I should like the Mining Engineering and I should like nothing better than for Mr. Ashburner to give me a "billet" at Pottsville for I feel sure that I could succeed and I think we could learn a good deal from each other. I don't think I can come to Pottsville unless Mr. A. should want to see me with a view to giving me something.

I showed your last letter to Father, and he thought it first rate and took it home to show Mother. I don't think Mr. Ashburner would like your proposition, for he might think I was trying to force myself on him to the exclusion of somebody else that he might prefer to employ in the future.

Now I must close as I want to drop a line to Father.

I will let you know if anything turns up and you do the same.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

U.S.R.S. "Colorado"

Sept. 8, '82

My dear Hal,

I rec'd your letter of the 7th today and I think I will go to Phila. and see Mr. Ashburner for as you say it can do no harm.

I don't think I could accept the responsibility of taking charge of the topographical survey without having had any practical experience although I understand the subject well enough as I am acquainted the subject of topography and understand the handling of instruments necessary for the work but, if I can take my experience in theoretical and practical navigation as a parallel case, I know from experience that there are hundreds of little things that one must know, and which can only be acquired by experience, for this reason I don't think I would be justified in declaring myself competent to "take right hold" of the work, without any experience.

I have, since receiving your letter 3 or four hours ago, bought Gillespie's Higher Surveying and, by next Monday, I can learn all the book has to say on the subject of topography etc. But, in case Mr. A. decided that I was competent to perform the work I could not start in until I had gotten leave or furlow, which would take at least a week, for I will not let go of the Navy

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until I see what Congress is going to do. But I may induce Mr. A. to give me a position as "Aid" as soon as I can get leave or furlow, for I would like to get the position for a year while waiting to see what Congress will do.

I have not fully made up my mind to go to Phila. yet but I will let you know.

I would like above all things to get a position in the same office with you.

I will not close this letter yet as I have not fully made up my mind.

Later: this letter will no doubt be very unsatisfactory to you, but it cannot be more so than it is to me. I rather think I will not go to Phila. for if I do not intend to take the work, it will hardly pay.

I will write again soon.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

U.S.R.S. "Colorado"

Sept. 12, '82

My dear Hal,

I finally decided not to go to Phila. for the reasons that I gave you in my last letter.

Yesterday my old roommate Niblack was here and he says he has no idea of resigning, for he says he is almost certain that the present law will not stand, and his Father, who is a prominent man in politics tells him that it is not possible for it to stand.

These opinions coincide exactly with mine, and they make me more decided than ever, if possible, to hold on until next Congress.

John Sims, Jr., has just forwarded me a letter from Mr. Ely who says that he is considering the matter. I don't expect much from it and don't care much.

I would like a position as "aid" under you or in the same office or town, for the reasons I have often given you.

If you will look on the Sextuple sheet of the New York Herald in the Sunday (10th) Edition you will see an article from the same illustrious pen that is slinging this ink, entitled "Reduction of the Navy." The article contains my version of the "Youngsters" and it is perfectly fair and square statement, with the exception of the last paragraph which was intended for sarcasm.

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I have had a good deal of fun out of it for nobody knows who wrote it, and it is quite amusing to hear the fellows conjecture as to the author.

I would cut it out and send it to you if I had a copy of the paper, but I have not. If you cannot find it I will get you a copy.

Now I must close.

Your loving bro.

(Signed) Wm.S.Sims

U.S.S. Swahara, 3rd rate,  
At sea about 700 miles  
from Cayenne.

Sunday, March 11th (1883)

My dear Mother,

We have now been at sea just two weeks and have made a very successful run, and encountered no rough weather.

Today is Sunday, and a very beautiful day, and having nothing to do I conceived the idea of dropping you a few lines (when we get in).

We left Hampton Roads on Feby. 26th and steamed S.E. with a fair wind; the next day we hauled fires, uncoupled the propellor, and have been sailing ever since. The second day we were out we entered the Gulf Stream. A cold wind was blowing at the time from the N.W. with occasional snow squalls. The temperature, I think was about 40°, but the water in the Gulf Stream was about 70°, and this difference of temperature caused the water to give off dense volumes of steam or vapor, as that it seemed as though we were sailing in a sea of boiling water, and this, contrasted with occasional snow squalls presented a very extraordinary appearance. I said above that we had encountered no rough weather, and neither we have, but for the first three or four days out we had a very heavy sea running, which however was not caus-

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ed by the winds that we encountered, but more the result of some storm that must have passed by us a hundred miles or so off. The effect of this sea that was not in keeping with the wind, was of course to make the ship roll heavily. I expected to suffer all the pangs of sea-sickness, after sailing in a quiet ship like the "Tennessee" but I never felt at all uncomfortable (about the stomach) but I must own that the rolling is very unpleasant, for it makes walking about a difficult matter, and above all it is unpleasant at the mess table, which have always to be provided with racks to hold the dishes, but for all the racks the dishes sometimes jump out when she gives an unusually deep roll. It requires no little skill to keep from sliding away from the table, and at the same time, watch a plate of soup, a cup of tea, a glass of water etc. - These are some of the discomforts of a sailor's life.

Immediately after we entered the Gulf Stream the weather commenced to get warm and in a day or so we sniffed the tropical air, and stowed away our peacoats and flannels, and now it is getting uncomfortably warm. I don't know what we will do when we get to Cayenne which is  $10^{\circ}$  further south.

Since we left the Gulf Stream we have encountered

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weather the like of which you never see in your bleak latitudes, the air has been soft and balmy, with bright, and not too hot sunshine during the day, and beautiful moon and star light at night, the stars by the way, are disappearing in the northern sky and new constellations appearing in the south, and among them the beautiful Southern Cross. - As for the sea water, it is almost impossible for you to imagine its color, and I don't know how to describe it, for I have never seen any color like it.

The nearest color I know is a washerwoman's blue-water - When we were about three days out from the Capes, an old sailor who has been in the service 25 or 30 years was suddenly stricken with heart disease, and died in about ten minutes; and next day I witnessed one of those most solemn ceremonies that ever take place on this earth, viz., a burial at sea.

You cannot imagine the solemnity of such a ceremony, you must see it to understand it. - Immediately after a man dies on board a ship at sea, the body is sewed up in canvass and placed up on the poop until the time for burial. The word is passed for the men to dress in blue and the officers in service uniform; then all hands are called to shorten sail; after which the ship is hove to so that she will remain stationary in



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the water; then the chief boatswain's mate, in his most sepulchral tones, calls, "a-l-l h-a-n-d-s b-u-r-y- t-h-e d-e-a-d." The body is then carried forward from the poop on the sliding board and covered up with a flag, and placed in a gunport. All the crew and officers being assembled bare-headed in that part of the ship, the captain reads the episcopal burial service for burials at sea. While he is reading a stand of grape is lashed to the ankles of the body, and at the proper moment, the board is tilted and the body slides into the sea; sail is then made on the ship and in an hour or so, the gloom of the occasion disappears, and the poor Jack is soon forgotten.

March 15th, '83

We are now in sight of land and expect to anchor this afternoon. I don't know where this letter will go when I mail it but I think it will have to go to France first then back to the U.S. as there are no direct American lines to Cayenne.

I will send this letter by the first steamer, which may not leave for some days, so that I will have an opportunity to tell you something about Cayenne. If I have to send it immediately, I will write again for the next steamer.

March 25, '83

The land which we were in sight of above, was not Cayenne but three small French islands about 25 miles outside of C. We anchored there and found that we could not go to Cayenne, on account of shallow water, so we remained at the Salut Islands, for about five days, during which time the Captain and several officers went to C. as guests of a French Gunboat, lying at the islands, and judging from the appearance of their eyes and noses when they returned, I think they must have enjoyed themselves.

The French officers visited our ship, and returned to their own vessel "properly loaded."

The Salut islands are three in number and quite small, not more than half a mile in diameter. They are high, steep and rocky, and, like all tropical islands, covered with verdure wherever it is possible for anything to grow. From the ship they present a very beautiful appearance. You can plainly see the houses among the trees, the paths and roads up the hills, the little church on the very top of the hill, and even the people walking up and down the roads, looking about as large as ants. As soon as we had anchored we sent a boat ashore to exchange "Bills-of-Health," and get permission to land etc. Then the Captain with three other officers,

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"one of whom I was which" went ashore to pay an official visit to the Governor of the Islands. We found the islands to be nothing but one immense prison. On each side of the road that led to the Governor's house, were seated rows of convicts in the scorching sun, breaking stone with hammers.

Nearly all the convicts are Arabs, and most of them are here for life. I thought I had seen some wretched people during some of my West India travels, but I never imagined such wretchedness as I saw on these little islands. During our stay of five days there I went ashore several times on my own hook and saw some very interesting things, although it was hot work, and to make things more uncomfortable nothing is spoken on the islands but French and Arabic, and, as I am a little rusty on my Arabic, I, of course, spoke French.

As I said before most of these poor devils are here for life or rather for a hell on earth. - They are worked all day long at breaking stone, building roads, hoeing in the fields, carrying water from wells to water the crops etc. etc. They are very poorly fed and not clothed at all to speak of. They wear only a blouse and trowsers of bagging with a straw hat and no shoes. They are nearly all terribly thin and some of them carry heavy chains shackled to their ankles, with which

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they are chained up like dogs at night. This is the method of punishment pursued by "the most civilized people in the world." For my part I think the Guillotine would be much more merciful. These poor creatures are set to work by their task masters and not very closely watched, but, nevertheless are soundly clubbed when caught shirking. They exhibit no more spirit when beaten or kicked than an ox. It is not necessary to watch them for they cannot possible escape. Vessels, even men-of-war, very seldom visit the islands and, even if they did, escape would be impossible, as the water is full of sharks.

When a convict is found out of certain limits during certain times, no questions are asked, he is simply shot, placed in a boat, rowed out to sea, and fed to the sharks. No convicts are buried on the islands, they are thrown into the sea.

I tramped all over the principal island, and found everything very quaint. All the houses and Gov. buildings are built of volcanic stone and most of them only one story, with deep verandas and no windows, that is no glass windows, only lattice.

I went into the little church and saw three Sisters of Mercy kneeling before some burning candles and praying, also an old darky woman and several small

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children, the latter praying loud and earnestly but fighting on the sly.

They have also a large hospital for the convicts where the Sisters of Mercy nurse them when they are sick with all kinds of contagious diseases. One cannot help but admire these noble women, who have given up everything, their country, their relatives and friends, and every maternal pleasure, to become just what their name implies Sisters of Mercy.

I made a sketch of the principal island from the ship, and, for the first I ever attempted from nature, I succeeded pretty well. I will bring it home with me. Next time I went ashore I took my book and made another sketch of a very beautiful scene from the top of a hill on St. Joseph's Island, showing one of the other islands, and the coast of South America in the distance. While I was making this sketch, two Arabs came trudging up the hill carrying a large bucket of water suspended from a pole over their shoulders. They were singing a doleful song in their native tongue. One of them was an elderly man of ordinary appearance while the other man was young and singularly beautiful. His tall lythe figure, regular features, black eyes and hair and white teeth, together with a very pleasant expression, would have attracted any body. I asked him if he spoke French

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and finding that he did, I asked him various questions about his life and treatment etc., and pleased him very much by giving him some American cigarettes. I, of course, did not imagine that he could have been guilty of a great crime, for he was so young (25 years) and frank looking. He told me that his home was in Arabia, and I finally asked him when he was going back, then the whole expression of his face changed, and I will never forget the look of unutterable yearning that came over his face as he stretched his hands towards the East, and with tears in his eyes, said "I will never see Arabia again," then shouldered his burden and went on up the hill.

Once when ashore I happened to be at the place where the convicts are mustered morning and evening when the drums were sounded for muster. I think I told you that there are about 1200 convicts in all, and about 500 mustered at this formation. They were formed in two lines and the roll called, then the chain gang was mustered, about 50 or 60 in number. These poor fellows had heavy chains, shackled to their ankles; the other end they carried in their hand. They had wrapped their ankles with bits of leather or old rags to keep the rough shackles from cutting their flesh. These chains were examined link by link. I think they were fastened up with

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these chains at night as they were only on the right leg and no weights were attached.

They were put in irons as a punishment for having attempted to escape.

During their leisure time some of them get a little manilla and weave it into little mats, or else carve and stain coconut shells, and make various trinkets, which they send to Cayenne to sell or exchange for small luxuries. I bought one of the mats and a carved shell. I will send the mat home to you by this mail.

It will be mailed and postmarked, New York, as I have put it on board the steamer that leaves here (Port of Spain, on the island of Trinidad) tomorrow. This letter will go by the same steamer, but perhaps I will have to send it through the regular mails and put Trinidad stamps on it.

We were very impatient to get away from the Salut Islands, for we could not buy anything to eat, as everything belonged to the government, and you can imagine that we would have liked some fruit after being out 17 days. There were a few people on the island who owned things that they could sell, but they took advantage of our necessity and charged exorbitant prices. \$1.00 for a small chicken. \$5.00 for a turkey - I must tell you one more event that happened before we sailed from

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the Salut Isls.

We caught a shark! We had a large hook baited with a piece of pork, over the bows and an unfortunate and hungry shark "bit."

A shark always has to be hoisted on board by a "bowline" (slip noose), for the hooks will not bear the entire weight, and there is always great excitement "playing" him to keep him from breaking the line, and in getting the bowline over his head and behind his fins. This fellow was about 8 or 9 feet long and he died game. After a good deal of trouble a bowline was passed over his head and hauled taut, but instead of catching him around the body, it caught him by the tail, so the rope was rove through a block (pulley) and with loud and excited cheers he was hoisted on board when the Jackies proceeded with the rather dangerous amusement of torturing him. All sailors thoroughly hate a shark and they always subject him to every indignity imaginable. When this fellow was fairly on board, they kicked him, cut him with knives, spit in his face and called him all the names in their vocabulary. Finally they ripped him open, to see what he had in him, but strange to say, found him empty. Then they cut his jaws bones out for a trophy and dried them in the sun, with the teeth in them. He had five rows of teeth, all as sharp as knives.



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The teeth are small flat and sharp on the edges, and each tooth is hid in a little pocket, and can be drawn in or pushed out at pleasure like a cat's claws.

