

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Port au Prince,

Nov. 18th., 1883

My dear Mother,

This morning I sent a letter to you by a British Mail steamer going to Kingston. The letter was a long one containing all the news but I had to mail it about half an hour before I got Fathers and your letter of Oct. 29th. It happened this way.

This forenoon three steamers were sighted coming into the harbor, and we soon made out that one was an Atlas Liner from the U. S., one a British Royal Mail and one a German. The Atlas Line we knew would bring our mail and I felt sure of getting a letter from somebody.

The British steamer came in flying a flag which signified that she would leave as soon as she could transact her business.

I was afraid I would not have time to get your letters in time to acknowledge the receipt them in my last letter (which was dated Nov. 14, 15, 16 & 18) so I added a P. S. to it to that effect. See?

It is now 8 P. M. of the 18th., and a Spanish steamer has just arrived and is to leave again at midnight for Santiago de Cuba, so I send this note only to acknowledge your letters which I enjoyed very much,

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what there was of them.

This may arrive before my last, but if it does, you will know that the latter will be along in a day or so.

I am very glad that Lou is off for Canada, for she has always seemed anxious to go.

I suppose when I write long letters home, they can be forwarded to Lou in Canada. I will, of course write to Lou, just an ordinary letter but I dont think I can stand more than one long letter in each mail, would you if you were me? especially in this hot climate.

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Tell Father I am very much obliged for the newspaper clips, and that I will "never be such a fool as to volunteer" to go on a Polar Expedition.

Now about "Captain's" ancestry etc.

When he arrived in Orbisonia he was about a week or ten days older than he was when I got him in Halifax, and thats all I know about his age, but I guess he could not have been more than a month or five weeks old when you got him, for he did not know how to drink milk from a saucer when I got him, so I guess he had not been weaned. He did not eat anything but warm milk until the day before I sent him to you, and for some time he would make a great fuss doing that, for he would place

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his front paws some distance from the saucer, and his head being the heaviest part of him, he would tip up behind, until he had drunk about a quart of milk when he could keep his balance.

I got him in Halifax, or rather the Captain's Steward got him for me.

His parents live about three miles outside the city but whether N. S. E. or W. I dont know, and that is everything I know about him.

I should have liked very much to keep him but dogs are not allowed on board.

I understand that a steamer leaves every Friday from New York, so please write often and address yet to

Kingston, Jamaica

c/o U. S. Consul

Now I must close as the mail will be sent on board the steamer in about 10 minutes.

With love to all at home

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"  
Port au Prince, Hayti  
Nov. 25 (Sunday) '83

My dear Father,

I am going to address this letter to you as I wish to write a few pages that I dont want Mother to see; there is nothing that she cant see, but I think you had better not read them to her as it might worry her very much, since it concerns the various charms of a beautiful young Haytian girl of my acquaintance. I am afraid I shall be obliged to write most of my letter about her, for in comparison all other topics seem extremely uninteresting, and I am afraid that in consequence thereof my descriptions of them will be equally uninteresting. However I will make an attempt, but where the spirit is not willing, you know the flesh is weak.

I sent my last letter, that is my last long letter, just half an hour before I recd. your last of Oct. 29, and could not acknowledge it, so I wrote another short letter, sending it off the same day by a different route, and they will have a race for which arrives first.

I suppose there are letters on the way for me, acknowledging those which I first sent from here, about Oct. 28th., and we have been expecting a steamer every day, and at this present moment the smoke and spars of two steamers are visible above the horizon at the entrance

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of the harbor, but that is not always significant for a great many lines of steamers come here, English, Spanish, French, German, Atlas, (Eng.), American etc. so that I am always prepared for a dissapointment, and in fact am never really dissapointed until a steamer arrives from New York, bringing our mail but no letters for me, which, fortunately, has not happened to me yet.

Since my last letter everything has been easy and quiet except my poor heart. My friends the rebels still hold out notwithstanding a proclamation of President Salomon's offering to pardon the rebels etc. and giving them until certain dates for the different places, to surrender. These dates are now all in the past and the rebels still hold the fort.

I think I told you that the "Ethel" was finally turned over to the Haytians. Well, a day or so later she was sent out against the insurgents at Jeremie and Miragaone, and we have heard every possible rumor about her, so that we dont know what to believe. A few moments ago she steamed into the harbor and anchored and we will probably find out something about her soon. I took a good look at her through the glass but could see no shot holes in her.

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Since I wrote the last few lines I have learned

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that the "Ethel," or as she is now called the Desse-  
laine, (after the first President of this republic)  
did have some fighting to do. She met the "Ida," (the  
rebel vessel) and according to their account killed  
60 (?) men and compelled her to run, and that she es-  
caped in the dark. The "Desselaine" has a few shot holes  
in her boats and smoke stack but they are small, and  
she had no men killed. I think that the storey she  
tells is only a poorly concocted lie, so I will not  
trouble you with any more of it.

I have been going ashore more frequently since I  
last wrote, and as you know by my last letter, I had  
then been invited to a dinner by a Mrs. Vouillon, the  
wife of the Director of the Bank of Hayti, which is by  
the way a branch of a large bank in Paris. I will also  
state by the way that Banking is here a very risky but  
very lucrative business.

Money is loaned on the best securities for 36 per-  
cent a year and when the government borrows money they  
have to pay 10% a month or 120%. I state all these par-  
ticulars because I may some day go into the banking  
business. Now if you would like to know what a subur-  
ban tropical house is like and moreover if you would  
like to know something about Monsieur Vouillon and his  
family, you have only to read on, but if you are reading

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this letter in Mother's hearing you must be careful to stop when I tell you and remain silent until I tell you to read aloud again.

The external appearance of a topical house is not imposing, to say the least, and they are built more for comfort than style. Mrs. Vouillon has lived several years in India and her house is fitted up in the Indian fashion and indeed has very much the appearance of an Indian bungalow (I don't know whether that is spelled right or not and don't feel like looking it up). The house is only one story high and is built in the centre of a large enclosure and must be 100 yards from the road.

It is only one story high but covers a large area, and is surrounded on all sides by broad verandas, with brick floors, & which are sheltered from the sun by canvas curtains depending from the eaves. The house has numerous windows and doors, all cut down to the veranda, from which you can walk into the parlor, sitting room, & dining room, and all these rooms communicate with each other. There is no hall or front door, although I suppose one of the doors facing the entrance gate, in front of which there is a brick court or yard, is the front door. I forgot to mention that the whole house is built on a brick foundation about 5 or 6 ft. high and extending to the edge of the veranda and beyond the

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the front veranda a distance of some 30 ft. forming the above mentioned yard. The bed rooms are just back of the front rooms and communicate with them. Mr. Vouillon's is back of the parlor with which it communicates by means of a large door having a handsome curtain hung over it. This curtain is, however, always drawn back so that you can see directly into the bedroom at any time of day, which is a very wise plan for the tropical bed-rooms are always the handsomest rooms in the house, and, as you know, if a woman has anything pretty in her house, she will not draw a curtain over it. This bedroom is very handsomely carpeted and furnished, but all the furniture and elegant trappings are entirely thrown into the shade by the splendor of the bed itself.

It is made entirely of brass, an enormous four-poster extending to the ceiling and having an immense canopy over the brass frame at the top, from which a violet colored mosquito netting reaches to the floor. The foot of the bed, which is towards the parlor door contains a large brass foot-board in brass filagree-work, and the whole is highly burnished. Just off the dining room is the billiard room containing one table on which all the family including the youngest, a little boy about 10 years old, play.

Last but not least I must tell you that the bath



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room consists of a room containing a stone tank about 25 ft square into which water is running in and out all the time.

I was invited to the Vouillons on the occasion of Miss Amelia Vouillon's 15th. birthday. Lemme Wall & I with two Lieutenants represented this ship.

Now I must tell you what the Vouillons are like. Mr. Vouillon is a large, rather short and stout, ruddy-faced, good natured, handsome Frenchman, with a small brown moustache which he is always twisting, and a good set of teeth which are always visible. He speaks English perfectly and is one of the most agreeable men I have ever had the good fortune to meet.

Mrs. Vouillon is a tall and strikingly handsome woman. She is a New York lady and was married to M. Vouillon there. They have two children, Miss Amelia and the little boy, "Manny" (?) they call him.

They are practically alone here, for all the other white women, the English & French Consul's wives etc. are more or less disreputable and all the native society here is rather dingy; as for the men, foreigners & all who are unmarried they are all rakes of the first water, and their chief is the U..S. Consul General, who, however, has a family in America, so you can understand that Mrs. V. is very glad to see an American ship here,

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and her house is made the favorite resort of all the reputable naval officers here of whatever nationality, "of one of whom your humble servant claims to be which." At the birthday dinner above mentioned there was only the family, ourselves, and a certain Mr. Howlden (?), The dinner was the usual thing down here, beef, sweet bread, turkey, etc. etc. claret, sherry, white wine & champagne, then a birthday cake with 15 candles around it.

I must mention a salad that was a mixture of pickled beets and something white looking like cabbage, but tasting very differently. I asked Mrs. V. what it was and was informed that it was palm-salad. It comes from the top of the tree where the branches spread out, and the tree has to be killed to get it.

But I have neglected to give a description of Miss V. or Miss "Dottie," as she is called, and this is the part I think you had not better read to my precious Mother for you know she regards me as a very susceptible youth who is only too willing to put his neck into the noose in some young girls apron strings. Or if she thinks I am out of danger she then imagines I am like the villains in the novels who are perfect "mashers" from Pulverizetown, and who make it their daily amusement to win the hearts of young girls only to trample upon them.

Well let me see, the young lady in question is rather

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is rather small, but with a slender and elegant figure and very small hands & feet. Her complexion is rather dark, as she lived a number of years in India, but beautifully clear; her hair is a very dark brown; almost black, and as glossy as silk, and very long; her eyes are by far the most beautiful I have ever seen, being very large, and almost black, with long black eye-lashes.

In addition to these charms, which I am sure are enough to paralyze anyone, she has a beautiful mouth and a slightly pugged nose. Her teeth are slightly irregular, but they would not be half so pretty if they were perfect. Add to all this a most amiable disposition and a charming manner and a very decided and very sweet French accent; also a good knowledge of the game of billiards, and you have some idea of Miss Dottie Vouillon.

On the whole I think I never met a more amiable and hospitable family, WE call there very often, and are always driven down in the carriage to meet our boat, sometimes by Mrs., sometimes by Miss, and sometimes by both. I promised Mother I would notice & remember their dresses but I have totally forgotten them. I can only remember that they were some light colored stuff, and that Miss Dottie has the good taste to carry a parasol lined with dark red. In dining out here

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the gentlemen wear white flannel or duck.

Now I think you can let mother in.

Today is the 28th., and still no steamer, although we have been expecting one for about two weeks.

The other day we had a little excitement to vary the monotony. Our 14-oared cutter has been out practicing every evening since we have been here, and the other night the Spanish man-of-war lowered a boat while ours was out and waited for her to give her a "spirt." Our coxwain when he saw the "Dago" boat coming, told his men to make every appearance of pulling hard but not to put any weight on the oars, so as to allow the Dago to beat him. This made the Spaniards think they had the fastest boat so they immediately challenged us and we immediately accepted. Their crew and officers bet \$842. spanish dollars, while ours bet about \$1300.

I would have bet all the personal property I have in the world on our boat for there was no possibility of their winning with such a boat as they had, but as we (the officers) all wanted to bet, we only put in \$20. each. The race was three miles, from a certain lighthouse to the Spanish ship. I had charge of all the arrangements, so taking the steam launch with our race boat in tow I went on board the Spaniard, left one of our officers there took a Spanish officer with me

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to see the start, and towing both boats, made for the light house. When the boats were even and along side each other, a pistol was fired which is the signal for a start and away they went. The result was just as I expected, our boat's crew pulled perfectly, just like clock work, and the Spaniards very badly, and it was no race from the beginning; our boat shot ahead and gained all the way in, winning by about half a mile. Tell Lou that from my share of the plunder I have a Sp. \$4. gold peice (1813), a \$2. gold peice (1781) & a \$1. gold peice (1777), which I will give her when I (come home, (if I dont get hard up and spend it), together with some copper and silver Haytian coins.

Sunday Dec 2nd, and still no mail.

Steamers have been arriving every day or so from every country in the world except the U. S. To day two came in, one from Germany and one from France. Since our last mail two sailing vessels have arrived from New York, and from them we have rec'd a few papers. Occasionally we get a paper from Kingston and they all contain despatches of Haytian affairs and for the most part are all wrong.

But I have forgotten something that I wanted to tell you about the Vouillhons.

Sometime last week I received an invitation from

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Mrs. V. to take dinner and spend the day Monday last, but on Sunday I received a second note in which Mrs. V. begged to postpone the invitation as M. Vouillon had just broken his leg!

Fortunately our Chief Surgeon, Dr. Penrose a very clever and experienced war surgeon was on shore, and he and Dr. Terres, an American practicing here, set the bones very successfully. M. Vouillon broke his leg below the knee by simply slipping on the side-walk.

You can imagine that we were all very sorry to hear of this painful accident for this jolly Frenchman is a general favorite on board this ship. Yesterday when I was ashore I thought I would drop in and see Mrs. V. and inquire after the unfortunate.

I left my carriage at the entrance gate and walked up through the grounds almost on tip-toes. I didnt know anything about broken legs and rather expected to find everything hushed and quiet, and everybody tearful, so you can imagine my surprise when, having sent a card to Mrs. V., I stepped into the parlor to sit down and heard M. Vouillon's cheerful voice hailing me from the begroom, "How do you do Mr. S. come in, come in and sit down" etc.

I found him looking just as cheerful and jolly as ever. He was lying on the big brass bed already mentioned

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dressed in a suit of silk pajamas, with a novel and a package of cigarettes beside him. He said his leg didnt hurt him much, but he didnt like the idea of remaining in bed a month, was afraid he was too fat to walk on crutches, etc. etc. The only thing that really bothered him he said (after Mrs. V. Miss Dottie & Manny had come in) was that they would keep too quiet and go around on tiptoes saying hush, when he wanted them to make a noise, and he insisted that I should come up tomorrow Monday and bring some of my messmates with me to dinner and spend the day; play billiards with Miss Dottie go in swimming in the tank with "Manny" and slam around the house generally, talk to him a little bit and help him to pass the day. He made me send my carriage away and peremptorily ordered "Dottie" to drive me down to the wharf, which she did and tomorrow three of us spend the day there.

And now I think you know almost as much about the Vouillons as I do and I guess you have heard enough about them too.

