

42 years ago*

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N.H.

Sept. 7th., '86

Midwatch.

My dear Adelaide,

As you know from my letter to Father, I have arrived here all right, and also "the dog" (he has no name until you give him one).

I will send him to you by express day after tomorrow, or perhaps the next day, and will drop you a line at the same time I send him.

I think he is going to be a very large fine dog in five or six months from now, when he fills out, and has his second coat well grown; but just now, at 6 months of age, he is half grown, and very awkward and ugly, for he has just about finished shedding his first coat, and the second coat is still quite short. But I suppose that even the famous "Captain" was ugly when he was half grown.

He is a very simple and good natured pup, so you will have no trouble teaching him anything you wish. I find that he will eat anything, even hard tack.

I give him scraps of bread, potatoes and rice, with the scrapings from the plates, and an occasional chop bone to chew.

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

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The man who got him for me takes care of him, and the other morning I saw him give him a good scrubbing with soap and water, then brush a large quantity of his old coat off with a stiff brush. He is very obedient, and follows this man about anywhere, and obeys him well, so I have no doubt you can manage him easily.

Now dont forget that you will find this dog at present, tall and clumsy and ugly, as all newfoundland pups are at his age, so you must not be disappointed, for you can depend on it that he will be a large and handsome dog by next spring. You remember I told you in my letter from Halifax, that his father and mother are very large handsome dogs.

Now let's see what the news is. We are here for repairs and will probably remain until Nov. until the elections are over, when I guess we will make a cruise south if we aint* frozen in by that time. After a while when everything gets settled down I will get leave and come home and see you all. I dont know how long I can be at home, but I will get as much leave as I can.

Tell Bess and Father that I rec'd their letters. I am sorry I didn't receive the former before I left Portland, so I could have bought her the shoes, but,

* The "aint" is surrounded by red pencil, with a small red & blue face beside it, evidently when W.S. S. reread letters. -ASF)

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perhaps I can get the same kind here - tho' I dont know as I havent been ashore yet.

I am very sorry all your visitors have left you but I suppose you and Bess have good times all the same.

Write to me soon. With love to all at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

Tell mother I received her letter that you wrote for her, and will answer it when I can get some of my correspondence off of my hands,

(Signed) Am.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N.H.

Sept. 8th., 1886

My dear Adelaide,

Tomorrow at 11 a.m. your dog will leave here by rail for Mount Union.

Today I went to town and had a carpenter make a box, which will have shavings in the bottom of it for the dog to lie on. He will have a good breakfast in the morning, and will not be put into the box until just before the train starts. The box will be at least 2 feet wide, 2 feet high, and three feet long, which, I think, will be plenty large enough.

This evening I will write a letter to the E. B. T. Station agent at Mt. Union and ask him to take the dog out of the box as soon as he arrives, and if he is dirty, hire someone to give him a swim in the canal, which you will pay for I know. So that he will arrive in Or-bisonis in good condition. You will find him a little lame in one hind leg, but only a little. I did not notice his lameness when he came on board, so I suppose some one must have stepped on his foot or leg, but I have no doubt it will soon be well. He has improved very much in the short time I have had him, for I have had him washed and brushed and well fed every day. I have become quite attached to him, and will miss him, for

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with all his awkwardness, he is a good natured and affectionate pup. I have no doubt you will # no trouble in training him to do anything.

Just now he will eat dry bread, or potatoes, or oat meal, and if I were you I would not teach him to be too fond of meat, or feed him too much, or let him get too fat. And besides give him plenty of exercise.

I sincerely hope you will be pleased with him, and excuse his clumsiness and ugliness for a few months, when I know you will have a splendid, big, handsome dog.

Please send me a telegram when he arrives.

I have very little news to tell you, except that it is not yet decided what will become of us. At present there appears to be considerable doubt as to whether we will remain here or not, but I rather think we will. Our ship was thoroughly examined today and tomorrow I think we will know what is to become of us.

Write to me as soon as the dog arrives and tell me what name you have given him.

With love to all at home, your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H.,

Sept 11, 1886

My dear Lou.,

I have been granted one week's leave from the 15th. inst. (next Wed.) I may be able to leave here on Monday evening, but perhaps not until Tuesday or Wednesday. I also have permission to apply for ten days extension beyond the week's leave, and it will be granted; but if any more watch officers are detached before my leave is up, on Oct. 2nd., I will be telegraphed to return. So you see I am only sure of a week's leave.