On March 21 we left these islands and sailed for Paramaribo, the capital of Dutch Guiana, where we arrived the next day, or rather we didn't arrive for we could not get up the river, the water being too shallow, so we went on to Georgetown, the capital of British Guiana where we found the same difficulty. Here we sent a boat ashore to communicate with the U. S. Consul and the next day proceeded to Port of Spain, Trinidad where we arrived on March 26th. (today is the 28th)

Tomorrow the New York steamer leaves and this letter with it. We are to remain here until next Monday, April 2nd when we leave for St. Lucia a small island in the Windward Islands where we are going for coal as we cannot get it here. It is only about 200 miles distant. From there we sail for La Guayra, about 400 miles more, where I expect to get some mail. I, at least, hope so for I have not received any yet. I will be able to write oftener now that we have got in among the steamer lines.

We are having a good rest here and enjoying our fresh provisions and fruit as only men can who have been without them for a month.

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Port-of-Spain is a city of about 31,000 inhabitants composed of all classes and racess of men (and women).

There are a great many East Indians here, where they are called "coolies" the men go about the streets with queer looking turbans on their heads, and very little else on. They wear a linen cloth about their loins, and another piece of cloth over their shoulders. They are all bare legged and bare footed and most of them bare headed. The women have rings on their fingers and rings on their toes, with bracelets, and anklets, and bangles, and ear-rings, and nose-rings, and some of them are tattooed on their arms.

There are quite a number of English people here, and we all have cards to the English Club, which is a very pleasant and cool place. They have a bath at the club that is worth mentioning, it is a large hewn stone tank, about 10 by 14 feet and four feet deep, with a shower bath attached. I floundered about in it for about half an hour when I went ashore.

Now I don't know anything more of intrest that I can tell you before I close. I have enjoyed perfect health ever since I left, and I have enjoyed the cruise very much so far, although we have only visited the out of the way places. La Guayra and Vera Cruz, are very

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interesting places to visit chiefly because they are sea ports of Caracas and the City of Mexico which I hope to be able to visit when I go there.

I will put American stamps on this letter and send it on board the steamer, for, as the steamer leaves tomorrow I am afraid it would not get through the Post Office in time.

Give my best love to everybody at home.

I will drop a line to somebody at home whenever I come across a steamer line.

I should judge from present appearances that we will arrive at Hampton Roads, about the middle of June. Now I must close. You will probably find this letter rather disjointed and perhaps a little inconsistent but you must remember that I have written parts of it at various times and under various circumstances; some of it at sea, and some in port. I have written three letters about as long as this, one to Hal and one to \_\_\_\_\_?

I think I will propose when I get back to the United States, however I will think about it.

I wish you would please send this letter to Alf if he is away from home, and to Lou if she is away.

Once more give my best love to Father, and Lou and Mary, and Addie, and let lots to your own sweet self.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

La Guayra, Venezuela

April 12th, 1883

My dear Mother,

I must drop you a few lines before we leave this place which will be in a day or so. I don't think I will have time to write a very long letter, for I have been quite busy ever since we came here getting the Quarterly returns ready for sending in.

When we left Port-of-Spain on April 2nd we steamed directly North about 230 miles to the small British island of St. Lucia in order to get coal, as we could get none at Port-of-Spain. We arrived there in two days arriving early on the morning of the 4th. This island has a beautiful harbor entirely enclosed by land, and beautiful scenery all around.

Instead of anchoring we went alongside the dock and immediately commenced coaling ship. We did not put the coal on board ourselves as usual, for when coal is bought there the natives (negroes) "coal ship," and strange to say they are all women. They carry the coal from the coal yard in large baskets on their heads, for about one cent a basket; the more baskets the more cents; each one tries to beat the next ahead, so they rush up and down the gangway, streaming with perspiration, and succeed in getting all the coal on board in three or four hours.

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While this was going on we amused ourselves with the crowd of small darkies who had gathered about the ship on the dock. We threw a number of large English coppers into the water, and the little beggars would invariably get them before they would reach the bottom. Then it was good sport to throw them into the crowd and let them scramble and fight for them. Then we heated some pennies, which, of course, increased the fun. But I finally hit upon a plan that produced the most laughable result imaginable. I beckoned 3 or 4 little darkies alongside the ship, some of the same ones who had been diving for pennies, then I pointed out rather a pompous looking darky in the crowd and told them I would give them a shilling apiece if they would put him overboard with all his clothes on. A shilling was a big sum in their eyes, so they eagerly consented, and after a long and hard struggle they succeeded and were duly rewarded by the cheers of the assembled crowd and their promised shillings.

While we were in this very pretty little place, I climbed one of the high hills that surround the town (Port Castries) and was rewarded for my trouble by one of the most beautiful views you could imagine, at least I thought so then, but I had not yet visited La Guayra. I did not have my sketchbook with me, but made a toler-

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able sketch on my cuff which I will copy and bring home with me. On the afternoon of the day we arrived we finished coaling and sailed for La Guayra, making the passage under sail alone and arrived here on the 7th.

The city of La Guayra is built at the foot and on the side of a very high mountain, and long before we could see La Guayra we could see the tops of the mountains above the clouds. There is no harbor here, the anchorage being an open roadstead, exposed to the heavy swells that always accompany the trade winds, and consequently there is a very heavy surf on the beach so heavy that we do not use the ships boats at all but have hired a native boat to carry us ashore and back and bring us marketing etc.

The surf breaks on the beach in great curling waves, big enough to cover up two or three boats, and it is very interesting to see how skillfully the natives can land a boat. Only two men pull the boat and they sit in the bows and each pull an oar. I went ashore with five other people and the swells were just splendid, sometimes the little boat would be down out of sight between two, then again on the tip top of one. When we got within about 100 yards of the beach the oarsmen stopped rowing and very attentively watched the breakers as they came rolling in, giving us a "boust" when

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they went under us and breaking a few feet beyond, with a roar on the smooth sandy beach. They waited until three large breakers had passed us, then, just before the next one reached us, they began to pull with all their might until it had overtaken us, then they stopped rowing and put the oars in the boat, and the breaker took us "A flying" in on the very top of it and landed us "High and dry" where only the last ends of the waves could reach us, then they jumped out and slid the boat further up and then jumped out and carried us over the wet sand.

La Guayra is a very queer looking town as viewed from the sea. As I said before it is built at the foot of a very high hill, or rather mountain (over 10,000 ft. high) and has a strong stone wall built along the sea. On the side of the mountain, above the city are two forts overlooking the roadstead, the tops of the mountains are nearly always covered with clouds, sometimes they settle low enough to give you a glimpse of the summit above them, the breakers are always breaking on the beach and dashing up against the rocks, causing a monotonous roar that can be plainly heard from the ship. La Guayra, as you probably know, is the sea port of Caracas, and everything from Caracas has to be carried over the mountains on donkeys, a distance of about eleven miles, or

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else hauled around by a longer route on waggons, a distance of 21 miles. The Captain decided that he would remain here long enough to visit Caracas and call on the U. S. Minister and the President (King) of Venezuela, so he made up a party of three (Lieutenants) besides himself, intending to go on mule back, by the shorter route. I did not know any good reason why I should not go on my own hook, so I asked his permission to be absent for two days, and three other steerage officers, and the Junior Surgeon of the ship did likewise, so we formed an unofficial party and engaged our mules and a guide, put on some old clothes; left the ship at 5 a.m; went through the surf in the dark, and started for Caracas, anticipating a glorious time. The mules of this country are very small, being the offspring of the small horses of this country and the donkeys, which are not much bigger than large sheep. Three of us were long-legged men and we presented rather a comical sight on such tiny mules, as we climbed up the mountain. It would be perfectly impossible for me to describe the grandure of the scenery in the mountains, so as to give you any idea of it; as for the road, or donkey path, it is indescribably rough, being, in some places, covered with large boulders, and only a few feet wide, and in some places so steep that you would not believe that a mule



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could scramble up alone, but they pick their way with the surefootedness of a goat and never slip an inch. They have very small hoofs, not much bigger than after-dinner coffee cups, and they are never shod. They will not go if you attempt to guide them, but you must throw the lines across their necks and let them pick their way among the stones. It is rather "scary" riding at first, but after a while you get confidence in your mule and don't mind it, although you can't help thinking that the whole concern, mule and rider, is rather top-heavy and in danger of tipping over. Part of the path is cut along the side of the mountain through the jungle, sometimes where the mountain is so steep that if you were to fall over the edge you would not reach bottom for a hundred feet or so. On this side of the mountain the verdure is very dense, so thick with trees, brush, vines, etc. that you can't see more than a few feet into it, but on the Caracas side the mountains are quite barren, although the bottom of the valley of Caracas is very fertile.

After we had been travelling for two hours and had reached an altitude of about 5000 feet we could see the city of La Guayra almost directly beneath us, and the forts on the hills above the city, that had seemed so high up when viewed from the ship, now lay at our feet

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and the "Swatara" and the other vessels in the harbor looked like little toy ships. We could see the shore, with the surf breaking on it for miles either way and the whole city and surrounding country were spread out like a map.

After we had been travelling about five hours or about 11 a.m., on rounding the edge of a large mountain, the whole valley of Caracas, extending as far as you could see, burst upon our gaze and at our feet lay the beautiful city of Caracas in the midst of green fields and surrounded by the foothills of the mountains on which we stood lost in admiration. The city looked so far down that the white roads leading into the city from the country looked like chalk marks and we all mistook a large tree standing alone in a field for a man. - After reaching this point it was all downhill work and sometimes so much downhill that our stirrups were alongside the mules ears. Just as we were going over the last foot-hill before entering the city we saw the Captain's party entering the city, but as we went to different hotels, and as their visit was official and ours for fun, we did not see them again.

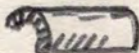
We arrived at our hotel at noon, the sun being almost exactly overhead but the air quite cool, for Caracas is over 3000 ft. above the sea. After having a

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good wash and excellent dinner and standing up for a while to rest ourselves we felt first rate, and proceeded to "take in the town." But I must close now for to night as my hand is badly cramped from writing all this at one time. I will continue the yarn, however, in the morning.

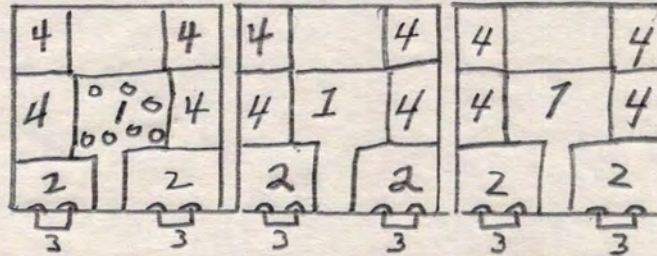
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"In the morning"

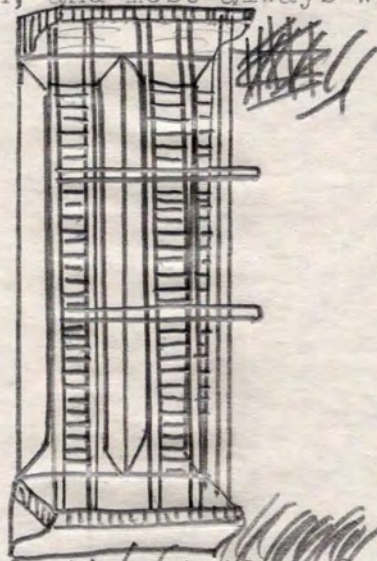
The city of Caracas, as viewed from the mountains looks very red, for all the houses are covered with brick tiles  so. The houses are all built of a mixture of stone brick and mud and all one story high. They dare not build them higher for fear of earthquakes. The one that occurred in 1812 killed 15000 people and destroyed nearly all the buildings. The last one in 1826 was less severe but destroyed many houses and killed many people about 4000. When we arrived in the city we were much surprised to find it neat and clean, which is something unusual for a Spanish town. The streets are quite wide compared to other "Dago" towns but they are all the same; no attempt is made to decorate the outside of a dwelling house, and I did not see one that was set back from the street with a garden in front of it. Each house usually had two windows and no door on

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the street, the entrance being through the port cocher or carriage door. The following is a plan of their houses.



1. Court, usually filled with large pots or half barrels filled with flowers. The floor of the court is paved with large red brick tiles.
2. Front rooms; one a sitting room and the other a parlor.
3. The front windows, which are invariably barred with iron, and most always with closed shutters.



occasionally when walking along the street you can get a glimpse of the inside of a house; and some are quite handsomely furnished although they have only

rough plaster outside. Sometimes, but rarely, you can get a peep at a bonito senoritta, and they are all very bonito, or pretty, for they have glorious eyes.

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I was particularly struck with the little babies that you could see at the windows; all of them are very beautiful with eyes that fairly sparkle. The inhabitants of Caracas and the country in general are all colors from white to jet black, and a white man is just as good as a nigger if he behaves himself.

I will not have time before this mail to tell you all I saw so I will have to close soon.

I did not, of course, forget to buy some "curios," to bring home, and some of them I could send, only I am afraid they would be confiscated, being dutiable. Unfortunately the Theater was not "going" the night we were there so we amused ourselves knocking about town and turned in at 10 p.m. very tired and slept like tops, for the air at night is quite cool, so that a blanket is necessary.

Next morning we did some shopping and about noon we mounted our mules and started back over the mountains. When we had reached the summit, and were above the clouds, which happened to be very thick, the view was a most extraordinary one for we could not see below the clouds which we were fast descending into, and upon entering them we found them so thick that we could not see more than 100 yards ahead, then on descending lower we found that they were rain clouds, for away be-

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low us we could hear the rain falling. There was nothing to do but keep on going down and when we had gone a few hundred feet lower the rain was falling on us in buckets-full, and it continued to fall until we had travelled entirely through it, when we found the sun again shining and found the air growing hotter as we travelled towards La Guayra. On our way up we stopped at a coffee establishment and saw the process of preparing coffee for market. The coffee berry grows on bushes or small trees sometimes 8 or 10 ft. high, and looks exactly like small black cherries. Each berry contains two grains. The preparation is very simple; the berries are dried in the sun then put through a machine to remove the skin or shell, then washed and dried in the sun, then ground under a wooden wheel to remove a thin skin that encloses each grain, and it is ready for market, and is loaded on donkeys and carried to La Guayra and sent to Oebisonia (?) for sails, or rather by sail for sale.

We arrived in La Guayra about 6 p.m. just in time for dinner and found ourselves not much the worse for wear but a little tired.