I dont know that I have anything more in particular to tell you about except that we have been having considerable sport with the sharks which are very thick in these waters. The water is so clear that you can easily see the bottom of the ship, and when the surface

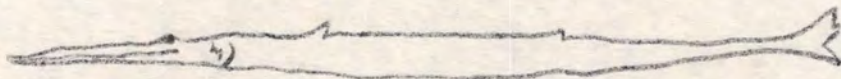
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of the water is smoothe the sharks can be seen 30 feet deep. They seldom come to the surface unless to get something. There are more fish in this harbor than I have ever seen anywhere. The water is alive with little schools of them about an inch long, I mean the fish are an inch long not the schools, which are often as large as an ordinary room.

The poor little beggers are the prey of all the larger fish and are always on the lookout for danger. They all move together like a company of soldiers; the slightest thing scares them and causes them to make quick starts in any direction but always together.

Their worst enemies are some kind of fish about 6 or 7 inches long that swim deep in the water and attack them from underneath when the poor little minnows spring away out of water all together making a great noise, and no sooner strike the water, than they spring again, but many of them are swallowed whole by their cruel enemies, who are however pursued by larger fish.

The most curious fish here is the "gar."



a very long sharpnosed fish. A great many of them come



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about the ship when the water is quiet to get bits of garbage that are thrown overboard. Some of them but not many are caught with a hook and line. They usually swim lazily along near the surface, but when anything frightens them they shoot off like an arrow. They possess the most extraordinary speed and besides the remarkable quality of being able to swim out of water by striking their tail on the water. Sometimes you will see a flying fish start out of the water with a gar a yard long after it, one flying and the other skipping over the surface. Very often the gars are successful in catching their prey.

The other day a big shark came slowly swimming about the ship with his back fin out of water so the Lieut. of Marines and I got a couple of rifles and watching our chance when he was just underneath the stern and almost directly under us, we counted one, two, three, together and let him have two bullets in the head, which I presume settled his hash for he went directly to the bottom.

Then we amused ourselves shooting gars, which Lt. Goodrell, (the Marine officer) could cut in two almost every time.

We noticed that when a gar was struck he slowly sunk, but before he was out of sight some kind of large

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fish would come up from the bottom and swallow them, these fish were as big as Addie, but would never come close enough to the surface to be shot so we got a gar that had been caught and making a string fast to him, lowered him into the water until one of the big fish was seen to come up when the gar was slowly hauled up and the unsuspecting big fish following it.

When they reached the surface and the big fish had just opened his mouth we blazed away and killed him dead as a nit, but he sunk before we could get him.

Another English ship the "Dido" came in the other day, also a German and a Dutchman, so that there are five vessels here now and we are in hopes of getting up another race with some of them.

If I can get up a boat race once a month with a foreign man of war, it wont cost me much to live here. When our fleet comes down for the winter we will have our hands full, as the other vessels are bent on racing us, and that will be a good time to bet light, for when Greek meets Greek, etc.

Now I think I will haul off and anchor for the night. I may add a P. S. in the morning but probably not as I have some official mail to get ready and besides you know I am going to play billiards with Miss "Dottie" Vouillon. This letter will go by way of Kingston by

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a steamer leaving at 4 P.M. tomorrow.

Keep on addressing to Kingston, Jamaica.

Dont forget to mention the "Captain" when you write.

How does he stand the cold weather.

We expect a severe January thaw next month.

Give my love to all at home your loving son

(Signed)

Will

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Port au Prince,

Dec. 7th. 1883\*

My dear Father,

I am only going to send a note as I hear there is a mail leaving tomorrow for the U. S. by way of Havana.

We have not received any mail yet although we have been expecting a steamer every day.

There is a steamer coming in now but I guess she is the one that takes our mail to Havana. Yesterday afternoon the U. S. S. "Alliance" came in and anchored alongside us, and tomorrow afternoon we sail for Kingston Jamaica to get coal when we will return here again.

The "Tennessee" is expected here in about a week or ten days and will probably be here when we return, when we will receive orders from the Admiral detailing our cruise for the remainder of the winter. The "Alliance" will probably take our place here. We will get our mail at Kingston if we dont pass it on the way, that is all that is addressed to Kingston. I hope "you all" have been writing lots of letters for it is now three weeks since the last mail arrived, and my last letters were dated Oct 29th.

I wrote you quite a long letter (some 30 odd pages) a few days ago which I suppose you will get before this one, but in case you dont you will know it is coming.

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

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I have no particular news to tell you this time unless I tell you something more about the Vouillons, but I think I told you enough last time so I will only mention that M. Vouillon's leg is doing very well and Miss Dottie is if anything, rather prettier than when I last wrote.

I went there for lunch the other day as I told you I was going to do and had a very pleasant time. Now I think of it, I am quite sure Miss Dottie is much prettier than when I last wrote. Apropos of pretty, I must not forget to mention that she possesses another most charming accomplishment; she dances divinely! You must not think from this that we had a party for there was only ourselves; three of us and the family. I also danced with Mrs. V., who remarked that she thought it rather a merry go that she should be dancing with a young man while her husband was in bed with a broken leg.

The mail steamer I mentioned above has just anchored and she belongs to the "Atlas Line"! and may have our mail on board, or all that is addressed here, so I will stop here until I hear from her.

I have just written to J. R. Carmody by this mail telling him that if he ever sent me a certificate of Membership for the N. Mutual Aid A., I never received it and directing him to send you a duplicate, so you

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can expect it in a few days.

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Saturday morning 8th.

The Atlas steamer brought all our mail from Kingston and last night I recd your letter of the 27th and one from Hal, addressed to Kingston and this morning I recd. the rest of them through the P. O. one from Mother, Addie, Nan Shunk and the "Nightmare." I wish everybody would write often and more.

Aunt Emeline's letter was enclosed and when I get to New York I will call on the Pattersons. I cant resist flattery any more than anybody else.

We will get up anchor in an hour or so so I wont attempt to answer any letters now but will write from Kingston.

I have been and am enjoying the most perfect health here, and we have had no sickness whatever on board. The weather has improved very much since we arrived and at night it is sometimes necessary to use a light blanket. I have no idea what the rest of our cruise will be and cannot find out until the Tennessee arrives.

I should not be surprised if, when we come north in the spring, (probably) we should go out of commission, and even if we dont we will have to have extensive repairs, in which case I will come home and see you all.

I am glad to hear that Addie and Lou and also Mother

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are studying French. I am studying it too and am going to learn to speak it or die in the attempt.

Give my best to all at home.

I wish you to pay over \$125. to Lou as it will help her out in Canada.

I have got about \$200 on the books. I dont know how it happened but it is there.

I guess this port has something to do with it as you cant spend money here to buy anything,

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Will

Kingston, Jamaica

Dec. 10, 1883

My dear Father,

I did not have an opportunity to send the first part of this letter by way of Havana so will have to mail it here.

We arrived here about 9 o'clock this morning and just as soon as we can get 170 tons of coal on board we will be off for Port au Prince again.

This mail will leave here on the 13th, but we will probably leave here tomorrow evening or the next morning.

I enjoyed your "clips" very much, especially those concerning Haytian affairs which I found very amusing.

As a sample of a letter from here which found its way into the Evening Telegram, of New York, I may state that it denied the existance of a revolution altogether and said that the trouble was between the republics of San Domingo & Hayti, and that the city of Port au Prince was destroyed by a bombardment from a San Domingo vessel of war etc. etc. Some of the other reports I see in the papers are not much more accurate.

As for the affair between the "Ethel" (now the "Dessalines" after the first President) and the "La Patrie," it did not amount to a row of pins. The engagement lasted a couple of hours but very few shots were fired and no damage done to either vessel beyond



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a few rifle shots through their boats. It was first reported that 60 men were killed on the "La Patrie" but Capt. Mason Cooper says there were only 6 killed, and I dont believe any were killed at all. Nobody was hurt on the "Dessalines" for everytime the vessels came within musket shot of each other all the Dessalines men ran below with the exception of Cooper and the Gunner, who is an old man-of-warsman and known by some of our officers. I noticed that the Herald published a correspondence or rather an interview with a man who called himself an Artillery Officer. This man was by name Lee, He came here as a mate on the "Ethel" and was I believe to accept a commission of some kind from the Haytian Government. Some of our officers recognized him as an apprentice who, although a smart man was a thorough scoundrel and who had been dishonorable dismissed from the service for stealing, and in fact he showed his propensity for that line of business by finding it much more profitable to steal all the money and clothes he could from the Captain and officers of the "Ethel" and skipping to Kingston, than to accept a commission under the H. Gov. The first time the "Dessalines" went out she had the "engagement" with the "La Patrie" captured two small coasting schooners and returned again in about ten days. When she went out she did not have

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anything she should have had, besides having a crew of landsmen. When she came in here she did not have a drop of water on board, for when our steam launch went along side her crew came streaming down the ladder with tin mugs and gourds to get a drink from the tanks and even Capt. Cooper sent a cup down to beg a drink.

I just wish I had as many dollars as Boyer Bazelaïs is alive and kicking. He is no more dead than I am. And now let me give you a point. I thought it strange and so doubtless did you that about 100 men could hold Miragaone against 8000 Govt. troops being completely surrounded for 9 months! Now dont you give it away and I will tell you how it is done. The Be besiegers are feeding the besieged!

Briefly the state of affairs is just this way.



I believe the liberal party to be sincere in their efforts to dislodge the blacks or Government party but they are not strong enough to do so.

The government party is strong enough to put the rebellion down tomorrow, with the exception perhaps of reducing Jacmel which is very strong, and President Salomon would do so tomorrow if he could, but unfortunately,

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P. Sal. is in the hands of his friends; his friends are the Generals of the armies and they dictate to him and he obeys. During peace times the army is paid very little and most of the soldiers disbanded, but the army besieging (?) \* Miragaone is living on the fat of the land and they work their little game thusly. They make requisitions for provisions and stores in enormous quantities, more than they can possibly consume. The Pres. dare not refuse them for he is in their power. They use what provisions they want and send the remainder back to Port au Prince and sell them right under the Presidents nose, and the Pres. and everybody else knows it. Obviously it is not to the army's interest to take Miragaone or starve out the besieged hence they feed them. A revolution is a snap for the army and they will make it last as long as they can, and I think this condition of affairs will continue as long as Salomon can borrow money at 10% per. mo. or until he can succeed in getting away.

I would rather be a dog and bay the moon than his excellency the President of the republic of Haiti (as they spell it here)

Everybody tells me that Lou has gone to Canada, to Ottawa but nobody tells me her address so I will send

\* (?) in manuscript. - ASF

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her letters to you to forward. They will, of course, contain about the same as my letters home so that there will be no use opening them tho as far as I am concerned, you are at perfect liberty to do so. Dont forget to tell me where she is when you write again.

I recd. a long letter from Hal the other day telling me how nicely he was fixed in his new quarters.

I think I would waste away and die if I had to live in the same room with the same girl for a few months, however chacun a son gout. (ask Addie what that means). I have written to Hal twice since he was married. Didnt I write and tell him that I stood a mid watch in a howling gale on the coast of Nova Scotia on his wedding night?? hay??

I am going to write a letter to myself and send it to Alf. for him to sign and send to me, so I will know that he isn't dead. Tell Mother that I got a lovely letter from the "Nightmare" and that I will let her read parts (only) of it when I come home. I also got a letter from Miss Shunk. I will let anybody read that (if they can). She makes me tired! - Now I think I will close for tonight, but I may add a P. S. before the mail closes, or rather before we leave.

Give my love to all at home,

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Port au Prince, Hayti

Dec. 17th., 1883 .

My dear Mother,

My last letter home was written from Kingston, Jamaica and addressed I think to Father. It is now on its way north having left there on the 13th. I mailed also a number of xmas cards, some of which will no doubt find their way to Orbisonia - as well as to other parts of the United States.

We left here for Kingston on the 8th., steamed out until we caught the N.E. trades, then set all sail and went booming along through the loveliest bluest seas, balmiest breezes, and brightest moonlight imaginable, and on the morning of the 10th. "rounded to" and dropped anchor in the harbor of Kingston.

The city of Kingston is built at the foot of a high range of mountains on a broad undulating plateau and is shut in from the sea by a long strip of lowland extending across the front of the harbor; the entrance being several miles from the city. On the end of this strip is a small town, Port Royal which many years ago was a considerable place until one day an earthquake caused the bottom to drop out of most of the town so that it became a submarine village inhabited only by crabs, fishes and other sea faring people. When the

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water is smooth you can look down through the sea at the submerged villiage and see the fishes swimming in and out of the old church windows and doors, and moving slowly through the deserted streets, which are quite distinct and free from rubbish, for this earthquake was peculiar from the fact that the town sunk bodily into the sea without throwing the houses down. Just inside of Port Royal and over this sunken city is moored a large "three decker," one of England's old "line-of-battle" ships. She is dismantled, roofed over and painted white and used as a recruiting ship and store ship.

Attached to her and entered on her enlistment books under the name of "Jamaica Jim" is a very large shark. Every day at noon he is on hand to receive his ration which is thrown overboard for him. The English Navy Department finds it profitable to support this elegant creature in order to secure his services as a policeman to keep men from swimming ashore from the ship. He is about 15 feet long, has elegant and expansive fins, and moves about with an extremely insolent and leisurely sweep of his majestic tail. I have no doubt he lives in great magnificence in some deserted mansion of the village in the sea. I saw him when I was there on the "Tennessee" during the winter of '80 & '81 and probably I told you all this in my letters then, and

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probably you have forgotten it all so it wont make any difference.

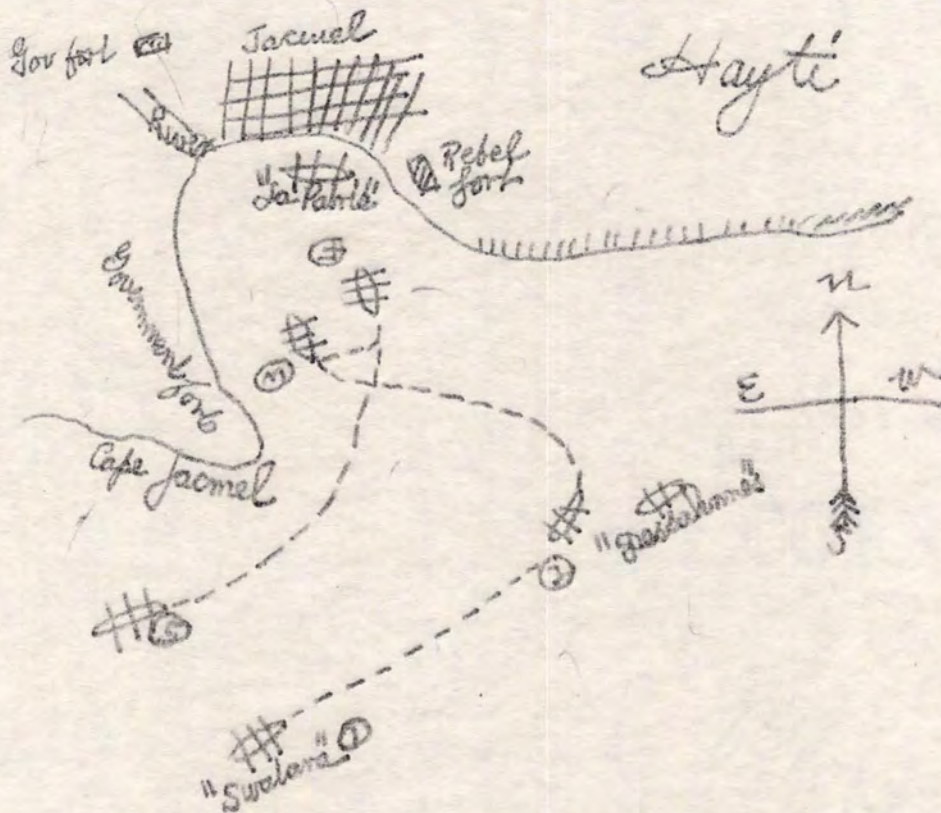
We were only in K'n about a day and a half, while we were getting coal, but fortunately arrived there just in time to see the annual horse races. I won \$1.00 which I will spend to buy you something nice. Early on the morning of the 12th. we got up anchor and started for Jacmel, one of the Haytian ports in possession of the rebels, and we were vere reluctant to leave before the 14th. for on that date our mail arrived in K'n from the U. S. and it is there now waiting for the first steamer that comes from there here.