I will stop in Phila. to see Alf. and Jno. Sims, but, my time being probably very short I will not want to delay there long. I will let you know by telegram when I start, and will be in Phila. the next day during the forenoon. If it is convenient for you, you might meet me at 1409, and tell Alf. of my coming. I will send the telegram to 1409, and you can make arrangements to have it forwarded to you, if you are not there. Will Mary be in the city when I arrive? If so, please tell her I am coming. Will you be ready to go home with me, or do you remain longer? Perhaps you would like to travel home with me, if it would not interfere with your plans.

Two of our watch officers are nearly at the end of

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of their cruise, and if they are detached before next Wed. I may not be allowed to leave until a new officer is ordered here.

So you will not be sure of my coming until you get my telegram.

It is not yet quite decided that we are to remain here, but I am pretty sure we will.

The only item of news I have to tell you is that "Skippy" Capehart is to be married on the 27th. of Oct. next, and I am to be one of the bridesmaids, or ushers, or whatever you call 'em. I dont know much about the marrin' business. Boots is to be another; the others you dont know, except possible Charlie Doyen.

"Dean" Swift is to be best man.

Give my love to Jno. and Grace, and the little daughters. Tell the latter there# big "Cousin Will" is coming to see them.

Ever your loving brother,

(Signed)

Wm.

Orbisonia,
Huntingdon Co.,
Penna.

Sunday Sept. 18 '86

My dear Jones, (Big)

I suppose I should be ashamed of my ignorance in not knowing how to mix shelac (K?)# but I aint, so I respectfully referred you to the Swatara.

I am off on one week's leave but hope to get an extension of ten days, which, however, is doubtful.

Please write to me right away quick, and tell me if you entertain any hopes whatever, of being retained when congress meets again? If not tell me what you intend to do, and if there is anything I could do to help you along. Why dont you study medicine. \$1000 would carry you through.

West, of my class resigned to take effect at the end of one year, and is now practicing in Brooklyn.

I could let you into the ring in Phila. where my Uncle Wm. S. Forbes (a Virginian) has the chair of anatomy, at the Jefferson Institute.

However, if you are thinking of something else, this is N. G. But, if you are just waiting for something to turn up, would you take a billet on the Penna. R. R. just while you are waiting for something better? You know this road is aristocratic, and you would be thrown with gentlemen for the most part, - in fact a man who is not a gentleman, or at least

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has the manners of one, has little show in this employment. If you would like to take a whack at it, let me know to this address, and I will see the Sec'y (my cousin, who takes great stock in me), and I am quite sure he would give you a chance when the first vacancy occurs. It wouldn't be much, but it would be a living until something turned up, not to mention the charming Phila. society, and the influential people you would meet.

Let me know what you think about it.

I really haven't a scrap of news to tell you.

I suppose you have seen that Sawyer and Noel (?) have been detached and Blocklinger ordered to the Swatara. Soon there will be no one left but Bub. Fritz, the Kid, and, of course, me.

Bax has sailed, and he says Lem. is thinner than ever.

My sister Louisa sends her regards to you. She has just returned from visiting Florie Maxwell, where the "handsome" Peter was very amiable and polite to them. Our entire family, including my old father are in love with Florie.

Write quick.

Your sincere friend

(Signed) Sims

U. S. S. Swatara,

Navy Yard, Portsmouth, N. H.

Oct. 1st., 1886

My dear Father,

I had only time to write you a very brief note yesterday, as I wished to catch the 10 a.m. mail.

And now that I have more time, I have hardly any news to tell you.

I understand that there is some uncertainty at the Dept. as to whether they will put this ship out of commission and thoroughly repair her, or only temporarily repair her for a winter's cruise.

I hope it will be the latter - but even then it will take them two and perhaps three months to finish us. I suppose we will know the result in a few days; and I will keep you informed. In case she should go out of commission, I would probably be ordered to the Galena or Yantic, so I wouldnt have far to go, as they are lying at the next wharf.

I dont know what we are going to do this winter by way of amusement, for this is a very quiet place, besides being on the other side of the river from us, but I fancy we will find something.

I would rather leave now for the West Indies and get out of the cold.

I suppose Mother has told you all the Phila. news.

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Mr. H. W. Jones met me there and we went to see John, who gave him a letter to Ely at Altoona, and wrote Ely a letter recommending him very favorable. I hope Ely can employ him, for he is a splendid fellow. Jones took lunch and dinner at 1409, and he and the Dr. know everyone in Virginia.

Alf was still at 1409, but expected to move to a boarding house in a day or so. He seemed to be getting along prett * * * n his studies tho' * * * he had too many. I didn't meddle, other than recommending him to take lessons in English composition.

I am sorry, but I didnt have time to go see Mary or Cousin Grace.

