

May 13, 1885 - page 2

month. We, however, get all the news from the isthmus.

When I last wrote I think the "Ad." and other parties concerned were trying to make an amicable settlement of the Panama (city) affair. However, it was finally settled by Aizpurn agreeing to evacuate P. without arms, which he did except that they carried their arms with them, and used them to considerable advantage in creating disturbances along the line. Aizpurn was arrested and sent to Bogata, the capital, and I would not give much for his neck.

You have probably seen in the papers that there were two men chums of Prestan confined on board the Galena until a government should be formed ashore. Their names were Cocobola (a Jamaican) and Paurtanzelle (a Haytian), an old acquaintance of mine. They were professional revolutionists.

Paurtanzelle is the same man who burned Jacmel in Hayti. Apropos of Hayti, I hear that there is a revolution in that delightful country now. You will observe that I have been speaking of the above gentlemen in the past tense, for if they have not brought up in a much warmer clime they are very lucky.

They were delivered up to the government forces ashore and by martial law promptly hanged.

There is no capital punishment allowed in this country,

May 13, 1885 - page 3

consequently a hanging was a new sight, and largely attended. The gallows was erected across a railroad track and the men with ropes about their necks stood on a car beneath it. Most of the spectators were Jamaica negroes. They watched the proceedings with intense interest until the car was drawn from under the men, when they turned like one man and fled. It produced a tremendous impression and will be remembered a long time.

After everything had quieted down here the Admiral went with the "Tennessee" and "Alliance" to Cartagena to see if he couldn't quiet things there some way or other. We the "Swatara," and "Galena" will remain here until they come back. Then when they do come back will some ship be left here, and if so how long and which one? These are the questions that are making us uncomfortable just now. Sometimes I think we wont be the one, for nobody knows the capacity, or rather vacuity of Wiltse better than the Admiral, and if there is any need of a vessel remaining I dont think he will trust him. But, if there is really no necessity of a vessels remaining, I think they will leave one all the same, and in that case we may be the one, for the Admiral hates our poor idiot like poison, because he (the idiot) will go to the Flagship, and if admitted to see the Admiral (which he very seldom is now), will grin and prattle the

May 13, 1885 - page 4

most absolute and absurd nonsense for as many hours as he is allowed. The Admiral is a profane man and sometimes uses rather undignified language, so I cant tell you what he usually calls "Old Gill." A casual observer might think I disliked the man myself, but I dont very much. However, I would attend his funeral in a suit of immaculate white duck, with white helmet, shoes and gloves, and perhaps I might get full on the way home.

The health of the troops send down here has been remarkably good. There has only been two cases of yellow fever and they were brought on by exposure. In both cases I believe the men got drunk and slept out doors in the heavy dew.

There has been a little malarial and chagres fever, but nothing serious. Usually it breaks in 48 hours. But it is marvelous how much brawn and strength it will burn out of a man in such a little time.

I believe the remainder of the troops will leave in ten days or two weeks and then we will commence to break up the fleet, and who knows but I may see you all in Orbisonia again some day.

I think you had better continue writing here until you hear from me to the contrary. Perhaps when we leave they will let us send cablegrams home; anyway I guess they will let us (the ship) send a message to the Herald

May 13, 1885 - page 5

which you will see.

Your letter of April 29th., that left New York May 2nd. arrived here the 10th. I also re'cd. one from Lou. dated April 6th. It had been missent to San Francisco, although it was directed quite plainly . I# didnt, however, have "Care U. S. Consul" on it which could not make much difference except it makes one more line in the address and serves to attract attention.

Of course, I was delighted to get it for it was a 16 pager and very lively and interesting.

In your letter you mention receiving my letter containing a check for \$21. and say that it seems so long since I had written. I could hardly believe, until I had thought it out, that that was my first letter from here, for it seems years since I first came here this time. I have however written a number of letters since and I suppose you have rec'd them all by this time.

Now first let us see about those letters that appear to have gotten mixed.

1st. I wrote a letter to the Chicago Times, a sort of rambling crazy letter about the French Convict islands and other things - it also contained something about "bucking a pat hand." I never heard from the editor about this letter, but when you told me you had rec'd it I wrote to him asking him to send amt. due me

May 13, 1885 - page 6

to you. Have you rec'd. it ? ? ?

2nd. I mailed at the same time from Havana two letters to the New York Times, one about Venezuela, exclusively, and the other about the Panama Canal exclusively. The editor send me several copies of the Times containing the Canal letter. Sometime later I wrote to him for the dosh, and, in sending me the cheque for \$21. for the Canal letter he referred to a cheque previously sent for the other letter. (I never received this cheque.)

I then wrote to him asking him to send you a copy of the Venezuela letter, and the cheque for it when it returned through the mails. Savez? Have you rec'd. it? ?

Please keep all three letters for me, for I have seen none but the canal letter, and when you next write please let me know if the "dosh" has all been received.

I have just heard that a synopsis of our reports are published and compared in the New York Times of May 2, but I have not been able to get hold of the paper. If you see one keep it for me.

May 16th.

I have seen the paper above referred to. It is a very poorly compiled article, but shows clearly enough that we (on the Swatara) "knocked 'em all out." Apparently there were only two reports sent to the Department. The Yantic's and ours. The Alliance's has not been

May 13, 1885 - page 7

heard from.

Nothing has yet been heard from the "Tennessee," as there is no communication between here and Cartagena.

Now I think I will close, as I really have no more news to tell you.

You can tell Addie that the little monkey "Chink" is doing very well, but is quite timid yet. He had a bath today and made as much fuss as ever.

Tell Lou, Addie, and Mary that I will answer their letters soon.

Please give Van. my sincere congratulations if you see him again.

I hope Hal. will succeed in his venture in Huntingdon. Do you ever send him any of my letters?

I suppose this letter will find you all in good health again. I sincerely hope so at all events.

With love to all at home

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Aspinwall, U. S. C.,
June 21st., 1885

My dear Father,

By the last steamer I sent two letters, one to Alf. and one to Addie. In the latter I told you all the news that I have to tell viz., our disappointment about the Yantic. She went out yesterday afternoon with a load of coal on board for the Tennessee. As far as we know the program is as follows. The Yantic takes enough coal to the Tennessee to enable her to reach Kingston, Jamaica, where (on dit) she will telegraph to the Department that there is no further need of ships in these waters. And that is about all we know about it.

Now I am afraid you will be worried by seeing that the Galena had yellow fever on board; but in Addie's letter I thoroughly explained the reason she got fever on board, viz., that she is a "yellow fever ship" and should never have been sent down here. Now you must not be worried about us for we are perfectly healthy and likely to remain so, and besides I dont think we will be here more than ten days longer. Then you know that in case yellow fever appeared on board we would leave immediately for the coast of Main (?) we have 100 tons of coal on board and would not be delayed a moment. Now about the newspapers you must not believe the yarns

June 21st., 1885 - page 2

you see in them, about the state of affairs on the isthmus. For an example I saw an account in a paper that yellow fever was epidemic on the isthmus, and that a number of vessessels (vessels) in the harbor of Aspinwall had it on board. That statement is totally false, there are 50 or 60 vessels in here and many of them were here before we came, and there is not a single case among them, and there is very little on shore on this side. For the last week or ten days we have had very good weather, - strong sea breezes and very little rain, and we are all healthy and in good spirits. I "tipped the scales" day before yesterday at 160 lbs. which is quite up to my normal weight, and I never was better in my life#. My appetite is quite startling, but then you know that "those lights burn the brightest that consume the most oil."

One day here is very much like the other, and I do the same things every day, viz., besides the regular routine of meals etc. I go to quarters at 9.30, then read until noon then read all the afternoon, and play two or three rubbers of whist in the evening, and sleep like a top at night.

I think I could stand this routine for at least 50 or 60 years for I am afraid I have become a sad book-worm.

June 21st., 1885 - page 3

I have just finished reading a truly wonderful and original book, and I must confess that it has powerfully influenced my mind. I can see no possible escape from the conclusions arrived at. The object of the book is to explain how, in this age of enlightenment, in the most promising country in the world, where material progress is every day advancing, there should be such an increase in poverty and misery, so many laborers only able to earn enough to keep their little childrens bodies and souls together, and so many laborers unable to find employment at all. The book also explains how all this may be remedied, and points to a future that surpasses all imagination. All this is demonstrated in the simplest manner and by the clearest logic.

I believe the book thoroughly and I dont think any unprejudiced man can read it carefully without being convinced of its truth.

The book is called Progress and Poverty, by Henry George, and is published in Lovell's Library. I think it would afford you a great deal of pleasure to read it, as it has me, for although it treats of the "dismal science," (political economy), it is so clearly and logically written that it can be read without effort. My curiosity was so great to find out his explanations of industrial impressions# (panics), over production,

June 21st., 1885 - page 4

under production etc. and his remedy for them, that I could read nothing else until I had finished it. The price of the book is 20 cents and can be obtained from the American News Co., New York, or from John W. Lovell Co. 14 and 16 Vesey St., New York.

The other day I happened to find on board a copy of Buckle's History of Civilization in England which I am now reading with great interest.

These things interest me so much that I dont feel the privation of having to remain on board ship so long. For as I have practically nothing to do but sit in a steamer chair on deck under the awnings, I am really very well contented here.

There is only one thing that worries me, and that is that I am afraid you are all worried about our remaining down here during the summer time, but, really, there is no necessity for it; however I suppose you will be uneasy until we are ordered home, in spite of all I can say. But remember, you will be greatly deceived if you believe all you read in the newspapers.

I did not get any letters by the last stamer; and I didnt expect any for I rather thought you would be fooled by seeing in the papers that we were ordered north. But you must remember that orders to an Admiral, or in fact a Commander are discessionary# unless specified

June 21st., 1885 - page 5

otherwise, and we cannot leave here until the Tennessee and Yantic have settled affairs at Savanilla. I think it will always be well to write to the address I give you unless you see in the papers a telegram that the vessel has left the port specified, and even then it is not much trouble to drop a line to the port in case the orders are revoked.

I suppose I will find my letters at Key West when we drop in there for coal on our way north. Unless you see in the papers that we have left here you had better continue to address here, although I really dont think we will be here when your answer comes; but, at all events, the letters will be forwarded after us in two or three days after they arrive.

We have no definite information as to the condition of affairs at Savanilla, but we understand that the rebels cant hold out much longer. I believe the Admiral succeeded in getting Peace Commissioners appointed on each side and arranged the terms of the surrender to the satisfaction of all parties, but at the last moment the rebel Genl - in - Chief refused to sign. However three of the rebel generals withdrew from their side, and the Admiral sent them here to us on the Yantic, and the same evening we put them on the Colon for passage to the U. S. where I presume they will fill their dusky

June 21st., 1885 - page 6

skins with ice cream until it is safe for them to return here.

This letter leaves here on Wednesday the 24th. on the Acapulco, and will reach Orbisonia about the glorious 4th. of July.

I can think of nothing more to write you at present, but I may add some before the mail closes.

I would like to be able to write something more to set your minds at ease about the yellow fever bug-bear but I dont know what more I can say, and, lest you should be inclined to doubt what I have already told you, I can only assure you that I have not attempted to deceive you about anything. I have told you that there is yellow fever in this port, but it does not approach the nature of an epidemic; and it is my candid opinion that it is extremely improbable that we should get it on board.

We do not feel the slightest uneasiness about it; and I would not have given the subject such importance in this letter if it had not been for the accounts in the newspapers.

Please tell Lou. that I received an acknowledgement of the photos. sent to New Orleans. The letter was mailed to me on May 5th., (to Navy Dept), and I did not receive it until June 19th. I received a letter from

June 21st., 1885 - page 7

Miss T. by the last mail, and I am sorry to see that she has become a thorough religious fanatic.

I am just about to write a letter to old Nibs. I have not written to him or heard from him for about two years.

Tell Lou. that all her friends on board are well, but none of them # their weight as well as I have.

Last night we all had a bad night. For the last week we have had a second anchor out astern with hawsers to it in order to hold the ship with her head to the swells as they come in the harbor; but last night about 1 a.m. (during my watch) the lines carried away. I sent down to tell all the officers to close their air ports before we commenced to roll, but Lemme thought he would risk the water coming in, and consequently got washed out of his bunk. Then it came on to rain very hard, and as we were rolling heavily it sent the water over the hatches. Both Ben Hill, and Ike. Seymour got their hammocks half full of water. Today we have fixed the anchor again with a chain.

Now I think I will put this letter aside until steamer day, then add a few lines.

June 24th. 2 P. M.

In a few hours this letter will be on its way home. Today finds us all very well, and enjoying a lovely bright

June 24th., 1885 - page 8

day. We have all our suits of clos. on deck to get an airing to keep the milldew away. I am enjoying the very tip topest health imaginable.

Before I forget I want to ask Lou. to send one of my photos. to the following address, viz.

Ensign A. P. Niblack, U. S. N.

U. S. C. S. Str. Patterson,

Navy Yard, Mare Island,

Please forward California.

Please seal it up and put on full letter postage so that it will be forwarded.

Tell Addie that Chink is going very nicely, but is still quite untamed.

Sometimes they catch him and tie him up for a little while. When they catch him he screams at the top of his voice but never attempts to bite. When he is tied up he will come to you and give you his hand, but he always looks as if he would give the world to be loose again, in fact he tries to chew his line in two. I think, however he would get tame if there were not so many people about. When he is loose he will come and take a banana from your hand, but he always stays just out of reach, and while holding on to something with his tail will reach out with both hands, but all the time keeping a good lookout on all sides for fear some one will

June 24th., 1885 - page 9

catch him. When he gets the banana he hugs it against his breast with one hand, and goes skipping up aloft into the "top" where he strips the skin off and throws it on deck, then eats the banana as fast as he can swallow it, when he comes down for another. In the morning when the market boat is coming off he spies it when it is a mile away, and lingers anxiously about the gangway until it arrives, when the steward always gives him a wardroom banana. He gets plenty to eat for the men all feed him until he is as full as a tick.

But he dont get fat for all day long from sunrise to sunset he is on the move, as uneasy apparently, as an evil spirit. He is a gentle little fellow when he is tied up, and I think that when he is tamed he will be quite affectionate. He cant well be tamed on board ship for there are so many people that he cant learn them all and it bewilders him. And besides to tame him one person should feed him all the time, and if necessary starve him a little bit so that # learn who his real friends are. Then if you once get him tame you can let him run loose. But one thing, you cant keep a monkey and raise chickens at the same time, for I am sure he would pick all the feathers off them; for lately he has succeeded in catching two or three little birds up aloft.

June 24th., 1885 - page 10

Now I must close as my ink bottle has about run
dry.

With love to all at home

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

P. S. Lt. Wood rec'd from his mother a letter acknowledg-
ing the receipt of check fo \$50. and I suppose you have
Mrs. Wood's receipt.

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Aspinwall, U. S. C.,
July 5th., 1885

My dear Father,

All things come to those who wait.

Day before yesterday the "Yantic" unexpectedly arrived from Savanilla and brought us orders from the Admiral. In accordance with these orders we will leave here about July 10th or 11th. for Savanilla where we will remain a day or so, then sail for the U. S. via Key West (for coal). I think we will arrive (probably in New York) about the first of Aug.

I think it is pretty certain that we will come north this time, but, as you know from former experiences you cant be certain until we arrive in New York. You will probably see our arrival at Key West in the newspapers, but I will drop you a line from there and perhaps telegraph.

If I send a telegram I will make it brief as they are expensive, e. g.,

(To) "Sims, Mount Union, Penn.

25 New York.

(S'g'd.) Sims"

which will mean.

To. "A.V. Sims, Supt.

East Broad Top Rail Road and Coal Company etc.

Orbisonia Penn.

July 5th., 1885 - page 2

Via Mt. Union, Penna.

We have just arrived here and all are well on board, particularly me. At present we contemplate leaving on July 25th. and will arrive in New York in about a week, when I will send you another telegram.

Give my best love to all at home, and tell 'em they will be likely to see me during Aug. or Sept.

Wm. S. Sims Ensign

United States Navy."

The health of our ship's company is excellent, and I am in splendid trim, and as you can imagine we are all in high spirits. Yesterday we had a bad day for the 4th. and it rained nearly all the time. We were dressed in our usual style with a string of flags from the "flying-jib-boom" up over the mast heads and down to the stern. We fired no salute for ships with less than ten guns are not required to. The Yantic invited us all on board last evening; a number of officers went, and a number got very drunk. I was on watch until 12 P. M. so didnt go. I wouldn't have gone if I hadn't been on watch, and If# I had gone I wouldn't have imbibed any incendiary punches. I dont remember having taken any liquor since I have been down here. By the time we arrive in New York I will have been on board ship about four months, and I shouldn't wonder if I put on an old

July 5th., 1885 - page 3

suit of clos. and went ashore on a "bender" just to get the malaria out of my system.

By the last steamer I received the following letters.

From Mother dated June 17th.

Receipt "	Mrs. Wood "	"	8th.
"	Mary "	"	17th.
"	Hal "	"	"
"	Addie "	"	16 & 17

and May 10.

I was quite surprised to get any at all, for, I thought you were all writing to Key West.

A few days ago we heard that we were to remain here for a month or so longer, so we telegraphed to Key West to have the mail forwarded here, and now we have to telegraph to Key West and New York to head it off.

The Railroad men ashore here will make an effort to have us kept here as long as they can, and, by means of the political influence of the company they may succeed, but I dont think they will. However if we dont turn up in Key West at the proper time you will know that we are detained at Savanilla.