We arrived off Jacmel about 7 o'clock in the morning and found the "Dessalines" outside blockading the place and the "La Patrie" anchored inside close to the town.

By referring to the sketch on next page you can get a better idea of how things look at Jacmel.

We came in from the westward and stopped alongside the "Dessalines" and Capt. Mason Cooper, Commanding the "D," came on board and took breakfast with Capt. P. H. Cooper, of the "Swatara," After breakfast he went on board his ship again taking five plugs of navy tobacco and some old New York Herald's with him, and we proceeded into the harbor. It was my watch from 8 a.m. to 12

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so I was Officer-of-the-deck going in and coming out.

Before going in all our guns were cast loose, for there is no telling what these ignorant people might take it into their heads to do. We steamed slowly towards the Government forts, which are on high bluffs on the left of the harbor, and when we were in the position marked (3) "ping" went a shot from one of the forts. Involuntarily everybody ducked a little bit, and there was a very perceptible movement about the decks



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but the shot passed ahead and away over us and must have landed in the town for we did not see it strike in the water. Just about this time a boat put out from the "La Patrie," and we backed our engines to keep out of the way in case the Govt. forts should fire at it.

Presently another shot whistled across the harbor into the town, but none were fired at the boat. We backed around with our stern towards the town to (4) then steamed out of the harbor and made off, leaving the boat that was coming out to us.

It does not become me to criticise the actions of my commanding officer, but I should like, just for curiosity, to know what benefit anybody derived from our presence in the harbor of Jacmel, excepting, of course, the moral effect of the display of our flag, or how Capt. Cooper knows that there are not destitute American citizens, or even citizens of other nationalities requiring assistance etc. etc.

It would not have taken long to send a boat in.

Let me give you an idea of the condition of affairs at Jacmel.

The "La Patrie" is said to be too weak in guns to fight the "Dessaline," hence she remains in the harbor.

The "Dessalines" dare not go in to cut her out for the rebels have a 68 pounder rifle in the fort which

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is more than she can contend with.

The Government has three forts commanding the town and one commands the mouth of the small river where the Jacmelites get their fresh water.

The "Dessalines" cuts off all supplies by water so that Jacmel is completely hemmed in and the Government troops could take the place tomorrow if they wanted to, but that is not their game, for the officers commanding the army, and other officials are making lots of money out of it.

Leaving this place we steamed leisurely around the Western horn of the island and the next forenoon arrived at Jeremie.

This place is in much the same condition as Jacmel and is commanded by Govt. forts and rifle pits back of the town on the hills. The besiegers could take the place in two hours.

I went ashore in a boat to bring off the Consular Agent who told me that the place is nearly starved out, and that he had not had any bread to eat for three days. A white man on the wharf begged most piteously to be taken on board ship in the boat. He said he was hungry and had had enough of the place and wanted to get away. I didnt, of course take him off, and he was not brought away with us. He was an Englishman-of-warsman who had

Dec. 17th., 1883 - page 7

deserted from some English ship, and was employed by the insurgents as a gunner. When we left we supplied the Consular Agent with some hard tack and canned meats.

We left Jeremie in the evening as it was only 65 miles to Miragoane, and we did not wish to arrive there at night. The next morning we arrived there but only steamed into the harbor and out again, and about 8 a.m. started for Port au Prince, where we arrived, a little after noon, the distance being only 40 miles. We rather expected to find the "Tennessee" here but she had not arrived yet. The ships in the harbor were the "Alliance" "Freya" (German), "Griffon" (English), and "Jorge Juan" (Span.)

The "Griffon" came here too take the place of the "Dido." When we were on our way from Jacmel to Jeremie we met the "Dido" bound for Barbadoes, and from there home. I know a number of officers on board her, and some of them are very nice fellows. The vessels passed quite close to each other so that our respective Captains could shout their goodbyes and Godspeeds to each other through the trumpets; we took off our caps to her officers on the poop and in a few moments they were gone and when and where will we ever see them again?

This afternoon I called at the Vouillons and found

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everybody very well and Miss "Dottie" looking very decidedly prettier than when I last saw her about a week ago (it seems a month ago). While I was there three Haytian Ladies called on Mrs. V. and I was introduced to them and I suppose you would like to know what they were like so I will tell you as best I can.

They were all very much alike in one respect; they were all quite homely. They were perfectly white but showed decided indications of negroe blood; their lips were thick and their eyes very black, with the whites of the eyes of that peculiar yellowish color and oily appearance that a negroes eyes always have. They belonged to some of the best Haytian families and had been educated in Paris. One of them had just returned from New York where she had been to school for two years to learn English and she spoke it quite correctly although with a very funny accent. For a wonder I noticed how they were dressed, I suppose because they were dressed alike in black, not silk but something of a dull black color and trimmed with black satin. Their bonnets were wide brimmed, entirely shapeless, like real civilized bonnets, and trimmed with black satin black beads, and black feathers. They wore black kid gloves, and carried black parasols. The only visible articles of dress not black were their white frilled collars

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and cuffs.

There is a rumor afloat that we are coming north soon, but I dont believe it. I dont think I would enjoy steaming up into frosty weather from this climate. I think the "Ad." will send us on a pleasure cruise to the windward islands. We will have to remain here some time after he arrives as there are some courts martial to come off that will take a week or so. I expect to send this letter to Kingston this afternoon or tomorrow morning, and as I have some more letters to write, and as there are always plenty of opportunities to send mail away from here I will close now. This letter leaves me if not quite "heart and fancy free," at least enjoying as usual perfect health, with little to do and plenty of fruit to eat, three oranges for a cent. The other day I got out my traps to work a little tortoiseshell and before I had been at work five minutes I stuck my knife about a foot and a half into my hand inflicting a very inconvenient but not painful wound. The point of the knife struck me in the crotch of the left hand between the fore finger and thumb, in such a place that it disabled both my thumb and finger, as they had to be bound together to keep them quiet.

In three days it healed amost entirely and is now almost well.

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After detailing this most distressing accident I think I will close.

✓ How is the "Captain." Take good care of him. //

Give my best love to everybody at home, and make them write often,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

P. S. Dec. 21st. '83

The mail did not go as I expected but will leave tomorrow evening.

On the 19th. our mail came in from the "States" and I received letters from Mary and yourself.

✓ In your letter you blame yourself for not writing oftener, and I quite agree with you. We only get mails once in three weeks or so, but send them much oftener by way of Havana, Kingston etc. I write tolerably long letters by every mail. To be sure you have not any wars to write about at home, but I can assure you that even as insignificant a trifle as the "Captain's" health interests me more than the whole bastard race of Haytians. Dont understand me to mean that I wish you to bore yourself by writing long letters, for my small complaint is that I think it pretty tough to get only one or two letters after waiting three weeks for a mail. //

I know you have not looked at it in this light

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and I dont want you to think that I feel I have been neglected, for to tell the truth I am not much vexed and only want to hear from home a little more.

I have been writing some letters to the "Chicago Times" from here and send one (the third) by this mail. I have requested the Editor to send Father copies of the papers containing them so that you can read them.

They relate, of course, to the revolutionary affairs of Hayti, almost entirely and will not be of much interest to you. They bring me in \$10.00/1000 each and cost me very little trouble to write them, being only from 10 to 15 pages of foolscap. The first letters I sent from here were published about Nov. 27th.

Ask Father when the papers are sent to him to keep the copies for me as I have not received any. //

This will leave here today (22nd.) by an atlas steamer, and you will have it in ten days.

I must close now as I have other letters to close. Dont forget to tell me Lou's address, I want to scold her a little bit for not writing.

Give my love to all at home.

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

P. S. (2) Please forward this to Hal and Alf, and I know they will consider it addressed to them as well as you

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and answer it accordingly.

Dont you think so?

(Signed) Will

\* Forward to Alf.

86 Franklin St.

Balt-

\*\*Forward to Father & write to me

(?)

\* Added in pencil by Grandmother.

\*\* Added in ink by Uncle Hal (?).



U.S.S. Swahara

Port au Prince, Hayti

January 7th, 1883

1884 I think\* yes ✓

My dear Mother,

I will not have time to write more than a note for the mail which leaves tomorrow, for I am really very busy and doing two or three men's work. The Tennessee arrived here a few days ago and the Admiral has ordered a General Court Martial for the trial of one of our Lieutenants. The court is now in session on board this ship. Just before the court met, another of our Lieuts., who had already been reported for drunkenness, got very drunk on board ship and raised cain. He is now under arrest and will be tried and undoubtedly dismissed. Two more of our Lieuts. are on the court, and as they are all four relieved from duty I have to stand watch; in addition to all this I have my duties as Captain's Clerk, and as this is the end of a quarter I have a great deal of work preparing quarterly reports etc., so you see I am really very busy.

I think I wrote my last letter from Kingston, or rather just after I returned here. If I had time I could write you a very interesting letter for we have had a good deal lately to wear away the monotony but nothing of a very stirring nature. I will write again later. A mail left here rather unexpectedly the other day but

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

January 7th, 188<sup>4</sup>~~2~~ - page 2

I didn't have any letters written except one for Addie to which I added a P.S. - We got a mail the other day and I received a letter from Addie written partly in French. It was a sweet little letter and amused me very much. I showed her letter to some of my messmates and they thought it very clever. When I get time I will write her a French letter. I went to the Consulate for the last mail and sorted over a few hundred letters and Xmas cards, but nary a one for me except Addie's. I think that was a little tough for a Xmas mail, don't you?

The revolution is about over now, at all events there will be no more fighting.

On the 26th of last month we left here for Jeremie together with the English ship "Foam" and Spanish "Jorge Juan."

Jeremie offered their surrender to Salomon which he at first refused, but was finally persuaded by the foreign consuls here to accept, and the American Minister Mr. J. M. Langston with the English and Spanish consuls, each on a man-of-war of their nationality proceeded to Jeremie and arranged the terms of the surrender and displayed their guns in the harbor while the army marched in and took possession. In the last mail, the one that Addie's letter went in, I sent another to the

January 7th, 188<sup>4</sup> - page 3

Chicago Times, in which all this is described, and the affairs of Hayti discussed as far as I am at liberty to write about them, for you must know that I know a number of very ponderous and important state secrets that I am not at liberty to mention. I requested the Editor to send a copy to Father and I suppose you have it now. Don't forget to keep them for me. I have sent stamps every time so the editor will have no excuse for not sending them but in case he don't you can get them from a News Agency.

The Editor won't allow me to write anything descriptive, only "affairs of international importance" so that you will find my letters rather dry, but by next mail I will promise to try and entertain you when I have more time. I am very glad Aunt Mary Stewart found my letter to her interesting, but I regret to say it was not sufficiently so to merit an answer, (so far).

Presuming that you have my "Times" letter I will not write any more on Haytian affairs.

But I must tell you about my visit to the Palace.

You must first know that January 1<sup>st</sup> is the Haytian 4th of July. Well Salomon issued invitations for a reception at the Palace on the afternoon of Dec. 31<sup>st</sup> and as the officers were invited, seven of us went from this ship. It was a thoroughly official affair and no ladies

January 7th, 1887<sup>4</sup> - page 4

were present. The American, English and Spanish officers, the Consular Corps, and all the Haytian officials, and prominent Haytians were present and everybody given seats according to rank. Nearly every Haytian there was jet black for you know the government is in the hands of the Blacks; most of them were dressed in evening dress with large white collars, and their tremendous solemnity and conscious dignity were very amusing. When the President came in every rose and the band struck up the national air. Then everybody was presented commencing with the Consular Corps, then the officers, then the Haytian officials of various degrees, then the stiffness of the affair was over and everybody proceeded to another room where champagne was served to everybody and all drank the President's health. I met him when he visited our ship and he and I are getting to be quite chummy.

I drank his health twice, shook hands with hands with him, and wished him and his republic a happy new year, then we all trapsed off up stairs to pay our respects to Mrs. Salomon who received with her daughter Mrs. Magnus, and the President's sister.

Ass soon as we could get away we all drove to the Vouillons where we spent a very pleasant hour and took another nip of champagne. The next day there was to be a grand parade of the army before the President, who

4

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was to deliver an address, at 8 a.m. Fortunately Lemme Wall and I had an engagement for that morning to go riding with Mrs. and Miss Vouillon, so we went ashore at 5:30 a.m., an hour before daylight, and arrived at the Vs. a little after six and you can imagine we were very much disappointed to find that Mrs. V. could not go for she was very much worried Maunotte (her little boy) who said he had a sore throat but the little scamp only had the stomach ache from eating too many candies. Then Miss Dottie, your friend, was not allowed to go as her mother was afraid a stray fire-cracker might frighten her horse, so Lemme and I had to go alone. We had a lovely ride along the mountain, and when we got a level piece of road the horses fairly flew through the cool air. We returned to town in time to see the grand parade, and took it all in. Our horses stood the firing without a shiver. After the affair was over we returned to the house and spent most of the day. M. Vouillon's leg I am happy to say is pretty well mended and Lemme and I persuaded him to let us carry him out on the veranda and put him on a reclining chair, which we did successfully.

January 10th, 1883

I have been very busy indeed and have not had time to write much of a letter.

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Port au Prince, Hayti,

January 14th, 1884

My dear Father,

As there is now an opportunity of sending a letter tomorrow, I will drop you a few lines and tell you something about our movements.

The "Tennessee" & "Alliance" sail from here tomorrow. The "Alliance" will take our mail to Cuba.