All 1409 were in good health, especially Innes who is very much improved in appearance. Aunt Ellie looked very well, and, with all the talk about her, I have never seen her otherwise.

Tell Lou. I gave her message to Jones, who, in return sends his best regards.

For a wedding present I got a cheese scoop, all silver (\$10.).

How is the Commodore?

Tell Addie not to let him get too fat, and to give

* Part of letter torn away - ASF

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him plenty of exercise.

Mother and I nearly expired in Phila. of the heat on the 27th and 28th. The 29th. was not so bad, and I had a very pleasant trip here.

I settled the trunk business by buying a ticket from Phila. to Portsmouth, with coupons# for transferring me across New York, and Boston.

I checked the trunk thro' and had no more trouble with it.

I must be lonely at home without our Mother.

Give my love to Lou. and Addie,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Portsmouth, N. H.

Oct. 11, 1886

My dear Louisa,

I enclose you the monogram at last, having finished it this evening.

I found it very tedious, and I am afraid you will find it more so to etch it. I enclose you also two little bits of wood that I used in drawing the curves, it may be useful to you in copying it. I dont know what kind of work etching is, but I should think you could prick the outline of the monogram through with a needle, then sketch the outline in and smooth the curves with the aid of the wooden curves. Dont draw too much at one time or you will find it very tiresome. I wish you luck I am sure.

I enclose you a letter I have just received from Jones, which explains itself.

There is no further news about the ship.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

Portsmouth, N. H.

Oct. 20, 1886

My dear Mother,

I received your note today, and am very sorry indeed that you will be disappointed in my not coming home. Some time ago I wrote home that I would apply for sea on the Galena or Yantic, but I didn't apply soon enough to prevent my being ordered on waiting orders, so you saw my orders in the papers. However you know by this time that I am ordered to the Yantic, and going to New York.

I am very sorry you will be disappointed, but you see the matter stands just this way. Of course I could come home for awhile without disturbing Alf's prospects, for I would have \$800. per year, and could easily supply him provided you could stand my navy appetite. But. If I allow myself to be ordered home, I as much as signify my willingness to remain on shore, and then the Department, in a few months would doubtless order me to shore duty, perhaps to the Naval Academy, and then I would be seriously embarrassed to find the money to keep Alf. at school.

So I thought it best not to run the risk, but to go to sea for a year or so more, until I could see my way clear to getting him through without any chance of

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failure.

I did this after mature deliberation because I thought it for the best. And, of course, it is needless for me to say that I would rather have been home this winter than on a ship half the size of the Swatara.

If it is a disappointment to you all who are together, you may imagine how much more it is to me being alone.

Dont say anything to Alf. about it at all.

Have a little patience and I will quit the sea and come home for a year, so that you may all get thoroughly tired of my for once.

I may be able to get home for a week from New York, but dont know what I can do on a new ship. The Swatara will be put out of commission about next Monday or Tuesday, but I will probably leave her for the Yantic about Friday, of this week.

There is a bare possibility that I may yet be ordered to the Galena, but I have not much hope of it, tho' I originally applied for that ship, and want to go there. If I go to the Galena I will be here until Jan'y.

I will write as soon as I find out anything definite.

I am glad to hear that Commodore is behaving so well.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving son

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Swatara,

I haven't got over the
"Swatara" at the head of
my letters. - Once more

U. S. S. Yantic!

Off W 28th. St.,

New York, N. Y.

Nov 1st '86

Mid Watch.

My dear Jones,

I have considerable news to tell you, so let me commence at the beginning.

When you last heard from me I was at Portsmouth, on the old Swatara in imminent danger of going out of commission. When it was at last decided that we should do so, and we saw our orders in the papers placing us on waiting orders, I conceived the brilliant idea of applying for the Galena.

I would have started my cruise there under favorable conditions, for the Capt. applied for me. Besides, a few days before I had the good fortune to save one of the Galena's men from drounding# in the river. It was this way.

It was a black and stormy night, blowing half a gale. I had the middle guard, and was in the chart room as usual, having just finished writing a letter, when I fancied I heard voices on the river. To satisfy myself I went out, when I plainly heard a voice crying for help in a way that