Nothing is spoken in this country except Spanish, very seldom even French, but the young surgeon that accompanied us is a Spaniard, and a Cuban by birth, and

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he can speak French, Spanish, or English indifferently so we were all right for an interpreter.

This trip is something that one will remember all one's life and it only cost us \$11.00 each; actual expenses, including mules, both ways, guide, hotel bill, beer along the way etc. etc. I spent as much again for "curios," and bought some very pretty things which will all turn up in time.

This letter, like the last one I wrote, and which must be nearly home by this time, will have to do for everybody as I could not stand the pressure of many 30 page letters. When we arrived here I got a letter from Father, yourself, Lou, Addie, and "Nibs," also the O. D. and a Vincennes paper from "Nibs." Nibs addressed my letter "Ensign W. S. Sims" and he says that his bill passed on Mar 2nd making us Ensigns, of a junior grade, with rank and pay of midn., but we have received no papers yet, and will not until we get to Aspinwall.

I have seen enough interesting things lately to fill a dozen such letters as this, but I must haul up soon. I just happen to remember that I have never sent a complete list of our cruise and proposed course home so I will enclose it.

As far as I can make out from all the letters Lou must have been having a pretty gay time in Phila. and

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Harrisburg, and Addie also, - well I envy them, for it seems years since I have seen any real civilized people, - Lou tells me that Helen Boas has been very sick, and I am very sorry and very much surprised to hear it. Speaking of health mine has never been better. I am getting fat and have now quite a "bay window" from eating bananas & oranges etc.

I hope Dr. Forbes will come out all right.

Give my regards to Dode and her little Dode when you see her. Lou said that you were worried about the predicted storm of that poor idiot Wiggins. We thought so little about it that the day passed before we knew it. I am very glad that Hal has got his approporation and can get married. Tell Father I don't know what to think about resigning, but will write him later about it. Lou wants to know whether or not I can get leave about July or Aug. and bring a couple of men home with me, if so she will provide the women; 2 Helens, 1 Shunk, 1 Sims, etc. etc. Tell her that I will see. It is too far ahead for me to find out anything yet but I will try and arrange matters and let her know.

Tell her also that I will get some tortoise shell if I can and make her the promised swords.

Now I must close. Give my love to all at home. I will write Addie a letter by this mail.



April 12, 1883 - page 14

Your loving son (Signed) Will

Please pass this letter around to Hal, and Alf,  
and to Lou if she is away from home.

I must add something that will interest Hal, viz;  
that when I was coming back from Caracas I filled my  
pockets (about 10 lbs) with pieces of rock; all the  
different kinds I could see, and that I will label  
them and send them to him.

No don't forget to send this letter around for I  
could not write three or four like it.

Goodbye until next time.

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

P. S. I mentioned in the first part of this let-  
ter that the Captain's party went ahead of us to La  
Guayra and were to return the same day, but have not  
yet put in an appearance. They are now two days over  
time and we are begining to get anxious about them.  
We were to sail today but it is now 4 p.m. and they  
have not returned but I expect they had such a good  
time in Caracas that they remained a day or so longer.

	Salut Islands	miles	
H. R. to	Cayenne	2500	2500
"	Gurinam R.	200	2700
"	Demerara R.	175	2875
"	Trinidad	360	3235
"	St. Lucia	230	3465
(next)	Puerto Cabello	70	3935
"	Curacoa	110	4045
"	Santa Maitra (?)	330	4375
"	La vanilla	50	4425
"	Cartagena	50	4475
"	Aspinwall	270	4745
"	Blewfield (?)	270	5015
	Belize	525	5540
	Progreso	480	6020
	Sisal	25	6045
	Campeche	100	6145
	Tobasco	100	6245
	Cootzacoatcos	100	6345
	Vera Cruz	120	6465
	Key West	900	7365
	Hampton Roads	700	8065

(Attached to letter of April 12, 1883 - A.S.F.)

U.S.S. "Swatara"

Aspinwall,

U. S. Columbia

May 4th

1883

My dear Father,

I mailed a long letter home from Curacoa but I have not enough to tell you this time to make such a long one.

I was very much disappointed on arriving in Aspinwall to find no mail from home, and I don't know how to account for it. Before I sailed from Hampton Roads I wrote a number of letters some home; one to Hal, one to Alf, one to \_\_\_\_; one to \_\_\_\_; and one to \_\_\_\_, asking them to send letters to La Guayra via, Str. Caracas, March 14.

Previous to this time I had given all the above mentioned persons, the Aspinwall address, and I at first thought that in sending the La Guayra address, I might have worded the letters so that my correspondents thought I was simply changing the address from Aspinwall to La Guayra.

I re'cd a letter from Hal at this place and he apologized for not having me a letter at La Guayra.

A number of the officers were, however, disappointed in their mail, so that perhaps there is something

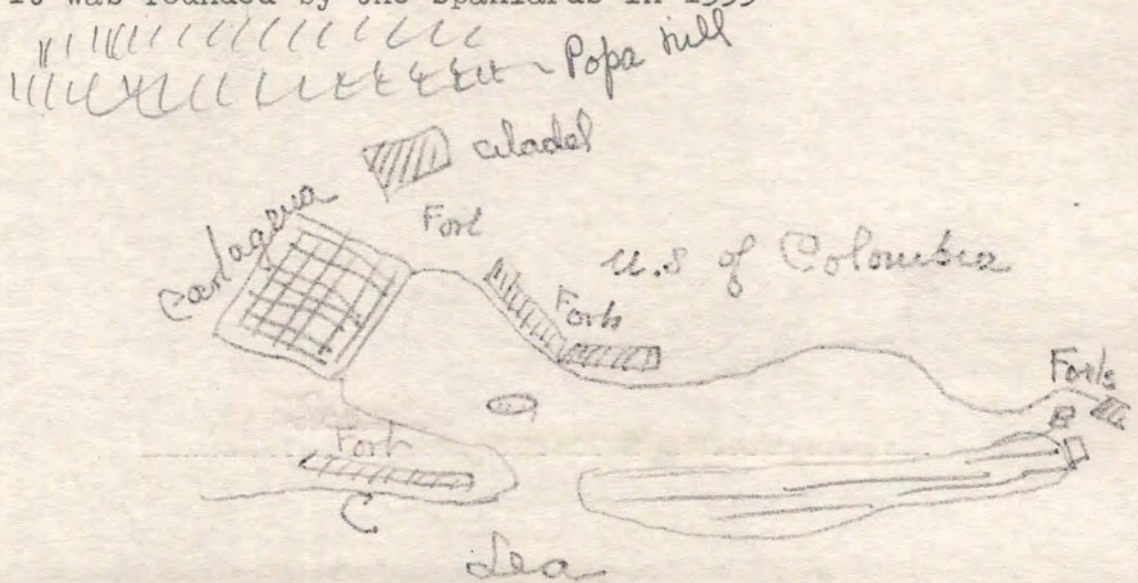
May 4th, 1883 - page 2

wrong in the mails. However, I was quite disappointed as you can well imagine.

I hav'nt the slightest idea that I have been neglected, and I suppose the letters will turn up somewhere, and sometime.

After leaving Curacoa our next port was Santa Marta (?), U. S. of C., a very inconsiderable place. Next we visited Savanilla, also a miserable hole, we only remained a day or so then went to Cartagena, which, in its day, (18440) was quite a considerable place, but now it has only 15000 people; about one third of its old population. Speaking of populations I will tell you now that in all these "Dago" (Spanish) cities at least 4/5 of the people are negroes or natives. I did not go ashore here for everybody who did come back completely disgusted. The city has quite an interesting history.

It was founded by the spaniards in 1533



May 4th, 1883 - page 3

and taken by the French and British eleven times.

Sir Francis Drake took it once; also the buccanneer Morgan. The harbor used to have two entrances one at A and one at B., the former was blocked up and the latter strongly fortified in order to keep the pirates of the Spanish Main out.

Although the city was strongly fortified at a cost of \$50,000,000, the idiots never fortified the heights back of the town, notwithstanding the fact that the city has several times been taken by the enemy occupying them, and without firing a gun.

But I must be getting on for I have considerable to tell you about Aspinwall.

We rather suspected that we would receive orders here, ordering us to proceed to H. Roads, but we were mistaken, and we will have a month more hot cruising along the Mexican coast. We were nearly out of coal when we got here, having coaled ship only once since we left. We found the price of coal here to be \$18.00/100 per ton or \$2700.00/100 for 150 tons, so the Captain telegraphed to Washington asking whether we should purchase coal or proceed to Key West where we had a coaling station, and we were all in hopes that the high price would get us out of the remainder of the cruise, but the reply came, "Purchase coal and proceed with your

May 4th, 1883 - page 4

cruise as ordered," and we are now getting it on board and tomorrow will probably leave for Blewfield. We will be in Key West in about a month or so where we will take coal again and proceed to H. R. arriving there about the middle of June or later.

Aspinwall is about the most wretched place I have seen yet. It has about 7000 people, having doubled its population in the last 18 months. The town itself is miserably filthy and surrounded by slimy marshes. The streets are full of the vilest men of all nationalities, but principally, natives, negroes, and Jamacians.

Everything is very dear, and especially provisions. It costs 1.75 to send one word to Washington.

The fare from A. to Panama is \$25.00/100 each way, and the distance is only 47 miles. I went over to Panama day before yesterday just to see the railroad and more especially the canal.

It didn't cost me \$50.00/100 though, for Naval officers can get a pass on application. The road is built standard guage and is quite a well constructed road, having American cars and American engines.

It takes four hours to make the trip for all the trains are freights with a few passenger cars on behind. I was prepared to find the country mountainous and the road full of heavy cuts and fillings and was much

May 4th, 1883 - page 5

surprised to find it generally much more level than the land between Oebesonia and Mt. M. (?) but it is a mystery to me how it could ever have been surveyed, for the surface is covered with a thick mass of impenetrable jungle, consisting of bushes, cactus, vines trees and dense underbrush, thickly matted together, and as for the heat of the sun in the jungle, where not a breath of air is moving, and the sun directly overhead, I should think it would be simply unbearable.

The railroad has been bought by the canal co. for \$17,000,000.00/100 and \$42,000,000.00/100 have been spent already and they have only just broken ground.

The above is the sum and substance of some newspaper articles I have seen on the subject, but a trip over the railroad, which runs most of the way parallel to the canal, will show anybody that the money has been well spent. Moored in the harbors at each terminus are a number of the most powerful dredges, with iron barges, iron tugs, etc., and whole sidings are full of cars for dumping and powerful steam excavators, that can dig 4000 cubic metres of earth a day and dump it into boiler iron dump cars.

All along the line of the works are hundreds of tons of iron movable tramways about 2' wide piled up ready for use, on these track small hopper shaped cars,

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holding about two cubic metres, are intended to run. From one terminus to the other the track of the canal has been thoroughly cleared and the vegetation burned. The line of the canal and cuts is clearly marked out with flags or painted stumps and all over the surface of the ground small sticks are set up having pieces of paper tied to them, the paper contains the depth of the cut at that point.

At four places along the line, large hospitals have been built and a regular Medical Corps has been established.

6000 laborers are at present employed, and work has commenced at six different places.

The plan is to work with pick and shovel in order to level the track of the canal by cutting off the tops of numerous little knolls, then lay the small tramway to facilitate the work, and, finally, to continue the excavation by means of the steam excavator which will take off successive layers, a bank 8 or 10 feet thick. The excavator runs on a track temporarily laid for the purpose.

They have sunk small wells all along the line to determine the nature of the soil and rock, and I understand that they have found no quicksand. The two great difficulties to be encountered are the Schagres River,



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and the shallow water and high rise and fall of the tide on the Pacific side, which has a range of 23 feet. This will necessitate building the canal some distance out to sea to reach the deep water. The river has to be dammed by an enormous dam between two hills and led to the sea through a channel constructed for it. It is a stupendous piece of work, but everything now looks as if the canal company ment business.

I recd three letters on arriving here, one from Hal, one from Helen, and one from West. Helen tells me that she has been very sick but is now getting better. Her letter was written a month or so ago so I suppose she is well by this time, I hope so, at any rate.

I wrote her a long letter from Curacoa, which I hope was more legible than hers. West tells me that I am an Ensign now, and he says that they came very near establishing a "benzine-board" this congress, and he seems to think there is a good chance of getting one of the said "B-Bs" next congress.

A "benzine-board" is a board of prominent Naval officers appointed for the purpose of determining what officers will be retained, congress first determining the number to be retained. Those who are selected not to remain will be placed on the reserved list for ever

May 4th, 1883 - page 8

unless there should be war, and receive something like one fourth pay. I hardly know what to make of it all and don't know whether I understand it thoroughly or not as I have seen very few papers, so I will have to wait until I get North. The weather down here is very hot and sultry and we are in a hurry to get out of it. The thermometer is about 86 or 87 but the air is so filled with moisture that the perspiration cannot dry on your body unless you are in the wind. The health of the ship's company has so far been excellent and mine particularly so; I think the tropics agrees with me. I will send this letter tomorrow on the steamer by Doyen, who is going home for examination. You remember Doyen from Concord, N. H. who turned back from my class?

Now I must close, Give my love to all at home, and write to me at Key West and don't forget.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

P.S. If you will buy Harpers Magazine for May you will find a very interesting description of the Brooklyn bridge, well illustrated.

S. S. S. Swahara,

Key West, Florida,

Her British Majesty's birthday.

May 24, 1883 \*

My dear Father,

We arrived here at noon today from Progreso, Yucatan, and are now alongside the dock. On our arrival we received our mail and I got yours of the 11th inst., also letters from Hal, Lou, Mary, Addie, Mother, etc. etc. nine letters in all, also the "Continent." It is needless to say that I enjoyed them all very much.

I am sorry to hear that things are getting so low in the iron trade, but I suppose there is no help for it. But I must tell you how we come to be here so much sooner than we expected, and sooner than my Aspinwall letter (which you must have by this time) would lead you to suppose.

After leaving Aspinwall where it was insufferably hot, we expected to have a hard time especially on the mosquito coast, then you must remember that we have been travelling north with the sun, which crosses the equator in March when we arrived in Cayenne, and we have been increasing our latitude about as fast as the sun has his declination so that he has been almost directly

\* Added in pencil later by W.S.S.