We have received our orders from the "Ad" and will leave here Feb. 15th., when the "Galena" is expected to relieve us. We will visit the places shown on the Schedule, which I will write separate so that you can paste it in Mother's hat. The "Alliance" is to make a pleasant cruise in the Windward Islands and the "Tennessee" will go to Aspinwall then to New Orleans for the Mardi-gras, and we, the "black-list" ship will remain here to wait for the Galena, and then make a cruise on the Mousquito Coast and In the Gulf.

The "Tennessee" has played sad havoc with us since she has been here. For about two weeks a General Court Martial has been in full blast on board this ship, and two of our Lieutenants tried for drunkenness and convicted. One will be suspended for two years and the other for a longer period and both will be sent home on the first steamer so that we will only have three deck officers,

January 10th, 188<sup>4</sup> - page 6

We are going to leave here for Aspinwall when the  
"Galena" comes to relieve us. She will leave about the  
10th of February so my orders about addresses - - -  
(incomplete)

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and Lemme Wall and I will be made watch officers and live in the Wardroom until we get north in May or June.

It would be a great deal better for the service if they would dismiss such delinquents, for I never saw a real drunkard that ever succeeded in being anything else.

I dont like the idea of starting out on a long cruise for we will be at sea most of the time for the next three months, and never remain long enough in a place to become acquainted with anybody, and to tell the truth I will miss my very pleasant acquaintances in this place very much. It is not a pleasant thing to feel that you are about to sail away over the sea and leave acquaintances and almost friends, at whose houses you have been at least welcome and that you will never see again.

Since the above mentioned court martial has been in session I have been standing watch in four watches and doing plenty of official writing besides, and I am now standing watch, so I have been very busy, in fact I have not been on shore since the "Tennessee" came in. When I have time I will write you a long letter, and you must only consider this a note giving you the enclosed schedule.

I will writē again soon.

Give my best love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will



U. S. S. "Swatara,"  
Port au Prince, Hayti,  
January 20 '84  
Sunday.

My dear Father,

I sort of feel it in my bones that we will send a mail soon so I am going to have something ready, although I have no particular news to tell, and do not feel in a descriptive humor. In my last letter I sent a schedule of our proposed cruise and said that all other instructions about addresses were to be disregarded, but, of course, you can address, Care of "Galena" until she sails, and after that according to the schedule, which I think will prove correct unless something turns up to delay the "Galena," and you know Naval vessels are sometimes delayed, especially when leaving a Navy Yard.

I dont remember what I told you in my last letter, but it could not have been much for it was rather short.

The last city held by the insurgents has fallen, and in rather a peculiar way.

The "Dessalines," Capt. Cooper, went to Jacmel when that place surrendered, and brought the "La Patrie" out as a prize to take her to Port au Prince.

As the two vessels were passing Miragaone, the last place to surrender, the besieging army before the place

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were so elated that they forgot to pay strict attention to their duties, and during the excitement the insurgents, who had entirely given up all hope of escape, made a dash through the lines and succeeded in escaping. They killed a good many soldiers, and left some of their desperately brave comrades behind. These men you know numbered less than 200 and were besieged by 6000. They had been refused a conditional surrender, and knew that they would be mercilessly butchered when taken.

They were nearly starved out and were absolutely without hope. They have defended themselves for nearly a year, and every man has killed 5 or 6 besiegers, as the government has lost more than 1000 men before this place. You may know how desperate their case was when I tell you that when one of their number received a serious wound he immediately blew his brains out in order not to become a burden to his starving comrades.

Their bravery is worthy of success, and so is their cause, for they represent the intelligent class and fought against the oppression of the ignorant blacks who are now more than ever in power.

Some time ago I told you of the conditional surrender of Jacmel, the place where they fired over the "Swatara"'s bows, well, just the other day, and after the insurgents had been promised amnesty, the General

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commanding the troops there, on some pretext or other, stood 46 insurgents in a line and in cold blood shot them. I think I have mentioned that this revolt has caused a bitter race hatred between the blacks and the liberals or mulattoes and I think this act of cruelty is due to this hatred rather than to any political cause.

The insurgents who escaped from Miragoane made their way to a small seaport called Petite Guave, which they captured but did not succeed in holding long, and they are now in the country and will eventually be hunted down and shot, and probably many suspected persons with them.

President Salomon, As I think I told you in my last letter visited the "Tennessee" and was received with all the honors due his rank, which is the same as President Arthur's.

It was only a day or so after the "Tennessee" arrived that The "Dessalines" steamed into this harbor followed by the "La Patrie," and both ships dressed with flags. As soon as they anchored the "Dessalines" fired salutes for everybody and every thing and there was general rejoicing in the whole city.

In consequence of the trouble in Jacmel the President has just gone there on the "Dessalines," and if I had any advice to give him I would tell him to keep

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his weather eye peeled, for he may very unexpectedly find himself dead and some of his generals President. I have a notion to invent (?) a rumor to that effect for the benefit of the readers of the Chicago Times. When you write again tell me whether you have received the papers I mentioned or not. If they do come be sure and keep them for I want to read them, especially the first ones to see what my first impressions of Hayti were.

The first two letters I wrote before I had been ashore in the place, except a few minutes that I was ashore at the Consulate when we first anchored.

Tomorrow or next day (today is Sunday) we are going to Miragoane, 40 miles from here to take the American Consul there. He wisely skipped to Port au Prince when the trouble commenced. If I have an opportunity I will go ashore and take a look at the place and next letter give you a graphic description. We will only be there a few hours, so I may not have an opportunity. I don't remember whether I told you about the **General Court Martial** on board here or not, but at all events, the Admiral ordered one for the trial of two of our Lieutenants and they were accordingly tried. One was sentenced to two years suspension on leave pay and to be reprimanded by the Secretary of the Navy, for drunkenness. Leaving out the disgrace, this is two years

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leave.

The other for the same offense, but much more aggravated circumstances, and for various other disgraceful circumstances the cause of which was drunkenness and semi-T.Ds.,# was dismissed from the navy. The former is a bachelor, but the latter has a wife and one child. They both should have been dismissed, but one cannot help pitying a poor devil of a drunkard especially when he has a wife and children, but then a Navy is not a benevolent institution any more than a railroad.

The "Tennessee"'s boat beat ours in a race, I am very sorry to say and still more sorry to say that some Dutchmen that pulled in our boat sold the race. We did not make as good time as the Spanish boat did when we beat her half a mile over the same course.

I might add that I am also sorry to say that I lost some of the yellow coins of the realm, but expect to win them back again when we meet the "Tennessee" in Hampton Roads next May.

You will see by the Schedule that we will go to Havana and I will have an opportunity to get cigars, so if you have anything more to say about them let me hear from you at Vera Cruz, Mexico, as I might miss your Aspinwall letters.

I wrote to John Sims telling him that I might go

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to Havana and would he like me to bring him a few cigars and if so what kind etc. etc. to which he replied as follows.

My dear Wm.,

Thank you very much for the kind offer contained in your letter of the 5th ult.

I believe that no less than 3000 cigars can be brought through the Custom house at a time, and that is, of course, a larger number than I would want for myself.

If you are bringing in others and can conveniently put a few for me with them, I would like to have say 500 La Legitimidad de F. P. el Rio. Regalia Britanica. They come 50 in a box. I like a light color, say Colorado Claro, but the marks give you really no idea, a Colorado is sometimes as light as a Clarò box. Grace and the girls are well. The above named cigars cost \$190.- per M. here so I suppose they ought to be from \$110. to \$130. - per M. in Havana. Those I have are of the crop of 1881. Take care of yourself and come home soon.

Faithfully yrs.

(s'g'd.) J.C. Sims, Jr.

Now what do you think of that. It looks as if John expected me to bring the cigars through the custom

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house.

Do you think he would smoke a cigar without a revenue stamp on the box? I can easily pay the revenues on his cigars at Hampton Roads if he wants me to, but I dont know anything about requiring 3000 at a time.

My ideas of bringing cigars into the U. S. is to give the Custom house officers a wide berth and if I bring you cigars they will not have any traces of stamps on them unless I have bad luck with them.

Did I tell Mother in my last letter that my little sweetheart Marjorie Ferguson, the Nightmare's little niece, sent me a pretty xmas card? well she did, and the Nightmare sent me one to# and wrote a long and very agreeable letter in which she describes little Marjorie thusly.

"You should see her, such a jolly little beauty you never saw, such a dainty, dancing, happy, wee little tad; all blue eyes and lots of thick golden hair, you will be very proud of her I am sure etc."

P. S. From a second look at the original I have concluded that "wee little tad" should be translated "Wee little soul," How few women write legibly!

My friends the Vouillons are all well I thank you, especially Miss Dottie whose rapid increase in beauty and loveliness is simply marvelous. I wish you (not

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mother) could see her on her little gray poney#, dressed in a cream colored habit; her hair flowing down to the saddle, her eyes shining like stars beneath the rim of her little jaunty hat. I am sure you would envy me cantering alongside of her on a superb bay.

We will be here about a month longer.

M. Vouillon's leg is nearly well, he now gets around on crutches.

I hear now that we are not going to Miragoane until after our mail arrives, and which we expect in a few days.

I hope it will bring some letters for me. This letter will probably go out on the same steamer and I may have a chance to acknowledge the receipt of any.

I think I will have to close now. If you have not already sent it, please send me Lou's address.

Give my love to all at home and remember me to the Bs. and Rs. etc.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will



U. S. S. "Swatara"

Port au Prince, Hayti

Feb. 5, 1884 -

My dear Lou,

I have just received you very agreeable and newsy letter which was commenced in Harrisburg and finished in Ottawa.

It arrived just in time for I was just about giving up all hopes of hearing from anybody again. I had been writing very long letters (50 pages) and a good many of them. Then I sent from Kingston where we happened to go for coal, 17 shillings worth of xmas cards, and when our xmas mail arrived I got one little letter from Addie written mostly in French, and nothing else. This was about Jany. 1st. and this mail is the first that has arrived since (Feb. 4th.) so you can imagine that I was very glad to hear from you. I had not expected you to write for I know you dont like it and we were very busy besides.

I would have written to you long ago but did not know where you would be. I wrote home for your address but it has only just arrived with your letter.

I am going to send this care of Jas. C.

In this mail I got letters from Father Mother, Lou, Mary, Addie, Hal and four xmas cards and two letters in acknowledgement of cards I had sent, so that tho.

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my friends did not remember me they acknowledged my acquaintance when I reminded them of my existance.

But you must not think I have been suffering very much, for to tell the truth I have been having a very comfortable time and have not been much worried, I growl a little once in a while because I rather enjoy it.

Now let me take a peep at your letter and answer your questions and impertinent remarks etc.

First I must say a few words about the money I sent you. When I heard you were going to Canada I knew it would cost some money for various things, and I did not think your allowance would be likely to cover it, and thought you would have to call on your "dad." If you do not want the money now why keep it until you do, it is always a good thing to have in the house. If you do not want to use it yourself you can spend it to give your good old "Pop" a holiday some time next summer, for I know he would often like to go to Cresson or some such place if it were not for the expense. In short you must spend your money to suit yourself but dont keep it for me.

How would a month at Cresson next summer with Father, Mother, you & I etc. go? When we come north which will be some time in May we may go out of commission, but, at all events, we have got to have considerable

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repairs and I will probably be able to get a month's leave, but I am wandering from the subject of following your letter.

It seems to me you have been having a pretty good time in Harrisburg, Phila, Brooklyn, Ottawa and Port Hope etc. I should like to have been with you. I think I would have enjoyed a short stay in Harrisburg if for nothing else than to tease Nan Shunk. Why didnt you tell me some H. gossip. Who is engaged etc.

You should have mentioned Helen Boas, for you know I always had a softness for her. I suppose she is engaged to Riley, or some such Irishman, and I rather admire her taste for he is a "nice boy" and# Nan would say.

Helen never answered my last letter. Apropos of letters Nan tries to write me a smart letter once in a while but is so strained and full of conceit that it makes me tired. The last one I answered I told her I was in love with a young tropical beauty down here etc. etc., and also that she did not put enough postage on her letters.

I wish you would write to me oftener; you need not write long letters just because I am far away but write often for I enjoy your letters very much, and think you have quite a knack of expressing yourself. Everybody makes the same excuse to me for not writing, i.e., that

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they have nothing to write about! Why bless your soul! I believe I could write an interesting letter if I had been shut in a dark room for a year.

I have been down here in a strange country watching the progress of a negroe revolution and naturely# I have written home about it (by the way I hope they have forwarded my letters to you as I told them to), and you have all expressed yourselves interested but why? simply because I am down here and wrote what I saw and what I thought about affairs. If a stranger had written the same letters and they had been published in a newspaper you would hardly have glanced at the heading. You are interested because I am your brother (lucky dog) and Mother is interested because I am her son (which fact will always be a matter of congratulation to me)

Now I dont think it much matters what a brother or son writes about, but for my part I prefer personalities, gossip and authenticated scandal etc. I know this is all very wrong and wicked and I never said it wasn't, but I like it all the same and so do you miss.

Of course family quarrels are to be sincerely deplored but all the same I dont see why I should be deprived of the pleasure of hearing the story told.

When you mention having met a person it is always

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interesting to know what he or she looks like. For example you say Mr. Palmer is very very handsome and I believe it, for I have perfect confidence in your taste in such matters, but I should like to know what he looks like; dark or fair, stout or slim, what kind of a beard he wears etc. etc. and who he looks like, etc. etc. See? I am very glad you like Mr. Palmer for I rather like Englishmen myself, and the next thing to being an American I would rather be an Englishman, although I would hate to acknowledge that any man in the United Kingdom possessed any hereditary superiority over me, or be conscious that a son of a Lord might be born an idiot and at the same time my hereditary legislator to make laws for me.

My principal objections to Englishmen is that they are so densely ignorant as a class, of everything in America, as it really exists, and so intensely conservative that they wont believe anything they have heard since they left school.

They refuse to give America credit for anything. An Englishman comes to New York on business and thinks it unnecessary to bring an evening suit, or a letter of introduction etc. A few months ago when I was in Charlottetown, P. E. I., I took dinner with the Captain and a number of gentlemen from the city and during the

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evening an Elderly Englishman with the utmost gravity told me that he expected before he died to see the United States a monarchy. He was a prominent officer in the government.

Another serious objection I have to Englishmen is that they wont play whist without "honors," while at the same time they acknowledge that there is too much chance in the game.

But this is rather a serious digression and I must get back to my letter or I will never get done.

"What are you givin' us" about Hulene (?). I guess I didnt scare him off much when he had agreed to come and was only waiting to see if I could get leave but as I couldnt I wrote him that the scheme had to be given up. I never told Emmie anything about Hulene it was she who told Aunt Emeline about him to tease her and then told me about it, and I never said anything about your being or possibly being engaged.

It makes me tired to have to contradict such nonsense.