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made my hair stand on end. There wasn't a boat on the ship, and the thought brought the cold sweat out all over me, and I was in mortal terror for fear I would lose my head and be helpless to render any assistance. Fortunately I didn't. With every ounce (pressure per. sq. in) of force in my lungs I shouted to the men to hold on that help was coming, and waked up half the crew and officers, bringing them on deck. A little bird told me to go to the ^Navy Yard landing, which I did with a dozen sailors in their shirt tails, and in less than a minute the brave fellows had got (it is no longer elegant to say gotten) a small skiff and shoved off, followed a couple of minutes later by three more - two of them without rowlocks. All this time I kept shouting to the ~~drowning~~ men to encourage them - not to drown, but to hold on - until I rasped all the skin off my ~~mucas~~ membrane. The tide was ebb, about 40 miles an hour, and they didnt reach the men short of Pull-and-be-Damned Point, where they picked up one just about dead. They were two sailors on French leave who, being drunk had attempted to cross the river in a 20 foot cat boat containing 1000 lbs. of ballast. They upset as soon as they made sail for it was blowing a gale in snorts. One wend~~d~~ down trying to swim ashore, and the other who could'e'nt swim floated on a piece of the floor that the weight of the ballast had torn out. The Dr. filled him up with rum and brought him through; and thus endeth the

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first lesson, which has carried me away off from my news.

Well, as soon as the Dept. received my application, it, or they promptly made use of me by ordering me to the Yantic. So here I am. We sailed from P. on the 23rd, and the Swatara was put out on the 28th. Capehart was married on the 27th., so I missed it all around as I was to have been an usher.

Our business here was to help make a noise when they unveiled (the face of) Liberty Enlightening the World. The Yantic, Alliance, Minnesota, Tennessee, Portsmouth, Jamestown, Saratoga, and Despatch taking part.

For some reason that nobody knows, but everybody guesses at, the French fleet on our coast didnt come. The day was miserable - wet and foggy, which spoiled the spectacle, which would otherwise have been grand. The fireworks have not been set off yet nor the statue lighted on account of the continued bad weather. During the rumpus our dear old Pete, who was temporarily on the Admiral's staff, came on board to see me. He was looking first rate. By some fluke his boat didn't return for him in time so he was stuck on board until 9 P. M., and took dinner with us, and we had quite a jolly time.

Mary Chamberlaine is in town, and Pete has seen her tho. I haven't had time to call yet. According to his account the little dimples are just as sweet as ever _____

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M. Fisher Wright send# me a document the other day bearing the inscription

Mr. and Mrs. M. Fisher Wright,

Germantown,

Philadelphia.

Thursdays.

and enclosing the fortunate (?)# lady's card. I never did believe it. No more did any of us. The idea!! A Navy Yard bull matched with a gazelle!!!!

The wedding was of course too select for us common low-bred Navy officers to be invited - However, he kindly acknowledged our existance.

Miss Louisa and Miss Addie Sims arrived at 489 Wash. Ave. on the evening of the 29th. The latter is our baby.

We are in five watches and have plenty of time off, tho' considering the length of watch officers we might have six. They are Archard (?), Kellogg, Sims, Brainard and Boots, a total length of 30 ft. 7½ inches, and an average of 6 ft. 1½ inches. And this on the Yantic. My heart was filled with bitterness when I was first ordered here, but I find myself very comfortable and contented. My room is much larger than on the Swatara, and the officers are all agreeable.

We remain here about a week longer then go to Newport, and thence, on dit, to Norfolk! for coal - and a cargo of smiles to last us until our return from the South. I hope

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it is true. If we do go there I will write you some gossip. And after I call on Mary C. if she has anything interesting to say I will report it to you, for I dont intend to let distance prevent me writing when I have any news to tell you.

Pete has made me promise - without any urging I assure you - that if I go to Norfolk I will run up to Taylorsville and see your families. And I will certainly do so if we remain long enough, as we probably will.

Pete gave me your last letter to him, dated Oct. 17th, so I know what a hard row you have to hoe. It is hard lines old man, and I hope you will be out of the woods soon, as I have no doubt you will. If you should get down on your luck in any way - sick, for example, and not want your people to know about it, always remember that the kindest thing you can do for me will be to telegraph me (care Navy Dept.) immediately if I can do anything. You know I am a provident sort of duffer, and can always make a raise instanter.

Now I think I have told you about all the news.

Of course I dont expect you to do much writing with your present surroundings, for I fancy you need all your time off duty for sleep. But drop me a note occasionally and let me know how your affairs come one.

I enclose you a postal card, and if this reaches you all right, just pencil on the back that you are alive and well; that you are keeping your pecker up, - for you may not have

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time to write for some time after receiving this.

With my most sincere wishes for your future success,
I remain,

Always your friend,

(Signed) Wm. S. Sims

Please send this to Alf. and he will give it to Mary, I am writing to them, but dont want to repeat all the news.

This leaves Aspinwall about Dec. 1st. and will be carried to New York and mailed there with a 2¢ stamp "onto" it. Please please send me by return mail 100 two cent stamps, and put it on the slate until I return. (Signed) Wm.S.S.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Aspinwall (Colon)

Nov. 28th, 1886

Sunday

My dear Lou.