If you will drop me a line as soon as you receive this I will get it at Key West.

Tell them all at home that I am very much obliged to them for writing me so many letters last time. I

July 5th., 1885 - page 4

enjoyed them very much. There is only one little fault that I have to find, and I believe I have never mentioned it before, viz., Each one tells me that, as the others are writing to me, they wont tell me the news over again and consequently I dont get much news. However, I am always more pleased with the family news than will all the rest.

If I get a chance I will send you a letter from Savanilla, via Aspinwall, which you may receive before you hear from me at K. W.

This letter leaves here on the "Colon" this evening.

I think I have told you every particle of news there is to tell, and I dont feel in the humor to write a letter without any so you must excuse me this time. You can tell Addie that Chink has been behaving himself quite well since I last wrote. He runs off with all the small articles he can find, and always steals bananas out of the parrot's cages but he always did that.

Give my love to all at home and tell them that I will answer all their letters soon.

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
At anchor inside
Sandy Hook, N. Y.
July 29, 1885

My dear Father,

I wrote a letter home from Key West, in which I predicted that we would arrive in Hampton Roads Sunday evening or Monday morning. I suppose it has been received all right. According to the program therein contained we arrived off the capes (Charles & Henry) on Monday morning, your humble son in charge of the deck.

We were no sooner pointed fairly in for Fort Monroe, than we met the Flagship coming out. We left her at Savanilla, but she left two days after us and steamed direct to Hampton Roads.

She signalled to us "Have you enough coal to proceed to New York," we answered "Yes," Then she signalled "Follow us," which we did to the best of our ability, and arrived at this anchorage this P. M. (or rather last P. M. as it is now 2 a.m. 29th. and I am writing in the chart room on the "mid watch.") The Flagship arrived several hours ahead of us, and is now probably anchored off the Battery. Tomorrow morning we will follow her.

How long we will remain here, and whether we will go to the Navy Yard or not we dont know; in fact we dont know any more than I have already told you. I will mail

July 29, 1885 - page 2

this letter as soon as we reach the city, and as soon as I can find out anything definite about our movements I will drop you another line, probably this evening.

I suppose some of you have written letters to Fort Monroe. We will telegraph for the mail. If you have sent anything there by express for me let me know and I will write for it.

Digression: Just now I heard the monkeys squeaking like a couple of crickets. I found that they were tied up in one of the boats where they found the weather too cold, hence the squeaking.

It is a perfectly calm moonlight night and the thermometer is 72^o, but it is too cold for them to sleep, so I brought them down and put them on the engine-room hatch where they are now quite comfortable. Tell Addie I will send little "Jim" home in a few days.

You can imagine we are all glad to get home again. It was terribly hot all the way up even as far as the Capes, but here it seems quite cold, and we have gotten our skins dried for the first time in many months. I am about as sensitive to cold now as the monkeys, for it feels quite chilly tonight.

Now I must close for today as I have a couple of business letters to write.

Give my best love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Brooklyn Navy Yard,
Aug. 11, 1885

My dear Mother,

Your very pleasant letter arrived today. I dont know when I have received such an interesting letter. Just such a letter as I love to receive. All about interesting persons and things, and particularly describing little incidents, and remarks. It seems to me that the pleasantest letters are those that are written from the inside of the house, for I would rather a thousand time# know what is going on among the members of the family, than any other general news. For, being away from home so much, I can't be very much interested in anyone outside the family, and for the same reason am more interested in those inside the sacred circle. I am very grateful to you for taking the trouble to write so much about Canada, for I know you dont like writing long letters.

Alf wrote me a very pleasant and wimsical# letter which I answered, I am sorry to say, by a very short and poor one, but I didn't feel equal to the occasion then, and in fact dont feel much like writing now.

It is against my fixed principle to let you know when I am sick, but this time I could hardly help it without telling a fib and saying I had been to call on Florence Maxwell, for, of course, you would all want to

Aug. 11, 1885 - page 2

know that I had called, and if I didnt call you would wonder why. However, I will set your mind an# ease by telling you what is the matter with me. When we arrived in New York I was taken with a mild attack of my old trouble, dysentery, that I contracted winter before last in Port au Prince. What brought it on I dont know, except change of climate and food, for I have indulged in no excesses whatever. The attack has not been severe and has not pained me much, and otherwise I fell pretty well. The disease is entirely local and is situated in the lower bowels. I understand it to be an affection of the mucous membrane of the bowels, and from the fact that it is local the stomach, and system generally are not much affected. Consequently I have a good appetite, and, paradoxical as it may sound, I enjoy tolerable health. I am up and about every day, and in the evenings take a walk in the yard. You can imagine that, remembering how much I suffered in Port au Prince, I am taking excellent care of myself, and as I am not on a very limited or unpleasant diet, I am really quite comfortable. But I do have very severe attacks of the blues, for one cant read always or sleep always; and, as everybody goes ashore except those actually on duty it is very lonely indeed at times. I have been accused of being cross in some of my letters, and have acknowledged

Aug. 11, 1885 - page 3

it, and I now offer the above circumstances in extenuation for that fault, and also for having importuned "somebody" to write me a letter each day.

I think I will be all right soon, for although there has been no change in my condition for the past week, I think I must be healed soon if I take care of myself.

It seems to be pretty well settled that we will go to New Orleans after all, but I don't know when we will leave, probably the last of this week or the first of next. I will let you know when the day is fixed.

Tell Addie I am very glad she is pleased with little "Jimmie" (or "Chink" which does she call him?). Tell Mary I have no doubt her parrot will improve in appearance at least, and it may learn to talk.

Now I think I will close for today. Tell Lou. that I received her letter, and when I get well will take a look at some marinos at Macys and see what I can do.

With best love to all at home, I remain,

Ever your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, Wash., D. C.
Sept. 29, 1885

My dear Mother,

This morning I was too busy to write much, and only wrote a hasty note to Father to tell of my safe arrival. Now I will try and tell you a little news, but I regret to say that I cant be very definite about the future movements of the ship.

My train was 20 minutes late at Mt. Union and in trying to make the time up before getting to Harrisburg we got a hot box, and, in consequence, arrived in H. 40 minutes late. The Washington train waited for us and started out 35 minutes late, and ran like the wind to make it up, but, just before we got into Baltimore we were stopped by a wreck ahead of us and had to shift over on to the other track and take the passengers from the wrecked train, after which we proceeded to Washington but, of course, arrived there late. Instead of going on board so late I changed my mind and put up at the Ebbitt House, for I was dusty, hungry, and tired. I had a good wash and a good supper and a good sleep, and this morning I reported on board in due form, and all my friends were glad to see me.

I have now got all my things stowed away and have settled down, and wont have to go on watch until day

Sept. 29, 1885 - page 2

after tomorrow morning, so I am quite comfortable; but, as you can imagine, rather homesick. However that will wear off in time.

We will probably be here about ten days more getting the silver out, then we will go either to Norfolk or New York or, possibly, remain here. The politicians are all trying to get us for their respective Navy Yards, and there is no telling where we will go. Our new boilers are now ready for us, but I dont think they will be put in this winter. I think we will go to either Norfolk or New York and make temporary repairs for about a month or six weeks, then make a short cruise in the West Indies, then go out of commission.

There is a rumor that all those officers on this ship whose times are out next Jan. will not be sent south again, for we will not finish our repairs until about Dec. 1st. But, as you know too well from experience, there is not much use in trying to predict anything about naval vessels and their movements, so we will just wait awhile and see what turns up. However, we will hope that we are sent to New York.

Tell Lou. that Lemme Wall is not going to get married just now. He and his girl have had a "falling out," which Lem. says is nothing unusual, they often have them. Lem. says to tell Lou. that he thinks it

Sept. 29, 1885 - page 3

fortunate that he didnt mention any names when he wrote to me. You know Lou. remarked that it was just like a man "not to tell who he was going to marry."

Poor old Lem. has had the rhumatism, but is now about well again.

I cant tell you how much I miss poor Rider. Every evening we used to sit on the forecastle and smoke and talk. Nobody knows of any possible reason he could have had for taking his life.

He received my letter accepting the position of best man at his wedding, for when I arrived here Gage gave me a partly finished letter to me, in which Rider acknowledged the receipt of my letter.

It was dated Sept 8th., two days before he shot him~~self~~. I will enclose it to you. He made all arrangements for his wedding by mail from N. O. and bought a wedding ring. About 11 A. M. on the 10th. (the day of his death) the ring was brought on board to him. At 11.30 they had breakfast. He finished his breakfast before the rest and went over into the other steerage and commenced writing some letters. About 12.30 he shot himself, and afterwards they found two letters on the table. One to Gage asking him to send his effects home, and specifying the persons to whom they were to be addressed. The other was to Jones H. W. giving him

Sept. 29, 1885 - page 4

an exact account of the mess affairs (for Rider was caterer), and that was all. He wrote no letters to his people at all, and they know no reason whatever for his terrible act. I saw a letter that his uncle wrote to Gage in which he said that Fred was the pride of the family and that he loved him more than he had ever loved any man, and that he would never recover from the effects of the blow.

It was a peculiar circumstance that he took his life in exactly the same manner that his Father did, and that his friend Shock did. Shock was also engaged and about to be married.

It was a terrible thing, and when I remember how, in talking of Shock's suicide, he had strongly condemned a man's cowardice who would inflict such terrible grief on his family in order to escape his own suffering, I cant think that poor Rider was sane. In fact, I am morally sure that he was at least temporarily insane. Poor fellow, he was very fond of me, and I of him, and I shall miss him for a long time.

The rotten specimen of humanity who commands this ship, acted, under the circumstances like the dog he is. He sent the body ashore immediately and without any ceremony whatever, - he did not even have the work of hoisting silver in stopped while the body was being

Sept. 29, 1885 - page 5

carried ashore. The next day he left the city and went down to quarantine, and would have left no officer or anybody in charge of the body if the Chief Engineer had not threatened the dog that he would report him to the Department.

Then he lied to the officers about telegrams he received from Rider's friends, and if it had not been for a telegram received by Gage, Rider's brother would have arrived in a strange city with no one to meet him, and would have had to search among the undertakers of the city for his poor brother's body.

But I wont talk of the disgusting beast any more..

And now I dont think of any news to tell you just now, and besides I want to finish this tonight to catch the early mail tomorrow.

I have not been to call on Commodore & Mrs. Harmony yet but am going tomorrow. I will write to you every day or so, and tell you everything that goes on.

You must all write to me pretty often for a while for I will be a little homesick.

Give my best love to all at home,

Every your loving son

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, New York,
Oct. 18th., 1885

My dear Mother,

I have been intending ever since my return to tell you of my visit to Providence to see my poor friend's family. For the first time now I have a little leisure.

You know that all Mr. Rider's family were very anxious to have Mr. Gage and me come and see them, as you can well imagine they would be. And particularly as Rider had often mentioned us as his particular friends. His devotion to his mother was simply beautiful, and, as he was a most charming letter writer he was able to associate his friends with his life on board ship so that, as Mrs. Rider told us, it seemed as tho. she had known us for years.

He had even been at the pains to formally introduce to her by letter Mr. Gage, Mr. Jones H. W., and me. He had also, of course, written to Miss Annie Rider about us, and so we were well known to all the family. Besides, you know, Mr. Sidney Rider (his Uncle) had visited the ship, and dined with us and knew us all. So, you see, we were really not visiting strangers.

Mr. Gage and I left New York at 2 P. M. Thursday, and arrived in Providence about 7.00. Mr. Sidney Rider, his son Burnett, and daughter Annie, met us at the depot

Oct. 18th., 1885 - page 2

and their greeting could not have been more cordial and heart felt. They thanked us so warmly for coming to see them and were so solicitous after our health and comfort. Mr. Rider positively insisted on taking charge of our valise while conducting us to the street cars. Arriving at their home we were introduced to their, or rather Mr. Rider's wife, Mother and sister, who expressed themselves very glad to see us, and declared that we were in plenty of time for tea, and had not kept them waiting a minute - but of course we knew we had. Mr. Rider then showed us to our bedroom, which, by the way, I am almost sure Mrs. Rider and he had vacated for us. We then sat down to a very nice tea, which, as we were quite hungry after our long ride, we enjoyed very much, though we would have hopelessly overloaded our stomachs had we eaten half as much as they would have us.

After tea we assembled in their very pleasant sitting room, where, the table having been removed from the center of the room, we sat in a circle about the open fireplace. They were not, however, satisfied until Gage and I had taken the easiest chairs, and the best place on the hearth; nor until we had changed our shoes for slippers, and been supplied with pipes and tobacco. When, however, we had assured them for the

Oct. 18., 1885 - page 3

third time that our chairs were perfectly comfortable, and the tobacco excellent we proceeded quite unreservedly to discuss poor Fred's terrible fate.

Of course it would be impossible for me to detail to you the conversation, so I will only say that their impression as to Fred's death accorded exactly with mine; and I was pleased to find that, such was their implicit faith in his sterling uprightness of principle, and the correctness and chastity of his life, that the idea of his death being caused by any complications arising from his excesses or weaknesses had never had never# once occurred to them. Their impression and mine is that he took his life while laboring under severe mental excitement caused by his despair of being able to throw off or prevent the terrible attacks of melancholia to which he was subject; and which during the last few months of his life, in the face of his approaching marriage, had recurred more frequently and violently than ever. Of course it is unnecessary for me to say how terribly they feel his death. To bring it home in a measure to ourselves you will understand me when I tell you that he was the pride and promise of their family, as Jim. Sims was of ours, and you know how we felt his sudden death.

His Uncle seems to feel it more than any of them

Oct. 18th., 1885 - page 4

except his (Fred's) mother; and I noticed that although he often tried to converse on other subjects, he succeeded but indifferently; and he often said "how Fred would have enjoyed your visit had he lived."

Miss Annie Rider, I am sorry to say impressed me very unfavorably. She took the earliest opportunity of telling me certain things she had no business to tell me, relating to certain difficulties between her father and Mr. George Rider (Fred's brother) arising out of the settlement of Fred's affairs, - the funeral expenses, etc - in which, according to her account Geo. Rider was in the wrong. She also informed me - and I thought it particularly indelicate - that Geo. Rider had proposed to her and been refused. She told me her father had requested her not to mention these affairs; and, indeed Mr. Rider no only never mentioned it but never let it appear by his manner of speaking to or of Mr. Geo. Rider that there was any trouble whatever.

These indiscretions may however have arisen only from Miss Rider's lack of savoir vivre, nevertheless, without entering into details, my impression of her was that she was a woman not capable of a very strong affection. In fact I cannot resist the impression that the little concern she did show arose more from disappointment than grief.

Oct. 18th., 1885 - page 5

She is a good girl enough I believe, but all the same, I hope my passions will never persuade my judgment to entrust my happiness to such a cold heart.

Miss Rider drove us to visit Mr. Rider's mother, and as you can imagine, our interview was very painful.

Mrs. Rider is certainly a very superior woman, not yet fifty years of age I should think, and has a lovable and motherly face, - such a face that one could not help loving her at once. She is not a weak woman, and she bears her terrible grief with the greatest bravery; but, my dear Mother, her face betrays a grief and suffering the like of which I have never seen before, nor wish to see again. I will always be very thankful for having had this opportunity of visiting her, and I will never as long as I live forget the manner in which she thanked us for coming to see her in her trouble. We told her everything she could want to know about Fred, and how much we loved him. She said that she never for a moment doubted his bravery and his love for her, - that she perfectly understood how he had struggled for years to overcome his disease (as she said she knew it to be). She said that he was a most dutiful son and a soul of honor, and that his love for her and hers for him could not be understood by anyone else.

She said she never could be sufficiently grateful

Oct. 18th., 1885 - page 6

to us for coming to see her, and told us she would be glad if we would each take some little thing that we could associate pleasantly with Fred. I asked to be allowed to retain some books I had of his, and Gage took one of his books.

All this she told us without once breaking down, although sometimes she could only say a few words at a time; and when we rose to depart she took my hand in both of hers, and, for the first time with tears in her eyes, thanked me again in such a heartfelt manner for coming to here, that I put my arms about her and kissed her and went away. You may well believe that so long as I live I will never forget this poor lady and her terrible grief.

Miss Rider bore this interview with almost perfect composure.

We left at 2 P. M. the same day, and arrived here safely at 7.00.

The ship will probably leave Tuesday or Wednesday.

I will of course write again,

With love to all at home

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.

Oct. 28, 1885

Wednesday

My dear Mother,

Your last letter from Phila. arrived all right. I am glad you had such a pleasant time. You must write and tell me all that you have not already told me, and tell Addie she must write to me soon herself.

I have very little news to tell you for this is a very quiet place. However, only a day or so ago we came very near going to Aspinwall again.

The Powhatan had been ordered to be ready to proceed there carrying about 160 sailors, and some officers for the Pacific squadron.

They of course did not want to go, and when everything else was ready her chief engineer reported her boilers in a very bad condition. We were ordered not to take our engine to pieces for repairs, but to hold ourselves in readiness for sea. The Powhatan's boilers were in a rather bad condition, but, after inspecting them it was decided to send her, and she has gone, so we feel easy again. We will be here six weeks or two months and will try to make ourselves comfortable. We have lots of company as the "Alliance" and "Yantic" (steamers) are here, besides three sailing vessels

Oct. 28, 1885 - page 2

belonging to the training squadron, the "Saratoga," "Jamestown," and "Portsmouth." The three latter vessels have about 700 or 800 little sailor boys on board, such a mob you never saw when they let the little chaps out in the yard to play.