In nearly every letter I have written home I have been describing to Mother the endless charms of a certain Miss Dottie Vouillon who lives here and who really is a very pretty and agreeable girl, I never go ashore without going to their house and often go riding up

Feby. 5, 1884 - page 6

in the mountains early in the morning. Mother has not made any mention of Miss Dottie in any of her letters so I guess she is getting worried about her. In her last letter she told me about a young man who is staying at Uncle Sam's (?) to learn farming, and said she would not like Lou to marry an Englishman or a farmer, but she said "I dont believe either Lou, or you will ever marry." What do you think about it? As for me, I am "heart and fancy free."

I dont think I will be able to get you a ring of the kind you describe unless I should happen to run across one. India is the place for such things and when I go there I will get you a bag full, as well as all kinds of pretty things. Now I must commence to wind this letter up which I will do by telling you a fish story which is briefly as follows, Last Sunday a fish weighing 25 1/2 lbs jumped from the water over the poop rail and onto the poop of this ship. The rail is 17 feet above the water.

I dont like to tell a story ~~like that~~ for I am sure to be suspected but I am prepared to prove it at any time by this ship's log on which the exploit is duly and legally entered.

I think a shark must have been chasing him; at all events he was in a hurry about something. As soon as

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he landed on the deck, a sailor seized him with both hands by the tail, but was unable to hold him, then another would try. Each one wanted to capture him for his own mess. For some time there was a lively struggle when he was finally secured and in due course of time eaten.

The U. S. S. "Galena" is expected here every day to take our place, when we will make the following cruise.

over (Page torn off - ASF)

Now whenever the spirit moves you you can write a letter to any of the above mentioned places and mail it about two or three weeks before the dates mentioned for our arrival. For example a letter mailed about March 1st. will reach me at Vera Cruz, Mexico and one about the 15 or 20 of March will reach me at Havana. (If you like Havana cigarettes better than American I can get you some.)

Now I really must close as I have to write to everybody yet.

Give my best love to Aunt Jue. (?) and Uncle James, also to Effie and Jim. I suppose they are grown up people by this time.

You must not of course forget to give my love to "Tory love" and her little ones, and now my dear write me a good long letter; a little every day or so but



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dont forget me.

And take good care of yourself and have a good time.  
Remember me to Bob, San (?) & Derke, (?) and all my  
aunts and cousins and believe me

Very sincerely

Your loving brother

(Signed) Will

P.S.

U. S. S. "Swatara"  
At sea making passage  
to Kingston Jamaica  
Feby. 6th., 1884

Dear Lou,

Shortly after the mail came in yesterday evening  
we got up anchor for Kingston to take in coal, and to-  
morrow when we arrive this letter will leave for New  
York where it will arrive about the 14th, and you will  
get it about the 17th. see if you dont.

We will only remain in Kingston about a week then  
return to P. au P. when it will be time for the "Galena"  
to put in an appearance, and for us to start on our cruise  
as scheduled above. Now I must drop a few lines home be-  
fore we get in, and to five or six of my best girls.

The "Nightmare" sent me a xmas card and wrote me  
a lovely xmas letter. I also got a card from my little  
baby friend Marjorie Ferguson, the Nightmare's niece.

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With love to everybody I remain your loving  
brother

(Signed) Will

(To his sister Adelaide)

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Kingston, Jamaica

Feby. 11, 1884

Ma petite cheri,

I am not going to write you another French letter this time for it is hard work for me to write French and it must be hard for you to read it as you have been studying such a little while.

I am only writing this to ask you comment vous portez-vous maintenant? and to tell you that Je me porte tres bien maintenant et toujours; et le Pup "Capitaine," se porte-il tres bien aussi? Je suis bien aise d'entendre que vous avez recu autant de cadeaux de noel, qui vous-trouvez si jolie.

I have told Mary all the news so I will not write it again, and I know you dont care which letter it is in.

Please tell Hen. that Je suis bien obligé pour sa lettre.

Tomorrow we will leave here and in a day and a half we will be in Port au Prince again, and I will be glad of it for I dont like Kingston and I do like Port au Prince, and I will tell you the reason why, but you must not say a word about it to Mother for she is rather nervous about such things. This is the reason why. There is a very pretty young lady there named Dottie Vouillon, and it seems to me that it is about three

Feby. 11, 1884 - page 2

months since we left there and I want to get back.

Elle est la plus jolie fille de tout le monde, c'est la pure verite je suis sur.

Maintenant il doit que je fais fin.

Embrasse bien pour moi, tout ma famille et pour toi je vous envoie mille des baisers.

Votre frere affectionne,

(Signed) Guillaume.

U. S. S. "Swatara"  
Port au Prince, Hay.  
Feby. 20th, 1884

My dear Mother

The last letters I sent home were to Mary and Addie from Kingston just before we sailed for this place, where we arrived on the 15th, and two days later our mail came over from Kingston and I recd. letters from

Mary,	dated	Jan.	28th.
Addie	"	"	23rd.
Father	"	"	24th.
Addie	"	"	28th.
Mother	"	"	<u>12th.</u>
"	"	"	27th.

all of which I hereby collectively acknowledge and as fast as I have time I will do so individually - We have just learned that a sailing ship is to leave here for New York this evening and we will send a bag of mail by her although I dont know that it will reach you any sooner than it would if I sent it on the steamer that leaves here on the 24th, but then the steamer might be delayed and the sailing ship may make a good passage.

Now, before I forget it, I must, I am sorry to say, make a small complaint against you.

You know that you have, from time to time, been accused by different members of your interesting family,

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of writing illegibly. You have, of course, always denied it, for an illegible writer is like a person addicted to an over indulgence in alcoholic stimulents # i.e., the worse off they are the better off they think they are. It is, believe me, with extreme regret that I find it necessary for your wellfare# and comfort as well as mine, to administer this rebuke, and particularly so to a lady. But when I tell you that your letter of Jany. 12. was addressed in such an ambiguous manner that instead of coming here it went first to San Francisco Cal. and then here, I think that now even you yourself must acknowledge that the proof is decidedly against you; and I must therefore entreat you to be more careful in future, for I would not like to miss any of your letters and you would not like to have them go astray. So "brace up" and "spread yourself" hereafter and see how nicely you can write when you address a letter.

Now I will see what you have to say in your letters; answer your letters questions, and then tell you what little news there is; but I must be brief, for I must write a letter to my enterprising little sister who has been so good as to write me two very sweet little letters by the last mail.

I am sorry to hear that Lou. does not write you

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good letters; you should scold her a little bit for she can write a very interesting letter if she wants.to.

In your San Francisco letter you mention having read one of my letters in the Chicago Times. Why didnt you tell me the date of it?, as I should like to know which ones he has published as I have not received receipts for them and dont know. The next time you write please tell me the dates of all you have received at home, and the dates of the issues they were printed in. - please.

Now as to your question as to when I will be at home again I dont know what to say for I have not much of an idea.

The schedule which I sent you says that it will be about May 2nd. but the same schedule says we should have left here the 15 of this month, but we are here still and likely to remain some time. We expected to be relieved, or rather we were told we would be relieved Feby. 1st. but we allowed 15 days for delays and when we got back from Kingston we expected to find the "Galena" here, and as we did not we expected her every day until the last mail arrived when we heard all kinds of yarns. Nothing official, but news from officers wives etc. and we now understand that the "Galena" was not to leave New York until Feby. 15, then to go to Norfolk

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for stores for herself and us, and be inspected, and leave there about 10 days later. You will probably know more about this than I do but I can only go according to my lights. But the rumor that has upset us most is that the "Galena" will bring us new orders, and nobody knows what they will be. Some say we will be ordered north at once; some that we will be sent on a cruise about the same as the schedule shows and some that we will be sent somewhere else. We should have been relieved by the "Alliance" but you understand we are kept here to punish or rather grind Capt. Cooper, who is cordially hated by Capt. Walker, the Chief of Bureau of Navigation, and as there is no limit to his vindictiveness, I think it extremely improbable that we will be sent north now; and quite probable that we will make a cruise in the Gulf; but at all events it is, to say the least, uncertain what we will do and where we will go, so for the present you had better address all letters to Key West, Florida, as we are sure to go there for coal sometime during the cruise, and besides, when the "Galena" arrives and we find out where we are going, I can write to Key West and have my letters forwarded, and write home at the same time and give you further information.

Verily it is an unpleasant thing to be on a "black



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listed" ship.

Do you remember when I was on the "Colorado" in the New York Navy Yard, I told you that I used to be very polite to the Commodore (Upshur) and his family, although his not-too-pretty daughter used to bore me considerably? Well he is going to command this station next summer, so they say, and if he does I think I can get a "loafing billet" on his staff, for the asking of it, then we wont have to watch any more nigger revolutions, and will see all the fun that is going.

But I must get on with my letter.

If we get north in time I would like nothing better than to go to Canada for Lou, although I may be short of tin then for you know there has been quite an extensive change in our uniforms, and we will all have to wear the new style by July 1, 1884 and it will cost me at least \$200.00/100 to make the change, I think I am justified in saying d\_\_\_\_\_n those busy-bodies at Washington who have nothing to do but meddle in such matters.

In a year or so it will probably be changed back again which will be \$200.00/100 more.

If I do have a chance to buy any pretty things to bring home this time, I dont think I can afford much without going in debt to my tailors which I dont like

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to do but I will bring you something.

I have heard from "Nibs" once since I have been here, when he told me all the news. I suppose he is too busy to write often.

Everytime he writes he tells me that he is just about worn out but has made up his mind to take a rest, but I dont think he will. I think he will continue to work for other people, and fuss twice as hard as he works, until some day his excellent but diseased heart will fail him and he will find his first and last rest. He is a fine lad and no mistake.

When a man has shown himself dishonest in his dealings with other men, he forfeits the respect and consideration of all respectable men, although his subsequent misfortunes may be so severe as to merit a little pity and mercy; but when a man deserts a noble and faithful wife, and her lovely children and openly lives with and supports a harlot instead of supporting them, and continues to do so until the infirmities of age and dissipation render such a life impossible, there is a question in my mind whether he deserves the pity, much less the mercy of honorable men and virtuous women. He may have suffered a good deal; but how much in comparison to the sufferings of a deserted wife who sees her children growing up with a stain on their names,

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for, as you know, society is not yet sufficiently civilized or men human, to separate the sins of the Father from those of the child. (H.N.S.)

Tell Mary I am very glad to hear such good accounts of her housekeeping and cooking during the late war with the servants.

Tell her also that I will write her a letter by the next steamer which leaves here in four days from now, and I should not be surprised if the steamer got north first.

Now I think I must close. Give my best love to all at home and express my sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. Ripple. I hope little Paul will be well when this letter reaches home.

Remember me to the Brownings large and small,

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara "

Port au Prince, Hayti

March 3rd., 1884

My dear Mother,

As you see by the heading we are still at P au P. and our relief the "Galena" has not yet arrived although we expect her about the 6th. or 7th.

I am only going to write a few lines for I have no news to tell you and do not feel in the humor for writing a descriptive letter, and besides I have very little time to do either as I intend to send this letter by a French steamer which has just arrived and is to leave in a little while for Havana.

We are still very uncertain about our future movements, as we have heard no news since I last wrote except that we learned from the newspapers which arrived on the last Atlas Steamer (27th. Feby) that the "Galena" had left New York for Hampton Roads to take in provisions and be inspected. I did not receive any letters by her as they are all on the "Galena" where I told you to direct them. As soon as the "G" arrives I suppose we will leave for somewhere, and I will either leave letters here for you or carry them to the next port, whichever is the quickest. But at all events it will only be about a couple of months before we come north, and it makes very little difference to me whether we

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go by way of South America or Key West; we will however make as unpleasant a cruise as the time will allow.

My opinion is that we will approximately follow the schedule I sent you, but until you get my next letter you had better address to Key West, as we are sure to go there some time during the cruise.

We saw by the papers all the new navy bills they are trying to put through. The fools are not all dead yet.

In a few years our poor navy will not be recognizable, but as old "Nibs" says they cant do much to hurt us. If the U. S. is ever kicked into a war the Western hayseeds will sweat for this.

Since I last wrote everything has remained perfectly quiet and nothing of interest has occurred; everybody is out of humor and dissatisfied, which of course, is only natural when we dont know where we are going and our mails are all mixed.

Do you remember a long time ago I told you about the small boats that come in with the sea breeze, loaded with bananas etc. and go out on the land breeze?

That was a long time ago and since then I have learned a good deal about them, and find that they much resemble the Chinese boats that ply in the large harbors and rivers of China and which contain a whole family

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and all their effects, although the whole boat is not more than 25 or 30 feet long. Among a certain class of these wretched people one of these boats constitutes their entire means of income, and they only make sufficient to buy a little salt fish, and the barest necessaries of life. They have a little sheet iron pan with sand in it, in which they make a fire and cook their raw bananas and salt fish in a tin dish. The rest of their property consists of a few gourds to eat out of, and a few scanty and dirty clothes to wear when they come to town. While they are on the trip from their starting places down the coast, to the city they dont wear any clothes, but put them on just before they get to town; we often see them dressing as they pass the ship, if you would call putting on a shirt or a skirt, dressing.

While the Atlas Str. was entering the harbor on the 29th. we saw one of these boats upset some distance ahead of the ship. We sent our steam launch and the Atlas Steamer sent a boat and they were picked up and brought on board this ship.

They had lost everything except the boat alone; unfortunately they had not yet dressed for their entrance into town and they were naked.

There is an old saying in reference to a sailors

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generosity that "he will give away the shirt on his back." There were two men, and two women, and judging from their ages I presume they were Father, Mother, son and daughter; and the sailors in the boat literally took their shirts off their backs and gave them to them, and when they came on board a sailor tore a blanket in two and gave each of the women half, which they fastened about their waists for skirts. Anyone would have pitied them for their faces were the pictures of misery and despair; the men's faces looked like wood painted black, while the women silently wept. The officer of the deck gave them \$5.00 and, in a few minutes the sailors collected quite a sum for them then they righted their boat and bailed it out and made what repairs they could, gave them more bread and meat than they could eat in a week and sent them on their way comforted. They will probably never forget the sailors on the "Swatara."

Sailors, as a class are probably about the most disreputable men in the world, and it is very curious sometimes to see their better natures shine out through their tough shells.

There now, I have spun you a yarn when I had not intended to write anything of the kind, and I must close presently.

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I am happy to say that my friend Miss, or rather Mademoiselle "Dottie" Vouillon is enjoying perfect health.

It is a very singular thing that she should constantly and steadily increase in beauty every day, dont you think so ???

This letter will be sent to the Govt. Despatch agency, and I shouldnt wonder if they will soon get tired of paying our postage and make you pay double at the other end so I will try and hunt up an American stamp or two.

It is five months ago, all but one week, since we left Boston!! That is a long time to spend anyplace, let alone noplace, and among niggers at that.