May 24, 1883 - page 2

over head all the time. The thermometre has not been very high only about 85 or 90, but the air is so full of moisture that you could only keep cool in the wind and out of the sun. You can judge how wet it is when you know that the sailor's wash clothes require about 7 or 8 hours to dry, when hanging up in the sun and wind. The nights at Aspinwall were simply sweltering, all night long your body would ooze or rather ooze persperation.

It is a wonder to me that all the people don't die during the wet season. Speaking of the wet season reminds me of a very startling statement I read in a physical geography the other day viz., that in some places in the tropics the rain fall in one year is 25 feet and in Cayenne 21 inches has been known to fall in one day. Panama is one of these places so you can imagine the difficulty of managing the Chagres River which crosses the canal once or twice. But this is not telling you how we came to be at Key West.

I am afraid my correspondents find me rather tiresome on account of my inclination to wander from the subject, etc.

Leaving Aspinwall we steamed for Blewfield where we arrived in two days, but only remained one day. We did not see Blewfield at all for we could not enter the

May 24, 1883 - page 3

lagoon on which it is situated, so we anchored outside and sent a whale-boat in to communicate with the American consul.

While we were there a <sup>d</sup>gug-out canoe, paddled by six natives came off to the ship carrying about a half a dozen passengers, who to our surprise turned out to be the Vice President of Nicaragua and some other officials. It just now occurs to me that I wrote a letter home since leaving Aspinwall and I may be simply repeating myself, however there is not much to tell and besides letters depend so much on ones mood that they are not likely to be the same. From Blewfield we sailed for Belize, a thoroughly established English Colony, notwithstanding the Monroe Doctrine. I wrote my last letter there, but carried it to the next port Progreso, where I put it on board an American steamer to be mailed in New York without a stamp, so you, or rather Lou, will have to pay double postage. When we anchored in Progreso and hauled fires we found that our main-injection valve was broken and the condenser could not be drained, but this would not prevent us completing the cruize so we started for Campeche and when only an hour or so on our way, something broke in the circulating pump and caused a couple of very hard thumps. We could

May 24, 1883 - page 4

not open the pump, for the injection valve in the bottom of the ship was broken, so we headed the ship for Key West, and after her head was pointed north the engine worked like a charm.

The Capt. has telegraphed to the Department and we await the reply in "fear and trembling," for we are afraid of being sent to Campeche to complete the cruize as per program which means 2500 miles more in the tropics.

At this present moment a diver is making preparations to go down and cover the mouth of the main injection with sheet lead so that the pump can be repaired.

I think however that we will finish the repairs and sail for H. R. and then go to the Norfolk Navy Yard and dock the ship and repair the valve etc., and probably remain there a couple of months in which case I shall try and get leave and come home, and bring some men with me if I can.

Suppose I bring home two men besides myself and Lou has two or three girls besides herself where are you going to stow them? But there will be time enough to talk about that when we get north.

I have just had an interview with the Captain's Steward and he tells me that he heard the Capt. say we were to leave here for H. R. on Monday (28th).

I am quite thick with the Captain's Steward who

May 24, 1883 - page 5

is a very original dorky. I address letters for him etc. If this report is true you will get this letter when I am on my way north.

I am glad that you enjoyed my letters. We have made quite an interesting cruise and I have picked up some very interesting "curios" to bring home, apropos of curios please tell Lou and Mary that I succeeded, after a long search in finding some tortoise-shell here and that the promised swords and bracelets will be duly manufactured as per order.

I was very glad to hear that Lou is so much improved in health and I hope it will be permanent; tell her that I will try my best to get home and bring the men.

I suppose Lou knows that Harry Phelps is married. He married a girl from N. or S Carolina I don't know which. I saw it in the Army and Navy Register of April 28. Poor devil, he has my sincere sympathy. He is, by the way, the first of my classmates that has been scooped so far.

I received a splendid letter from Addie which I will answer when I get time. Tell her that I don't know whether I will be able to get a little dog or not but I will try.

I was quite disappointed to receive no letters at

May 24, 1883 - page 6

Aspinwall and I thought that you had mixed up or lost the address. However, its all right now.

✓ I am very glad to hear that the Appropriation is going to pass for Hal's sake. As for myself, I am afraid to leave my present profession which, it must be acknowledged, has its facinations, for the confined office work which Hal is now engaged in.

I feel almost sure that in a month or so I would want to go to sea, and of what use would be the additional money I could make if I was discontented, however I will think the matter over well and write again from H. R.

I must close now as I have to write some letter for the Capt.

Give my love to all at home.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will //

P. S. Do not write to Mr. Ashburner on my behalf, and, should he write to you about it, and an immediate answer be necessary, you can decline the position for me.



U. S. S. "Swahara,"  
Navy Yard, New York,  
June 22, 1883

My dear Father,

I have just rec'd your letter of the 20th. and Mother's of the same date.

I am very glad to hear that everybody enjoyed their share of the box.

I was very lucky to find Mother and Addie in Phila. and of course enjoyed meeting them very much. Tell Mother that Hal and I called on Aunt Mary and left our cards, as she was not in. On Sunday I went out to Chestnut Hill and took dinner with John, Grace, and Jane. Nobody knew me in the house except John, on account of my beard, which I suppose Mother and Addie have told you about. Charlott the nurse did not know me at all. The same evening I returned to Phila., took tea at Aunt Cellie's and left for New York at 8 P.M. I suppose you will simply glance over this part of my letter to get what I have to say about coming home, and I regret that I cannot even now give you any definite information, but can only tell you how affairs stand.

We expected when we arrived here to get some Naval Cadets, and as we will remain here for two months, I could have chosen my time, and had only to await the convenience of the remainder of the party. I wrote to

June 22, 1883 - page 2

"Nibs," Lafford, and Doyen and gave some verbal invitations but could get nobody. While I was in Phila. I wrote to Hulme asking him when he could come and bring one of his classmates with him, but I have not heard from him yet; so much for Lou's men.

Now about myself. We are short handed all around on this ship, and I could not get a month's leave at present, in fact not until we get some Naval Cadets, but I can get a week's leave at any time so that in case everything else fails I can run home for a week to see you before we leave here.

After receiving your letter today, I went to Captain Cooper and asked him when he expected to get the above mentioned N. Cs. He said that he supposed they would be granted about one month's leave before being assigned to duty, but that he knew nothing positively about them. In case they are ordered after having a month's leave they will be here about the middle of July. So that it appears to me that it is very doubtful whether we will be able to have our picnic or not; but at all events, you will see me home before long, and if it is only for a week, why that will be a week better than nothing.

I think Mother had better make her arrangements to have Aunt Mary and Aunt Emeline when it is convenient

June 22, 1883 - page 3

for her, and, after the N. C's are forthcoming, and I have a chance to get leave, it will be time to talk of making arrangements.

I will of course be disappointed if I cannot succeed in getting a month's leave and bringing some "men," but I will not be disappointed on my own account, but because I think Lou. as well as yourself and Mother will be disappointed. I don't mean all that, but I mean that I will not be so very much disappointed if I don't succeed in getting the party together; of course I want as much leave as I can possibly get.

I will keep you informed if anything turns up or any arrangement can be made.

I think I have finally made up my mind to remain in the Navy. I like the life, and am afraid I should not like civil life. Hal advises me to remain. Now about the prospects.

The class of 81 (Doyen's) who have just completed their final examination, will be dropped, with the exception of the first 23, and the present new law provides that they shall take precedence; be assigned rank and pay, etc. as shown in the following form

<u>Rank.</u>	<u>Corps.</u>	<u>Pay</u>
Lst. <u>Junior Ensign</u>	Line	\$1000.

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2nd.	<u>Relative</u>	( Ensign	Engineer Corps	1700
3rd.	<u>rank</u>	( Ensign	Pay "	1700
4th.-	- - - - -	( Ensign	Marine "	1640

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That is to say, the men who graduate head of the class take the line, the next take the Engr. Corps etc., and, as you see above, the line is junior in rank and pay to all the other corps, although they are acknowledged to be the best men in the class, where they have all used the same text books. For example, in Doyen's class the men who were stars will go into the line while those who graduated junior to them will rank !! them in the service and get from 600 to 700 more ducats.

You have seen the successive steps by which the ignorance of congressmen has brought about this extraordinary state of affairs, arising partly from the unintentionally awkward wording of the laws, and the intentional villainous constructions put upon them.

Now I don't think that such a glaring inconsistency as that can stand, do you? The attention of congress will not only be called to this fact but the matter will be pushed with all sail on and old "Nibs" at the helm. We confidently expect to get the pay equalized, either brought up to \$1700 or more probably a happy unhapy mean will be struck at about \$1500.

June 22, 1883 - page 5

There is no doubt about the justice of our claim for equal (at least) rank and pay with those below us, and those below us will lend a hand to keep it from being cut down too much. - "Nibs" had a long head when he fought so hard for the commission.

He is laying his wires now for his next campaign. In his last letter he told me that he had one newspaper "solid," The "Evening Post." The editor is a Vincennes man and "Nibs" gave him a letter of mine written from Aspinwall on the canal question. This was a private letter to "Nibs," but he left out all personal matter and gave it to the editor for a pure "b. l." (boot lick). By such wily measures as these "Nibs" will have that Ed. in proper time by next winter so that he can make use of his columns, and perhaps write an editorial or so for him.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swahara  
Brooklyn, Navy Yard,  
Aug. 3rd. 8 P.M.

1883\*

My dear Mother,

We have just received our mail from Key West and I have just read father's and your letters about poor aunt Vic.

You know I always loved Aunt Vic. more than any of my aunts.

I think she had the most lovable disposition, and the most faithful motherly heart that any woman could have.

That any man could ever have ceased to love her is beyond my comprehension. I can understand such conduct in an uneducated and unrefined man, who is governed more by his animal than intellectual nature, but it seems to me that if I ever loved a woman, and ever ceased to love her through no fault of hers, that every impulse of my nature and intellect would prevent me ever letting her find it out.

Your letter was to me very sad. I am very sorry for you, for of course you must feel this grief more than I can.

\* Added in pencil later by W. S. S. - ASF

Aug. 3rd, 1883 - page 2

If I have one thing to be thankful for more than another, it is that I had the good fortune to be born your son.

To have seen the happy life you and father have lived together, and the wretched lives some people live is enough to discourage a single man from ever making the matrimonial experiment.

I wish you would write me a good long letter and tell me all about our relatives in Canada.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

P. S.

Ask father if he thinks there are any more women in the world like those of his day (his marrying day), and if so, how to tell them.

U. S. S. "Swahara,"  
Navy Yard, New York,  
Monday 13th '83  
August\*

My dear Father,

I suppose you have noticed in the papers that a number of young officers have been ordered to the "Trenton."

My orders were not issued with them, and I wrote Capt. Hammond (?) asking him to see whether I would be ordered or not.

Unfortunately he was not in Washington at the time so he wrote to me advising me to address a personal letter to Capt. Walker, who details officers, reminding him of his promise, which I accordingly did in my most eloquent and pathetic style, and I am now waiting for the eloquence and pathos to work on his vitals, but I have not much hope of success and I presume I will remain on the "Swahara."

We are at this present moment getting up steam to give the engines a dock trial, that is steaming ahead with the engine while secured to the dock to see if the engines are all right.

We will probably be ready to sail by the last of

\* Added in pencil later by W. S. S. - ASF



August 13th, 1883 - page 2

this week and we have orders to sail for Halifax and visit a number of fishing points, or ports about the mouth of the St. Lawrence River. We will be back here by Oct. 15th., so you see that if I am not ordered from this ship to the "Trenton" I will not be able to attend Hal's wedding in Sept.

The "Trenton" will be put in commission on Sept 1st, but will not get away for a month or so and if I am ordered to her I could get enough leave to attend the wedding.

I will let you know when I hear from Capt. Walker, if I hear from him at all and anything else that may turn up.

Last Sunday, I think it was I wrote to you, enclosing Nib's letter. Please send it to me the next time you write.

I have not re'cd any letters this week, but I suppose somebody wrote yesterday.

Give my love to all at home.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swahara "

Halifax, N. S.

Sept 2 '83

(Sunday)

My dear Mother,

When we first arrived here, on Wed. last at noon, I sent a hasty note ashore and afterwards wrote another letter, and sent Mary's hairpins at the same time. I suppose you have received all of them by this time, and have sent answers to them, but they have not arrived here yet.

Tomorrow we sail for our next port, only 180 miles away.

I will enclose a list of the places to be visited with the times of arrival and departure, and the distances, by which you will see that just one month from the time we leave here on our little cruise, we will be leaving here for New York.

I don't think I have a single bit of news for you that I didn't mention in my last letter. We have remained very quietly at anchor since then with the exception of the first day, or rather night that we were here.

Immediately after we anchored on Wednesday noon it commenced to rain, it continued raining all the afternoon and that night it blew and rained at such a

Sept. 2, 1883 - page 2

rate that we were all heartily glad we had reached a harbor and escaped it, otherwise we should have passed a very rough and uncomfortable night, and especially those who had watches that night.

Just imagine standing a watch from midnight until four a.m. on such a night.

Standing on the bridge, the ship rolling and pitching heavily and a cold N. E. gale driving the sheets of rain in your face, and you can readily understand that we well enough satisfied to be at anchor.

Of course you understand a fellow dosen't stand



a watch  
like that in a  
linen duster,  
but is complete-  
ly protected  
against the  
former by a  
good  
suit  
of

heavy wollen underclothes and a peacoat, and against the latter a suit of rain clothes, consisting of a "Sou. Wester," rain coat and "Gum" boots.

"End?"- added in pencil by W.S.S.

U. S. S. "Swahara "

Georgetown, P. E. I.

Sunday, Sept. 23rd '83

My dear Mother,

I only received your letter of the 16th inst. yesterday the 22nd., and I can assure you that I was very glad to get a letter from you again, and to know that you had made up your mind to shake off your nervous "spell."

I wrote to Lou a few days ago, but dont remember whether it was from Pictou or from Charlottetown; at all events, since leaving Pictou we have had a very pleasant time indeed, for in Charlottetown we were very kindly received indeed.

A wealthy Englishman gave us a large reception, and it turned out to be a very pleasant affair. Most of the girls here dance the American dance, although no as well as they might, but what they lack in dancing they make up in good looks, and especially in their complexions, which are more like peaches and cream than anything else. Next day after the reception I was invited to a tennis party, and it would do you good to see the English girls play tennis.