They are from 14 to 18 years old and all dressed in white cotton suits sailor fashion. Directly in front of where their ships are moored the yard is broad and level, and grassed over, so that it makes a splendid playground for them. Every morning they are drilled there and in the afternoon allowed to play baseball, football, or anything they choose.

Their ships are old fashioned sailing frigates such as were considered excellent men-of-war fifty years ago.

I dont know how I am going to amuse myself while the Swatara remains here. I suppose there will be a number of "hops" etc. in Norfolk and in the yard, but I dont know whether I will attend them or not. I suppose however I will have to as I know a good many people here. We are going to set up a tennis court in the yard to give us a little exercise, and I have no doubt we will put in the time pleasantly enough. It will be some time before we will find out what our cruise this winter will be, but we will probably bring up in New Orleans in Feb. or March.

Oct. 28, 1885 - page 3

We are going to get a new executive officer in my friend (?)# Mr. Strong's place on the 5th. of next month, and, we hope, a new captain soon.

It would not surprise me if I were detached before the ship left for the south, although, I rather expect, as watch officers are scarce, that I will be allowed to remain, and Lemme also. I dont think I will apply to be detached, as I have much better duty now than I am entitled to, and probably if I went on shore duty, I would soon be sent to sea again. We are now being repaired for a cruise of only six months, when we will go to some navy yard to **have** our new boilers put in. I think, however, that we will **probably** cruise about a year more, and have the boilers put in next fall.

I think I must close now. Please write to me soon, and tell Lou. to write us soon as she gets to Brooklyn, where I understand she is going as soon as you get home.

Give my love to Father, and all at home,

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Will.

P. S. I forgot to tell you when I wrote to you about my visit to Providence that Miss Rider showed me her wedding ring, on the inside of which was engraved a quotation from the "Tempest of the Heart," a song I think from the opera of Il Trovatora. Rider was extremely

Oct. 28, 1885 - page 4

fond of this melody and it seems to me that the quotation has a very painful and pathetic significance, and particularly as in a note he wrote to Mr. H. W. Jones just before he shot himself he asked him to send the ring to Miss Rider, but not to tell anyone of the engraving. It was as follows "Thou can't by thy sunshine only calm this tempest of the heart."

(Signed) Will.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.

Nov. 26, T'k's'g. (1885)*

My dear Lou,

I received your last letter but was too busy to answer it until now.

You know how busy I was getting up the reception in New York? Well it has been just the same here. I have had most of the work to do - and I am quite worn out. I was a fool to have anything to do with it for I have not been going into society at all here.

The reception comes off tomorrow afternoon, and it will be my first here. How I wish you and Florie could be here, but you need not envy me, for I am tired of the whole business, and will be too busy and worried tomorrow to take much part; besides I dont know more than three or four people here.

I sent you an invitation yesterday, and I suppose you will receive it soon. I sent one home also. The invitations are all gone, and I have just remembered that I promised one, so I am going to ask you to send yours to the following address,

C. Andrade,

1324 Spruce St.,

Philadelphia, Pa.

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

Nov. 26, 1885 - page 2

Please do this for me for I dont want to disappoint Mr. Andrade, (our Chief Engineer).

Now about this money business: - our Paymaster has been on leave and has just returned but there is positively no money in the ship, and he wont have any for some days - not until he can go to Washington to get it. As soon as I can get it I will send you some if it is not then too late. You did not say where you would be in Phila. but I suppose at 1409, nor how long you would stay.

Write to me soon and tell me if you are going to visit Nancy. If you do you must give her my very best regards. Remember me to all in Phila.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard Norfolk, Va.,

Dec. 2nd. 1885

2.30 a.m.

My dear Mother,

I suppose you have received the invitation to our reception, and forwarded it to Mary. How I wish you all could have been here. Lou. Mary, and Addie w'd. have enjoyed it so much.

Everything went off very nicely, and it was quite a success. The dancing hall was in the Sail Loft and was about 200 x 75 feet, all decorated with the various colored flags of all nations. We had ten pieces of the best music Norfolk could furnish. The refreshments were rather elaborate for an afternoon affair, Ice cream, cakes, punch, sandwiches, coffee, and chicken salad - and they were all very good, especially the punch.

I had the management of the whole business, as I had in New York, although I swore I would never try it again after the trouble I had in New York. There is twice as much work about an affair of the kind here, where there is no regular caterer, and where you have to send away for so many things. I was foolish to undertake it for I have not been a society man here this winter. However I succeeded very well, The invitations as you may have observed were quite the thing.

Dec. 2nd. 1885 - page 2

They were ordered from New York.

Jno. C. Sims helped me out splendidly. I wrote to him for 34 dozen teaspoons, 16 doz forks, and 250 napkins, and they were expressed to me the same day. I sent Jno. & Grace an "invite," also one to the Misses Sims. I am now quite an experienced caterer, and can tell you how many people to a gallon of ice cream, salad, coffee or punch. It is curious, by the way, that a given number of people in a place the size of Norfolk will "get away" with as much as twice the number in New York or Brooklyn.

I provided

15 gals punch

12 " ice cream

8 " salad

500 sandwiches

16 lbs cakes

and they carried it all away with them. We had between 250 and 300 guests.

The punch was so manipulated that the affair did not drag as afternoon affairs sometimes do, but went off with a snap.

There were four bowls of punch, and I mixed them as follows.

1st bowl. $\frac{1}{4}$ water, $\frac{3}{4}$ claret

Dec. 2nd. 1885 - page 3

2nd bowl all claret
3rd " $\frac{1}{4}$ whiskey $\frac{3}{4}$ claret
4th " $\frac{1}{3}$ " $\frac{2}{3}$ claret.

Of course nobody knew but myself how they were mixed.

The effect was that people went in the small end of the horn and came out the large, and by the time it was all gone nobody wanted to go home.

The dancing was kept up until about 5.30, and when the last dance was finished it was so dark in the hall that you could not tell one girl from another, and everyone went home in a good humor, and not very many (I hope) tipsy.

There is a good deal of gaiety going on, mostly in Norfolk, but it is a long pull over there at night, (especially coming back) and I have not yet tried it.

Our repairs are moving along slowly, and I guess we will be ready about Jan 15th. I long for the balmy breezes of the West Indies, as I dont like standing watch in the cold.

There is the greatest possible difference in the ship now that we have our new Commander and Executive. The latter is a very pleasant man, and a good executive. He is cleaning the ship up in good style, and the crew and officers are all contented.

Our skipper is a "light weight" but thoroughly

Dec. 2nd. 1885 - page 4

inoffensive and good natured, and I think we will have no trouble with him. He has put one of the Naval Cadets on watch with us so that we now have six watches, i.e. two days on duty, and four off.

The weather continues mild, but for the last three days we have had a rain storm from the north, and it will probably end by being cold.

Lou. writes me splendid letters, and tells me she has enjoyed her visit very much, and likes Florie more and more. (Same way with me.)

I must close now for this time. Write soon.

Your loving son

(Signed) Will

Letter written on back of letter from U. S. Coast and
Geodetic Survey Office, dated, Washington, Dec. 4, 1885.

My dear Father,

I have just re'cd. this letter and have promptly declined Mr. Peter's offer. I would rather go to sea in three watches than be on duty in Washington. Mr. (Lieut.) Peters is a total stranger to me and I cant imagine who could have recommended me for this duty. My declining his offer will, of course settle the matter.

I hope you have sent Mr. Prices letters back, as he is looking for them every day. Let me hear from you soon concerning Alf. Also concerning the mining stock.

I am at present standing a tour of duty, and, consequently, have not time to write much.

With love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

The letter on the following page is the one on the back of which the above was written. - ASF

U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Office,
Washington, Dec. 4, 1885.

Dear Sir,

Would you like to come to this office on duty connected with the revision of the Atlantic Coast Pilot, of which work I have general charge at present.

The duty requires office work during the greater part of the year, and probably you would have to go afloat occasionally.

This letter is entirely personal on my part. I dont know yet whether the matter could be arranged. Before inquiring into that, I'd like to know whether you wish to come.

Yours truly

Geo. H. Peters

Ensign W. S. Sims,

U. S. Swatara -

(See proceeding letter from W. S. S. which was written on the back of this . - ASF)

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.
Dec. 4th., 1885

My dear Lou.

I had just commenced to answer your letter of Nov. 30, when I received your last of Dec. 3rd.

I would have written before but I have been very busy settling up my "Hop." accounts. They are all fixed now and I returned 60¢ to each subscriber so that it cost us just \$4.40 each. (67 of us), and everyone appears satisfied.

Last Wednesday the people of Portsmouth gave us a ball at the Ocean House, which I attended, but it used me up so that I will now remain at home. We danced until 3 a.m. and I did not get home until 4. This is the first affair I have attended except our reception.

However I had a very good time, although as usual I didnt do the proper thing. I continued to be introduced to three or four of the best dancers and confined my valuable attentions to them instead of meeting a number of people I should have met. However it makes no difference if I am going to remain at home.

I find that my health is not quite good enough to stand the fatigue and exposure of remaining out all night when I am off duty, and standing watch besides. Not to mention eating salad, oysters and cream, and drinking

Dec. 4th., 1885 - page 2

picnic punches at all hours of the night. I would like it well enough if I could stand it,--I mean the hops themselves. But if you attend them there is a weary round of calls to make on silly girls who are comparative strangers. Besides the young ladies down here, although very agreeable and hospitable, are by no means so well informed, and consequently not so agreeable as you northern belles (thanks).

However, you must not run away with the idea that I cant get along without these dear girls, or that I will be materially injured by my own society, as you seem to imply when you say that these giddy whirls will "do you good and take you out of yourself."

Let me warn you not to waste any sympathy on me, for I need it as little as any man I know.

I really havn't a care in the world and, moreover, I am perfectly contented.

If I had lots of money and nothing to do I dont think I would be half as happy. I have now two days on duty and four off, and agreeable shipmates, especially those in authority over me.

The Jonesii and Lemme send you their regards, and the latter wants to be remembered to Addie when you write. They, and two of my new shipmates, Naval Cadet Werntz and Assistant Engr. Baxter (two splendid fellows) are

Dec. 4th., 1885 - page 3

on the go all the time day and night. Hops, Germans, Musicals, Sociables, Shakespeare, and Literary (they spelled it "Litterary" on the invitations) Societies, etc. etc. Pete Jones is as irresistable and susceptible as ever.

You did not tell me that you had been sick, and I am very sorry to hear it. You must take good care of yourself.

I wouldn't quarrel with Aunt Emeline if I were you, for although she may be very annoying, you must remember that she is very old. When I have her weight of years to carry I expect to be so cross and disagreeable that I will have to live in a house by myself, and pay high wages to get a servant to let me abuse him.

How is Mary looking, and does she like the school. I imagine her high spirits chafe a little under the discipline, although she acknowledged to me that she thought it was necessary, as she says some of the girls are unprincipled enough to flirt with young men when they go out for a walk. However we can have perfect confidence in Mary's uprightness and propriety.

I love her very much, and I am sure she is going to make a fine woman, then I will have two fine young "growd" ladies for sisters (thanks). I have been too busy to write to her much lately, but intend writing soon.

Dec. 4th., 1885 - page 4

Dont forget to give my love to Aunt Josie when you go to see her, and tell her that one of my shipmates remembers Uncle Clifford when he was courting her, and also remembers her. The shipmate referred to is Dr. Parker our chief Surgeon, a Philadelphian. The Dr. is going to Phila. soon and will call on Clifford at his office. I hope he will give a good account of me.

When you go to Harrisburg you must give my kindest regards to Nancy (dont forget)

You spelled "lanyard" correctly and I have not forgotten it. Some time ago I found a sailor who can make you one, but none of the sailors have time to do such work now, as they are all busy taking down all our rigging and refitting, besides doing hundreds of other things that you would not recognize by their nautical names, and which have no other names.

For example they are reparcelling and servng the jib guys, bobstays, fore-togallant stays, whisker jumpers, jib martingales, cat harpins parrels (?), and housing down the lower shrouds with the dead-eye lanyards. How much of that do you "get on to."

We have not been in the dry dock yet, and dont know when we are going in, and the "society men" dont care, as the longer we stay the better they like it. I dont think we can get away until the middle of Feb.

Dec. 4th., 1885 - page 5

The best piece of news I have heard lately is that Admiral Jouett's scheme of making us camp out three weeks at Tampa Bay and march three days inland is "busted." I only hope it is true, as I am too fond of a quiet life, to like such expeditions, for I am not much of a professional enthusiast - that is I am not so enthusiastic about my profession that it keeps me awake nights. Apropos of nights, I am getting powerful fond of my bunk in my old age. I have a good reflecting candle at the head of my bunk, and it affords me great entertainment to don my flannel robe de nuit, prop myself up, tuck the clothes in under my chin, and read until I am sleepy.

Now my young miss I think I have finished with you for this time, except telling you that Garvin (?) the Potteville Photographer is enlarging a photo. of Mr. Rider which Gage and I, and perhaps Jones H. W. are going to present to his lovely Mother. The picture will be about 18 inches long and of proper width, and framed.

I must also tell you something that you will be glad to hear.

Alf. and Father have consented to let me supply \$600. per year to send Alf. to Cornell University to take a course in Civil Engineering, and I think he will go next Sept. I particularly want you to keep this

Dec. 4th., 1885 - page 6

to yourself, for of course you will understand that Father has always regretted his inability to send his sons to college, and besides he thinks I ought to be saving money for myself. I dont think he understands what an old plug I am, and that I wont need the money. Anyway I am quite sure I would never save much unless I did have a definite object. Old Hal. I am happy to say is now doing well, and by the time Alf gets through college, I think times will be more stirring. Then we will all be fixed. Now I must close as the mail is going ashore this very minute.

Your loving brother

(Signed) Will

Remember me to all at 1409.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.

Dec. 20, 1885

My dear Lou,

Your letter of the 15th. inst. was rec'd a few days ago, and I would have answered before only I was on duty when it arrived, and besides I have been quite busy writing business letters lately.

When you get home Father will tell you all about the business. I have invested a little money in a silver mine that looks very favorable, and I think I will make a little money out of it.

It is too late for me to send this letter to Harrisburg, for I find in looking over your letter now that you intend to join Mary in H. on the 21st., so I will send it home.

I did not know before that the Shunks had moved out of H. and you did not tell me what they were doing in the country. Have they a farm? And what is Mr. S. doing? Is Helen Boas married yet, and if not is she going to be?

I am very sorry that you had a stiff back while at Nancy's, but you say you had a good time. When you write you must tell me all about it, and what you three girls did to amuse yourselves. I would like to have been there to help you. I am sorry to say that I have

Dec. 20, 1885 - page 2

not finished Nancy's tortoiseshell sword yet, and moreover that I have lost my whole box of tools and appliances for working in shell, together with some pieces of shell, all my polishing gear, and Nancy's sword which you know, I had already sawn out but not finished. However I have some large pieces of shell somewhere, and before we go south into the warm weather I will try and get some more tools together as I have several little things to make.

The other day we hoisted out a section of our propeller shaft, then went into dry-dock, where we now are. We were all much disappointed to find that old "Gill" had not damaged the bottom much by running ashore so many times. The only considerable injury done was the bending of the ends of the propeller blades. The propeller has been taken off and is now being straightened. We expect to be in dock about a week or ten days more. Then there remains to hoist in the new propeller shaft and complete the repairs to the engine and boilers. I think we will be ready about the middle of Jan.

The sooner the better for me, for I don't like the cold weather - although now it is quite pleasant here.

We now have out tennis court indoors in a large loft only a few hundred feet from the ship, where we can play in all weather.

Dec. 20, 1885 - page 3

I am still jogging along as usual, having a very quiet but contented time. I call on Commodore and Mrs. Truxtun frequently and play whist. Mrs. T. is a very fine woman indeed and keeps the Old Com. who is inclined to be "tough" in good condition. Mrs. T. is the 2nd. wife of the Com. who is the father of Truxtun in my class.

Did you see in the papers that a Japanese servant on the Swatara assaulted Lieut. Comdr. Durand? The newspapers are as usual wrong.

The affair happened on the "Alliance," and I believe there is nothing in it, and that Durand is to blame. At all events the servant is to be tried by a General Court Martial, and I am going to defend him, for I pity the poor devil, a stranger in a foreign country the language of which he can't speak or understand. I will leave nothing undone to clear him, and hope to show the court that Lt. Comdr. Durand has been guilty of conduct unbecoming an officer, and that he is responsible for the whole trouble. Durand is a "moustant" and a poor thing, and it will do him good.

If I take charge of this case I will tell you more about it.

I must close now. Give my love to Mary, and all at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will

Swatara, Norfolk, Va.

Midnight, 29th. (Dec. 1885)

My dear Father,

I have been working several hours on the argument for my defense of the Japanese I mentioned in previous letters. I dont know whether I will clear him or not. I have seen sicker monkeys get well. This one is pretty ill, tho.

I have no time to write as I must turn in.

I have heard nothing from San Francisco yet, but as I explained before, it is not time yet.

This letter* is from Commodore J. G. Walker in answer to mine asking him to let me stay here.

Polite of him isn't it? He would order me away tomorrow if he wanted me to go anywhere tho!

Harmony and Walker are pard\$ hence this is thusly.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving son, (Signed) Will

P. S. I am giving this court considerable worry. They dont know much. One of them was heard to remark, "That youngster is to d- n fly." (thats me.)

* Refers to letter on inside sheets of which the above is written, and which is copied on the following page. -ASF

Dictated

Bureau of Navigation

Washington 28 Dec 1885.