Now I think I will close. I suppose you are all well, as I am, but not quite so warm. It is commencing to get warm and rainy again and we would all like to leave; Capt. Cooper especially, for he is commencing to suffer from his old complaint consumption. They say he has only one lung, and Capt. Walker knows it and still keeps him here. The (once more) rascals are not all dead yet.

Give my love to all at home, and tell Addie and Mary that I will write to them by next mail.

Your loving son

(Signed) Will



U. S. S. "Swatara"

Port au Prince, Hayti

March 16th. 1884 -

My dear Father,

Let me first correct an error in the heading of this letter for as we left Port au Prince early yesterday morning for Aspinwall, we are consequently now at sea.

It is a sleepy Sunday and we are moving along slowly under all sail and using no steam and hoping to get into the NE "Trades" in a few hours.

I gave you our proposed schedule in my last letter from Port au Prince which details about the same cruise as the one I originally sent you except that we started just one month behind time. As this letter may arrive before my last from P. au P. I will repeat the schedule therein contained; we have changed it a little but not materially. We expect to arrive in A. the 19th, leave the 21, arrive in Vera Cruz the 31, leave the 2 or 3, and arrive in Key West the 11, leave the 16th, arrive Havana 16, leave Havana 19, arrive Matangas 19, leave 21, arrive Charleston 24th, leave 30th, arrive H Roads May 3rd.

So you see, the letters you have sent to Aspinwall, V. C. and K. W. are all right, and I will acknowledge those I find in A. in this letter.

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Tell everybody to write me letters to Key West, Havana and Charleston, and, for my part I will write at every opportunity.

Some time since I have been in Port au Prince I wrote to the Sec. of the N. M. A., asking him to send you my certificate of Membership. I also wrote to you informing you of the fact. Have you heard anything of it???

I understand that all the officers are picked out for the Greely Relief business, and at all events I dont think they would send an off. who expressed himself unwilling to go. If I were ordered I would ask to have my orders changed but would certainly not resign to escape going.

As far as I am personally concerned I would rather like to go on such an expedition which could not fail to be very interesting and would not be attended by any particular hardship or danger, for it will be well fitted out and the vessels will probably remain in company, and moreover it will, this time, be planned and directed by sailors, not landsmen, and imcompetent landsmen at that.

But, since you have expressed your unwillingness to have me go on such an expedition, I promise you I will never go on one if I can well get out of it, but I dont think it would be quite the thing to resign when

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ordered into danger, especially when the danger is to be incurred in the effort to save some unfortunate and deluded men.

If I were, however, ordered on an expedition to the North Pole I would then resign. But I don't think we need worry about such things now.

I was very sorry to hear about Hal's eyes, and I should say he had better be very careful.

For some unexplained reason everybody has been lecturing me for not writing to a certain Nancy Shunk of Harrisburg, Pa. Whence all this solicitude? I was not aware before the row began that there had been an established correspondence between us. Shortly after we arrived in Port au Prince I read a document in which I managed to read a word here & there, and from which I learned that she had addressed a number of letters to me care of the Navy Dept. (with 2¢ stamp on I suppose) and complaining at not receiving any answer. The deficiency in postage on this document was supplied by the Govt. Despatch Agency and I suppose the letters at the Dept. are patiently waiting for this vessel to return to the U. S. as the Dept. does not supply deficiencies. I think, however, they will keep and be none the worse for age. All the above information was sent to the frisky Miss Nancy, from Port au Prince some

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months ago, and she should certainly be in receipt of it by this time, and I cant see for the life of me what the row is about. Even Addie gives me a dig about it. But I guess it will all come right in the end.

I was very much interested and amused by reading Lou's and Aunt Jue's letters. I think Lou writes a splendid newsy letter and I enjoy reading them very much. I also found Aunt Jue's quite interesting especially where she discussed Lou etc.

I am very sorry to hear about the Smarts and their trouble. As for poor Duke I suppose there is no help for him.

Does Alf. write home much? I cant get him interested in a correspondence with me.

I think it is a great pity about little Paul Ripple, do you think there is any hope for him? Dont forget to say that I spoke about him, and give my kindest regards to Mr. & Mrs. R.

Also remember me to the Dr. and Mrs. & Miss B. Did I tell you in my last letter that Kate Van Duzer was married? I was very glad to hear it indeed, for I always liked her very much. You know she was over 30 and had remained unmarried because her father was an invalid and there was no one to take care of him as her mother was dead. Hattie Toishew (?) is going

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to be married!! I must confess I felt uncomfortable when I heard it. All these young things getting married makes me feel old.

I commenced this letter yesterday, consequently it is unnecessary to say that this is the 17th. and St. Pat's day, but what I wish to come at is that now that we have been at sea for a couple of days we are beginning to realize that Port au Prince is not such a bad place after all. Now that I come to look back on it, although even from a distance of two days, I find that I have enjoyed it considerably and improved my time besides reading and studying. For the past year or so I have been possessed of a moderate thirst for information of various kinds, combined with an uncomfortable feeling that I dont know as much about literature etc. as I might, and that "Art is long and time is fleeting" etc. and while in this port I have done a great deal of reading and some studying, the reading principally scientific with an occasional novel thrown in for recreation, but always by a standard author. I have studied some French so that I wont be afraid of Addie when I come home and on the whole I feel that I have not wasted my time.

Now I think I will put this aside until we arrive in A. when I will receive your letters and answer them

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in this if I have time. A Pacific Mail steamer has just steamed past us and will probably arrive there a day ahead of us, and may be about to sail when we arrive, so I am not sure I will have time, and in fact may have to mail this before we get our mail.

Aspinwall, U. S. C.

March 20 '84

Dear Father

We arrived here this morning and I received your letter of Feby. 4th. enclosing a letter from Mother, and the Hale Bill, also one dated March 4th. enclosing Addie's.

I recd. also a very characteristic letter from Nibs. which contains his views of our much talked of prospects. I will enclose it if I do not as usual forget it.

I recd. a letter from the editor of the Chicago Times saying that he had published 4 of my letters and would publish the fifth. He also asks me to write a couple of letters on the Panama Canal.

We have learned nothing here to change our cruise materially, but we will be delayed a few days to take the Consul General to Boco del Toro and back here again. There has been some insult to the Consul at that place which I presume will be meekly put up with as usual

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We leave this evening so I will have to close, but will write again when I return. Give my love to all at home and tell Addie I will write her a long letter by the next steamer.

Also tell her I dont know much about feeding young dogs but I would be careful not to feed him too much, and feed him very little meat.

Lemme Wall has just got a letter from the young lady to whom he sent the Captain's brother and she tells him that the poor little fellow died with fits from eating to# much meat so you must be careful.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Key West, Florida,

April 2nd., 1884

My dear Lou,

I have just received a very cute letter from Addie in which she begs me to write to you and ask you to try and coax Aunt Jue., and Uncle Jim, to let Effie come home with you to visit her. Her sweet little heart seems set upon it, and she holds out as an inducement that she and Mother will bring her back to Canada again.

She seems to be very fond of Effie and it will be a pity if she is not allowed to come.

I promised Addie I would write this letter although I guess it will be too late to find you there.

Addie seems to have great confidence in my influence. She does not know that my Canadian relatives always regarded me as rather a "bad egg," which I think particularly deplorable on account of its accuracy. A stale loaf is better than no loaf at all, - but the same does not hold good for an egg.

I have heard of you since you have been in Canada, and always as having a pretty good time. I would have liked to be with you. I have not seen a real white girl, excepting the young Haytian lady I mentioned, for six months, let alone a live American girl, so you can imagine I would rather enjoy a ball.



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Since we left Port au Prince we have only been to Aspinwall, then here for coal.

We expect to leave for Vera Cruz tomorrow, then will visit Havana, (for cigars), Matanzas Cuba, Charleston S. C., then Hampton Roads, by May 3rd. where we will probably remain about a month and then go - where?

I dont feel much in the humor for writing and besides this is my fifth letter for this mail, and I am tired and sleepy too, but I will make up for it some other time.

Give my love to Uncle Jim and Aunt Jue, also to Jim and Effie.

Remember my to everybody else,

Your loving bro,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Matanzas, Cuba,

April 18th., 1884

My dear Mother,

I have just received your letter of March 28th. enclosing Lou's of March 18th. Also your of April 7th. enclosing Lou's of April 2nd. Aunt P's of March 26th., and extract from H. Calcutt's of March 8th. All these were adressed# to Key West where they have been delayed. I am very much obliged for all the letters and enclosures and enjoyed the news very much - so much that I let my breakfast get cold this morning while I was reading them,

When I last wrote we had just arrived here and I had not been ashore. Since that time I have seen something of the place and we have made a short trip to the Eastward on this coast. Nobody appears to know exactly why we are in this port, but I can tell you what the rumors are. In my last letter I explained why we left Key West, and how the culpable inactivity of our ships and the municipal authorities there, had allowed armed Cuban insurgents to leave for Cuba, with the leader on board. I understand that the Spanish authorities have complained to our government of a lack of vigilance at Key West, in allowing the schooner to escape (The complaint is perfectly justifiable and I

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would like to see somebody "sanded" for it). A few days ago another Naval vessel arrived, the U. S. S. "Yantic," and the next day we left the harbor in company with the "Vandalia" on a trip to the Eastward, the object being to watch the channels, between the Bahama Ids. and Cuba. We remained in the Southern Chan. and the Vandalia in the Northern. We were anchored there one day just to the S. of a small Island called Anguila. The next day the "Vandalia" came and joined us, when we got up anchor for this place, and here we are waiting for something to turn up. I have no idea what our late trip was for, but I imagine it was more to impress the Spanish authorities here than anything else. I think the Spanish government is afraid that the Cubans in New York will attempt to send arms and ammunition to the insurgent leader to arm the discontented populace. The Cubans are terrible oppressed. Burdened with heavy import and export duties and allowed practically no voice in their government, all the officials being sent out from Spain, etc. etc., but I suppose you dont care any more about these affairs than I do, so I will tell you about something else.

In the first place I can tell you nothing about our movements. We dont know how long we will remain here, or where we are going when we leave. Perhaps to

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Vera Cruz, but I dont think so. By the way, all the letters you sent to V. C., are there yet. We have not sent for them as we expected, until quite recently, to go there.

We are, however, sure to go to Key West again before we get North as we will need coal, so you can address letters there until further orders, and somebody at home will manage to write once a week I am sure. Dont make the excuse that there is "no news," when a postal card which tells me that you are all well is news enough for me.

The other day I went ashore with two of our fellows with the express intention of visiting the famous cave of Matanzas, called in Spanish the "Beautiful Sea." It is about three miles from the city and we went on horseback. We got three splendid horses with large Spanish saddles and we made things "hum." When we arrived at the cave we found a neat little house built over the entrance in which was a guide, a dog, and a bar, as well as benches to rest on and cabinets full of specimens of stalactites.

I naturally expected to find a large black cave, wet and chilly, and filled with slimy and dirty looking stalactites & stalacmites, and only interesting from its size, length, and gloomyness. I was agreeably

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dissappointed. The guide lighted two enormous candles and led the way down a substantial staircase built of iron, which came up in the centre of the building. This took us sometimes over deep pits and sometimes along the side of perpendicular walls and finally landed us in a large chanber as big as a small church. Away above our heads we could see a streak of daylight coming in the entrance. From this place we passed into another chamber, through corridors, alleys and streets; sometimes finding ourselves in broad low, chambers sometimes in very high ones, some shaped quite regularly; square, rectangular or round; and some with no shape at all. Then the guide would disappear down a hole that looked like an enormous well, and we would follow down the narrow iron stairs, sometimes winding, sometimes taking a shoot off to the right sometimes to the left. When we thought we were at the bottom we would pop through a little arch in the wall; climb a pair of stairs, go down, two or three, climb another pair; pop into a large chanber on one side, make our exit through a narrow corridor on the other; perhaps go up, perhaps down; turning, climbing winding, until you could not form any conception of N. S. E. or W. I imagine it is about as irregular as the holes in a sponge. The cave is entirely without ventilation, and I suppose that

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accounts for the fact that the air is very hot and close. The walls are all of a very light yellow rock, soft, porous, and crumbling, probably of limestone. The color is so light that one candle will light up a large chamber, and it is so dry that you might visit every part of it in a ball dress without wetting your feet or soiling your dress. Most of the stalactites are slender and extremely delicate and just the color of pure white wax. The most beautiful ones are protected by screens of iron, to keep the delicate spears from being brushed off. I will describe it fully when I come home, but must close now to catch the mail or wait a week.

Give my love to all at home your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Key West, Fla.,

May 2nd., 1884

My dear little Addie,

A day or so ago I wrote a letter to Father and would have answered your letter then but, unfortunately it had gone to Cuba and did not come back until last night. It was dated April 16th, Mary's birthday.

Tell Mother that I received her letter of April 7th, enclosing Lou's, of April 2nd., and Aunt Polly's of March 26th., and enjoyed them all very much.

I was very much pleased with your letter, and very glad to hear that "Captain" has recovered from his sickness. I am afraid you will kill him yet by feeding him too much.

Before I write any more I must correct a mistake. I have just acknowledged Mother's letter of April 7th., but I find that that is the letter before last.

The one I have just received is dated April 21st., and encloses one from Lou and one from Aunt Polly both dated April 10.

Now that I have corrected that mistake I will proceed with my letter.

In my last letter I told Father about all the news and there is very little more to tell.

There are now five men-of-war anchored here and

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we are all trying to keep the Cubans in Key West from sending rifles and guns to Cuba, where they are trying to get up a revolution against the government. Every night we send out our little steam boats to watch for the Cubans. They stay out until daylight in the morning. Each boat has five men in it, all armed with a cutlas# and pistol. We stop every sail boat going out and examine them. Sometimes we have to fire a few pistol shots over them to make them stop. If that wouldn't stop them we would send up a big rocket and one of the ships would be sent after them. So I dont think any of them will get out.

But I dont suppose you care much about such things. You would rather know when we are coming home, and so would I. We do not know anything for sure yet, but we think we will leave here soon as we have been in the West Indies so long that it is time we came north.

When we do come I think we will go to New York and we will be sure to stay there for two or three months, so you will be sure to see me home for a while. When you write again tell me whether Lou. and Aunt Polly have arrived or not. If they have, give them my best love. You must tell me to# how long Aunt Polly is going to remain. I dont think I can get home while she is there, but then I might if we leave here soon enough. I will



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be sorry if I dont for I would like to see her very much indeed.

I am very glad you take such an interest in my friend Mlle. "Dottie" Vouillon. I have not heard anything of her since we left Port au Prince more than six weeks ago, but I think she must be on her way to New York now as they were to leave on May 1st.

I will see her in New York and tell you more about her, but you must keep mum about it to your Mother, for such little things worry her.