Unfortunately we did not remain very long there but came away the next day. On the evening of the tennis party I took dinner with Capt. Cooper and helped

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him entertain a number of gentlemen, including the U. S. Consul and the gentleman at whose house we were entertained, and I dont remember ever to have enjoyed a dinner so much, for with one exception besides myself, everyone present had traveled in nearly every country in the world.

But I dont suppose this will interest you much so I will jog along with something else. We arrived here from Charlottetown on Friday afternoon and on Saturday morning got up anchor and went outside for target practice with cannon, or what we call "great guns."

We thundered away all the forenoon, firing about 100 guns, and during the afternoon we practiced with rifles, and as a consequence of all this my ears are singing yet.

We will leave here about the 26th. for Halifax, where we will remain until about Oct. 2, then go to Boston to remain there until Oct. 12 or 13, then go to New York, where we will probably be for a month or so.

You see that according to this program, I cannot attend Hal's wedding or be at home when he is there, and you know, and so does Hal, that I am very sorry for it.

I think all the presents you told me about are

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very handsome, and Hal will be able to start house-keeping in style.

I hardly know what is to become of this ship when she gets to New York, or what is to become of me, for I have just heard that the "Trenton" is just now going in commission, and that she will be at the Newburg centennial with us, and as I have been promised orders to her, I may be transferred there. If I remain on this ship I suppose I will make the usual West India cruise this winter.

I will address this letter to Orbisonia as I am afraid you will leave Waukesha (?) before it reaches there, however it may reach home in time to be forwarded to you, but at all events Hal and his wife will be with you, so please offer them by congratulations and best wishes.

With love to all

I remain

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swahara "

Navy Yard Boston,

Oct. 5, 1883

My dear Father,

We arrived here yesterday after a rough passage from Halifax.

We were only out two nights and during one of them we caught quite a blow, with its usual accompaniments of rain and a heavy sea.

I was lucky enough this time to have "all night in" instead of the midwatch, and I rather enjoyed lying in my bunk and listening to the howl on deck.

As soon as we arrived here we received orders to take in sea stores and prepare for sea at once, but nobody knows where we are going, not even the Captain.

I dont know whether I have mentioned it or not, but our Captain has incurred the displeasure of the Department, and this ship is "blacklisted" as we call it.

Cooper was to have been detached in June and given leave during the summer, then ordered to the Naval Academy, but his orders were kept back and he was sent north on our last cruise, I think more to punish him than anything else. He expected confidently to be detached when we arrived here, and now he is to remain and doesn't even know where he is going.

It will not be to China as we have not taken, or

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are not going to take in enough sea stores for that. We may be going to Hayti, and we may not be going anywhere except to New York, to attend the celebrations, but in a few days we will know something definite.

I would have written before, but I have really been too busy, sending in my quarterly returns and preparing a report on the fisheries, some 35 pages of official paper. Some of these days when I get time I will make a copy for you.

I have not rec'd a letter from home for some time, not since before Hal's wedding.

The last letter I rec'd from anybody was dated Sept. 25 from Miss Moore acknowledging the rec't. of the silver. Somebody must write and tell me about the wedding, which I suppose came off on Sept. 27th., as per programme.

I will let you know as soon as I know anything definite about our movements.

I have about reconciled myself to spending the remainder of my naval career on the North Atlantic. I am not much disappointed about the "Trenton," for this ship must go out of commission some time and then I will get 3 or 4 month's leave to spend at home. I have no definite expectations on the subject, but, at present, I feel quite contented to sit down and wait



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for something to turn up.

Tell Lou that when I get the work off my hands with which I am at present incumbered I will finish her tortoiseshell swords, which are nearly finished now. They will be quite pretty and have been very much admired even in their unfinished state.

Tell Mother that I am now about "heart and fancy free," for they are all either dead, married, or have "shook me," but, nevertheless, I feel very susceptible and am in constant danger.

The shortness of our stay at Charlottetown was all that saved me.

My enamored (is that right) was quite as tall as I am and looks very much like what I fancy I would look like, had I been born a girl, dont you admire my taste? She plays cricket and tennis and can jump over the net.

Apropos of cricket, a very amusing thing happened in Halifax in playing that game.

The Superintendent of a large lunatic asylum situated there conceived and put into execution a plan for amusing the idiots and lunatics of the milder orders, by introducing the English national game among them. All the tools for playing the game were provided and the unfortunates commenced a game. For a little while everything went well, but, as the game proceeded the

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lunatics became a little uneasy and were visibly becoming excited, each one seemed to be possessed with a desire to get the ball, for every time it was batted, they all put after it, no matter what part of the field they were stationed in, and the one securing it threw it back with an air of triumph, while all the rest looked disappointed and envious. This rivalry gradually became more intense until finally, one idiotic batter gave the ball a tremendous lick and the lunatics gave chase; the fleetest one captured the ball but, instead of throwing it back into the field he kept on running with it at the top of his speed with the whole eleven at his heels. The poor fellow ran with it for several miles out in the country and was finally found exhausted but with the ball firmly clutched in his hand, and stoutly refusing to give it up. The remainder of the eleven all ran until they were exhausted, and were not collected by the officials for some hours, who, when they returned to the asylum found the lunatic who had batted the ball still running the wickets for all he was worth, under the impression that he had knocked the ball across Nova Scotia into the Bay of Fundy.

This little incident amused me very much when I first heard it but finally excited my pity.

Now I am going to close, please tell somebody to

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write and tell me all the news,

With love to all at home,

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swahara"

Navy Yard, Boston

Oct. 6th, 1883

My dear Father,

Since writing yesterday (although dated 6th) I have found out that this festive craft will, when she has her stores on board and she is ready for sea, point her nose directly South for St. Domingo, Hayti, and that's all I do know about it. I cant imagine what we are going there for, surely not to protect American citizens, for any American who would live there ought to suffer any indignity. It is only a little piece of DAM cussedness on the part of Captain Walker. As for myself, I dont care a pin, in fact I would rather spend all my time while on board ship in the tropics. I dont know anything about our future movements for I got my information surreptitiously, but can let you know later.

Now look out! for I am going to throw a boom shell into the camp!

I bought a dog!!, a very small Newfoundland pup, while I was up north.

To the best of my knowledge and belief he is a thorough bred; is about a foot long and black, with the exception of a white spot on the breast and one white paw. Some day he will be as big as a cow, if you give him half a chance. I intend him for a present for Addie,

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our Mother to the contrary notwithstanding.

Tell Addie it is the cutest little fellow in the world, and that will settle it finally.

Tell Mother it can eat bread, a little meat, drink vast quantities of milk, and P every five minutes. I will probably send him by express on next Monday or Tuesday, addressed to Mount Union, "Love me love my dog."

I will drop a line when I send him, so that you can give him a good reception.

I would have addressed this to Addie, but I understand that she is away and thought the letter might be forwarded unopened.

I will not write to her about it, for, if my impressions of my childhood days are correct, she would want to come home immediately.

I will probably write again in a day or so.

I rec'd. the wedding cards today, but no letter from home as yet, althought I got one from Alf. I think he must have made a mistake.

With love to all at home I remain,

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swahara

Navy Yard Boston

Oct 8 '83

My dear Father,

We sail tomorrow for Port au Prince, Hayti, and I never was busier in my life so I have very little time to write.

I sent the Pup to address Mt. U. to Addie Sims. I am sorry to say that he has ticks, whih I have not had time to treat him for, so he will have to be attended to if he arrives alive and buried if he arrives dead.

I enclose the By-Laws of the Navy Mutual aid Association which I joined before leaving New York, making you my beneficiary until Mrs. Wm. Sims puts in a superior claim, if I should ever be so unfortunate as to be encumbered with such a nuisance.

I joined it now because I could do it cheaper than when I am over 25 years old. I will continue to be a member in case I should resign at any time.

It will cost me about \$20 or \$25 each year for (at present) \$3,259.90/100 which I think is pretty good.

Since I am going south where it will be inconvenient for me to attend to payments I am going to ask you to look out for it for me.

I have left you an allotment of \$25. per month,

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out of which you can pay the assessments, and "stow" the remainder away for me. I wish you would take \$25. and add it to my share of the wedding present which was not very equally divided between us.

Whenever you are "strapped" you can make use of my money if you wish.

The allotment is made payable to you at the Navy Pay Office, Phila., the first payment the end of this month.

If you will write to Pay Director A. W. Russell, U.S.N.,  
Navy Pay Office,  
Phila.

telling him you wish to draw the allotment, he will send you a number of blank receipts and instructions about drawing the money.

I think the modus operandi is to send in two receipts for the amount (\$25) and he (Russell) will send you a check.

The By-Laws will explain everything else about the assessments etc. etc.

I will write to the Secretary of the Association giving him your address, so you will have nothing to do but wait until my next quarterly assessment (See Section 2. page 14) comes due, or somebody dies.

I feel much more important since I have become a

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member.

I dont know as yet when the next mail steamer leaves for Hayti, but if you dont hear from me again before we sail just address Port au Prince, Hayti, and I will get it. Let me know by the first letter if the Pup arrived all right.

I will write again if I have time. Give my love to all at home. I am very glad to hear that Mother has recovered her former good health.

Your loving son

(Signed) Will



U. S. S. "Swahara,"  
Navy Yard, Boston,  
Oct 9th., 1883

My dear Father,

We failed to get off today as we expected, but will sail tomorrow at noon for Port au Prince, Hayti.

Nobody appears to know anything about the mail steamers to Hayti, but, as I said in my last letter, just address the letters and let them go. We will probably remain there two or three weeks, and perhaps longer, so I will have plenty of time to hear from you, and by that time I will be able to tell you something about our future movements, about which nobody knows anything at present. In case you hear nothing from me to the contrary address letters to me at P. au P., Hayti, as the Consul will forward them after we leave.

Please tell the good people at home that I have not heard anything about the wedding except from you, and you know that no man can describe a wedding properly.

Since we arrived here I have not had a spare minute, for when a ship is in a Navy Yard there is plenty of red tape. Then I have had the quarterly returns to send in and write my fishery report, which was just 40 pages.

Tell Lou I am sorry I could not send her swords, but I have not finished polishing them.

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I suppose you have received the pup before this time and I hope you gave him a good scrubbing. I had him washed in sulphur before he left to kill the ticks. Tell Addie she must give him a name for he hasn't got any now, poor fellow.

Tell everybody to write as soon as they can so that I will get the letters when we arrive. It is 15000 miles down there, we will go down in about 7 or 8 days. This winter you must cut Navy clips from the Herald and send them to me in letters, especially after congress meets. It does not always do to send the papers for if we happen to miss them they are not forwarded.

Now I must close and bid you all good bye for the present.

I think I have told you all the news I have to tell.

Give my best love to all at home,

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Will

P. S. I enclose rect. for Pup in case he dont turn up.

P. S. 2. I have always had a little curiosity to see a country that is governed or misgoverned by niggers, and I shall take pains to find out something about the manners and customs of a nation of negroes so you can stand by for a lengthy epistle or two, if it isn't too hot to write down there.

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There is a possibili\* that we may go to Hava\* when I would be abl\* to get you some ciga\* so when you write tell me what kind you like. I mean how strong; you told me once but I ha\* forgotten. What kind does Hal smoke.

Also John Sims.

W.S.S.

\* Edge of page torn off - ASF

U. S. S. "Swahara"

Navy Yard, Boston

Oct. 10, 1883

My dear Father,

I have just sent money to J. R. Carmody in payment of my quarterly assessment for the quarter ending Oct 3rd. '83, and, as I will be away I have directed him to send the receipt to you.

I will enclose the last receipt I got for payment of two death assessments.

The record of my dealings with this association are as follows.

(Entrance fee -----	\$5.00
(with one assessment ----	3.10
Two death assess's -----	6.20
One advance quarterly assessment ----	3.10 (just paid)
	\$17.40

If there is anything I have omitted to tell you, you will probably find it in the By-Laws. Any other information you may require may be had by writing to J. R. Carmody.

We sail today at noon as per program.

Dont forget to write and tell the rest of the people to write too.

Now I must close with love to all at home,

Your loving son,  
(Signed) Will

Dear Hal - Read and pass on to Alf with instructions  
to send back to me                      AWF    \*

Alf's address is                              U. S. S. Swatara  
86 Franklin St.                              Port au Prince  
Baltimore                                      Hayti  
Md.    Oct. 23rd., 1883

My dear Father,

I will commence a letter to you now for we are by  
no means sure when the mail steamer will arrive. As  
far as we know she will arrive and leave here on the  
28th. of this month.

I will commence at the beginning.

My last letter to you informed you that we had been  
delayed one day in Boston, but only one day for we sail-  
ed on the 10th for this Godless and miserable country,  
making the passage in 11 days.

In my previous West India letters I have described  
at some length the beauties of the tropics at sea, so  
that I will not bore you with them this time to any  
great extent. We enjoyed a very smooth passage, steam-  
ed about S. E. from Boston, in order to get outside of  
the Gulf Stream after which we headed directly south.  
We did not get a whiff of cold or even cool air after  
starting for we had a head (South) wind all the way

\* Added in pencil at top of letter - ASE

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down until we struck the "trades" which blow from the NE.

We steamed through the Gulf Stream then uncoupled the propeller and set all sail with a head wind so that we had to "beat" for two days until we struck the "trades" when we set all sail that would draw and skipped along before it.

I stood a deck watch all the way down in the place of a Lieutenant who is under suspension for drunkenness.

I have often told you how beautifully blue the water is down here, but this time it looked more beautiful than ever, it looked as though you could dip a pen into it and write with it, but at the same time transparent, and when we had the NE trades behind us and great blue waves rolling up under the stern with the sun shining through them giving an infinite variety of shades to the water; the tops of the waves covered with snow white foam; flying fish skipping away from the bows; the clouds in endless variety in the sky; and often a rainbow caused by some passing shower on the horizon; and the softest and balmiest possible air, we found seagoing quite endurable. When we entered the Gulf Stream we had the usual fogs. When the wind is from the Nd. they are very wet, and soak everything as much as a rain, but with a Southerly wind they are dry and

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wet nothing. These fogs seem more like odorless smoke than anything else, and, in themselves are not very disagreeable, although nobody likes a fog at sea as the whistle must be kept going nearly all the time to warn any vessel that may be passing. We did not sight any vessels in the fog but while I was on watch we heard one. Her whistle first sounded on the port bow away ahead, and, gradually coming nearer passed us on the port side not more than a quarter of a mile away, as her whistle could be heard very plainly. When we were nearing the crooked passage and were still a hundred or so miles away we passed two sailing vessels at different times.