Ensign

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

U. S. S. "Swatara,"

My dear Sir:

Your note of the 27th has just reached me, and I will give directions that as you request, you shall not be disturbed on board the Swatara, but remain there for the present.

Very truly your,

(Signed) J. G. Walker

Letter just preceding this from W. S. S. written on the inside sheets of the above. - ASF

Swatara, Jany. 7th, '86.

My dear Father,

If I were a married or a spoony man, this would be a chance for me. However, I never liked the Academy enough to want to go back again.

I would rather be on the briny; and so I have declined this rather complimentary offer - with thanks.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

The above written on the back of the following letter. - ASF

Department of Mechanical Drawing,
U. S. Naval Academy,
Annapolis, Md, Jany 5, 1886

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

Dear Sir:

Your name has been handed to me as that of one who had taken an interest in mechanical drawing and had done some good drawing.

Another assistant is needed in this Dept. of the Academy, and I am authorized by the Superintendent to enquire of you if you would be willing to come to the Academy as an instructor in Mechanical Drawing. If you are, and you know of no reason why the Navy Department would object to sending you here, he will apply for you officially.

Jan 5, 1886 - page 2

No free hand drawing, sketching, or anything of that kind is taught here now, nothing but Mechanical Drawing.

Should you be willing to come, it is desirable that you should come as soon as possible.

Hoping that this may find you favorably inclined,

Believe me

Yours very truly

Harry Knox, Lt.

Head of Dept of Mech. Drawing

U. S. S. Swatara

Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va

Jan. 14, 1886.

My dear Mother,

Your long letter of the 10th. reached me yesterday or day before, and I would have answered it then but was very busy indeed defending a man before a General Court Martial. This last case was that of a Seaman on this ship who was accused of theft. It has been a long and tedious trial, and was only finished this morning, when I read my paper for the defense, a document of 30 pages.

It is a hard thing to tell what a Court Martial will do, but I have very little doubt but that they will acquit this man. There was no positive evidence against him except the testimony of one witness which was very damaging, but I think I succeeded in breaking his testimony, for he contradicted himself four distinct times on my cross examination, besides giving testimony that was very improbable and very suspicious. No civil court would accept this man's testimony. I dont know whether this court will or not.

I have convinced myself to ~~my~~ entire satisfaction that this witness and another man mentioned in the trial are the thieves, and that the accused is innocent. I hope I have convinced the court to the same effect. The

Jan. 14, 1886 - page 2

accused has been on the ship with me for nearly three years and is a very good man and I want to see him get off.

All this law business is giving me quite a legal reputation. This morning Capt. Brown, the Capt. of the Navy Yard came into court to hear the defense.

I will not bore you any more with this legal business, but some of these days when I get rested I intend to make a copy of both these papers for defense, for future reference, and will send them home for you to read.

I have not heard yet how my Japanese friend Motoyoshi Katsuzo came out on his trial, but from several hints I have heard members of the court drop I am almost sure they acquitted him.

I hope they have, for I believe he is an honest, faithful and respectful man. When I send my defense home to you you will see how I handled his accuser.

It was really touching to see Katsuzo's gratitude to me, for although the trial was all Greek to him, he could see, when I was having a tiff with the court on some objection or other, that I was doing all I could for him. And a dozen times he told me through the interpreter that if he got off he would come to my ship to see me. And every morning when I came to the court room he would bow very low as I passed him, I expect to hear very soon the result of his trial, and will let

Jan. 14, 1886 - page 3

you know, as you all seem to be interested in the poor fellow. I have not heard from the Japanese Minister yet.

All this work has been very tiresome, and for one not accustomed to it, a rather severe mental strain. I am reading a novel now to take the legal talk out of my mouth.

Now I must tell you about something else, however, I have little to tell for I have done nothing for the past three or four weeks but attend court, study law books, and write defenses.

Society is as gay as usual here, but, of course I have been too busy to attend to such frivolities#.

Last Wednesday, however, we had a little society on board. Lemme Wall, who is our heavy society man, and Dr. Ashbridge invited a party of ladies off to breakfast (11.30 a.m.)

The party was chaperoned by Mrs. Commodore Truxtun, and consisted of three giddy girls besides. It went off very pleasantly indeed.

I could not be there as it was a court day, but I arrived in time for the last course and desert. My room was of course selected for the ladies to put their wraps in and was fixed up for the occasion.

Your bunk cover was on the bed, Lou's table cloth on the wardroom table, and all the "pretties" in sight

Jan. 14, 1886 - page 4

in the room.

Of course, they would not believe that they were all made by you and my amiable sisters, - they never will. As I have often said before Mrs. Truxtun is a most amiable lady, and a good friend of mine.

I have a general invitation to play whist with her and the Commodore whenever I choose to come up.

Now let me tell you of something very sad, viz., the funeral of our dear old shipmate Lt. Wood.

It took place last Monday, and was a military funeral. Just before this cruise Mr. Wood was on duty at the Navy Yard and lived in Norfolk where he had many friends and acquaintances.

We all assembled at the hotel, three companies of marines in full dress, two companies of sailors, and all the officers. The body was lying in state in the hotel parlor covered with our national flag, and surrounded by about a dozen beautiful floral designs, the most beautiful of which was given by the sailors of this ship.

It was about two feet high and represented the familiar design of "the gates ajar." It was made entirely of white flowers with the exception of "our shipmate" in blue letters over the arch, and "crew of Swatara" below. The procession marched from the hotel to the Episcopal Church, the marines, with reversed arms, first,

Jan. 14, 1886 - page 5

then the sailors, followed by the officers. The body was taken into church and the services held. A little boy sang sweetly in the choir, and the minister delivered the services.

It was one of the most affecting scenes I have ever witnessed. I regard part of the episcopal service for the burial of the dead as very beautiful, and part of it almost brutal. I never pitied any one so much as I did Mrs. Wood who had to be reminded of the worms and corruption awaiting the body of the man she loved more than her life.

From the church we escorted the body to the steamer, where it was placed under a guard in charge of a Lieut. Comdr. who accompanied Mrs. Wood to her home in Morristown New Jersey.

Long years ago when Mrs. Wood was first married she had a little child.

It lived only a few years. When it died her religion failed her, and she refused to believe in a God who could take her only child away from her. She did not go near a church for five years, but finally repented and became a devout christian, as she now is.

Now she is alone in the world. Her lot has been a sad one. She is one of the loveliest# women I know. She reminds me very much of Aunt Josie.

Jan. 14, 1886 - page 6

I hope Hal. and Allie find themselves comfortable in Huntingdon. Are they -----*

Tell the Small Adelaide that she has been very good to me lately writing so many letters, and I will answer them as soon as I can.

Tell her also that I smelled the little "Puritan" bag and found out that it was not a pin-cushion.

I am very sorry to hear about Lou. Patterson's affliction and Uncle San's (?) misfortunes. Uncle Bob will feel rather lonely on his farm.

I am pleased to hear that Folly is sprucing up. When she gets her spring coat I think she will be quite handsome.

Tell Alf. I was very much pleased with his last letter, and will answer it tomorrow.

Now I must say good night and turn in.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) William

*Half a page torn off at this point. - ASF

U. S. S. "Swatara,"
Aspinwall, U. S. C.,
May 13, 1885

My dear Father,

The last steamer left here on the 7th. inst. The next leaves on Sunday the 17th., and will convey this letter home. I intend to send a cablegram on Sunday which will reach you only a day or so later than my letters by the steamer of the 7th. would have reached you if I had written any by that steamer.

But I didn't write any for several reasons. We understood at first that the steamer was to sail of a Saturday, but she didnt, she sailed of a Thursday. In the meantime I was laid up with what I thought to be the mumps, but which turned out to be only cold. I was about to write a letter on Friday, when I found that the steamer was gone. I was very sorry but there is no harm done for I would only have written a few words as I didnt feel well - and now I can send you a message by electricity.

I suppose you have kept yourself pretty thoroughly informed about affairs down here for everything of importance is telegraphed home and appears in the papers. I have not been ashore since - let me see - when I last returned from duty on the armored train - which was about April 16th. and since today is May 15th., it is about a

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.
Jan. 16, 1886

My dear Addie,

I have a good piece of news to tell you.

My client, the poor Japanese who was tried by a General Court Martial, was acquitted by the court.

That is they decided that he was innocent and he is to be set free.

So you see I have done a poor ignorant man a good turn, for if there had been nobody to defend him he would surely have been convicted and punished, for the witnesses against were not honest. He will be set free today. I know you will be glad to hear this, and so will everybody here in the Navy Yard, for I am receiving congratulations from everybody.

I have very little news to tell you except that I went to a German in Norfolk last night, and danced until two o'clock this morning! What do you think of that for an old man? I had quite a good time and met a number of girls I used to know three years ago. Tonight I am going to the Commodore's to play whist.

So you see I have plenty of amusements.

There is no news to tell you besides all this, for I have just written letters to Mother and Alf. You must write to me again soon and tell me if you have not

Jan. 16, 1886 - page 2

had good skating and coasting, and how "polly" gets
along this cold weather.

I suppose Mary has gone back to school by this time.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving brother

(Signed) W I L L

U. S. S. Swatars,
Navy Yard, Norfolk Va.
Jan. 28th., 1886

My dear Lou,

Your letter of the 24th. duly received.

I thank you for your good opinion of my legal ability. Perhaps it will not be so good when I tell you that I lost my second case - the one I felt the surest of. The man was convicted and sentenced to one year's imprisonment, then to be dismissed from the service.

I never was more convinced of anything than of this mans innocence, and I know that before a civil court the testimony on which he was convicted would never have been received against him. If the cases had been tried in the inverse order I think this man would have been acquitted and the Japanese convicted with a recommendation to mercy. A Court Martial always feels under obligations to convict, and they feel that they have been defrauded or outwitted if the man is shown to be innocent.

An enlisted man before a Court Martial is not tried by a jury of his peers.

And worst of all there is no impartial judge to charge the Court (jury) and tell them what evidence is sound and what not; what must be received and what rejected, and what is the relative value of evidence for

Jan. 28th., 1886 - page 2

and against the accused. A Court Martial seldom gives the benefit of the doubt to the accused. The burden of the proof lies with the accused who must prove his innocence beyond a doubt.

From our experience of men, and what we have learned from reading, Rider and I came to the conclusion that man is not a reasoning animal; that few men (proportionally) understand logic and evidence well enough to form a correct judgement; and that fewer men still have the courage and confidence of their own convictions.

The great majority of men are ruled by the opinions of the few. However, I am convinced that my arguments were sound and my conclusions legal, and I feel satisfied with my papers, if I am not with the decisions of the court. I could not supply them with information, instruct their legal ignorance, or supply them with brains.

At all events, although I have worked hard, it my# bear its fruit some day, as it gives me a certain reputation, determines in a measure my individuality, and shows that I have the courage of my convictions.

I am quite busy now but will try and manage to send the copies of my arguments before we leave, which will be in about a week or ten days. We are to go direct to Key West, and will probably make no cruise in the W. I.

I will send the papers from there if I dont finish

Jan. 28th., 1886 - page 3

them here.

I am a very bad "sassiety" man now, Afternoon teas, germans, theaters, etc. etc. It takes all my time, - that's what I dont like about it. However we will soon get away.

Addies's last letter was very good, and I will answer it just as soon as I get time.

Tell Mother that I rec'd. her letter of the 24th, enclosing note from Father.

I have just rec'd a letter from Jno. Sims, concerning Alf. and must answer it, so good bye for this time,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Will,

I have met here a very handsome girl, - a visitor in Norfolk. Tall (5' - 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ '') handsome, cultivated, amiable a perfect lady etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. etc. Dont tell Mother !!!

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, Norfolk, Va.
Feby. 4th., 1886

My dear Mother,

Your last letter was duly received and enjoyed.

I have just written to Alf and told him all the news, and now I am going to write you a little gossip, or rather tell you what I have been doing lately to amuse myself.

Until about three weeks or so ago I remained very quietly on board ship, for to tell you the truth I was not so very well. The change of climate from Orbisonia to Norfolk did not do me any good. And that, together with a little too much tennis one day set me back and gave me the blues besides.

As usual I drew myself into my shell, drew my books in after me and enjoyed myself to my heart's content.

Three or four weeks ago, when I was long since quite well again, Lemme Wall, and Dr. Ashbridge invited four ladies to the ship to breakfast and invited me to help entertain them. I did so and havent had any rest or peace since. Germans, teas, operas, theaters, calls, etc. There's dust on the books. I only read one last month.

At the first (fatal) german I attended I met a certain very pretty little girl, whom I asked to tell

Feb. 4th., 1886 - page 2

me who a certain tall and handsome girl was. The tall and handsome girl turned out to be her guest, a stranger.

I met her!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

16

As I said before this terrible girl is tall, handsome, amiable, sensible, unaffected, ladylike, womanly, accomplished, well educated, well read, graceful, shapely, an elegant dancer, and rich. She resembles nobody that you know.

Although I fancy Aunt Maria must have looked something like her when she was a girl. The same character of face, and the same beautiful teeth.

Now I fancy I have told you enough about her, and will go on with something else, - or would you rather hear some more. ? You would? - Well I'll tell you some more. You must remember that I only met her three weeks ago.

Now I dont know what more to tell you. Unless, indeed, you would be interested in hearing that I **have** in 3 weeks called half a dozen times or so on her and her charming little hostesses (there are 2 of 'em), taken her to the theatre twice, to the german once, and had her, with her two friends and a chaperon (aged 23) to take breakfast on the ship. All this not to mention flowers etc. etc.

Now dont you think I ought to be ashamed of myself.

Feby. 4th., 1886 - page 3

A quiet middle aged man gaddin' about in this way. On duty 2 days and gaddin' 4 days, walkin' two or 3 miles and 2 or 3 back, ridin' across the river in a small boat at one a.m. and getting to bed at 2? Besides wasting all this time. However it is all over now, as she is going away last Thursday, that is she was if it had not been for the late blizzard, which detains her until next Monday. And now, before I drop this tiresome subject let me inform you that the "Swatara" has every reason to be grateful for the hospitality of the household in which this dangerous young (19 yrs) lady has been visiting. There was evolved, therefore, in my fertile brain the following scheme. We (the Joneses, Wall, Baxter, and Sims (that's me)) sent her, on the day of her proposed departure, the following, viz., a handsome cane traveling basket containing a box of candies, an assortment of fruit and cakes, two books, and a lot of cut flowers, with our cards and compliments. As I have said she didn't leave and hasn't yet.

We received the following note today, which is copied after the opera Mikado. If you have ever seen it you will appreciate the parody, if not of course you
w
sont.

This is the note.

"I am so proud

To be endowed,

Feby. 4th., 1886 - page 4

With such a lunch
On which to munch.
With books and flowers
To while the hours,
That slowly go
Unless there be
Good company.

The flowers that bloom in the spring Tra-la
Have much to do with this case
To my mind they will always bring Tra-la.
Each well remembered face.

One little (?)* maid from school am I
Very fond of cake and pie
Free from its genius tutellary.
Equally fond of confectionery.

* (?) in text. - ASF

A nicer lot of officers couldn't possibly exist.
And when they sail from Norfolk, Oh how sorely they'll
be missed
Their taste in all things literary excelled can
never be.

And so they send to the mountain maid, a tale of
Tennessee

Feby. 4th., 1886 - page 5

Here's farewell to you
Wish 't were "how-de-do"
Hope we soon may meet again
At the house of Chamberlaine:
And so, I'm sure, do you.

Gratefully yours,

(The "tall handsome girl")

Feby 4th, 1886,

But all this is vanity.

I am now writing on the mid watch. This letter will leave tomorrow 6th. Last night the blizzard I mentioned in Alfs letter was colder than it has been here since 1851 (fo de wo.) and if it had not been for the wind would have frozen the river over then. However the river is full of broken ice, and is now freezing over.

In consequence, we will be delayed two or three days, perhaps more, as we haven't powder and shell in yet.

I will of course write again from here, and from every port. I am now enjoying perfect health, so dont worry about me - or the tall handsome girl.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,
Morilla Point,
S. W. end of Porto Rico.
Feb 27, 1886

My dear Lou,

Of course you will want to know what the enclosed bulky paper is about, so I will tell you before I proceed to explain what I am doing in this out of the way corner of the world.

Possibly you remember seeing a copy of a letter I sent to Mother before we sailed. It was in acknowledgement of a basket we sent to a certain girl on her leaving Norfolk, and written in Parody on the Opera Mikado.

Well, this gave me the idea of writing the enclosed "Little Marine Opera" - in parody on the Mikado, with Lemme Wall, H. P. and H. W. Jones, W. J. Baxter, and your foolish brother, as characters.

Of course it is only intended for fun and nonsense,

"A little fun and not much sense,

A little rhyme, at your expense,

I'm sure that none can take offense,

Honi soit qui mal y pense."

Have you heard the opera? If you havent, of course, you will not appreciate the parody.

As for the incidents I will explain a few of them.

"Lemme" you know wanted to be detached on account

Feby 27, 1886 - page 2

of a girl. Her name is McBlair. I didnt mention any names in the opera, but, in one of Lemme's songs, I managed to find 54 words to shyme with her name - that's the reason this song is so "far fetched" in some parts - I wanted to get 'em all in.

Peter (Peti) Jones (H.P.) was very badly "stuck" on a certain young lady. His rival was a certain Greek, with the unpronouncable name of Trangopulo; a cotton buyer or agent for some English company. Men connected with the cotton business are sometimes disrespectfully called "Cotton Jammers," a name applied to negroes whose business is to stow bales of cotton in vessels.