I am very glad to hear that Mary has gone to Huntingdon to school. I think I owe her a letter and you can tell her I will write soon.

We are all very busy now as five of our officers have left us and we have to do their work so that I dont have so much time for writing letters.

When you write again tell me how much the "Captain" weighs, if you can make him stand still long enough to weigh him. Now that the warm weather is coming on you must stop feeding him meat, for a young dog is very liable to go mad and then you would have to shoot him. And worse than all he might bite somebody before you shot him.

Make him stay out of doors at night. Take him with you whenever you go to town or go for a walk, and teach

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him to run after sticks and go in swimming etc. so that he will get lots of exercise. If he gets "ugly" and wont obey you you had better have him thrashed while he is young.

Your Mother used to pound me every day when I was about the "Captain's" size, principally because I was not born a girl. Wouldn't I make a nice young lady? Over six feet high and with a big black beard!!

Now I must close for this time. Tell Mother that I will write her in a day or so.

Give my best love to everybody at home

Ever your loving brother

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Key West, Fla.

May 7th., 1884

My dear Addie,

I have just received the mail from home including letters from Mother, Mary, and yourself. I learn from Father's P. S. in Mother's letter that poor "Captain" is dead and I am very very sorry; not so much on my account as on yours, for I know you must have been fond of him.

If I go to Halifax next summer I will get you another dog and a brother of the Captain's if I can.

The steamer that brought these letters is going to leave in a little while, so I will not have time to write you much of a letter.

Tell Mother I will answer her letter immediately and it will come by the next mail in a few days. I am very much puzzled by this letter but will study it hard and let her know what I came# make of it.

There is no news yet about when we are coming home, but we expect to find out in a few days. I dont think we will be home before about the 1st. of June, when we will probably go to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and remain 3 months.

I must close now as the mail is going now.

Your loving brother

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara"

Key West, Fla.

May 9th., 1884

My dear Father,

I wrote a hurried note to Addie by the last mail, then posted a letter to Mother which I think will arrive in the same mail with this.

I am only writing to give you a little news item that I have just learned, which is as follows. We ("Swatara" and "Tennessee") will sail from here tomorrow, Sat. 10th, for Hampton Roads, and by the time you receive this note we will probably be there at anchor, as the mail will get north a day or so ahead of us. Someone at home must write immediately, and let me know all the news.

I should like very much to make arrangements to get leave while Aunt Polly and Lou. are at home, but I dont know whether I can manage it or not, as we are very short handed, and there is no telling when the "Dept." will order officers to fill the vacancies. However I will see what can be done when we arrive.

We are good for at least three months in a Navy Yard for repairs, and will probably go to New York, so you may be sure of seeing me this summer. I will try to get a month's leave and give you a good chance to get tired of me.

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Now about this business of girls.

My Mother persists in regarding me as a "lady killer" of the first water, nor can I blame her for entertaining such an opinion, if she has believed one half the nonsense I have said and written on the subject.

But now I wish to correct the erroneous impression. I dont wish, however, to deny that I occasionally enjoy the society of the sex; in the way of "hops" etc., but I dont like to feel that I cant escape them when I want to.

Besides I am afraid Mother puts herself to a great deal of trouble sometimes to invite girls simply on my account, when, in fact, when I have only a short time to remain at home, I would rather be alone with our family and relations.

This is all in relation to my personal inclinations on the subject, but, of course, when Lou. owes some of her friends an invitation, I will always be glad to lend a hand to entertain them and keep them out of mischief, and I think that right now I would rather enjoy the occupation, for I have not seen a real white girl for eight months, excepting Miss "Dottie" Vouillon.

Now I must close as I have some other letters to write.

Give my best love to Aunt Polly if she has arrived

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and tell Lou. that, although I owe her a letter she  
must write to me at Hampton Roads.

With Love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

Hampton Roads,

May 15, 1884

My dear Mother,

I received your letter enclosed in Addies, and dated May 12, two days after we left Key West. I also received one from Lou., dated April 23rd., and, judging from both letters, I make out that Lou. will be home about the last of this month; as for Aunt Polly, I have quite lost track of her, and cant make out whether she is going to the N. W. or coming to see you, although the evidence seems in favor of the latter. I mailed a letter the day we left Key West, which I think you will get today, and I suppose you will write at once.

But first and foremost I suppose you want to know something about the movements of this ship, and as usual, I am not able to give you any reliable information on the subject.

I think it very likely that we will remain here until the latter part of this month and then go to New York or Norfolk, probably the former.

As for leave, we are situated just this way. "Lemme" Wall and I are the only junior officers on board, and, at present, we are certainly indispensable. I am standing a regular watch and will continue to do so until another Lieutenant is ordered to the ship, and "Lemme"

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is doing a little of everything, and all together a good deal. One of our watch officers has a little baby six months old that he has never seen, 1st baby to#, so I think he is entitled the precedence in the matter of leave. There will be no junior officers ordered to the ship until after the graduation at Annapolis, on June 6th., when we will probably get some Naval Cadets, and, until that time I dont think there is a possible chance of getting leave.

Nobody has been granted leave from our ship yet, on account of the uncertainty of our movements.

You will see by all this that it is too early for me to commence to make plans, in fact, I think you had better go ahead and make your plans for the summer counting me out. If I get leave in time to join some of your parties, all well and good, but if I dont, I assure you that I will enjoy my leave quite as much by spending it quietly at home - in the bosom of my family as it were.

When I do come, I intend to have a month, if I can possibly get it.

I think Lou's. Idea of remaining in Canada all summer (or as long as she continues to enjoy herself) a very good one, Let her make hay while the sun shines.

I wish you would forward this letter to Lou. if she is not coming home too soon, as it will explain to



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her my chances of making my leave fit some of her schemes for the summer. I suppose you remember (I know Lou. does) that I promised to make her a pair of tortoise-shell swords, many years ago. Well last Sept. I made them and had them all finished but polishing, and carried them to the West Indies with me, and when we left Key West the other day I started to finish them, for I would have been ashamed to come home without having them finished.

I have taken a good deal of pains with them and I am glad to say they are quite pretty.

I will send them by this or the next mail addressed to Orbisonia.

If you wish to examine them you can open them, but you must forward them to Lou. so that she will have them in Canada.

I am going to send them by letter postage, as I think they will be safer. They are in a little box, with the lid only tied shut.

I will add here for Lou's. benefit (and yours if you open the box) that they are rather delicate, and you must not try to remove the blades from the baskets. They can be removed if you know how, as they are not fastened or glued, but only sprung on. I must tell you that I once made a similar pair of swords for "another

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not a sister in the happy days gone by," and I confess, with the deepest humiliation, that it did not take me nearly as long to finish them but, my dearest Louisa, I beg leave to call your attention to the fact that this is only an illustration (at your expense) of an universal and very human weakness, and I can only offer, in extenuation, to ask you to consider the trifling circumstance that these are much prettier than those above mentioned, both as regards design and finish. And I must direct your attention to the fact that these were designed expressly for you, as I had long since lost the design of the first ones, and I hope that my long delay has not led you to imagine them to be more gorgeous than they are; in other words, I sincerely hope that, instead of being disappointed, you will be pleased with them.

A military man often writes in a lady's autograph book, "mon epee a ma patrie, mon coeur a toi," which graceful and complimentary declaration I will transform to suit the present occasion, as follows.

Mes epees et mon coeur a toi.

Adieu. -

P. S. I intended to get a jeweler in New York to make a case for the swords, but I thought you would rather receive them now in Canada.

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(Signed) Wm. S. Sims

Now my dear Mother I dont know that I have anything more to add that will interest you, although I can tell you something that interested me today, viz., this morning I drank some milk (no stick), ate some butter, and some oysters, for the first time in over seven months, for these are luxuries that have to be dispensed with in the tropics, where all the cows are goats, and all the butter soap-fat, and where the climate is fatal to the festive oyster.

These facts may seem trifling to you, but if you have any desire to appreciate them as I do, just abstain from the articles for seven months. I appreciate the milk most. I acquired a strong taste for it more than 25 years ago. //

I suppose our letters will pass each other on the way, and I will write again as soon as I receive yours. You (all) must write often now that we are within 24 hours of each other. I have some things to send home but as most of them are liable to duty I will have to "lay low" for a while, and perhaps until we get to New York, or some other port.

Now I think I will close.

Give my love to all at home.

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Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

P. S. I have changed my mind about the swords. I will send them as merchandise and register the package, and I would advise you to do the same in sending them to Lou.

P. S. to Lou. I have put a small piece of chamois leather in the box for you to keep the swords polished with. It has a little manicure powder on it, which is much better than sand or bath-brick, or anything else for polishing, so I wouldnt advise you to try of them

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

May 30th '84

My dear Father,

I have just recd. yours of the 28th. also Mother's of the 28th., enclosing Alf's of 25., also Lou's. and Min (?) and Charly Smith's with a note added from Mother, and I believe that is all there are to be acknowledged.

I was very anxious to receive these letters as I did not know how things stood at home with regard to Lou. Aunt Polly etc.

I am very sorry indeed to hear that Aunt Polly cant come, for I know you all would have enjoyed her society very much. But I must first tell you all about the movements of the ship and so forth. I understand that we are not going to the Navy Yard now but will leave here June 18th, either for Hampton Roads to give the Admiral a "send off" when he retires, or on a short cruise to the Eastward. The idea I believe is to postpone all the repairs until Sept. and Nov., if possible, so as to have the Navy Yards full of solid voters. However, that will not make much difference with my leave, as I am waiting for more officers to be ordered here.

When another Lieutenant and some Naval Cadets have been ordered, I dont think I will have any difficulty

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in getting leave. We will probably get a Lieut shortly after we get our new Capt. who will be here tomorrow, and the Naval Cadets will probably be ordered soon, and then we will talk about leave.

I guess I could get a week's leave now if I tried hard but I dont want to spoil my chances of a month's leave. I have written to Annapolis to find out if I can, when the graduates will be ordered to sea.

Now about Lou! Mother, I think, takes the proper view of the affair. She acknowledges that she misses Lou. very much, and wants to see her, but at the same time is glad that she is having such a good time, and has such a good chance of more pleasure on a yachting expedition.

I think it is only fair to Lou. to remember how many times she was disappointed about going to Canada, and how many tears her disappointments cost her, and, for a young girl, how little enjoyment in the way of society she has had.

I have no doubt her ill health and dispepsia were entirely due to her former inactivity. As for your insinuations as to Lou's. not caring to come home to see you and Mother, I dont worry myself much about that for I think I know both Lou. and you well enough to disregard them.

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I dont think I will be able to get my leave much before July if any, and I may not be able to get a month, but I can at all events get a week, so, as I have often said before, you will be sure of seeing me. While I think of it, if you, or any of the family happen to be coming to Phila. you must let me know several days in advance (better by telegraph) for I can get 48 hours, without any red tape to delay me, most any time, if I have warning enough so that I can swap watches with somebody. see?

Now I must close as I want to drop a few lines to Lou. Hal., and Alf.

Give my love to all at home, and tell my dear little Addie I will write her a letter soon.

Your loving son, (Signed) Will

P. S.

I wish, when you write again, you would send me my Chicago Times letters, as I would like to read them.

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara"

New York Harbor,

May 30, 1884

My dear Lou,

This is only a note as I have a few things to say, and I must be brief as I have lots and lots of letters to write, besides I dont think I owe you a letter for if I have not written directly to you, I have had the letters forwarded.

I sent you the long promised swords some time ago and asked to have the letter forwarded to you. The swords are at home and have not been sent as Father is afraid they will not pass through the Custom house.

And Now this is what I want to say.

There has been loud complaints from home because of your long absence and the many postponements of your return. Mother tells me that she is longing to see her dear daughter, and that she is very lonely all day when Addie is at school or out playing, but, bless her heart, she says she is willing to put up with it all when she thinks what a good time you are having, and in fact I think our dear Mother would make any sacrifice for her children.

As for Father he misses you of course, but it vexes him more to see his dear old wife so lonely. I mention all these things of my own accord, because I dont



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think you can see the state of affairs as well as I can, as you have been having such a good time, you have probably not thought of it.

I have taken your part all along and I have just written home that I think you ought to remain in Canada.

I understand that it has been decided to let you remain until the last of June or first of July, and I am writing now to say that I dont think Father and Mother will bear another disappointment, so if I were you I would not ask to remain later than July 1st. In fact I dont think you ought to when all Mother's chicks are away from home.

I will not be able to get leave until after you come home, at least not as things look now. I will, however, let you know when I will be home.

I think it would be a good plan to write good long gossipy letters home to keep everybody contented, and direct them to forward the letters to me, as that will save you the trouble of writing again.

Now I must close. Give my love to Cousin Min. and Charles, and kiss little Irene and Bob for me, and believe me ever your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

P. S. Ever since I was last in Halifax I have carried the enclosed dollar in my pocket book until it is nearly

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worn out so I beg you to spend it for me. It is N. G.  
here.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

May 31st., 1884

My dear Mother,

Only yesterday I wrote a letter to Father giving him all the news, but today I have something particular to say to you.

I understand that a certain number of years ago from June 2nd. you made your first astonished bow before this world of sin and sorrow, in the form of a very small but prepossessing little baby. I am also informed that, exactly twenty one years later, you bestowed your hand in marriage upon Alfred William Sims, a Yankee, consequently, June 2nd. will be the double anniversary of your birth and marriage.

It will be unnecessary for me to comment upon the vital importance of this train of events in shaping my entire career, especially when I recall the insignificant circumstance - which may have slipped your memory - that two years and four after the last named event, in the dead of night, a wee small voice proclaimed the arrival of a second son, who having dressed himself and smoked a cigarette, inquired what o'clock it was, and, on being told 1 a.m., stretched himself, yawned several times, and then "turned in," requesting that he might be called when the sun rose, as he wanted

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to see it.

That was me; and hence this letter, which I write to wish you joy and many happy returns of both days.

The son-in-law of the bride's mother is said to be a very insignificant personage on the wedding day, but when viewed through a telescope 28 years long, with his son at the eye glass, the insignificance vanishes, and the congratulations which I here tender are those dictated by the respectful love of a willful son.

May you both live to see my gray hairs; and, if I ever cause yours to whiten, may I be fired from an 100 ton gun against the latest modern improved armor, and then sent to the penitentiary for life at hard labor.

I send you by express to day two boxes addressed to "Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Sims, Mt. Union," which I hope will arrive by Monday.

Father's share of the present is contained in the large box, and he will have no difficulty in recognizing his property, the rest is for you, and I hope you will be pleased.

Now I will close, wishing you again many happy returns of the day.

Your sincerely

affectionate son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York, N. Y.

June 5, 1884

My dear Father,

I rec'd. your letter of the 3rd., also one from Mother and one from Addie. I thank you all for them. Addie's letter was a very pleasant one and I enjoyed it very much.