We hoisted our colors and exchanged salutes with them. Then "exchanged numbers" which means that we told each other by means of hoisting a certain combination of flags representing letters, what our names were. Every registered ship is given a certain combination as, for example (QRSN) which is placed in the list of American ships opposite U. S. S. "Swahara." These flags are also used to form an alphabet by which vessels of any nationality can communicate with each other. The first vessel we met hoisted the Norwegian flag, then her number or name, then a signal which signified that she had a contagious disease on board. She did not ask

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for assistance so I suppose the crew was not disabled. She had every stitch of canvass set and was steering directly north into the cold weather, in order to kill the fever for I suppose that is what she had on board. The next vessel was an American barkantine also heading to the Nd.

When you first sight a vessel at sea it appears the slightest possible speck on the horizon which a seaman would discover half an hour before a landsman.

On looking at this speck through a powerful glass you can only see the tops of the spars and the upper sails above the horizon, and it will be an hour before you can see the hull. Once while I was on watch during this trip a steamers smoke was sighted on the port bow and in an hour or so her spars were visible, but only the tops of them, and, as she was not heading directly towards us, her hull did not appear at all, so she pass<sup>d</sup>ess (?) us with her hull below the horizon, looking like three masts sailing along without any hull.

On the morning of the ninth day out we sighted land to the Westward which is always an interesting thing after being out a week or so, but in this case particularly interesting from the fact that the land we sighted was the very same land that Columbus first sighted, and, as it was to the westward of us, we must



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have been about the place where that intrepid old sailor fell upon his knees and thanked God for his discovery. The land is now called Watling's Island on recent charts.

The next morning while I was officer of the deck, we sighted the coast of Hayti and shortly afterwards sighted the smoke of a steamer directly in front of the land, but still hull down looking as though she coming from under the land, this deception



is caused by the fact that, until you approach quite near the land, you cant tell whether you see the shore line or the part of the land that is visible above the horizon. Referring to the picture, we saw the land at (b) which appeared to be the shore line (a) See? - Now that you have finished your geography lesson and are satisfied that the world is round, I will tell you something about this steamer.

When she had steamed up over the horizon so that I could see which way she was heading I sent word to the Capt that we would pass within about two miles of

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her. He sent out word to "stand across her bows," "exchange colors and numbers" with her, and ask her by means of signals "where she was from," "where bound," and "if she would take our mail"?

She answered that her name was the "Esk" from St. Thomas, bound to Havana and that she would take our mail. Of course all the time the ship was heading for the steamer everybody who was not on duty wrote some letters, but yours truly being on duty could not write one, or you would have heard from me some time before this. The "Swatara" was headed in the same direction as the steamer and a boat got ready for lowering; then the ship was stopped, then the boat dropped, then the steamer stopped and the boat went alongside her; put the mail on board and we went on our way rejoicing, and the next morning before eight o'clock we arrived in this beautiful harbor, half of the beauty of which is taken away by your knowledge of the fact that it belongs to the most detestable set of black cutthroats: a race of bastards born with murder in their souls; their filthy bodies only vehicles for the filthiest and most revolting crimes, vices and diseases.

But I must not let my righteous indignation against these dogs take me ahead too fast in my story.

When we were entering the harbor we met a Dutch (Hollander) man-of-war going out and when we anchored

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we found ourselves in the middle of a fleet of three other men-of-war; a Frenchman, a Spaniard, and a Hen-  
glishman, all a little smaller and infinitely uglier than the Swatara, for you must know that the U. S. S. "Swatara" is a very pretty vessel. As we were the last vessel in the Captains of the other vessels paid their official calls on our skipper which he returned. Some officers from the English ship the "Fantome" paid us a social call, but the Spaniard and Frenchman have not called yet.

As soon as we had fairly anchored I wrote a communication from the Capt. to the U. S. Consul, then buckling on my brass coat and sword I took it ashore and here begins a tale of murder, rape and looting and all the horrors of a sacked city.

It is impossible for an outsider and especially a white man to unravel the tangled skein of Haytien politics, or to give a clear idea, if in fact a clear idea exists, of the causes which led to the present trouble.

I think I will say a few words about Hayti in general, then attempt to give you some idea of the nature of its people; their ignorance and degradation, in order that you may the better understand their motives and their craving for rebellion and bloodshed. Sometimes

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I almost pity the poor wretches, then again I wish them in the lowest pits with their throats cut.

I must, of course, be brief so dont skip a page or two.

On second thought I think I will defer the remainder of this letter until another time for it is 9:30 P.M. and as I wrote about 40 pages of court martial to day with the thermometer 88<sup>o</sup> in the shade, I think I deserve a rest, so bon nuit.

Oct. 24th, 1883

To continue the subject of Hayti etc.

Once upon a time long ago the island of Hayti belonged to the Spanish and French, the Spaniards occupying the eastern part, now called the Republic of St. Domingo, and the French the western part now styled the Republic of Hayti. At that time the island was cultivated and worked by means of slaves whom both the Spanish and French treated with extreme cruelty, so much so that the poor negroes were driven to revolt, or rather a succession of riots and various disturbances, which finally ended in a tolerable well organized uprising under the leadership of a mulattoe whom we will call x. to save the trouble of looking up his name in the cyclopedia. This uprising although not successful was followed by many more, and the disturb-

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ances became so numerous and disasterous to the planters that the French finally gave the blacks their freedom, then took it away from them again; then more riots; then liberty again.

The blacks then elected a president; murdered him; elected another; murdered him, etc. etc. and all the time fighting with St. Domingo which was also free.

Finally one president declared himself "Emperor of Hayti," surrounded himself with a numerous and expensive court, spent all the public money; tried to squeeze more out of the people and lost his neck by the operation. Since the Empire there has been four presidents, of whom, I think, none have died a natural death. The present incumbent is called Salamon. He is jet black. His wife is white and was formerly an ordinary French prostitute. I may as well mention here that the U. S. Consul General to this place, Jno. M. (?) Langsdon (colored) lived openly with a French prostitute (white) at the American consulate. Landsdon is now in the U. S. having gone there at the commencement of the trouble here. While there he bought for the Haytien Government a steamer which is now anchored here waiting for the payment of \$150,000.

She is to be commanded by a certain Mason Cooper, who has been commissioned a Captain in the Haytien Navy,

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and who is a son of Admiral Cooper, the Commander-in-Chief of this station. I cant imagine a more degrading occupation for a white man. - But I am wandering sadly from the subject; but you cant expect a fellow to write a continuous narative with well rounded and smooth sounding periods, when the thermometer is 90<sup>o</sup> in the shade and not air enough to turn a feather over.

I have not seen the president but can tell you something about his army and officers, as well as his staff or Cabinet.

The army contains about 8000 men all black. I saw a number of them about the streets. They have every conceivable kind of uniform, but most of them only a blue blouse & trousers of coarse drilling, and bare feet; as for hats and caps the variety is endless, everything from a straw hat to a brass helmet; old blue, discolored and battered caps, decrepid cocket hats, straw hats etc. etc. They are paid about 50 cents a week or rather that is their pay, but they seldom get, but live by begging and stealing. When a soldier deserts or attempts to desert he is hung up by the heels and beaten with a club. The officers of the army serve for glory and get no pay.

The inordinate desire which a nigger has for any display or anything military, brings in new recruits

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and the fear of the club keeps them in.

In a certain old cafe the Generals, Secretary of War, Prime Minister, Chief of Police etc. etc. may be seen any afternoon, and a ludicrous as well as disgusting sight it is to see these men with their jet black skin and repulsive countenances strutting about. The generals in the dirtiest and rustiest uniforms, half worn out, and with old battered cocked hats, and leather epaulets, and all the uniforms different. As for the swords of the generals and the guns of the soldiers you can hardly conceive any kind of arms that you cant find among them. As for the people themselves it is difficult to give you an accurate idea of their nature. They are divided into two classes the "blacks" and "colored people" or mulattoes. They have a much different appearance from the negroes in the U. S. The "blacks" are intensely black, and all of them have high cheek bones, deep set eyes, hideous thick lipped mouths, the lips, being as black as their skin. Their expression is a combination of fierceness and insolence that cannot be described.

I dont remember to have seen a good humored face since I have been here. They are impetuous and excitable to the last degree. The least thing excites them,

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and in speaking to each other when excited they gesticulate in the most extravagant manner, showering torrents of words at each other.

In Hayti they speak a French dialect, in St. Domingo, Spanish.

There are, so far as an outsider can tell, two political parties. The party in power which, for want of a better name, I will call the conservatives since the opposition call themselves the "liberals." The Pres. is elected for a specified number of years, which term he specifies at the beginning of his campaign, or at the beginning of the insurrection of which he is the leader. His partners in crime become his Cabinet officers and generals, although some of them are so ignorant that they cant read or write, and in this respect American politics closely resembles this in its system of political rewards.

Now that I have endeavored to give you an idea of this government and its people, I will proceed with the rat killing.

For sometime back the government has been threatened by the liberals, and a few month ago they broke out in open rebellion and took possession of three town in the Southwestern part of the island, and the government has been unable to recover them, and so affairs have



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rested for some time.

Now you must follow me closely or you will get mixed up, for I expect to get mixed up myself before I get through.

Pres. Salamon, to use a vulgar expression, is as black as the hinges of hell consequently his followers in his election or insurrection were mostly blacks, and naturally, now that he is in power the government may be called black. See?

The mulattoes, finding themselves out, made a common cause against the government and with so much effect that they have seized and continue to hold three towns and part of the S. W. portion of the republic. The government is evidently on its last legs, for the mulattoes are the more intelligent people.

Now for the looting of this wretched city (35000) On the 22nd. of Sept. last a number of young and irresponsible mulattoes went to the house of the Governor (Mayor) of the city and requested him to come to the door of the house, and when he did so they discharged twenty pistol bullets into him, then scattered. Then the Pres. called the troops out and the looting commenced, not by the liberals, but by the government troops, and by a great number of blacks, who were in town, as it was Saturday, when they all come to town

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to sell their fruit etc. Some say that the Pres. had promised the troops that they might loot the city at the first favorable opportunity, but I dont believe the government had anything to do with it, but it is a fact that the soldiers and blacks from the country did the looting and not only the soldiers, but the black officers, or generals, for most all the officers are generals.

The town contains about 35000 inhabitants, and contained many very fine store, owned principally by white men, French, English, Spanish and American. These stores were all broken into, gutted, then burned, and their owners shot if they offered any resistance.

One merchant, a Frenchman was shot and thrown into his burning store for attempting to defend his wife from insults. Many of the black women were engaged in this outrage, and were even more fierce and wild than the men. When nearly every store was gutted & burned, the mob, consisting mostly of soldiers, went raging about the city demanding different private houses to surrender, saying that they were sheltering liberals. In case the house surrendered, it was raided and burned and perhaps the people shot in mere wantonness. In case of refusal to surrender the doors were battered down, or, when of iron, bombarded with some small

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howitzers the troops had, and everybody shot unless they succeeded in escaping the back way.

The Secretary to our Consul General (Langsdon) a mulattoe from the States was attacked in his house and only escaped with the clothes he had on, and, although he tragically wrapped himself up in the American flag and fled to the U. S. Consulate, he did not escape being fired at but was fortunately not hit. The poor Sec. was accused of being a liberal.

The blacks have become so bitter against the mulattoes politically that they have now made it a war of races or rather color, or to be more accurate still a war of shades, and it is feared that in case of another outbreak it will be to murder all the mulattoes and whites, the latter being either neutral or else favoring the liberals, as they are the most intelligent people.

As I said before the revolutionists hold three towns and have held them for some months, and, in anticipation of some trouble there has been various men-of-war in here for as much as five months back. They only leave occasionally to get coal for condensing water, for in the tropics we "make our own water."

It was during the temporary absence of all the men-of-war except the Englishman that the looting commenced, one Saturday night; Saturdays being the critical days,

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as everybody comes to town, and gets drunk.

It is my opinion as I said above, that the govern-  
ment itself did not originate the disturbance but that  
it was winked at I have no doubt, for, when the looting  
had been going on for some time the English Captain sent  
word to the President that his guns were trained on the  
city and if he did not stop the looting in thirty min-  
utes by the watch, he would shell the town.

And the Pres. managed to stop the looting inside  
of the 30 minutes.

They are in mortal terror of a man-of-war and  
dare not refuse them anything. Sometime ago one of the  
Atlas line of steamers, (an English line) was fired on  
by the Haytiens because she would not get out of the  
harbor. She was suspected of having arms on board, and  
was finally compelled to leave. The British man-of-war  
arriving soon after demanded 500 pounds indemnity which  
was promptly paid. For ten days after the trouble the  
men-of-war kept a guard ashore to protect their consul-  
ates and citizens. A number of American barks in the  
harbor received some Americans on board with their goods.

We arrived on Sunday, and found the city on the  
verge of another outbrake, at least so the U. S. Consul  
seemed to think, but I think he was needlessly worked up.

However I am confident that if the men-of-war were

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to sail from here, there would be an outbreak in a few hours, so we will probably remain here for a month or so, or at least until our fleet come down here for the winter when a vessel will probably be sent to relieve us. We have our boats, rifles, pistols, cutlasses, howitzers, gattling guns and amunition all ready for going ashore, and 150 men to man them, and without any assistance I think we could "clean out the town," for the niggers are miserable cowards. As an example of their cowardice I need only mention the fact that 106 mulattoes took the town of Miragone and have held out ever since, a period of some months, against 4000 government troops.

The Haytiens have only one man-of-war, and that is a small tug with a few guns of small calibre. A short time ago this boat went from here to attack Miragone by water. She was commanded by an American, a man who, I should judge, has been a 1st. or 2nd. mate on a merchantman, but a man of some "sand."

He says that the mulattoes have only a few guns and badly mounted at that, one of them being on two logs, and that he failed in his attack because his men were miserable cowards, while the mulattoes fought like tigers. He had a crew of 300 men and lost 60 (?) of them.

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Unfortunately for me, since I have been here I have been very busy, I have had lots of official writing to do and three court martials which I have just finished.