Big (Gu) (?) Jones, (H.W.) was, as usual, peculiar for his non-susceptibility, (local susceptibility) and universal attentions.

Baxter, (whom you dont know), a splendid fellow, sings the seasick part. (Ithink his song is very intense, and the best of all).

Your trifling brother dont take much part in the opera, as of course he isn't givin' himself away - to amy great extent.

The dedication is to

"Three little maids from school." viz, Misses., Mary, and Annie Chamberlaine, and Miss Meem. (the "tall handsome girl") - Christian name, Elise. Residence

Feby 27, 1886 - page 3

16 Bute St. Miss Meem, you know, was their guest. She is the daughter of General Meem (Confederate) and lives in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia. "Mimses Station" is what the country people call Meem's Station.

Apropos of Miss Meem, I have been intending to repeat one of her amusing yarns, viz., She said she once heard of a man who was so very cross-eyed that when he wept the tears rardown his back - I have felt sorry for the man ever since. He is as unfortunate as the woman who had such a large mouth that she could whisper in her own ear.

But - to return to the opera. The word Lagniappe (Lanyap) is not a regular French word, but is used by the French in New Orleans, and means something extra - thrown in.

Now only one thing more.

Please remember that I have never taken advantage of my many opportunities of hearing the Mikado, and in this parody only followed the words. Consequently I suppose my version wont quite fit some of the tunes.

Now I will tell you what we are doing here.

We arrived in San Juan on the 20, got permission from the authorities to make the survey (?); coaled ship; left there on the 23rd. and anchored here the same night at midnight.

Febv 27, 1886 - page 4

Mayaguez, Porta Rica.

March 1st, 1886

We arrived here yesterday.

At the Morilla Point we remained two days. The Navigator went ashore with his nautical instruments and established the position of the point. We were anchored 3 or 4 miles out from shore, and, as there was not town on shore, very few of us went on shore.

From Morilla Pt. we steamed westward to a small island in the Mono Passage, thence here. We only expect to remain here a couple of days to establish the position, then go to the N. W. end of the island to establish another position; then to San Juan again to compare our chronometer, then to Key West, where we expect to arrive by the 15th. of this month. Unless I find a steamer about to sail from San Juan, I will mail this in Key West, as you will get it quite as soon, if not sooner.

This little place of Mayaguez is in the western end of the island, about the middle, and situated in a very pretty harbor.

I have not been ashore and dont intend to go, as it is altogether too hot, about 85^o, and very little breeze, as we are sheltered from the trade winds. Last night (Sunday) there was a masque ball on shore, and

Feb 27, 1886 - page 5

several of the officers attended. They always have all their entertainments on Sunday, which, after 12 meridian, is considered by their church, as a holiday.

It is the same in all Catholic countries, and a very good thing, as it gives the poor people a holiday.

March 4th '86.

This afternoon we got up anchor and steamed away from Mayaguez, and are now anchored about 30 miles from land on a shoal in the Mona Passage - a queer life the Navy leads us eh? We will remain here all day tomorrow taking observations, then go to San Juan for coal, and thence to K. West, where I will close and mail this letter.

We were all quite pleased with Mayaguez, where we met some very pleasant people, and were# we also got some excellent marketing. The fruit of this island is especially delicious, and "dirt cheap." Oranges only cost \$3.00/100 per.thousand. I must say again that we have the best caterer I have ever seen. He not only goes to market himself and watches every penny, but he always manages to keep us in fresh provisions at sea. I dont think we have had one meal of sea fare yet, and our canned vegetables, string beans, peas, tomatoes, mushrooms etc. etc., are so perfect that we cant tell them from fresh ones. He always has live chickens & turkeys on board; and altogether we live like the

Feby 27, 1886 - page 6

proverbial fightin' cocks.

I am getting quite fat in spite of the hot weather. My health has never been better, and I am happy and contented all day long, and all night too when I am on watch.

I am on watch (12 to 4 a.m.) now, writing you a letter in the chart room, anchored at nowhere in a beautiful starlight tropical night, while all the ones I love are tucked in under their blankets in the cold up north, and I hope all enjoying the sleep that goes with good health and easy consciences. The engineer officer on watch is keeping me company. We have just had a lunch of sandwiches, coffee and oranges, and are entirely comfortable.

I must tell you what one of the Spanish ladies said about Mr. Baxter. All the people down here are dark with dark hair and eyes. Baxter is the lightest possible blond, with a fair complexion and sky blue eyes and consequently a novelty to these people, who regarded him with the greatest admiration. One of the ladies referred to him (as we were told) as the beautiful blond with the blue eyes. (we, comparatively dark ones, are consumed with envy). You would be amused to hear Big. Jones heave a tremendous# sigh and say, (in Baxters presence) "I wish I had blue eyes and a blond beard" Lemme Wall is apparently quite happy, and, I think, quite satisfied

Feby 27, 1886 - page 7

to have escaped safely from Norfolk. He has made a copy of the Opera to send to Miss McBlair and also written to some other girls telling them to go around to 16 Bute and read my copy. I expect it will be all over town in about 15 minutes, and I will be in for it if I ever go back there. By the way, I will make you a smooth copy if I get time, but if I dont, I will send you the original in pencil, which, however is perfectly legible. I think it would amuse Florie Maxwell and Nancy Shunk, if you explained the incidents to them.

We are, of course, all looking forward to our arrival in K. W. in anticipation of receiving our mail. I will probably have time to, at least, acknowledge the receipt of my letters when I close this, but if I dont there are two or three mails from Key West every week, and you will hear from me often. We know nothing that has happened in the U. S. since we left, as we have not seen any papers later than Feby. 15, and we left on the 13th.

I suppose you have seen our arrival here in the papers, as we telegraphed from San Juan, on our arrival, that we had arrived with all well on board.

Our telegram read "Detail. Washington. Swatara. Woodward." which means that everything is O. K.

In April all our Naval Cadets will leave us to go North for examination, and I will be very sorry indeed

Feb 27, 1886 - page 8

to lose them. The "Jones boys" are the finest fellows I have ever known, and I have become sincerely attached to them. Pete will be retained in the service, and says he will come back to the ship. Big Jones' case is doubtful, but I hope he will be retained. At all events, some of these days I hope to be able to visit them at their homes in Virginia. I am afraid the ship will be lonely for me when they are gone. However, all our officers are very agreeable. We all get along together without the least jar, and most pleasantly.

Indeed we have a very exceptional mess, and a very happy ship. Our Capt. and Ex. Off. are both easy going, and very agreeable. It is so different from what it was with Strong for a wet blanket and old Gill for a _____ fool. I hope he is dead by this time. Every day he lives, humanity, and the entire brute creation are insulted.

Some of these days I hope you will meet Mr. Baxter. He is a thoroughly refined and cultivated gentleman, and we are great friends, and literary chums. He has read a great deal, and I benefit a great deal by his society.

I cant tell you how much I miss Rider, expecially in the evenings in the tropics.

Almost every evening we used to sit on deck until

Feb 27, 1886 - page 9

late amoking and talking. I often think of his poor lonely Mother, and I intend to write to her soon, as I have already done several times.

At Sea, making passage to Key West.

March 11, 1886.

We are just now steaming along the north coast of Cuba, and will arrive in K. W. tomorrow evening or the next morning. If we dont get in until Saturday morning we will not have time to answer our letters, and perhaps not time to even acknowledge them, for the mail leave Saturday noon. However there is another mail on Wednesday.

Key West

March 12th '86

We arrived here at 2 P. M. today and the mail leaves tomorrow morning. I found 13 letters waiting for me, not to mention several business letters (containing bills). You were all very good to write so many letters and I will answer them all just as soon as I get time. Your letters were duly recd, and read with a great deal of pleasure.

I am on duty now and will be on tomorrow from 8 am until 12 so I have not time to answer them in detail by this mail. However from some of the home letters I understand that you will be in Brooklyn until

Feb 27, 1886 - page 10

the 17th. If so you will just have time to receive this at 489. Please send it home at once for I have only time to write a note there, but not to tell them where we have been and what we have been doing. We found the "Tennessee" "Powhatan," "Galena" and "Yantic" here, - The Brooklyn is in Aspinwall keeping the peace.

As soon as we anchored Ben Hill and Bloody Shoemaker came on board, and we were all delighted to see them. They acknowledge they are sorry they ever left the Swatara.

They enquired after 489, and I told them I was going to send this letter there, so they all send their regards. All means, Hill, Shoemaker, Peter and Big Jones, Lemme and I - I tell you what we would all like to be there.

In about 10 days the fleet goes to drill at Pensacola, to remain six weeks, then come back here (when all the Naval Cadets will be sent north), then go in company to the Windward Islands on a six week's cruise (so they say) then come north.

This is all I have time to write now, but I will write again by next Wednesday's mail, and in fact by every mail.

I am sorry I havn't time to make a smooth copy of the Little Marine Opera. Send it home with this letter

Feby 27, 1886 - page 11

so they will understand something about it.

Give my very kindest regards to Florie Maxwell,
and Nancy Shunk, and believe me,

Ever your loving brother

(Signed) Will

P. S.

I have just seen Polly Capps, and he wishes to be
remembered to you all.

(Signed) Will

U. S. S. Swatara,

Key West, Fla.

March 15, 1886.

My dear Mother,

I rec'd in my bundle of letters here, two from you dated respectively Feb. 14th., and 27th.

The first letter is the one I fancy you read to Addie, and about which she wrote me that you talked like a methodist preacher. At all events the burden of the letter is a certain "precious woman," who appears to be worrying you considerably just now. I used to know what her name is, but now I have forgotten. It is over a month since we left Norfolk. So dont fuss any more. I am not the susceptible chap you insist on taking me for. However, I am thankful that this time you have not accused me of wilfully trying to wreck some unfortunate lady's happiness etc. This girl who has caused you so much uneasiness, and whose name I have forgotten, I will probably never see again, and it would not be dangerous if I did.

I have just written to Addie and complemented her on her writing; it is quite remarkable. I am sure I could not write any better when I was 17 or 18.

I am glad she takes such an interest in her studies and music.

Alf. wrote me a very long newsy letter, telling

March 15, 1886 - page 2

me he has decided on a two year's course at the P. W. I suppose you are all delighted at home, and I am perfectly satisfied.

I am glad to hear that Lou. is so well and going to enjoy herself with Florie and Nancy in Brooklyn. I hope they will have a good time, as I have no doubt they will. It just so happened that when I arrived here my long letter was already written to Lou., and the mail left so soon that I had not time to write much in my letter to Father. I thought Lou. would enjoy receiving her letter while in Brooklyn, on account of the little opera, for both Florie and Nancy know all our fellows and, of course they will have more fun out of it reading it together.

Lou. will send the letter home, and when you read this little opera, please remember that you are not to believe any of it. See? Especially all the "guff" about the Flowers that bloom in the Spring etc.

I think Mary is improving a great deal at St. Marys we keep up quite a correspondence.

I dont know anything about the "old bible" you mention in connection with Hal. and Allie. What do you mean? If they find a certain old bible will they be Kings or something?

As I said in Addie's letter there is positively

March 15, 1886 - page 3

no news about our movements, but we are going to have a drill of about six weeks, and they say we are going to make a cruise of six more weeks among the windward islands. If we do we wont get north until about July, and I dont know where we will go then, or what we will do. I hope you have not got your heart set on my going to Canada, for I dont see how I will be able to go.

As long as the fleet is moving I could hardly get leave at all, except in case of sickness at home or some such emergency. And if we were to go to a Navy Yard for any repairs I could hardly get leave for more than a week unless we remained at least two months so that all the watch officers could have a chance to go for two weeks. You must remember that there are five of us to do a certain amount of work, and we are all of us in a chronic state of wanting to go on leave, and I am one of the juniors so am not likely to get more than my share see?

It is needless for me to try and say how much I would enjoy going. But you can tell them that I am a fairly good boy, and that I am going to bring you to Canada some day myself.

Since we arrived here it has positively been cool enough to wear a vest, something almost unherd# of here. We have had a couple of "Northers" that blew lots of cold air down from up your way, and it makes it delightful

March 15, 1886 - page 4

here, and as you may imagine we are all enjoying it.

My health is simply perfect, and I am taking good care of myself as I always do. I have not been ashore, except on duty since we left Norfolk and I dont intend to go either, for it is more comfortable by far under the awnings on board ship than ashore where there is nothing to do but drink beer and play billiards or poker, and I dont care for any of them. I sometimes wish I were not so unsociable with men in general, I mean officers I meet in different places but their tastes as a general thing are so different from mine that I dont care for their society. It has been this way ever since I can remember, and I sometimes have to smile at myself playing my little part and making myself agreeable when I am cornered, but avoiding the necessity when I can conveniently.

I think I am an unmistakable crank, but I am in good health and a simple contented idiot at worst, and always able to amuse myself without assistance from any one.

As I have a number of letters to write you will have to let me go this time. Please write soon and tell me all the news.

With love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Will

P. S. I am entirely "h. a. f. f."

U. S. S. Swatara,
At sea, making passage
to Pensacola,
Saturday, Apr. 3 '86.

My dear Lou:

I have faith enough in you to believe that I will find a letter from you at Pensacola. If I dont find a letter I wont have so much faith in the future, until by long good behavior you have earned it.

From all accounts, I should judge that you were about home by this time, although I dont place much faith in appointed times for the end of a pleasant visit. however if you are not, it can easily be forwarded to you. I suppose you have seen in the papers that we have left Key West, and I shouldn't wonder if you had addressed a letter to me there, but if you have, dont, be uneasy for it will be forwarded to me, and probably be at Pensacola as soon as I am.

April 4th.

Today at noon we anchored just outside the harbor of Pensacola. The Flagship draws too much water to get in over the bar, and we remain here with her. The Despatch - the fleet tender is inside, but has not yet come out with our mail. I suppose they didn't expect us so soon and have not steam up. I hope when she does come we will have time to read our mail, but I dont think we

Apr. 4th, 1886 - page 2

will. However, a mail leaves here every day, by rail, and by the very next mail that arrives after you receive this you will hear from me acknowledging the receipt of your letters.

Since this morning at 8.00 it has been raining hard - a regular old Aspinwall rain. It was just my luck to have the forenoon watch, from 8 to 12.30 and I caught it all - on my rain clos. -

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"Sow-wester," rain coat, and "gum" boots will keep out any storm.

I dont believe I have any real news to tell you, for I have just written to Father and given him about all there is. You will be most interested about Lemme Wall, about whom I have spoken rather cynically, but you must not regard my remarks as at all general. Lem. and his "Washington girl," dont seem to know their own minds, and haven't for a number of years, so I think they better call it square and quit their foolishness.

Lem. is a queer fish. I have been going to sea with him over five years, lending him any of my clo's.

Apr. 4th, 1886 - page 3

that would fit him, and I dont know much about him yet.

I just hear them say on deck that the Despatch is coming out, and we will get our mail! and I will probably have to send this to her by the same boat that brings the mail back.

Tomorrow (Sunday) I will acknowledge all my letters. Give my love to all at home and give my kindest regards to Nancy Shunk if she is with you.

The word has just been passed to put all the mail in the bag, so tata!

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. Naval Brigade,
Camp Osceola, Fla.
(Address) Pensacola, Fla.

April 17, 1886

Saturday

My dear Louisa,

Your letter of the 11th instant was received in camp yesterday and you may be sure I was glad to hear from you. You apologize for writing a short letter.

I know very well that if one dont like writing letters it is something of a task to write long letters about nothing. It is easy enough for me (when I have time) for so many interesting incidents occur in my life that you all like to hear about. I dont care for long letters but I like them often. It is so pleasant to receive them - just little notes - and so very easy to write them if you keep the material handy and dont fuss and worry about it. In ten or fifteen minutes you can write a page or so just to say good day. See? The pleasantest thing I can imagine is to get a letter every day sure; and my offer is still open, viz. If I receive a letter every day from any one at home, I will write a letter every day to some one at home. Dont imagine, however that I think I am neglected, for I really get a great many letters but I would like to be sure of getting one letter every day.

April 17, 1886 - page 2

There are ~~1111~~ (5) now at home. That is only a letter once every Five days. We get the Herald at odd times but I am sorry to say that I dont look at a newspaper once a month. I get all the current news from the wardroom "yap." I rec'd the Herald's from you of the 9th and 10th, and found the account of Gladstone's speech very interesting. You know how much I am interested in social literature - which all hinges on the land question - and how much I sympathize with Ireland.

If you will believe me that a socialist - not a communist, or anarchist - is a man whose heart is large enough to include the sufferings of all men, and whose aim and hope is to explain the reasons and remedies for them, you may some day be interested in this absorbing subject. If you wish to read a complete explanation of poor old Ireland's trouble and misery, and what the reason is, you will find it all in Henry George's Progress & Poverty; where you will also read his picture of the life that is possible in the future. - But enough of my hobby.

Now let me tell you what we are doing. On Wednesday last we came on shore and went into camp. We attacked the beach in regular style with a line of about forty boats, bombarding the enemy first from the ships, and shelling the beach with the howitzer boats as we approached.

April 17, 1886 - page 3

Then one line of boats made a dash on the beach with skirmishes. Then followed the remainder of the force. The water shoaled very gradually and the boats grounded from 200 to 500 feet from shore. I had charge of a heavy howitzer boat with 23 men and a 600 lb. howitzer on board and stuck along way out. The piece had to be put overboard and dragged ashore through the waters. When we were fairly landed and had completely annihilated the enemy, we proceeded to the camp ground.