We left Kingston, Jamaica as per last home letters, and arrived here last Thursday afternoon after a fair passage. As we passed Porto Bello, a port 18 miles away, we met a tug belonging to the Panama R. R., and having the Supt. and his Secretary on board.

The Supt. evidently was determined to tell his story first, for the tug followed us in to our anchorage and the Supt. came on board and was closeted with the Capt. for some time. However I dont think he induced out wily skipper to commit himself for he is a stranger in Isthmian affairs and is very chary about **expressing** any opinions. All our present officers are strangers here except me, so that I am naturally the authority, and

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the skipper's right hand man. This is, of course, perfectly natural for I have been on the Isthmus so much - especially while making the report on the canal, and during Bill Whitney's War, at both of which times I met many of the railroad men, and became acquainted with the management of the road, and its political relations with the Colombians. The Skipper has seen fit to ask my opinion on various points in the present controversy, and has trusted me with the task of collecting information for him.

I suppose you have seen in the papers what the trouble is all about. It is briefly as follows. When we came here in March '85 and took charge of affairs here, and virtually put down the rebellion, Admiral Jouette forced the Colombian authorities to execute the leaders of the rebellion, and since then our government insisted on the new government's putting a clause in their constitution authorizing capital punishment in murder cases, and for political crimes against the authorized government. This the Colombians don't like as a revolution has always# been recognized by their former constitutions. However it was necessary for the peace of the isthmus. Well not long ago a conductor on the R. R. shot and killed a Colombian who, having refused to pay his fare, drew a machette (a long heavy knife)

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on the conductor. The conductor surrendered himself to the government and was placed in the common prison (callaboose) which is a wretchedly filthy prison. The employees of the R. R. thereupon demanded that he be put in decent quarters and properly taken care of until the time of his trial. This was refused, and they all went on a strike, which put a stop to all transit over the isthmus, consequently decreasing the custom revenues of the government, (Colombian) which was finally forced to give in and put the man in proper quarters until his trial. The trial came off a few days ago but the sentence has not yet been promulgated. The reason we were ordered here is that it was feared that the result of the sentence might cause trouble whichever way it went. If the man was acquitted the people here might take their revenge by burning and plundering American property; and if heavily sentenced, it was feared the R. R. men might cause trouble.

Yesterday the Capt. sent me ashore - being a little under the weather himself - to hold an interview with the Supt. of the R. R. and ascertain any further news there might be about the sentence. Nothing had been made public, but the Supt. showed me an intercepted telegram from the Gov. of Panama (state) to the Prefect of Aspinwall, which said that the sentence gave satisfaction

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to the Government, or rather that the conviction gave satisfaction, and that he (the Gov.) would direct the judge what sentence to give. This is the way justice is administered in this country. The government directs the judges what sentence to give!! The sentence will probably be made known today, but I dont think it will be severe, and I think there will be no trouble over it. Of course our business would not commence until one side or the other threatened or committed actual violence to life or property of American citizens. I think it will all blow over in a very little time, and as soon as our reports get to Washington we will probably be relieved, and continue our cruise.

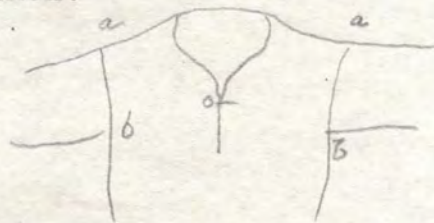
Probably by Wednesday I will be able to tell you something further about this affair. If I dont before closing, there is nothing more to tell.

Before I forget it I want to mention something of importance - to me, viz., my flannels are commencing to give way - the undershirts at the elbows, and the drawers at the knees. I got $1\frac{1}{2}$ yds of flannel in Kingston to patch with and will manage to make them last until I get North next spring.

Please ask Mother if she still has the pattern they were made from, and if so if she wont make me a new set before spring. I have three nightgowns, and they

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are still good. Keep a correct account of the price of the flannel and put it on the slate until I come north. The last ones were very satisfactory. The drawers had a tuck around the waistband about $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in depth. It might be made a full inch.



The shirts became a little tight about the neck and the button had to be shifted down $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 inches from the top. One shirt must have been put in hot water, for it shrunk considerably and the first place it ripped was under the arm and on the bicept. (a b.)

The night gowns are a little short. I would like them to reach to within 6 or 8 inches of the floor when new.

We find the health excellent here now. As soon as our Dr. had made his investigation we were allowed to go on shore. Since I commenced to write on this this morning I have been on shore.