I am now writing on the evening of the 25th. and the steamer is expected in any time and I have some writing which I must finish before she goes, so I will leave this letter "here or hereabouts" until I finish my other work when I may come back to it and give you some more. - I finished my report of the fisheries before we left Boston, but we (the Capt and I) were so busy that we did not forward it to the Department, and it will be forwarded from here.

In forwarding it the Captain wrote a very complimentary letter.

I will enclose the Captain's rough copy (if I dont forget it).

I am sorry that I will have to send this letter off just a day or so before the mail arrives, but there will be plenty of time for more letters.

The Americans and English, and in fact all the white people show us every kindness and next Saturday we all have an invitation to spend the day at the house and plantation of a certain American planter and we expect a pleasant day. After the mail steamer leaves I will have plenty of leisure and will roam about ashore

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a little and notice the people and their habits and in my next letter you may expect some character studies in charcoal, and anything else that may be interesting.

I expect to hear when the mail arrives that the pup is alive and growing, and the pride of Addie's heart.

Now I think I will close, with the prospect of a P. S. if I have time.

Give my love to Mother and all at home and be assured that I am in perfect health and possess a constitution and, what is more important, abstemious habits, that will take me through any climate, moreover this Port is free from all infectious diseases, and the Captain and Surgeon have issued health regulations containing every reasonable precaution against sickness of every kind.

So now goodbye.

Address letters to

Port au Prince, Hayti,

until you hear from me to the contrary.

Always address

Care U. S. Consul.

Remember me at the Ripples & Brownings.

With love to all at home.

Your loving son,

(over)            (Signed)    Will

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P. S. 27th.

The mail will close now in a very short time, so I have only time to say that I havn't time to write any more, but of course you will hear from me with every mail. Tell everybody to write and send some papers occasionally.

(Signed) Wm. S. S.

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\* I skipped this page somehow in writing this letter, and have just noticed it now that I am on the 9th sheet, so I dont think I will write it all over again just to fill it out, but in case I forget it I will employ the blank space in telling you that I am enjoying excellent health, and living on vast quantities of bananas, oranges, limes, aligator pears, monkey apples, ochra, melons, plantins, and cigarettes.  
etc. etc. etc. etc.

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---  
---

\* Added on back of page 3 - ASF.



U. S. S. Swatara  
P. au P., Hayti,  
Oct. 31st, 1883

My dear Father,

I mailed you a letter a few days ago which I sent by way of Kingston Jamaica, and now there is a Spanish man-of-war going from here to Santiago de Cuba, Cuba, from where it will go, by mail to Havana, thence by steamer to the U. S.

I dont know which letter will reach home first, but if this does you must not think it too short for the other letter contains 40 odd pages.

I enclose in this a letter that I forgot to enclose in my last.

As the mail will close in about two minutes I will close with love to all,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

---

U. S. S. "Swatara,"  
Port au Prince, Hayti,  
Nov. 2nd. 1883

My dear Father,

The long looked for steamer arrived today, bringing me your letter which you may believe I was glad to get.

I am delighted to find that the "Captain" arrived safely even if he was a little "travel stained," and that he received such a hearty welcome and hereafter no letter will be complete without a brief mention of his health and happiness.

This will be the third letter I have written to you from here, the 1st. a long one mailed about the 26th or 27th, the next just a note enclosing Capt. Coopers letter of transmittal for my report, mailed the 30th.

This letter will leave here day after tomorrow, Sunday the 4th., for Kingston. I mention this in case this letter should reach home before the others, for when a letter gets adrift in the W. I. there is no telling where it will turn up.

I am not going to write you a very long letter this time, for I have not been ashore to take a look around yet, except when I went ashore officially on first arriving here.

There has however been some little excitement here which I will proceed to relate.

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You probably remember my mentioning the "Ethel," a ship purchased in Phila. for the Haytian government. Well there has nearly been trouble about her and may be more yet. It appears that the Haytian Govt. offered the Master of the "Ethel" a 90 day draft for \$150,000 in payment for her but the Master refused it not knowing whether it would be honored or not, and so things remained for about three weeks. The Gov.t is very anxious to get possession of her in order to send her to Miragoane against the insurgents, who have just bought a new vessel, and who have now two good vessels.

So the Govt. chartered a steamer to go to Kingston and from there telegraph to the States to find out whether the owners of the vessel would accept it, but the owners replied that they would except nothing except a sight draft or cash, and so the matter stands. I dont know what the contract is but Capt. Cooper says in his despatches that the owners of the "Ethel" have violated their contract, although some forfeit has been paid.

So that at present everything is at a standstill. It is my private opinion that the insurgents have offered a larger price for the vessel and that the Master is trying to sell her to them. The excitement commenced

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as soon as the chartered steamer was seen returning from Kingston, for it was rumored that the insurgents would make an attempt to cut the "Ethel" out as soon as she hoisted the Haytian flag. When the Govt. found that they could not get possession of the vessel they were highly enraged, and the Master of the "Ethel" fearing that they would attempt to seize her applied to us for protection. He was also afraid the insurgents might seize her. Then since the Master of the "Ethel" had violated his contract, the U. S. Consul would not give him permission to sail and the Haytians fearing that he would leave anyway asked Capt. Cooper to prevent her sailing. This crisis culminated about 8 P. M. , the first intimation we had of it was the Captain's order to get everything ready to get up steam; cast loose all the guns; get amunition on deck; detail certain boats with their crews to be ready for "cutting out"; other boats to carry out light anchors and hawsers for turning the ship about if necessary so her guns could be trained everywhere, and to have everything at hand and be ready for a call during the night.

I belonged to one of the boarding boats and slept that night with a big Navy revolver and a box full of cartridges hanging over my bunk with my sword. But,

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so far everything has remained quiet but there is no telling what will come of it. We sympathize with the insurgents, as they are the most intelligent and worthy people, and moreover they are fighting against a government of rascals.

The leader of the rebellion is one Basalais, a mulattoe.

I dont remember exactly what I told you in my last letter so I may repeat myself, and moreover I dont know any real news to tell so I will have to descend to gossip and personalities. Perhaps you would like to know who the President of this glorious republic used to be. Well, some 30 years ago he was Minister of Finance under the "Empire" during which time he was banished. I should think this would be a splendid place to be exiled from. He was absent 30 years, when he came back about four years ago, and was elected on a charcoal platform, i.e. he headed the "blacks." During his term of office every but the blacks have been dissatisfied, and they would have been had he not kept them well stuffed with promises. By his bad management the nulattoes have been so oppressed that they have finally broken out in open rebellion as I have told you and in such a determined and plucky manner that I think they are

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likely to succeed, they have purchased two good ships, and their soldiers have first class rifles. Hurrah for Basalais!

It is rumored that the president has deposited \$500000 in Paris and is watching his chance to skip. At any rate they are watching him very closely.

I wish I had his chances. I think I could easily reach the till in Paris.

By the way, to change the subject rather suddenly, and before I forget it let me tell you that I forgot to ask you to send my letter to Hal, I have not written him yet but will by this mail, and this climate is too trying to rewrite such a long letter, so you must send it to him if you have not already done so.

I think I will close this shortly for I have to write to a string of people, but I **promise** you some more letters after I have been ashore and picked up a few points.

We expect to remain here until we are relieved which will be when? I think in a month or so but I dont think we will go north until the spring when we will have to go to a Navy Yard for a month or so when I intend to get some leave. Capt. Cooper will then be relieved and Capt. Dewey take his place and be it known Capt. D. is a "coburger" (?) and a ship that he commands will

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not go on any such dirty jobs as this. We will then cruise mostly in New York Bay and off W. 23rd. St.

I presume you know that a "coburger" is a man who has "scads" of influence at the Department and can get ordered most anywhere he pleases.

So you can count on seeing me next summer.

Now I must close, I will get you some cigars if we go to Havana "Colorado" and "C. Madeiro".

Give my love to all at home,

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

P. S. Nov. 5th.

After this address my letters to

Care U. S. Consul,

Kingston, Jamaica

as they will come quicker that way and besides we expect to go there in 3 or 4 weeks for coal.

(Signed) Wm. S. S.

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Port au Prince, Hayti,

Nov. 3rd. 1883

My dearest Lou,

I was very much delighted with your letter, for the news it contained and for the manner in which it was told.

I particularly enjoyed your remarks about old Hal and his young wife. I should like to have been home at the time to tease him a little.

Do you think you coax Alf to write me just once? You must write oftener yourself for you have a knack of expressing yourself that is very amusing and should be cultivated. If you write the first thing that comes into your head, without trying to get up nice sentences you will write an interesting letter, for example, you did not tell me anything about "Hulme, old boy," and I know he must have come into your head some time while you were writing. How are Father and Mother on the subject of Hulme? Are they scarey yet?

I wish I were home now to go to Canada with you, but that cant be so you will have to go it alone and I hope you have a good time.

By the way I promised you that if I went on the "Trenton" I was going to leave an allotment of \$20. per month and was going to give you something between \$100.



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and \$150. I dont remember what for, but I remember the promise, so you can have the money now that is as fast as it comes; \$25. per mo. less what Father has to take to pay for my insurence assessments.

You had better freeze on to it now while you have the chance, for I have lots of money on the books here and wont want it. I havn't spent anything for two months except my mess bill etc.

I have told Father about all the news there is so dont intend to write it again, besides the mail goes tomorrow and I have more private letters to write as well as the official mail to prepare. I will, however, write you at greater length when I have more time.

I hope you will have a good time this winter; remember me to my friends in Harrisburg, if they are not too much engaged in their love affairs to be bothered.

Ever your loving brother

(Signed) Will

P.S. I will try and get the swords ready for the next mail.

(over)

P.S. Nov. 5th '83,

After this direct mail as follows

Ensign Wm. S. Sims, U. S. N.

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Care U. S. Consul

Kingston, Jamaica

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as it will come quicker that way, and besides  
we will go there for coal in 3 or 4 weeks,

(Signed) Wm. S. S.

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Port au Prince, Hayti,

Nov. 14th., 1883

My dear Mother,

How is the pup?

I believe I have not written a letter to you since I have been down here, but I suppose you understand that letters written home are written to everybody, and that when you have finished with them I want them sent to Hal and Alf., although Alf. doesn't deserve it for he seldom answers my letters.

I dont know when the next mail steamer but I will commence now so as to be ready, and the longer the steamer is coming the longer this letter will be. - We expect a steamer in here in a day or so from New York, and I hope to hear from someone then. I dont know the times that steamers leave New York, but it is once every two weeks, by the Atlas Line, direct for here, and I dont know how many times by way of Kingston, Jamaica, but there is something I do know, and that is that every day is a week here, consequently the weeks are something over a month, so you can imagine that after waiting two or three weeks for a steamer, it would be very disappointing to get no letters. I dont doubt but that you (all) like to get my letters, but at the same time you must remember that I like to get "you

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all's" just seven times as much, as time here appears seven times as long, see? So whenever you (all) feel inclined just drop me a few lines and post them, and let it find its way, but write often and don't worry your head about the steamers, for they are very irregular. As for my end of the correspondence I will promise not to miss a steamer or sailing vessel that can carry a mail to the States. I will faithfully describe everything I see that I think will be interesting, and will not spare paper ink to do so, but, as I said before, I ought not to be expected to write 40 or 50 pages to everybody, so you will please consider this letter addressed to Father, Louisa, Mary, Addie, Hal, Alf., and your own sweet self, and if they will also so consider it and drop me a line occasionally, everything will be lovely and I will proceed with my yarn, if you will excuse this rather lengthy preface.

I must first say a few words about the ~~state~~ state of affairs here, but I promise to be brief, as I know it cannot interest you as much as it does me, and that personal incidents are more interesting.

There has been no active movements on the part of the insurgents; they still hold Miragaone, Jacmel and Jeremie, and, as far as I can make out, they are quietly gathering men, and resources, and preparing to take the

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the field. At Jacmel they have 1000 troops well armed and equipped, and commanded by a Venezuelan General who has just arrived, and I should not be surprised if they soon took the offensive against the Govt.

In my last letter I told you something about the expected trouble over the "Ethel," the ship the Haytians purchased in Phila., There was some difficulty about the negotiations for her purchase, the owners having refused to accept a 90 day draft. The merchants of Port au Prince finally made up the amount due (\$150,000.) in about 20 different drafts for various amounts and for 60 and 90 days, but the owners also refused this, and there was every prospect of further trouble. Finally it was reported that the ship would be turned over at noon on a certain day, and during the forenoon boat loads of niggers went on board of her, but, at noon the American flag remained at her masthead, and towards evening things commenced to get exciting, and after dark a conference was held on board her, at which a number of Haytian officials, the Capt. of the "Ethel," her Agent, and our Capt. took part.

When Capt. Cooper went on board the "Ethel" he left orders to prepare the ship for action, and took with him, besides his gig, the steam launch and a large sailing launch full of men in tow, he also took a red

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signal light with him which he said would burn if the ship was turned over, and in about two hours time the red light was shot into the air and we could see the American flag coming down in the dark and the Haytian being hoisted at the same time a blare of broken winded bugles sounded and kept up an infernal racket for ten minutes, then a native band that they had on board struck up the national air of Hayti, which was greeted with shouts of laughter from the "Swatara." We all devoutly wished that the "Ida," (a steamer belonging to the insurgents) would come in and attack her, for she was entirely defenseless, having no amunition on board, no steam up and no disciplined crew. The "Ida" however did not come in and the next day the "Ethel" got up steam and went alongside the dock to get coal and amunition. This was only a few days ago and today she steamed out of the harbor blowing her whistle and dipping her flag to the men-of-war in the harbor.

We dont know where she is going but we all hope she will be captured. Perhaps you would like to know what the Haytian flag is like so just look for yourself



in the margin.

I think it is

rather

pretty.

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Next Monday (today is Wednesday) we expect to go to Kingston for coal and return here by way of Jacmel where I will probably see and duly report whatever is of interest. It is 270 miles to Kingston and as we will steam about 8 knots we will get there in about 35 hours, and probably remain 3 or 4 days, then 2 or 3 days at Jacmel, then here, and in all about ten days.

I dont know how long it will take my last letters to get home, but I hope to get answers to them at Kingston.