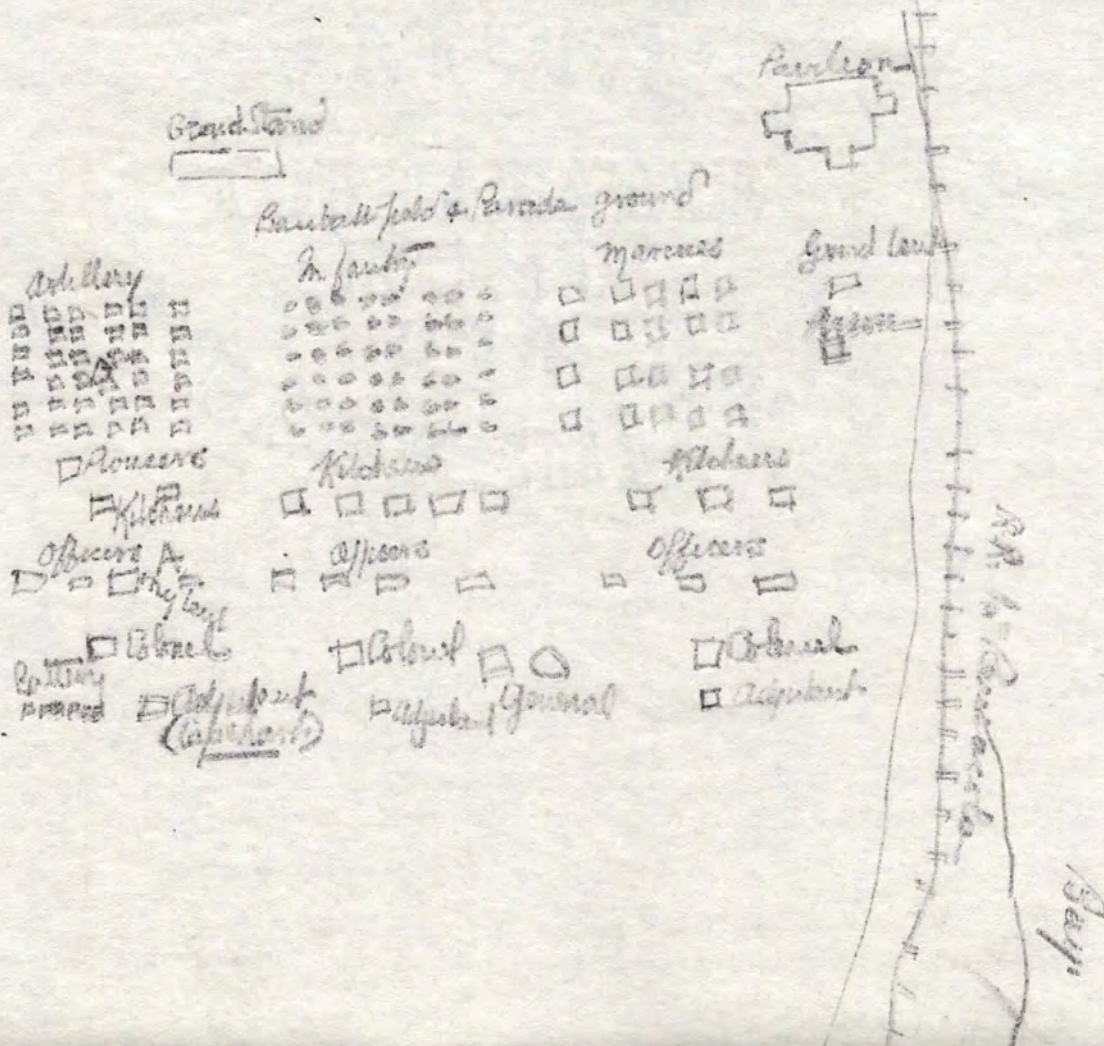
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April 18 '6.

I was interrupted here yesterday by a rain storm that swept over the camp and for a time gave us considerable trouble, as our tents leaked until they were thoroughly wet and shrunk up tight. It rained very hard all last night but I managed to keep dry by putting a rain coat over my head. I slept like a top all night. We all have army tents, or militia tents that are a great convenience, and a decided improvement over our improvised Gardner's Island tents. Our tent is about 15 feet square and contains the following occupants, viz., Wm. S. Sims, H. W. Jones, "Polly" Capps, "Bloody" Shoemaker, "Tim" Fabs (?), "Dean" Swift, and Boots, most of whom you know. The latter you must have met at the Claude's. He is now 6 ft. 5 in. in his shoes, just three inches over my

April 18, 1886 - page 4

head, and a very big man besides. You can imagine that we have plenty of fun. We all have improvised bunks built of boards, and a thin hammock mattress and blankets for bedding. All the Swatara's officers mess together and get along very well indeed. We have all kinds of canned goods, besides fresh meat and eggs. My appetite is simply startling and my digestion is perfect, and it is going# me good, for on board ship I dont get exercise, or recreation enough, as I never go ashore. We have about 800 men here in camp at Magnolia Bluff about 3 miles outside of Pensacola, on the state malitia# camp ground. It is also the picnic ground of the city.



April 18, 1886 - page 5

A. Represents my men's tents and directly in front of our camp is a base ball field and grand stand, On the right is a pavilion and band stand. The railroad runs trains every half hour and we have plenty of visitors. We put in the day carrying out the complicated routine of a camp, drilling, parading, and target practice. When we have spare time we play base ball. Yesterday the Artillery played the Infantry and beat them in splendid style. I was catcher and am pretty stiff today. I dont play ball once a year but I dont find myself out of practice. On Mondays the officers play the sailors.

I am writing under great disadvantages, as we have no table or chairs. I am sitting on my bunk writing on my knee, which is not comfortable, so you must not expect much of a letter.

You know we did intend to go to Tampa Bay, away from everybody, but, as usual, the politicians were too much for the Navy. We will of course, gain considerable experience, but all the same our real business here is to entertain and benefit the Southern people (democrats) of Pensacola, and to please the south. It will also advertise the Navy and make them favorably disposed towards us, and perhaps thereby help us in Congress.

April 18, 1886 - page 6

The people here are simply delighted and have done everything they can for us. It will benefit them of course, as the fleet drops about \$3000. every day in their city. I suppose when this is over about next Wednesday (one week in all) we will have a ball ashore, and one on the flagship etc. etc. Visitors are invited to all the ships, and every effort made to entertain the populace. (I am now lying down writing). All the railroads to Pensacola run excursion# trains to bring people from the interior, and the city is crowded with them - some even from Chicago. Every day is Sunday for the Pensacolans now. Mobile is making every effort to have us sent there as they want some of the pie. I dont think we will go, but I would not be surprised if we did.

I will write you again soon, and let you know what goes on, and when I go on board ship and can write comfortably I will tell you all about it. Tell Mother, Addie, and Alf that I rec'd their letters and will answer them as soon as I can.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

Lieutenant# of Artillery

U. S. S. Swatara

Pensacola, Fla.

April 26, Monday

(1886- Added in pencil by W. S. S.)

My dear Lou,

Your short note received this morning. Here goes for another.

I want to get this in today's mail so have no time to write as I want to take it ashore with me and post it. Dont write any more here. If you write at once I will get it at Key West. After that address New York as I cant know where we will stop besides K. W. I will mail letters wherever we put in. We must arrive in New York by the 28th.

I send you by this mail two photos. of our tent. I will send the other photos if I can get them. Boots is now a very large man, 190 lbs and 40 inches around the chest. In the pictures you will recognize most of the faces. In regular order from the right their names are Boots, Sims, Jones H. W., Capps, Walsh, Swift, Fahs, and Bloody Shoemaker. I will write again from here.

All the Naval Cadets left for Annapolis the day before yesterday. Plunkett and Hulme, were sent north by steamer from Aspinwall before the Brooklyn left there for Key West to join our fleet.

I will, of course, write again before we leave here

April 26, 1886 - page 2

next Friday. I suppose all the family are at home now.

Give my love to everybody,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm,

U. S. S. Swatara,

Key West, Fla.

May 3rd., 1886

My dear Lou.

Today at noon we arrived here and will only remain long enough to replace the coal consumed in coming from Pensacola here - probably until Friday or Saturday.

Today is Monday.

I did intend to write you a letter on the way here, but surprised myself by writing one to Hal.

However there is very little news to tell you, for we know no more about our future movements now than we did then, if as much. I doubt now if we will go to St. Thomas at all - but there is no telling.

You cant imagine how lonely this ship is without the "boys," I miss them very much, for, you know, I used to spend most of my time in the Steerage. Now it is empty and desolate. They are now peggin' away at their examinations, and I hope they will all succeed. If the vacancies to be filled by the lately reinstated Cadet Engineers come out of the next class, and not out of theirs, they will all be retained. I believe they all want to be.

Some of these days I hope to be able to visit them - but the lord knows when. Perhaps they will come back to this ship.

May 3rd., 1886 - page 2

Before I forget it, I wish you would send me the camp photographs to New York, I want to show them to the Thompson and Ferguson families#. I will send them back to you "so he-lep me." They are the only copies I could get, for there was such a demand for them that they could not be printed fast enough.

Also before I forget it I must tell you that Jones H. W., H. P., Capps, Hill and Shoemaker and Boots, all asked me to remember them to you; and all but the latter wish to be remembered to Florie and Nancy. So dont forget to tell them.

I would like to look in at Annapolis and see what they are all doing, but I wouldn't like to be obliged to stay there.

Perhaps when I close this letter on Wednesday or Thursday, when the steamer comes I will have some more definite news to give you about our movements. If I have you will find it below.

May 5th.

The steamer will arrive this afternoon and I will have to mail this before we get our mail, so if I have any letters to answer you will get them by the next mail, about four days later than this.

We expect to leave here on Sunday the 9th and I believe the Admiral has orders to go as far to windward

May 5th., 1886 - page 3

as possible but must be in New York by the 28th. And that is all we do know. Be sure and write to me in New York and tell me all the News. Today one of our watch officers was detached so we have only four. I hope we will get another one as soon as we get north. The Ensign who was ordered here in Lemme's place, has been ordered to the Tennessee. Lemme left here on the Powhatan about 10 days ago and must be in New York by this time. I suppose he will turn up at 489.

He says that there is nothing in the Washington affair. He also said that his Norfolk girl was not pleased with the Opera. You know, em. sent her a copy. Perhaps you dont know that the lady in question had no use for me.

I was always very polite to her, but I think I started the row by not admiring her as much as she thought I should. Anyway the last time I saw her (at a german) she fired a few sarcasms at me entirely unprovoked. So, between you and I, I didnt intend to please her, although I imagine she finds a great deal more to displease her than I intended.

We may go as far to windward as St. Thomas but if we dont we will probably put into Bermudas. They also talk of going out to sea for the whole time.

But what is the use of guessing about it, we will

May 5th., 1886 - page 4

be in New York on time and I dont care much where we go.

When we arrive in New York we will be very busy with the preparations for the parade on decoration day, etc., but as soon as I have time I will, of course, go and see them all at 489. I would go see Mrs. Brewster but she is away somewhere for the summer. I dont know when I will get a chance to come home. It depends on how long we remian in New York, - if we remain there at all - and how soon we get another watch officer or some Naval Cadets. On dit now that we are going to camp again in Garnders Bay.

Also that we are to make a cruise in company down east. So we will have to wait and see what turns up. I may have time to run up to Phila. for in four watches I have one night off in four; tho' it will hardly pay.

I understand that Mary is home and will remain there some time. Aint that right?

With love to all at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. The orders detaching the above mentioned Ensign from this ship have just been revoked, and he will remain here, and we will have our five watches.

He was only detached about 6 hours, and didnt have time to move his traps. So we are all right again.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

W 35th. Street

(Address) Station W.

June 1st, 1886 - 1.00 A.M.

My dear Lou,

We have been slaughtered to give Rome a holiday.

At 8 A. M. yesterday we landed at W 51st. St., and marched all over the city, bringing up finally at the foot of W. 10th. St., where we went on board a barge and returned on boardship. Then we hove up anchor and went up to 125th. St. where Grants body now is. From noon to sunset we fired minute guns, and finished by each ship firing 21 guns. Then we returned here to 35th. At., where we will remain for the present. The man whom I reported will be tried in a few days, then I will see if I can get a week's leave.

We know nothing whatever of the movements of the squadron during the summer. However I think it is pretty certain that we will be here in Sept. for the Bertholdi Statue business.

The Powhatan goes out of commission tomorrow and Lemme is going home, by way of Washington and Norfolk. He will be lucky if he dont stick in one of the places, although he says he has another girl now.

I saw Ben Hill. today. He is on his way home from Annapolis. All our fellows have passed their examinations

June 1st, 1886 - page 2

and will all be retained with the exception of perhaps Big Jones, who we hear has been rejected physically, for a slight development of varicose veins. Nevertheless he has by far the best physique of any of them. We hope they will give him a re-exam.

I think he has gone to Washington to see the Surgeon General. Our Surgeon, at my request wrote a personal letter to the S. G. asking him to do what he could for him. I sincerely hope that he will succeed in getting in, for I dont think Pete would stay without him. Besides he wants to stay very much. I am very fond of them both, and they of me, and we hope to sail together some day.

I dont know where any of the fellows are going on duty, but they will remain attached to the Academy until June 30th. (but can go home), after which time it will be known exactly how many are to be retained and they will be given one month's leave. I have not heard any special mention of Hulme old boy's name, but as he stood pretty well up in the class, I take it for granted that he passed. Unless I am very much mistaken in him he will select the Line. I hope he will for we want men like him. He is a perfect gentleman and a man of thorough principles and correct habits.

I have not seen Florie since I last wrote. I went

June 1st, 1886 - page 3

to see her the first day I got ashore; - the next two days I went to Phila. and the next (last) two I was on duty. I come off today for three days, and will see her again before I go on again. Malcome is a very fine baby. He made friends with me at once. "Las" is quite agreeable now - that he is in Chicago.

I think I mentioned in my last letter that I had been to see all the Thompson connection, and found them all very well. I am going to take tea with them all at Mrs. Ferguson's tonight. I have promised Marjorie to come an hour earlier to play with her before she has to go to bed. She is a very beautiful child, and her manner reminds me very much of Grace's little Dorothy.

Give my love to all at home and write soon,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,
W 35th. St. (Station E.)
New York, N. Y.

June 3rd, 1886

My dear Lou,

Your letter of June 1st, arrived today. Yesterday I wrote Addie a note telling her the news, which you have seen in the papers I suppose, viz., that we are ordered to be ready for sea as soon as possible. You will see in the Herald what Whitney says, that he never intended the fleet to remain here any length of time. I dont believe it.

I think we are being kept ready on account of the fishery troubles, and that the authorities are at present undecided whether to send us or not, but I dont think we will be sent there. Perhaps their policy is simply to make a slight demonstration by letting it be known that we are ready to sail.

But however all this may be, it is all the same to those who want to go on leave. We are not allowed to go away now and dont know when we will be, and so the matter must stand for the present. We may be kept this way until the fleet sails "down East" or somewhere else, and it may blow over tomorrow. This is unfortunate, but those who go down to the sea in ships must put up with it.

June 3rd, 1886 - page 2

However it will all blow over soon, and we are sure - unless something very unusual turns up - to be here by the first part of Sept. when the fleet will disperse for some repairs before the winter's cruise. I dont know what Navy Yard we will go to, or what will become of us (the Swatara). We may have a couple of month's repairs, or put our new boilers in - which will keep us in a navy yard six or seven months, or we may go out of commission, and all be detached.

In any case I will be home to see you, and in case we go out of commission I will probably be home a month before I get another ship.

At present of course, it would be impossible for me to get a month's leave unless I had influence enough to go over the Capt's and Admiral's heads, for there are four other watch officers who have equal rights with myself, and it wouldn't be fair. However you may depend upon it that I will do my best to get home, for I want to see you all, probably more than you want to see me, for it is lonely here on the ship, in such an expensive city.

I have been to Phila. as you know, and have seen all my friends here, and the remainder of the time have remained on board. I went to see Florie and remained to tea; after tea we sat in the billiard room and chinned

June 3rd, 1886 - page 3

and smoked. Florie said nothing about owing you a letter, but said that the next time you visit her you must bring Addie.

Malcome is a fine boy, and made friends with me at once. I am sorry you have not heard from Nancy, Perhaps she is sick.

I have heard no further news from the Jones boys, but expect to every mail. I received the camp views and will return them presently.

All the class of '84 were not retained, but I think all you know were retained. I know Hulme was.

By the way all these fellows are at leisure until about August 1st. Why dont you invite some to Orbisonis and have Florie & Nancy there. I think you would have a bully time, and a very jolly household. You can reach any of them by addressing Care Navy Department.

I am very glad Hal. is looking so well, and that Alf. is better. I had a long letter from the former a few days ago.

The Powhatan has gone out of commission and Lemme has gone home by way of Norfolk & Wash. I will correspond with him and let you know the news.

I have been writing on time (?) to catch this P.M. mail.

Love to all at home, and write soon.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara

Station E.

New York,

(June?)*

Sunday 6th '86

2 a.m.

My dear Mother,

Your last letter of June 2nd., P. M. June 3rd, was rec'd day before yesterday but as I have been on duty I hadn't time to answer it until now - on the midwatch my favorite time for writing, when the ship is so still I can hear all the clocks and watches ticking. I always have a lunch ready. Tonight I had strawberries, a beef sandwich, and coffee. When we have steam up I send the coffee to the engine room to be heated on a shovel full of hot coals. At other times I heat it over a lamp just as well. After the lunch comes tobacco and writing materials.