I went with the skipper to take breakfast. (11.30 a.m) with the Supt. of the P. R. R. There were four invited guests besides ourselves and I found it very agreeable. The guests were the Capt of a Royal Mail Steamer, a French

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Count (a tough, under a cloud in France), a young man from New York (an employee of the R. R.), and an American from Cartagena. We had a right jolly time, and remained until about 4 P. M.

My health is, as usual, simply perfect in every respect, and, as you know, I take care of myself. However, I fancy you would pass me on the street without recognizing me, for my face is as clean as yours. All the watch officers are shaved clean. I am not stuck on myself, for I hardly know myself yet, and havent got out of the idea of brushing my chin where the beard used to be. I am going to let it grow again.

Did I tell you that the Captain has his little son Frank with him? He is the largest of the two boys you saw on board in New York. About 14 yrs. old. He is a regular little sailor, and a fine boy.

The Captain was very much taken with Addie, and said to me the other day that he thought her a very attractive child.

Our next steamer is expected next Thursday and our mail leaves on Wednesday. It ought to be just the other way, but it aint, and we have to send the answers to our letters by the same steamer that brings them, when she discharges and returns to New York.

I may have something to add on Wednesday

Unfinished - ASF

U. S. S. Swatara.

or rather

U. S. S. Yantic.

Aspinwall, U. S. C.,

Dec. 13, 1886

My dear Lou.

We have been very uncomfortable here, for the heavy trade-wind swell that rolls into the harbor set the little yantic (with a small "y") rolling terribly. At the best we rolled 10° or 15°, and when the breeze freshened, as much as 35°, so that chairs would slide about the deck. This we did about 15 times a minute all day and all night and you can imagine it was rather tiresome. It required a regular gymnast to accomplish the regular morning bath; and constant watchfulness to keep from tipping over in your chair, not to mention managing a plate of soup and a cup of coffee. All day and all night the bulkheads and timbers squeaked and groaned. As for getting in and out of boats it required a perfect athlete. Nobody visited us from shore unless on business, and we were unhappy and wished the isthmus sunk in the sea. However our excessively nervous captain was more worried than any of us. I didn't mind it much, for I had so much harder and miserable a time here on the Swatara in the wet season, that by comparison it wasnt so bad.

Ever since we arrived I have been trying to persuade

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the skipper to try and get in behind the terre-plein or brakewater# built by the French but he poo-hooded the idea. Said there was not enough water; that they (The French) would not give us permission etc. I told him there was plenty of water and that I could take the ship in but he wouldnt believe it. Finally he was persuaded to go into the canal on the Panama R. R. tug, and take a look at it. Then we had to get permission, and he allowed me to go and try it.

I went to see the authorities and succeeded perfectly. The French officials were very polite and said they had no objections to our coming in.

So we coaled ship along side the Royal Mail wharf in Aspinwall, and then came here inside the terre-plein. (see plan)* where we are entirely protected from the swell, and lying as quietly as at a navy yard. This changes everything. We are now very comfortable, and would rather remain here than go knocking about on a cruise. Our friends of the Pacific Mail Co. and Panama R. R. come to call and take breakfast with us, and we go to breakfast with the R. R. people every Sunday. So you see we are nicely fixed.

Yesterday we had the Supt. of the R. R. and a Frenchman

*Evidently lost - ASF

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to breakfast with us, and next Sunday a lot of us go and breakfast with them. The Frenchman mentioned above is the same as mentioned in my last letter. He is not a Sunday school man, but one of the most amusing chaps I ever saw.

He is a gentleman, but prefers (?)# the Isthmus to France just now. You can understand something of the kind of man he is from the fact that they say he spent a fortune of \$600,000 in France in a year or so. He has a good position here, and when he makes a little money he goes to New York and "blows it in." The last time he was there he remained three weeks and managed to dispose of \$2000.

Probably you think this is dangerous company for your poor little brother, but all the same Monsieur Ville is a very entertaining chap. We have many hearty laughs at funny stories and funnier English. He has been all over the West and tells the most amusing stories of frontier life.

On next Monday a party of us are going over to Panama on a special train on the invitation of the Supt. and M. Ville.

We leave here (we means the Capt. Murtz (?) Lt. Magruder, Dr., Orchard, Kellogg, and Sims.) at 7 a.m. arrive at Touernilla (?) at 8., inspect the works there,

Dec. 13, 1886 - page 4

arrive in Panama at 11 a.m., remain there until 4 P. M. and return here by 6 P. M. We take breakfast in Panama with M. Ville. Altogether we will have a very nice time I fancy.