Now I will tell you about a little trip I took the other morning which proved, to me, very interesting, and, in fact, would be interesting to anybody, but whether I can describe it with sufficient accuracy and vividness to make it so to you, I dont know. But now I come to think of it I have never attempted a description of Port au Prince or the harbor etc. etc.

I am afraid my letters have been altogether too much about these petty wars etc., which, of course, cannot interest you as much as they do me, but I will proceed with the yarns, and give you no more of them in this letter.

Now if Mary will be kind enough to get the Atlas and find the island of Hayti you will see that Port au Prince is at the eastern end of a very large gulf;

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and about 50 miles West of P. au P. is Miragaone, on the long neck of land that extends about 120 miles to the Westward; and almost at the end of the neck is is Jeremie; while on the South side of the neck, SE of Miragaone, and almost south of P. au P. is Jacmel. We are anchored about 1 1/2 miles West of the city, but on the map you are looking at, that will be a very small distance. We can see Govane Island, and all the shore line on the N. & S. sides of the harbor, inside of the island, for the shore is lined with very high hills. The city of P. au P. is as beautifully situated as a city could wish to be on the side, and at the foot of a small hill which slopes gradually down to the waters edge, so that, from the ship you can see nearly every house, as well as the fort on the hill back of the city, and the blue tops of the mountains in the interior just peeping over the tops of the hills in the foreground. On your right, as you look towards the city rises a large hill, the surface of which is deeply indented with vallies and gorges, and covered with ridges and little round hills in endless confusion, and so thickly covered with verdure that if you close your eyes a little you can readily imagine the whole to be an immense bank of moss.

At the foot of this hill to the right of the city



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are a number of residences here and there among the little hills, for some distance up the side, and as they are all painted white they look as cosy and cool as possible. To the left of the city the land is rather low but undulating, and towards the waters edge are low tracts of land so covered with trees to the very waters edge that they look like very green forests of small trees floating on the water. There is usually very little shipping here, only a bark or two, anchored close in to the city, so that it has not a very commercial look, or busy appearance.

In other respects it looks like any other city, from a distance, except that, like all tropical cities, it is white, as all the houses are painted white or light yellow.

Apropos of white houses do you remember that in a letter from Arichal, C. B. I., last Sept., I complained that the houses there were all white and had such a bleak and cold appearance? Well, please allow me to modify my views about white houses in so far as to say that I only dislike white houses in Latitude  $46^{\circ}$  N., but down here under a merciless tropical sun I would like to have everything white, white houses, white clothes, white houses, white dogs and above all white people. - After this rather lengthy digression

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I will proceed to give you a closer view of the city.-  
I think I have told you before that Saturday is here the market day when all the country people come to town to sell their produce, well, I was told by an American resident here that early in the morning it was a sight worth seeing to see these people streaming in through the city gate, (for the old walls and gates of the city are standing yet tho. in a ruinous condition).

So I determined to go and see for myself, and also take a look at the markets, which in any country will give you an idea of the condition of agriculture etc., and I accordingly got up at 5:30 last Saturday morning and went ashore in the early market boat which takes the stewards ashore every morning; and while the boat is going ashore, which takes some ten minutes, I will say that we have two breezes here every day, one in the day time, commencing about 10 a.m. and blowing from the westward, and one during the night from the land, and I have often noticed hundreds of small dirty looking boats, with two dirty and tattered sails, set "wing and wing," coming from different points along the shore and from the direction of Govane Island, running in on the sea breeze and landing in the city somewhere, and coming out at night on the land breeze. I made up my mind to first find out what these boats brought to town, so

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I went to the part of the city where they landed and saw the following singular sight.

I will not attempt to say how many boats there were for that it immaterial, but there was a great number of them. They landed in a part of the city where there was no wharf, and the water being shallow, they could not get nearer than 50 or 60 feet. They were mostly loaded with sugar cane and green bananas ready to ship north, (for the bananas you eat in the states ripen on the way).

These boats were being unloaded as rapidly as possible by negroe men and women. The men with their trousers rolled up to the top of their thighs, naked from the waist up and a piece of coarse bagging over their heads to protect them from the rough cane, the women with their dresses tucked up under their waist bands, and a breech clout made of part of it in some indescribable way. They were obliged to wade into the water to get their load of cane or bananas, with which they staggered off towards one of the market places where they deposited them in heaps. The water front in this part of the city is dirty, beyond description, the water itself is dirty and partly stagnant, as there is very little tide; the earth (for in this part of the city the street is not paved) is wet and muddy and

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trodden full of waste vegetables, dead fish, and old rubbish of all kinds, and emitted a stench that is only exceeded by that emanating from the streaming bodies of the men and women carrying the cane and bananas, and which I found capable of penetrating a thick cloud of cigarette smoke, with which I surrounded my head. Of the two odors I think I prefer the "extract of dead fish."

In a very short time I got enough of this and started for the city gate, but I must first describe the costumes of these people, so that when I tell you of a country negress riding to town on a donkey, you will not imagine that she wore cotton gloves and carried a parasol etc.

The babies and small children are adorned with that simple, elegant, and breezy costume which they have on when born; when they get big enough to walk around they wear a shirt only, and that is cut off about the waist so I don't see what use it is. I suppose they cut it short so they can't sit down on it. You can see any day little boys from 0 to 13 years old with nothing but a long shirt on, but it is very often torn so much that you would not recognize it as a shirt unless they have it on. Little girls wear a long shirt or chimese reaching about to the knee, and neither boys nor girls wear any hats or caps, occasionally you will see a boy

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with any old kind of a hat on that he has probably picked up somewhere.

I have described all these naked children etc. in order that you may know what the customs of the people are here or rather that you may see things as I saw them.

As for the costumes of the men, it will be a much more difficult matter to describe them, for in a country like this a mans dress depends on his wealth or rather his grade of poverty, so I will only mention a few peculiarities, and throughout all the W. I. islands, the negroes, both men and women dress in much the same manner. When a black man can afford it he dresses like the white people living here, and may be seen in all varieties of European costume that you will see among the various classes in the U. S. The poor negroes never wear any shoes unless he is going on a journey in the mountains, then he wears a sort of slipper with a leather sole and nitted cord uppers, having a hole in the toes to let the sand out. They wear ordinary trousers, and a long shirt which is almost invariably worn outside the trousers, and when he is away from the city, or out in a boat fishing you always see them with their trousers off. But their is nothing characteristic in their dress, as in that of the women.

All the women except a very few who are rich enough

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to wear European dress, wear a long flowing dress of calico, or some such stuff, very voluminous about the skirts and on Sundays and holidays one with a long train, and the whole starched so stiffly that it rattles and cracks as they walk. But the most characteristic part of their dress is the madrass, or head covering; this is universal in the W. I., it is simply a large handkerchief bound about the head and caught at the back. They are usually in very gaudy colors all mixed together in the same madrass, but may be seen in all colors.

Now we will return to the city gate and see the people coming to market, then take a trip through the markets, and then I have something else to tell you about.

When I first reached the gate and saw the people streaming in I thought it must be a caravan. The road was filled from one side to the other, and the gate which was 30 ft. wide was not a bit too large to let them through. In all these people coming to market I did not see a waggon or cart of any kind, or a vehicle of any description, and only an occasional horse, and they were so small that they would pass for ponies in the states. Everything is brought in on very small donkeys with large panniers on their sides, full of all

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kinds of truck, and almost every donkey with a negress on his back between the panniers, and every negress with a madrass on her head and very often with a little naked baby slung in a cloth on her back.

I stood at the gate for I suppose 10 or 15 minutes and never saw two donkeys with the same kind of cargo on board. First would come a huge bundle of sugar cane with a pair of ears sticking out at the top and four tiny feet underneath, all the remainder of the poor little beast being covered up. Then another with two panniers full of charcoal and a long mahogany board lashed on each side, and extending away ahead of him and away behind him. Then one very small creation with two enormous panniers filled with vegetables, with a chickens head sticking out here and there, and a 200 pound wench on top of all, with a baby on top of her sucking little black fists and crowing. etc. etc. but always a huge bundle composed of two panniers and a negroe wench. The donkeys seem to be able to carry all they can pile on them.

I had to laugh at some of these rigs, and sometimes a good natured wench would return my laugh with a broad grin, then again another would scowl blacker than a thunder cloud. When I was tired watching them I joined in the caravan and soon found myself in the market place,

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which is a square about three acres in area with not a building of any kind on it, and perfectly crowded with women. The donkeys are all left at the edge of the square and the women squat on the ground with their marketing in front of them.

Just imagine three acres of negroe women, each one with a colored madrass on, and all talking and jabbering at once. They speak a French dialect called creole French, which a perfect Frenchman cant understand, and this they speak with the most incredible rapidity and when they become excited they gesticulate violently and shake their fists in each others faces. Among the hundreds of women that I saw in this market place, I did not see more than a dozen men, and they were loafers. This country is so productive that the people can live on the natural growth without doing much work, and the little work that is done is done by the women and donkeys. In walking through the market among these people the only produce visible is oranges, bananas, sugar apples, custard apples, alligator pears, and other native fruits, also beans, corn, potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, etc., etc., but the noticeable feature throughout the market is the very small amount in front of each woman. For example in front of one wench spread on some pieces of dirty cloth, were a few potatoes, not more than twenty or thirty



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in little piles of 4 each; a little pile of beans, about a gallon, which she sold at so many cents a gourd full; or a little pile of corn meal coarsely ground; a basket of oranges and alligator pears in front of another woman; and again in front of another a cloth covered with small rudely fashioned clay pipes etc. etc. About every fourth woman had a little coal black baby, perfectly naked, and tumbling about beside her; they only bring the babies to town when they are too young to stay at home. I saw one of these little chaps eating his breakfast, and, as he was only a month or so old, of course, you know he was not eating it with a knife & fork. His mother was standing up with her foot on a basket and the baby a straddle her leg, while she held him with one hand and used the other hand to gesticulate with while she talked to another woman. You know the French language cannot be spoken without numerous gestures, which is illustrated by the fact that an Irishman, who, once upon a time, wished to stop a Frenchman talking, tied his hands behind his back instead of stopping his mouth. And it stopped him talking.

Now I think you must be tired of markets etc. so I will conclude by giving you a peep at President Salmon, for the other day I was introduced to him, together with his wife, & daughter and all his Military Staff,

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consisting of about fifteen generals, When we first came here Capt. Cooper called on the president to see about the trouble over the "Ethel" etc., and Salomon instead of sending, as customary, one of his Staff Officers to return the call, determined to come himself, and I went in the steam launch to meet them at the wharf. Prof. Langston, (a mulattoe) the U. S. Consul General, accompanied the party and introduced me to them in their respective order of greatness. Salomon is an enormous man, two or three inches taller than I am and heavily built. He was dressed in a blue cloth uniform, with two rows of brass buttons down the front; gilt epaulets, cocked hat and bright sword. He is a pure negroe, intensely black, having a round though lean face, broad thick lipped mouth, and flat nose, and his whole face horribly pitted with small-pox; his nose, especially, which looked like a sponge that had been dipped in ink. He is nearly 70 years old and his hair is very curly and snow white. He has rather a dignified bearing, a benevolent appearance, and a pleasant smile, but when his features are in repose, he is simply hideous.

Mrs. Salomon is a white woman about 45 or 50 years and rather good looking. I am sorry I am not able to describe her dress accurately but for the life of me I cant remember, except that she was dressed in some

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black stuff, plainly fashioned; carried a parasol & fan, wore black kid gloves; I cant remember her bonnet at all but she had on blue & white striped stockings for I saw them when she went up the ship's side.

Her daughter who is also white, being a child of a former marriage, was dressed just like her mother, stockings and all and looked like what her mother must have looked twenty years ago. The Generals were ordinary everyday niggers, the only remarkable thing about them being their uniforms which were as follows; very light blue frock coats with three rows of brass buttons in front, scarlet trousers with a broad yellow stripe down the side, cocked hats with white horse-hair plumes, & swords.

It is laughable to see the "lugs" these Generals put on, they walk with an extremely conscious swagger, furtively glancing around to see if anybody is looking at them, then taking a look at the brass buttons and yellow stripes on their uniform, they will glance up at you as much as to say, "take another look at me you poor beggar! it wont cost you anything" - When I first saw the circus coming down the wharf to the boat from their carriages, I had to laugh, and it was with difficulty that I could maintain a sufficiently grave appearance when I went forward to meet them and pay them

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the official courtesy due their rank.

They were received on Board ship with yards manned and with all the official honors with which the Queen of England would be received. We did not fire a salute, as vessels carrying less than ten guns are not required to do so.

They were received by the Captain and Executive officer only, whose duty it was to receive them.

I am now writing on the 15th., and dont know when I can send this letter.

We expect the Atlas Line steamer to come in sight any minute, and perhaps we will send mail away on her.

I am afraid I have given you the impression in my letters that there is nothing but bloodshed, wretchedness, and black people in this country, and no wonder for I have not written of much else.

There are some, but very few, very nice people, here, mostly all planters.

The officers have met some of them and have entertained and been entertained by them. I have scarcely been off the ship since I have been here, as I find it much more comfortable on board.

I could have visited some plantations owned by bachelor planters, who invited officers to visit their places, but I felt that I would only be in the way unless

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I made up my mind to drink about 1000 cocktails; if you dont know what cocktails are ask Father, he can tell you.

I have however accepted an invitation from a Mrs. Bouillon, to a birthday party in commemoration of her caughters birth day. Mr. Bouillon is the banker of P. au P.

I expect to spend a very pleasant day and will tell you about it in my next letter if this goes before Saturday. I will try and remember Mrs. & Miss Bouillon's dresses, and will attempt to give you an idea of what a country house in the tropics is like.

Nov. 16.

The mail steamer has not yet arrived, but I think I must close this letter as I have some more to write, but if I have time and the spirit moves me I may add a postscript.

Take good care of the "Captain" and dont forget to mention him every time you write and report his general health and growth.

Give my love to all at home.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

( Address )  
( c/o U. S. Consul )  
( Kingston, Jamaica )

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P. S. Nov. 18.

While I am now writing three steamers are coming in, and among them the long expected Atlas Line steamer bring our mail from the U. S. which will be on board in an hour or so, and I hope I will hear from some of you in which case I will extend this P. S. by acknowledging them, if I have time which is doubtful for a British Mail Steamer is coming in flying a flag which means that she will leave for Kingston as soon as she transacts her business here.

(Signed)

W. S. S.