You will see in todays Herald that the Secretary has declared his intention to send the fleet down East to have them handy in case they are wanted in the Provinces. How soon we will start nobody knows. The Tennessee and Swatara are ready, but the Galena and Yantic need some slight repairs, the former about ten days. Perhaps we will sail without them, and perhaps the repairs

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

June 6th '86 - page 2

will be postponed until the fall.

It is pretty tough to be disappointed in getting home, but that is one of the penalties of the profession.

It is worse for me than you, for you have all your family at home 'cept me, and I have nobody.

I remain on board most of the time, for, being a mild harmless, and coal# blooded crank I dont care for dissipation. I have visited all my old friends, and found them all very well. Little Marjorie Ferguson, is now $4\frac{1}{2}$ years old, just Dorothy's age, and the sweetest sunniest little fairhaired, blue eyed maiden you could imagine. We are great friends of course. Florie Maxwell is looking very well as usual and has invited me to come to her house at any time, as early as I want to, and stay as late as I please, and play tennis, billiards etc.

Apropos of the Misses Cuylers you mention. When I was last here Grace came on to New York, and I took lunch with Jno & her, and Mr. Patterson (Ed.) and while Jno was looking after some business she took me to call on Mrs. and Miss Cuyler. When we came on the other day to see the intercollegiate games we called there again and Miss Cuyler went with us. I suppose these Cuylers are related to those you mention. I have not called on the Pattersons yet, but probably will do so

June 6th '86 - page 3

before we leave. My visit to Phila. was very pleasant.

Grace's little daughters are perfectly lovely. Dorothy is my favorite, she is one of the sweetest children I know. Aunt Mary was very glad to see me, and I was much pleased to find her looking - I thought - very well. She spoke of Alf's going to the University, and said she would be very glad to have him live with her, and go to college by rail, but she knew it would be very dull for him there as she knew nobody in Germantown. Besides she recognized the advantage it would be to him to be in the city with the Forbes boys, when he could see as much society as he had time to enjoy. And I think she is right. She expects to move somewhere in Oct. as her lease runs out then, and for many reasons she dont like her present place.

I hope you will have the Markel (?) House chockfull this summer. You young people should have enterprise enough to prepare and enclose a good tennis ground. Our pasture field would be a good place but the ground should be enclosed in order to keep it in condition.

It would not be quite the thing I suppose to congratulate a lady on reaching her 51st. birthday, but I can congratulate you on being the youngest lady of your age in, probably, the whole state of Pennsylvania, also on having the youngest and friskiest 60 year old

June 6th '86 - page 4

husband on record. When I go on the retired list after 40 years service I will be 58, Father 90 and you 81, Hal~~l~~ 60 etc. and we will be a fine lot of old cronies. This will be in 1916 when the fare to Phila. will be about 25¢ and the time about one hour.

I was very sorry indeed to hear of Allie's illness, but dont know whether I am allowed to speak of the cause of it or not yet.

I have not heard from the Jones boys yet. I enclose you a list of the class as they stand after their last examination. I dont know whether Jones H. W. has been reexamined physically or not yet, but I had a letter from one of the class telling me that four above Jones H. W. were rejected physically, consequently his number is now 23, and he will be retained if he succeeds with his physical. I am afraid however that he cant make it, but I sincerely hope he does.

You will observe from the list that there are seven in the class from Penn. and only two from New York, although New York sends the greater number to the Academy.

I dont know why this is but it is always the case. I suppose there is more politics about the New York appointments, and that, therefore, they dont appoint such competent men.

I will keep you informed as to the probable movements

June 6th '86 - page 5

of the fleet, although the Herald will usually tell you as much as I know.

From present indications I should say we would leave about# the 'steenth of Sometember, or Sometober, or some other month, and that's about all I know about it.

Give my best love to all at home, and write to me again soon.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. My health is excellent so I dont mind telling you that when I played baseball in Nassau I caught cold and had a severe attack of dysentery, but I recovered so quickly that it demonstrated that it was the result of the cold simply, and that I have outgrown all climatic influence, and will probably not be bothered any more. This is what the surgeon says. I never was in better health than I am now.

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. 2.

A Lieutenant has been ordered to the Naval Academy in the Drawing Dept. so that lets me out.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Station E.

New York,

June 7 '86.

My dear Lou.

I have only time just now to write you a note. there is no more news about the movements of the fleet that I know of. We are about ready to sail.

Last night I called on Mrs. Brewster, and found her as usual very pleasant. I remained until about 11 P. M. and we talked over everything about old times. Mr. B. was there also.

They are at present staying at 580 Washington Ave., only a block or so from 489. They are going away some place for the summer, but will be at 122 Madison Avenue N. Y. this winter. I did not, of course, give you away, but I regret sincerely that you did not call on her last winter. She asked very kindly after you! She is certainly one of the loveliest women I ever knew, and we are very good friends, and I am very sorry indeed you did not cultivate her acquaintance, for I know you would have been friends. And I know she would like to have had you come and see her, for she has no children, and lives alone with Mr. B. who is a charming gentleman.

Yesterday (Sunday) Mrs. Edsal and Mrs. Kinkade took breakfast on board. Mrs. E. as usual entertained us

June 7 '86 - page 2

all - she gets younger every day.'

I will see Florie tomorrow or next day, and before
I write again.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Portsmouth, N. H.

Sunday, 10 '86.

(W. S. S. adds in pencil "June?" - ASF)

My charming Louisa,

Your letter of the 7th arrived last night with Adelaide's. It is needless for me to repeat how much I always enjoy your letters.

I have the cap on now, but I am afraid I haven't personal vanity enough to make me remember to take it off every 20 minutes, however, I will do the best I can for your sake, as you seem to be in mortal terror of my having a bald shiny head - for you to keep covered with a silick# skull caps.

How did Florie like the sailor's cap? You are entirely welcome to it ('hanks).

Tell Mother I am on the lookout for the scarf, tho' I can't use it now as we are having summer weather. The last few days have been simply and absolutely perfect, as only New England weather can be. And we are all very glad of it, fot the French Flagship Minerve,- Contn (?) Amiral Vignes, is in the lower harbor, and we want to show them some good American weather. It fell to my lot to make the official call when she came in, and I met the Ad. and told him all about the entrances to Boston and New York harbors, where he is going

June 10 '86 - page 2

next. The Minerve leaves in a few days for Boston. The Ad. is a very fine old chap, with a soft spot for children. He entertained a party of them on board yesterday, and gave them lots of good things.

I will make the monogram immediately and send it on.

I have not heard from Mr. Jones yet, so I conclude he didn't make much out of Ely, and has gone on to Minneapolis.

I wrote to Florie the other day and told her how she had captivated the Sims family, big and little.

You must keep an eye on the Commodore and see that he dont get any more meat. If he should get all he could eat once, I think it would settle him.

Dont be in a hurry about the gloves.

Swift will come on board tomorrow, and Brainard takes his place on the Yantic.

I had a letter from Wall the other day, and he is going to New Orleans the 16th. of this month to take charge of the Hydrographic Office there. He didn't tell me any other news.

Capehart is to be married on the 27th. of this month I think. I have met the victim, and think her a very pleasant and sensible girl, but not pretty. She is about as large (or small) as Mary Blandey - perhaps a little larger. I forget the color of her hair and

June 10 '86 - page 3

and eyes and what kind of a dress she wore.

No news yet about the ship - see Addie's letter - but we (who want her to remain in commission) take it as a good sign that they have ordered another officer here.

Went over in town yesterday and called on some cousins of a classmate (Maxwell) that I met here some years ago. In the evening I played Bumblepuppy at Mrs. Edsals.

Drop me a little sheet often,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H.

Sunday, 12, '86

(Added in pencil by W. S. S. "June?" -ASF)

My dear Alf,

I have just received your last from home. I would have answered your previous letter before, but I have been so very busy settling up the correspondence that accumulated during or# trip north, and with dogs etc., that I have hardly had time. You will see Lou in Phila. and she will tell you that I expect to come home on leave soon, leaving here on the 13, 14, or 15.

I am not sure I am coming but will know tomorrow, and telegraph to Lou. if I am coming. I intend to stop over and see you and Jno Sims, before going home, when we will talk it all over.

I am sorry to say you are entirely wrong on your theory of baseball curves, as you will find out in time, as you come to study further the mechanics of action and reaction.

I will come to 1409 as soon as I arrive in Phila. Tell Aunt Cellie to have me a piece of bread and butter.

Give my love to em all,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

(1886)
(W. S. S. adds "1884?"-ASF)

U. S. S. Swatara,
Station E.
New York,
June 15th.
1. a.m.

My dear Lou.,

I dont believe I owe you a letter for I dont think I have rec'd one since I last wrote home (to Addie) on last Tuesday. However, I always write on the mid watch, as it is a pity to lose such good writin' time.

Dont you think it a shame we should have been here so long and not allowed to go home? and even now we dont know when we will leave.

Tomorrow Admiral Jouette leaves us, and his successor has not been named yet, but probably will be in a day or so. Then I guess we may expect to move. I hope we will soon, for if we cant go home I want to "move on." I am tired of this place.

Last Thursday evening I called on Florie, and on Friday Baxter and I spent the day there. We took all our tennis clothes with us, and played most of the time. The Misses Ginkernauts, and a certain Dr. and Miss Lawrence (Miss Florence Ginkernaut and the Dr., you know, are engaged) were there, not to mention Theo. and Dick. With tennis, lemonade, cakes, cigarettes, chaff and rollin' about on the grass we put in a very pleasant

June 15th., 1884 - page 2

afternoon. Then Baxter and I remained to dinner. Florie is looking first rate, and in good spirits. She has several times asked me to try and make you come on and bring Addie, but if you were only to be here while the ship remains, it would not be worth while, as we might leave before we#arrived.

However Florie has her mind set on Addie's visiting her, so the next time you come Addie must come too. It is quite a journey to reach 489 from here. It takes an hour and one half to go there in the day time and two hours to return at night - that's a pretty long time - especially at night.

On Thursday I also called on Madame Vouillon, Mdlle. Dottie, and the little boy, and on Saturday I dined with them and spent the evening, or rather half the night talking over old times and acquaintances. They are all looking better since they left Port au Prince. Dottie, tho' not beautiful, is very pretty and attractive. Olive complexion, black hair and eyes, and a very sweet French accent. She rolls all the Rs in the English words. She will be 18 on Nov. 17th. next. I surprised and pleased them all by remembering the day and month. Next Nov. three years ago, I went to her 15th birthday party at Port au Prince, and I remembered the cake with 15 candles. M. Vouillon is banking in New York, but they

June 15th., 1884 - page 3

dont like living here after Bombay, Paris, and Port au Prince. They miss the varied society they used to see in those places.

You remember Caesar's remark in the little village "I would rather be first here than second in Rome." Also the honest dogs remark. "I would rather be a big dog in a little tan (?) yard, than a little dog in a big tan yard."

This is one of them cases of what they are which. And it comes home to the naval officer, who is an exceedingly small and scrubby potato in New York City, but a fairly midling spud in a place like - for example - Norfolk.

Now I have told you all I did on my last tour off duty, and I have no more news.

For some reason or other Pete Jones has not answered my last letter, so I dont know much about the boys.

I see by the papers that there are 16 vacancies in the line. I thought there were 20 and I dont understand. Baxter rec'd a letter from Gage in Wash. today in which he said he had seen the Jonesié; that the vacancies had been reduced to 16 (I dont understand); that Pete and Bloody would be retained, but, Seymour and Big.(?) Jones mustered out, that Big. G. had a re-examination physically, and passed; that there was a

June 15th., 1884 - page 4

bill in to temporarily increase the number of Assistant Engineers, so as to provide for those coming back, whom Chandler illigally# mustered out; and that if this bill passed before June 30. it would give this class 11 more vacancies, and include in all 27, which will take in all you know.

So I will have to wait until the last of this month before I can tell you the result.

Write soon and tell me all the news. When you write to Nancy, dont forget to remember me to her.

I should like to have seen her when she was dressed up in my tennis suit.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm

U. S. S. Swatara,
Portland, Maine,

July 15 '86

My dear Lou,

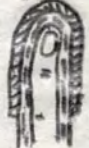
Your very acceptable letter of the 13th. inst. reached me today, and I thank you very much for it, for I had not rec'd. a letter from home for some days - about a week. But I cant complain for I haven't written for some time myself, on account of a lame shoulder. I am all right now, and ready to play baseball any day, but for some days it was really very painful to write for any length of time.

I am glad to hear that Bess. and Addie are together for, I fancy they are great chums. I am quite fond of them both.

I hope you will have Florie with you this summer for I think she likes to visit our house, as she likes you all, especially Addie. She is a "bully" girl and a solid friend. I am very glad to hear that you are to have a tennis ground, for it is a splendid game and will make a new man of you. Have you everything you require to play the game? If you havent I can help you out. There is one of Peck and Snyder's Catalogues on board and I can order anything for you. You should have one of the catalogues in the house, for they contain everything in the sporting line. If you want one, send

July 15 '86 - page 2

25¢ to Peck and Snyder, Nassau St., New York.

I would like to see some of your baseball games in Orbisonia, and if I was there I would help the outside nine against the regulars. Does Alf. play, and if so in what position? I suppose they have all the latest implements, gloves, masks, etc. Professionals now wear splendid gloves.. The right hand glove has the fingers, thumb, and back of the hand bare, - the left is a complete glove, except that the back is cut out. The leather is very thick, but soft, and the palm is padded quite half an inch thick, while the fingers and thumb are tipped with hard stiff sole leather, each finger so.  With these gloves a catches can stand any amount of hard pitching, as they take all the balls on the left hand. Our sailors have a pair on board which I will use if we play the people ashore.

We have not heard anything more about when we will leave or where we will go.

I think we will remain down East somewhere until the fishing season is over, tho' we may go to Portsmouth N. H., Mt. Desert, or some place near here. I havent worked the society racket much here, for I have met very few people. Partly because I have been too lazy, and partly because I have been on duty when all the

July 15 '86 - page 3

receptions were given. There are however many very pleasant and cultivated people here - among them I met a girl who has written a novel, that will be published this month. She went to the White Mountains with us, and I buzzed her for several hours on literary subjects (not knowing she was an authoress) and came to the conclusion that she didnt know much about the subject - so I am very curious to see her book.

I fancy it will be rather light, that is, not very deep, if indeed she wrote it unassisted. Her father's occupation is literature, and perhaps he gave her a few hints, or revised the book. If I get a copy I will send it to you. However she is a very clever and accomplished girl, and not at all hardheaded, or bumptious, as one rather expects to find a young authoress, - that is, if we believe all we hear.

We have been having splendid weather, tho' a little cool, especially at night, when an overcoat is very comfortable on watch. Once in a while - like today for example - the wind hauls around to the E'd, and blows the rain and fog in from the Gulf stream and makes it very wet and cold. The fogs here are about as thick as buttermilk.

Give my love to all at home, and give Addie my Bess love.

July 15 '86 - page 4

Ever your loving brother

(Signed) Wm

P. S. Tell Mother I recd her letter today, and will
answer it soon.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Portland, Maine,

Aug. 4 '86

My dear Lou.

I have been intending to write you for some time, and I did intend to write you a long letter tonight but as you see I got wound up on political economy, etc. in a letter to Father, and havent much time left for you. We are literally busy all day with our new "Ad." and I really have very little time in the day time. However, tho' you may lose considerable guff and wind, you wont lose any news for these is very little to tell.

Here are a few items.

Item I. I am growing each day in this climate unmistakably stouter. Positively I am gettin' fat. Last Sunday, being the first Sunday in the month I had to put on my full dress clo's. and I could hardly breathe. Excuse my mentioning it, but I haven't a pair of trousers that will button around my stomach.

I weigh 175 pounds, and am gaining a pound or so every day, seems to me. Gettin' quite pudgy in fact. But with all this enormous accumulation of fat I am in excellent health.

We have a horizontal bar in the wardroom hatch now and there are only two of us who can raise ourselves high enough to touch our heads on the skylight above,

Aug. 4 '86 - page 2

of one of whom I am which. Tho' we have a good deal of drill, we dont have much watch now, as we are in seven watches!

If I dont stop gettin' fat soon I will have to commence to train. I am becoming alarmed.

Still we have no news about our future movements. I should not be surprised if we remained a month, or if we sailed tomorrow.

I am entirely out of society here, what little there is of it, and seldom go ashore, except to see baseball games, and call on the officers wives. Mrs. Edsal, the white haired lady, is here, and she is as lively and lovely as ever.

I havent heard from the Jonesii for some time. Pete is on a Coast Survey Steamer at Bath Beach L. I. and Big. Gee hasn't been ordered to duty yet. Bloody Shoemaker is on the Brooklyn in New York and expects to sail soon for China.

Read the article on Gladstone in the North American Review I sent Father. It is the last chapter in a book by the same author on the English Aristocracy. I will send you the book if I can get a copy. I am on the look out for Donnelley's book on the Shakespeare cipher, and intend to get that too.

How goes it with you now? Have you got the tennis

Aug. 4'86 - page 3

court fixed up so you can play on it. Apropos of tennis that reminds me you owe me a letter, for I asked you if you had everything you wanted to play tennis, and I dont remember you answering it. Brace up and write me a letter.

I received an invitation to Hattie Forshem's wedding which takes place on Aug 10th '86 - you possibly remember the photo. I have of her. Of course I cant go, but I acknowledged the card and said all the pretty things I could think of.