Tell her for me that I will send her little souvenir tomorrow, and tell Mary that I will send hers at the same time. I will also write them a letter to send with them.

And now for a little business. A long time ago I wrote to you asking you if you had ever received my Cirtificate# of Membership to the N. M. A. A., and I dont remember whether you ever acknowledged it or not. If you have rec'd. it please let me know and if you have not, I will write and have it sent you.

On Oct. 1st. I commenced an allotment of \$25. per mo. which has consequently been going eight mos.

I gave Lou \$125. and you reserved \$25. for N. M. A. A. assessments etc., which, therefore, leaves due me about \$50. or thereabouts. I suppose however, that the assessments must have amounted to more than \$25. by this time. But, to come to the point, I would like you to send me \$20. as I will need it before leaving

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here to pay for uniforms and military trappings that I am compelled to buy before July 1st.

It is a pretty heavy pull to be called on for \$200. in cash, particularly when you derive no particular benefit from it. I would like you to send the money as soon as you can, conveniently, and would like it best in the form of a check.

I am very glad that you and Mother were pleased with your boxes. I think you might try some of the cigars now, they may not be very fresh.

This afternoon I called on Mrs. Edward Patterson and was very cordially received. I think I shall like her very much. Aunt's favorite expression "a very superior woman" I should judge to be about correct. She is certainly a very clever and cultivated woman and one has to pay strict attention to business and keep one's wits alive when talking to her. I am not quite sure I shall not be a little afraid of her. I am going there to tea next Sunday evening. Give my love to all at home.

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

June 10th., 1884

My dear Lou,

I have rec'd. all your letters and postals addressed to Hampton Roads and Key West, and I would have written before, but just before you wrote I wrote you a letter which must have passed yours on the way, and in which I gave you all the information that your questions asked for.

We expect to leave here about June 18 or 20, on a cruise "down east." On dit that we are going to Halifax, and thence to, or rather, up the St. Lawrence as far as Montreal. We all want to go very much, as we will be sure of having a good time.

I should like it very much, for I would probably have a chance to run down to Port Hope, or meet you at A. Bay, if you go there.

We expect to return to New York, some time in Aug., when I intend to try for a month's leave. I suppose you will be home then, as I understand you intend coming home about July 1st.

Father is still very savage about your remaining away so long. At the same time when I wrote you that you had better not try and remain after July 1st., I wrote to Father interceding for you but he paid no

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attention to my remarks in his subsequent letters. As I said before, Mother misses you very much, but, all the same, is glad you are having such a good time. And so am I.

I have been very busy since I have been here as I have had endless uniforms and military trappings to look after, some \$200. worth, and I have not been very well, but am pretty well now. Of course you must not say a word about this at home, as it would only worry Mother.

All my old New York sweethearts are as lovely as ever, and of course I have called on them all. I have made the acquaintance of Mr. & Mrs. Edward Patterson, relatives of John's wife, and find them very lovely people.

I will write you at greater length in a day or so, but I must close now.

Give my love to my cousins Min. & Charley, and believe me,

Ever Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

P. S. Write soon, and give us a little gossip and scandal etc. etc., for I am wicked enough to enjoy such things.

(Signed) Wm. S. S.



U. S. S. "Swatara,"  
New York Harbor,  
June 15, 1884

My dear Lou,

I understood from some of your letters, or those from home, that Miss Florence Maxwell has invited you to pay her a visit on your way home. Some such arrangement as that, I dont remember exactly. However, I thought it would be the proper thing for me to call on her. And I did so, but found her "out." The next day she wrote me a very kind note expressing her regrets and inviting me to a tennis party and to dinner, on any of three days she mentioned for me to choose from. I accepted, of course, but had to send my regrets as I was not well. This morning I received another very kind note in which she told me that the invitation held good for any time etc. etc., but that they were going away for the summer to Far Rockaway L. I., in a few days. Then came this passage.

"I should like so much to see you before I go, for I want to know something of your sister. She was coming here on her way back from Canada but I have not seen her or heard a single word from her." etc.

I tell you this in case you have forgotten to answer her kind invitation, or in case your letter has gone astray. I suppose you have her address, but, I

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will give it you, in case you have lost it. 489 Wash-  
ington Ave.

I rather expected to find Miss Schunk there, as I have a faint recollection that she told me so in a letter I received long ago in Hayti.

Everybody at home, except Mother, are vexed with you for not coming home before. In nearly every letter I have rec'd. for the last month they have said something about it until finally, the last time I wrote I told them I was tired of their complaints. When do you expect to come home?

The probably movements of the "Swatara" for the summer are the same as I gave you in my last letter. If I get leave at all, I will probably get it in Sept.

Write to me soon as I am not very well and feel very gloomy.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

P. S. Never say anything at home about my not being well.

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

June 17, 1884

My dear Father,

Yesterday afternoon we left our anchorage off the Battery and are now anchored off West 79th., for today the statue of Simon Bolivar is to be unveiled in the park and we are to send our battalions ashore and fire a salute when the statue is unveiled. There are four ships here: the "Vandalia," "Yantic," "Alliance," and "Swatara."

Simon Bolivar, is called the Geo. Washington of South America, although you might read any history, except Spanish, for a long time without encountering a more contemptible character. A cunning, scheming politician, traitor, coward, murderer, and tyrant. Guzman Blanco, ex. president of Venezuela, arrived on the 10, en route for Europe. He will unveil the statue. He is now practically King of Venezuela, having left one of his party in charge while he takes a little spree. I admire the man for his ability, although he is a tyrant, for he rules his country firmly and well, and without unnecessary oppression. He has built railroads, colleges and schools, opened up the mineral resources of the country, and is preparing the people for self-government, that is, if it is possible for

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Spaniards to govern themselves.

Tomorrow we return to the Battery. When we will leave, I dont know, but certainly not for a few days yet. There are rumors that we will go to the yard for a couple of weeks before our proposed cruise, and again other rumors that we will not make the cruise, but I think they are all more or less idle. Nobody knows but the Dept. Of course, I will let you know as soon as I find out.

I suppose you have noticed in the papers that five Naval Cadets have been ordered to this ship. They reported on the 9th., and they are all very fine fellows. We still continue to like our Capt. and hope to do some pleasant cruising when we once get started.

I got a letter from Nibs. the other day. He seems to think our bill will go through the Senate this session, but I have my doubts. He is to be ordered to sea soon on the "Carlisle Patterson" a new coast survey steamer, built for the purpose of surveying on the coast of Alaska. She will start soon on her trip around the horn. I am afraid Nibs' health is not very good. If he breaks down at sea he will be "wholly retired" i.e., dropped, for he passed his "physical" at our "exam" on those conditions.

I dont know why I am writing this time as I believe

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I owe nobody a letter. Tell the people to write often,  
just a line or so.

With love to all at home,

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

I called on Miss Maxwell but found her "out." She  
has sent me several very kind invitations to tennis  
parties and dinners, but I have not yet been able to  
accept.

Miss "Dottie" Vouillon is simply and truly charm-  
ing. So is the "Nightmare."

(Signed) Wm. S. S.

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

June 19, 1884

My dear Lou,

I am only going to write you a line to tell you that I recd your last and am very glad you liked the swords.

We are going to leave here on June 25, to return again after a cruise with all the fleet for 25 days. We will probably not come up the St. L.

I enclose you the three Spanish coins I told you about long ago, and which you have probably forgotten all about.

I won them on a boat race at Port au Prince from the Spanish ship Jorge Juan.

They are a \$4., \$2., and \$1. bangle or broach. I would have sent them before but I wanted to get them put together in New York.

I sent Mary and Addie broaches made of each a Haytian silver dollar, and they express themselves very much pleased.

I was delighted with your last letter, particularly the gossip, write some more immediately, and look out for yourself that you dont get "bit." Never trust a man, and especially an acknowledged beau. They are always on the "mash."

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Give my love to my **cousins** Min. and Charley, and  
tell them I will always love them for being so good  
to you.

And do please write soon.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

Miss Louisa P. Sims \*

Compliments of

Wm. S. Sims

P. S.

Please let me know as soon as you receive this so  
that if I dont hear from you, I will know it hasn't  
arrived and can look it up.

\* Letter obviously folded around small box, and the  
above written on the back. - ASF

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

June 21, 1884

My dear Lou,

Yesterday I rec'd. your letter of the 18th., and a day or so before yours of the 12 and 14, addressed to the Navy Yard.

I am glad you did write to Florence Maxwell, for she appears to think a good deal of you.

Have you heard from Miss Shunk lately. The last time I wrote to her I chaffed her considerably about directing her letters wrong and not putting enough postage on them and I have not heard from her since.

I sent you yesterday a small trinket in a small box, and enclosed a letter with it, so you can look out for it.

I told you all the news, so I dont intend to write much now. I hope you will be pleased with the trinket, and I suppose you will be, for you vain women are all pleased with gugaws# to hang up in your ears or about your clothes. For all I know it may be considered "bad form" to wear coins just now, but, of course, I dont know anything about that, and you must simply believe my intentions to be sincere and complimentary.

Now about my late, and in fact present illness. My trouble was dysentery, and when I was first attacked



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I was very sick and was not well for a month. That was in Dec. last, and since that time I have not been completely cured, as it has returned five times with more or less severity.

I have just recovered from the last attack, but am feeling pretty well# and will probably recover entirely in a little while. I feel flattered that you wrote so soon to enquire about my health, but you must remember that this is for your ears only.

Dont tell somebody, who will promise "not to tell a soul," for they will only do the same with somebody else, etc., etc., - I dont want Mother to know, for, if she finds out, she will always suspect me of deceiving her.

The "Nightmare" has just left the city for the summer. Her little neice is the most beautiful baby I ever saw, and she and I are great friends. Hattie Foishew (?) has been in Brooklyn, but I did not find her when I called. The Vouillons, my Port au Prince friends are also here.

I have been very quiet since I have been here, which, as you know, is quite a change, as I am usually very wild and dissipated. I havn't been "full" once, and am feeling eminently respectable. All this virtue, however, is directly due to poor health and a flat

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pocket book.

I have had to buy \$200. worth of uniforms, besides cit's clos. and lots of other things; but you cant keep money in New York, any more than you can hold on to a handfull of sand with the back of your hand up.

I dont suppose you read the New York papers, so you would not see that I have been promoted, but I have, for I am now an Ensign, the junior grade of that rank having just been abolished by law. That gives me \$200. more per. annum. so that, when at sea, I now get, including ration-money, \$1308.00/100, and we expect to get it brought up to 1600, or 1700, by next session of Congress.

Now I am going to close. Please write a gain soon, for I enjoyed your last letter very much.

I dont wish to flatter you too much, but your remarks about our Aunt Jue were quite clever.

Now please write soon if you dont write much and dont forget all the gossip and scandal. I know its wicked but I like to hear it.

Your loving bro.

(Signed) Will.

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

New York Harbor,

June 27, '84

My dear Lou,

Your letter of the 23rd. (postmarked 26th) arrived today, and I am delighted to find that you are pleased with the trinket I sent you as a birth-day present, for which I might take the credit, but, I am honest, and must confess that I hadn't the faintest idea when your birthday came. I am glad, however, that it happened so nicely.

You are very kind to express such sympathy about my health, for I have not had much, as nobody at home knows I have been ill.

I have however, enjoyed the "Nightmare's" sympathy.

I saw her before they went away for the summer, and have had several letters from her since she left. Her last commenced, "You poor boy. I am very sorry indeed to hear that you are still no better etc" then followed a lot of advice, to the effect that I should go on leave etc. She is a very good girl, and treats me like a sister would her younger brother. She is about as old as you are, and my only feminine friend.

I have often wondered at myself for not falling in love with her. But I am very glad I never have.

I am a thousand times more a bachelor than I ever have been, and have even taken a dislike to the sex in general,

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and society in particular.

I am getting quite old. I read and study all day long, and hardly ever go ashore. I let my beard and hair grow until they get long enough to bother me and then I cut them off, and let them grow again. But I suppose this will all pass away when I get well again.

To be real honest I must say that I am not much better, but you must not worry yourself about me, for I have the best of medical care, as we have two Surgeons on board, and I will doubtless soon get better.

I enjoyed your last good gossip letter very much, and you must write often. The last letters I got from home were very amusing - It appears that in one of your letters to Mother you mentioned Mr. W. and told his occupation, and said a few words about his character, manners etc. Well, you just said enough to start your suspicious mother off.

(Of course, you understand that this is quite as confidential as your letters and you must never tell.)

I assure you she is quite as bad as your Aunts.

I will give you a short quotation.

"I am delighted that Lou. has a beau. & in writing to me she said "that this Mr. W. was a prominent man both in business & a social point of view, & had very gentlemanly manners." I remembered at the time that that was a great deal for Lou. to say about any man. She also said that Mr. W.

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was at the head of the Toronto Bank in Port Hope."

Father makes a good deal of fun of Mother in his letters to me about it.

It is a pity you did not mention Mr. W. before, then you would'nt have had any trouble in getting permission to remain in Canada, and by putting in a word now and then you can remain as long as you want to. This is very wicked in me to be writing this way when I know how very much they love you and want you at home, but you will understand it is more for fun than anything else. Still you know what great match makers all mothers are and that their greatest anxiety is to see their daughters well married and who can blame them. I cant, for I feel the same way myself about my sisters. This is not a propose# of Mr. W. or anyone else, but is just to show you that our dear Mother's anxiety is not a subject for sport.

She would love to have you marry a good man, and so would I, but rather than marry a worthless one, you had better keep house for me.

These remarks really have no reference whatever to Mr. W., for, of course, I can know nothing about him, except that I am prejudiced against all English subjects, but less against a true Canadian than any others, for a true Canadian isnt much of a British subject.

Now I must tell you about our cruise.

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It has been postponed until July 7th, because the Flagship is undergoing a few necessary repairs. We will only be out until July 20, all the same, so our cruise will only be shortened. You must write again immediately and write often. I will always get your letters as they will follow me. I really enjoy your letters very much, and you must get into the habit of writing to me regularly. In other words we must be regular correspondents, so "brace up." - There is not much chance of our coming up the St. L. this summer, so we will have to give up the idea.

I would fairly love to come to Canada now, for I know I would enjoy myself, and I thank Min. and Charlie very much for their kind invitation, and now I must close, as I have no news to tell you.

There is some talk of our going up the St. L. after our proposed cruise, but I guess it is only talk, and you must not "count" on it.

I suppose your letters from home tell you about the presents I sent home to Father, Mother, Hal, Alf, Mary, and Addie. Cigars, preserves, jellies, pickles, etc. from the West Indies, Wine from Halifax, brooches for the children etc. etc.

Now I will close and you must write soon.

Give my **best love** to Min. and Charlie.

Ever your loving bro.

(Signed) Will

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P. S.

Have you read my Haytian letters to the Chicago Times? If you have not I will send them to you, as they might interest you.