There is no further news about the trouble here. The conductor got away and is now safely on his way to the U. W. and I fancy there will be no further trouble. However, we will doubtless remain here a while to make sure.

I forgot to tell you about a little thing that happened while we were at the coal wharf.

As usual we put marine sentries on the dock to keep the sailors from going up in town.

The Prefet (mayor) of Aspinwall sent word to our capt. that he wanted him to keep all armed men on board. The Capt. went to see him and told him that his objection was captious, that the men were only sentries, and not armed men landed, and that if he (the Prefet) wanted them removed he had better send down and remove them if he thought it safe.

In other words told him to go to, and asked him what he was going to do about it.

We heard nothing further from it, so I guess he went to.

I will send you by this mail some photos. of streets

Dec. 13, 1886 - page 5

in Aspinwall. The large one is the only decent street in the place, and that is only so because the R. R. keeps it so.

This is main, or R. R. street. The others are taken at A.A. (on plan) or thereabouts, and are a fair sample of Aspinwall streets. How would you like to live in Aspinwall.

There are a few things the photo. couldn't take, viz., the green slime and frogs in the water, and above all the stench.

Dont forget to send this letter to Alf. for him and Mary, photos. and all, the latter can be sent back to you. I may have time to write something more before the steamer closes, but if I dont, au revoir.

Give my best love to all at home.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. My health is so very good that I hardly think to mention it.

P. S. 2.

Are you wimming folks going to have my flannels made by the time we get to a U. S. port? Mine are nearly worn out, and all patched, but I guess I can make them last. I think it would be better to make six suits for they will last me about two years - with the ones I have.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Aspinwall, U. S. C.

Dec. 17, 1886.

My dear Lou.

Yesterday the steamer sailed for the U. S., and today the Captain sails, or says he is going to sail somewhere - he hasent told us yet - to be absent until after the next steamer sails. I dont believe he will go at all, but if he does, this will explain why the usual letters have not arrived by the steamer.

If he does go out, I think it will only be for target practice, and possibly a visit to some other port for a few days.

We will be back here of course - possibly before the next steamer sails (24th.)

If we go, why au revoir until we come back.

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Aspinwall, U. S. C.

Dec. 22nd '86

My dear Lou.

"I told you so," we didn't go out at all, but are still quietly lying behind the Terre-plein.

The "Old man" was only vexed because a line we were secured with chafed in two, and we could not find the anchor it was fast to. The Canal Co. lent us another anchor, and a tug to carry it out with and we are now secured with our spare chains, and the old man don't talk any more of going away.

We will again have a chance to answer our letters, for the steamer arrives tomorrow and the Northward bound one dont leave until a day or so later. This is unusual, and I believe owing to some delay in the P. M. Steamers on the Pacific coast.

We find our stay more and more pleasant each day, and we have the French to thank for it. If we were out in the harbor rolling we would be miserable, for besides being very uncomfortable, nobody could visit us.

Just now we find ourselves very sociable. We have had Mr. Power (Supt. of the R. R.) and Mr. Ville (the jolly Frenchman I mentioned in my last) on board to breakfast. Last Sunday five of us went to Power's to breakfast. Ville was there and after breakfast, about

Dec. 22nd '86 - page 2

3 P. M., we all went to Ville's house in "Christopher Colon" (the town built on the Terre-plein. 3000 inhabitants) and found it in the possession of about a dozen Frenchmen, and a few ladies (?)#. There was champagne and singing as there would be in a desert among Frenchmen. They are all gentlemen - most of them Army and Navy officers on the reserve list - and all very agreeable and polite, as you will see.

They seem always in good spirits and able and willing to have lots of fun over very little. There is not the least stolidity about them. You never see their faces in repose (glum) like an English or German face, with an expression, as Thackeray says "of subdued agony and intense gloom. I would say a Frenchman was about as much like a German as a glass of champagne is like a schooner of flat lager.

On the following day, Monday we were all to go to Panama on a special train given us by ^Mr. Power, and while on the trip and in Panama city we were to be the guests of M. Ville (who is connected with a large contracting Co.) We started at 7 a.m. and, at the last minute found that Ville could not go on account of some business, but that didn't make any difference tho' he is such good company, for we knew the members of his company, and they went over with us. We had to stop

Dec. 22nd '86 - page 3

occasionally to pass trains as it is a single track road, and at one station we saw a man who had been run over and cut all to pieces the night before, and not yet buried.