Now Mademoiselle it is 10 minutes of four a.m. so you must excuse me for I want to turn in. Give my love to all at home, and at Apple Blossom Cottage, and tell Alf. I will answer his last letter tomorrow, or rather today if I get time.

Ever and Always, as you know, your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,
Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H.
Aug. 7, '86
Evening.

My dear Lou,

Since you say you are going to Johns on Wed. (8th)
I will address this there.

I have re'cd. both your last letters, and will send
Florie a cap. I have one now, a very handsome one work-
ed in black silk. I will send that if you say so. But
if you want one worked in colored silk let me know at
once, and I will have it made.

It was very good in my dear old Pete. to be so
kind to you girls. You know of course, that Big Jones
was not retained. I wrote to him from Cape Breton I'd.,
and told him what we were doing there - also about the
gale in which we had such a hard time, and in which we
lost two of our boats.

I suppose you want to know all about our being or-
dered here, so I will tell you, but first let me dispose
of the Henry George clip. You are of course not to blame
for thinking this smart, for you have not read the books,
and if the Alta, or World editors had read them they
would never have written such a silly thing. Mr. Henry
Mr.# Henry George never wrote one single word to try
and prove or even to advocate the holding of property

Aug. 7, '86 - page 2

in common; on the contrary he expressly states that the great bond and safeguard of society is the right every man has to his own. If you read the books as I have you will see that this is so, and consequently how silly this smart little clip is.

Now about our stay here. It has not yet been quite decided how long we will remain here or whether we will complete our repairs here or not. If we dont put in new boilers we will probably remain here, but if we put in new ones we will go to Norfolk. I dont see how we are to get to Brooklyn this year. You know we have a crazy Admiral, and sometimes he has the say, and sometimes the Dept., so we know nothing. However, my idea is that we will remain here until November.

In a week or ten days from now I expect to go home and see everybody at home. Everytime they write they want to know when I am coming home, I expect to get two weeks, and will stop in Phila, to see Alf, and everybody, and probably go to Mt. Holly.

Perhaps you know that I have a newfoundland dog for Addie, - one about 5 or 6 months old, long, clumsy, and very ugly, but a good breed, nearly thoroughbred, and when he is grown, he will be a fine handsome dog. I will send him home in a few days, but I am sorry to say that these idiots up here will not take him by express

Aug. 7, '86 - page 3

unless he is boxed up, and I am afraid he may suffer much from the heat tho' I will make it a slat box.

I have very many letters to write, now, so you must let me off with this.

Le me hear from you soon - just a line - but often. Tell me how Alf. is fixed for clos. etc., and where he is going to be in Phila. etc.

Your loving bro.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Portland, Maine,

Aug. 11 '86

8 P. M.

My dear Mother,

Today I received yr. letter of the 8th. telling me of the death of poor little Ralph Sims. I did not see it in the papers, and did not know of it until a day or so ago, when Lou. mentioned it in one of her letters. It is very sad indeed, and I feel for them with all my heart. I wrote Aunt Josie a letter today expressing my sympathy. Was not Ralph their third son, the one called "Bug?" I am very glad they are coming to Orbisonia. I knew there was some difference between the families, but didn't know much about it. However I am glad it is all over.

I am very glad Florie was so fortunate as to meet Grace's little fairies. Of course she admired them and of course they liked her.

Wont you have a jolly time when all you Simses meet together in Orbisonia! You dont want me to be there any more than I want to be there myself; but my business doesn't seem to be amusement just now, and there is no chance of it.

You want to know when I think I can get home. And I dont know what to say. There is no immediate prospect,

Aug. 11 '86 - page 2

as far as I know, of our leaving here, tho' we may leave tomorrow. Two ships, the Galena and Yantic have sailed under sealed orders (probably for the fishing grounds) and we may go at any time.

However if nothing turns up we will be in New York by Oct. to help unveil the Statue of Liberty. The papers say it will be blown in on Oct. 22nd. or thereabouts.

But many things may happen before that time. There are the Mexican war clouds on the horizon. Seriously, I dont think there is the least possible chance of trouble with Mexico. The Cutting trouble must be amicably settled. Mexico is not crazy enough to invite certain defeat, and we (the U. S.) would surely prefer a peaceful settlement of the difficulty. If those wild steers will only keep things cool down in Texas it will all be fixed. If however, the# attempt a rescue, Cutting will probably be shot and there may be trouble, tho' its not likely. However if the worst comes there wont be much "war," and we wont have the fightin' to do, tho' we may be several months on the blockage of Vera Cruz. But if they must fight, let us hope they'll put it off until fall, for it's altogether too warm in the Gulf just now for anybody to fight.

But to return to the original question. There is really no telling when I will be able to get home, for

Aug. 11 '86 - page 3

we all know from long, long experience that we cant look a month ahead from a seagoing ship.

Never mind, I will be with you in spirit, and you (all) must help me to imagine it all by writing often and giving me the details. Never mind the "news," but tell me what the people do and say.

Now I dont wish to meddle in home affairs, but I would like to see Addie go back to Brooklyn with Florie, because I know Florie is fond of her, and Addie is such a sweet little girl that I know all the family will like her. And besides I know Addie would love to go.

What do you think about it?

When all the children are in Orbisonia wont they have gay old times at the Cottage?

I have just rec'd the Little Marine Opera from Mrs. Rider this evening, and I forward it to you by this mail

Ask Lou. if I returned the Camp photos.

Give my love to everybody as fast as they arrive, and to all at home,

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara*
Port Hawksbury,

In Gut of Canso.

Cape Breton I'd.*

August 26th '86
25th*

My dear Father,

We have just arrived here. I will write again tomorrow, but have no time now as the boat goes ashore immediately. Didn't know until we arrived that we could send a mail from here.

All well on board. Had a bit of a blow on the way up; lost two boats, but no other damage done.

Your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

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

U. S. S. Swatara,

At Sea in the Gulf of St. Lawrence, North of Prince Edwards I'd.

Aug. 27th '86

My dear Mother,

Day before yesterday (25th.) I wrote a short note in pencil from Port Hawksbury, in the Gut of Canso. I dated it by mistake the "26th." I expected to be able to write again from there, but we left very early in the morning.

Now I suppose you would like to know what brings us to this part of the world, so I will commence at the beginning and tell you as well as I can, but you must excuse the writing, for the vibrations of the engine destroys my usually beautiful penmanship.

We (the whole fleet) left Portland together, as I told you, expecting to go to Newport, after being at sea for ten days or so. As soon as we were well clear of the harbor the Admiral signaled to us "Proceed on the duty assigned you." It appears that just before we got up anchor the Admiral send# out Capt. orders to visit the fisheries.

It is, of course, perfectly childish and idiotic to keep up such an absurd secrecy about the movements of a ship, but I suppose the Admiral was born an ass, and therefore, metaphysically considered, he is not

Aug. 27th '86 - page 2

morally responsible for being a fool. There is no sin-#
sible reason why we should not have been informed of
our destination, and had letters for us at Halifax,
where we will call on our way down. .

I can sympathize with officers who are anxious a-
bout sick wives or children. Verily, of all forms of
mental derangement, the mean little tyrannies of a mil-
itary crank present the most melancholy examples. The
grey hairs of a military mind are too often only a fun-
gus growing from a diseased brain, and are entitled to
no manner of respect. Of this my old friend Gil Wiltse
was a disgusting example. This degeneracy is peculiar
to permanent office holders, and men of means. I would
rather die now with a healthy brain and good common
sense, than allow my intelligence to be dimmed by inan-
ition, and my brains to grow fast to my skull from dis-
use - but this isn't telling you about our cruise.

We understood that we were going to some port in
the Gut of Canso, a narrow strait between Cape Breton
Island, and Nova Scotia, so we started on our way. To-
wards the evening of the first day out, although there
was only a moderate breeze, there was a long heavy swell
coming from the Sd. and Ed., and the next day both the
wind and sea had increased, and we were afraid we were
about to be overtaken by the hurricane that had been

Aug. 27th '86 - page 3

reported in the West Indies before we sailed, so we made all preparations for heavy weather. I knew we would not have a regular hurricane, that is a circular storm, for they follow the gulf stream, which we were far inside of. However, it blows hard on this coast, and you may remember that three years ago we just got into Halifax in time to escape a severe blow, and that we had another (on the night of Hal's wedding) when we were returning. Towards evening of the second day, it commenced to hawl, and the S E swell was tremendous. That night I, fortunately, didn't have any watch, but laid in my bunk listening to the uproar on deck - the wind shrieking through the rigging, the trampling of many feet, the orders of the officers etc. Every minute the motion of the ship became more violent. Sleep was of course out of the question, as it required all ones attention to remain in the bunk - two officers were, in fact thrown out of theirs before morning.

At times it was amusing to hear the racket made by loose articles about the decks, - chairs, kegs, pans, dishes, buckets, a dog and a goat. The latter, a poor little nannie, bleated all night. I dont believe she knows to this day what the matter was. After a time the seas commenced to come on board, and all the hatches were "battened down," that is covered with tarpaulins

Aug. 27th '86 - page 4

and nailed around the sides through slats or battens of wood. By and by I heard someone on deck say that the dinghy (a small boat) was gone. A sea struck it, and carried it away. Then all hands were called on deck, that is all the sailors, and line officers. I had on all my rain armor, and didnt get a bit wet (I haven't been wet once this cruise)

When I got on deck I saw a sight that everyone ought to see once in a life time. It was simply grand, and I have no doubt would have scared the very life out of a landsman. It was blowing what seamen call "half a gale," which is not very hard, compared to what it can blow, for there are four grades of greater intensity, viz., "gale," "storm," "cyclone," and "hurricane." But it was blowing quite hard enough, and to make matters worse we still had a tremendous "cross sea" belonging to some other gale, - possibly the above mentioned W. I. cyclone to the East of us. This cross sea threw our 2000 ton ship around like a beer cork. The wind was from the N E, and later from the N W, and as we had to keep our head towards it, the seas came up astern. One of them struck the Captain's gig which was secured across the stern, and broke it, so that it had to be cut adrift. The steam launch, which rests in cradles on the bulwarks, nearly got away, and went overboard, but

Aug. 27th '86 - page 5

secured in time. Besides this no other damage was done, and there was nothing to do but wait for the storm to be over.

When I first saw a ship building it seemed that it was of unnecessary strength, but it is a marvel how any structure can stand the rough usage a ship gets in a storm. There isn't much fiction about the schooner Hesperus that "shuddered and paused like a frightened steed, then leaped her cable's length." I think we did it two or three times that night, and as for rolling we took water in first over one rail then over the other.

The captain sent me with a dozen or so men into the after cabin to put on the upper tiller and get the tackles ready in case the steering ropes carried away, and it was a lively old time we had doing it. A table that was in the centre of the cabin had to be moved, and when we unlashd it it got away from us and chased us about the cabin, until finally we downed it and made it fast to a steam coil. Then we had a time getting the heavy iron tiller (150 lbs.) in place on the rudder head. I held a candle while the men worked. There was nothing to hold on to, and when a heavy lurch came it would send us in a heap in one corner of the cabin, then across the deck into the other corner. I very dexterously managed to be on top of the heap every time,

Aug. 27th '86 - page 6

and kept the candle from going out.

Towards three in the morning the wind commenced to go down, and by noon the next day we had bright sunshine, and only a moderate sea. It was a very uncomfortable experience, but there was not any danger at any time.

On the evening of the 25th we entered the Gut, and anchored at Port Hawksbury, leaving at 5 the next morning for the north shore of Prince Edward's Island, where we were told the American Fishery fleet was. We found them the same day and boarded about a dozen of them. One fellow gave us several bucket fulls of mackerel, and we gave him three barrels of coal. There must have been over 200 vessels in this fleet, all beautiful schooners, as graceful and shapely as yachts. That night (26) we anchored in shore, and in less than two hours there was several hundred pounds of cod fish caught with lines over the side. One of our mess caught one weighing 12 lbs. another $13\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.

This morning we got underway again and steamed westward along the coast of P. E. I'd. and only about an hour ago spoke (?) a second fleet as large as the first, looking even more beautiful than the last, as today is bright and sunshiny. As soon as we come in sight every schooner runs up her flag and, as we steam

Aug. 27th '86 - page 7

slowly through the fleet they all dip their "colors" to us. They are all on their good behavior, and remain well outside the three mile limit. They are perfectly satisfied and happy now, for they have succeeded in getting the treaty abrogated and they have the monopoly of the American market, and you consumers of mackerel and cod pay the difference, and boast that we (Americans) have the best of the Canadians, - and the Yankee fishermen smile in their tarpaulin sleeves, and pinch the American eagles tail to keep the patriotic sentiment booming. See? Just remember this every time you swallow a cod fish ball, or a mackerel. This is what we call protecting the American fishermen, i. e., giving them money for the privilege of hearing the Eagle scream and flop his wings. hurrah!

Aug. 28th.

Last evening we passed around the western end of Prince Edward Island and steamed all night through Northumberland Channel (bet. P. E. I. and Nova Scotia), and this day about noon it came on foggy and we anchored, and are at anchor now waiting for it to clear up.

We are only a few miles from Charlottetown. Do you remember my writing to you from there three year's ago? I met a number of very agreeable people there, and remember them quite well yet. I went to a reception,

Aug. 27th '86 - page 8

played tennis, etc. etc.

I understood that we intended to steam directly to Halafax, remain there only long enough for coal, then proceed to Newport, and anchor there by Sept 4th. I think this is what we will do. At all events we are only making a flying visit and will be in Newport the first week in Sept.

Now I know that when Addie hears that I am in the Provinces, she will think of nothing but newfoundland dogs. Of course I will get one if I possibly can, but she must remember that I will have only one chance, in Halifax, as we dont stop anywhere else.

She must not make sure of having a dog, but I will do the best I can.

Now I think I have told you about all I have to say just now, but may add a few more pages when we get to Halafax#. So good night.

(Unsigned)

P. S. (Written on back of letter - ASF)

After getting through the Gut of Canso, the weather looked bad, so we have anchored here at Arichat, Cape Breton I'd.

Love to all -

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Arichat,

Cape Breton I'd.

1 a.m. Tuesday morning,

31, Aug.
(W. S. S. added "1886" in pencil - ASF)

My darling Adelaide,

You have probably read my letter to Mother, mailed at this place, so you know what we have been doing up here.

Yesterday morning early, at 5 a.m. when I was on watch, we entered the Gut of Canso from the Gulf of St. Lawrence, bound through to the Atlantic ocean on our way to Halifax. About 8 o'clock in the morning we were through the Gut, but the Capt., who is a timid little fellow, thought we were going to have bad weather, so he decided to anchor in some harbor until the weather cleared up. Arichat was the nearest so we anchored there, and are still at anchor, Probably we will sail tomorrow.

I hardly think you will find the place on the Atlas, for it is only a poor little fishing town, but it is just at the Eastern end of the narrow strait between Cape Breton Island and Nova Scotia.

Perhaps you remember that just about three years ago (in Sept. '83) the Swatara visited this place. This was the first place at which we had any chance of communicating with the shore, so you can imagine I was on the lookout for a dog.

31, Aug., 1886 - page 2

It happened that we have a man on board who came from here, and he was allowed to go ashore, so I got him to try and find me a dog, but when he came back last evening he said there were no real Newfoundland dogs there. There were plenty of black and white half breed dogs, but none like "Cap.," and he advised me to wait until we go to Halifax, which will probably be tomorrow or next day.

If I cant get on# there I will tell you what I will do. When I get to New York, I will find a steamer that runs direct to Newfoundland, and make friends with the captain, and get him to bring me a thorobred from Newfoundland. However I think I will be able to get one in Halifax.

I dont know whether I will have a chance to mail this letter here tomorrow (or rather today) or not, but if not I will carry it to Halifax and send it from there.

Write me a letter to Newport, and tell me all about the people at home. If Florie is still there give her my love. And Nancy Shunk too if she is there. I suppose you have plenty of Simses there yet. Give 'em all my love.

I wish I could enclose you a fresh codfish, for they are dirt cheap here. You can buy one weighing 15 pounds for 20 cents. We are so tired of 'em that we

31. Aug., 1886 - page 3

wont eat them any more, but the beautiful fresh mackerel are always good.

Some of the people came off to see the ship today, for they dont often see anything but a schooner here. They are good simple people, none of them rich, but none very poor. They are mostly French, for you know this country once belonged to France.

It is a very beautiful country with lovely green fields and hills, and is not so cold in winter nor so hot in summer as Pennsylvania, for the wonderful gulf stream keeps it from getting very cold. When I come home, if you will remind me, I will tell you about this wonderful river in the sea.

Some day I think I will get up a party of Simses, and spend a month on Prince Edward Island, one of the prettiest islands in the world. We could go by steamer from New York or Boston to Halifax and from there to P. E. I'd. or, if we would rather not go to sea, you can go all the way by rail to the Gut of Canso, and from there by steamer; or by rail to Picton, which is just across the Northumberland Strait from Charlottetown, P. E. I. How would you like it. Americans often come here in summer, and living is very cheap.

Then we might take a steamer at Charlottetown, go up the St. Lawrence River to Port Hope, and come home

31. Aug., 1886 - page 4

through New York State. That would be "away up"
wouldnt it? We will have to talk this over someday.

If I have to carry this letter to Halifax, I may
have more to add to it.

With love to all at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

Tell Alf. I will expect a letter from him at New-
port. I suppose he is getting ready to go to Phila.
now.

(Signed) Wm.