At Tauernilla (?) where this company has a very larg contract we stopped about an hour and a half to see their dredging machinery, which is very successful. They had four splendid machines at work - something like this -

The earth is scooped up by an endless chain of powerful steel buckets or scoops bolted together, and by them carried up and dumped on a broad rubber belt, which is endless and passes over two rollers 150 # apart and many smaller rollers between them. The rollers are fixed in a strong iron framework, like a bridge, and this together with the dredge and all the machinery (boilers and engines) moves on parallel railroad tracks as the cutting advances.

The material for these machines ready to put together costs about \$30000 in France, and it costs \$30,000 more to bring it here and put it up.

From Tobernilla (?) we went on to Panama and arrived there about noon. It rained hard all day, so we found Panama rather muddy.

At breakfast there were about a dozen French gentlemen

Dec. 22nd '86 - page 4

and six of us. There were a great many courses and the usual wines, and everything was "lovely." At 5 P. M. we left Panama, and arrived here at 6.30, having had a very pleasant day indeed.

All this helps us to pass the time until the Galena comes - if she ever will.

I have just found out that the only lady here, the wife of Dr. Thorrington, quite a pretty woman, was a Harrisburg girl - a miss Jenner, or Jennings. I have not met her yet, but expect to soon.

By the first of next month it will be quite gay here, for the Supt. of the R. R. Mr. Ward, arrives then with his bride, her sister and some other lady. Mr. Power, whom I have spoken of as Supt. is only acting while Mr. Ward is away. Power is cashier of the road.

We have no idea when we will get away, and we ain't worrying about it much, for we are all in good health and comfortable.

We haven't had a single case of sickness, except the little sailor boy we sent home. I am A. 1. Good appetite, sleep well and feel well. Everybody tells me that a severe attack of fever here - like mine two years ago - acts as a vaccination against taking it again. They say everyone has to have it when they first come here.

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If I should have the fever again - or rather the yellow fever, I would have a pretty bill by the time I got through, for I would send to Panama for Dr. Didier, a Frenchman who has been here six years, and is considered the best man on the isthmus. He was at breakfast with us the other day in Panama, and I had some chin with him. Among other things he asked me about Henry George and his books, and was very curious to see them. He does not read English easily so I am going to send him a French copy if I can get one. Another fellow who wanted to see the book, and could read English, got my paper copy.

Let the good work go on. We are doing some good on the isthmus anyway.

I will probably add more to this before I close.

P. S.

Mail just arrived, and steamer to leave in an hour or so for the North.

Tell Father I received his letter, but haven't time to answer it now. I re'cd just exactly two! letters this mail, one from Father and one from my best girl.

Brace up children!

We are all well and comfortable.

Love to all at home

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Aspinwall, U. S. C.,
Xmas day '86

My dear Father,

The mail didn't close after all as I said it would in Addie's letter. A steamer is late on the Pacific side and the one here is waiting for her. I believe the steamer sails this afternoon.

I have no particular news besides than contained in Lou's letter which, of course, you will see.

Dont worry about my not having a good time on xmas, for I am going to dinner tonight (about 6 of us) with the Supt. of the Panama R. R., and we will have everything that the New York market can supply - things, even raw oysters, are brought down from New York frozen solid in the steamer's ice boxes. We will doubtless have a very pleasant time.

We are all comfortable and well and like this - lying behind the Terre-plein much better than cruising in the West Indies.

How I would love to be home with you all this xmas - but it dont fit the present scheme. However we are all well and happy, and should be contented.

I send you by this mail a photo. of one of the Slav-in Dredging Co's. largest dredges.

There are two like this, and they are splendid

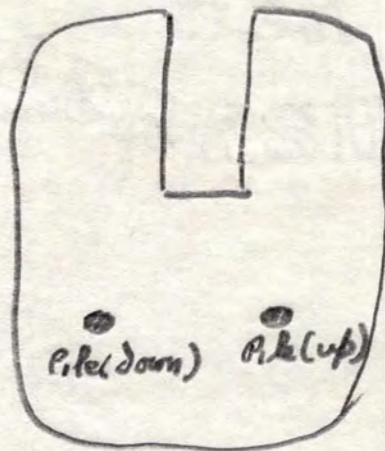
Xmas day '86 - page 2

machines.

The platform is 100 feet high and the discharge pipes 200 long.

There are several men in the photo which will give you some idea of its size.

The buckets are on the opposite side and dont show well. They are supported by the heavy chain purchase on the right. The buckets discharge into an immense hopper in the centre of the upper platform, and thence the dirt is washed through the pipes by a stream of water. Directly under the man on the upper platform you see a very large pile or spar held up by a strong chain tackle. The one under the corner on the left is lowered down into the mud, and holds the dredge in position while the machine is at work



Vertical projection of float of dredge

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The dredge swings about on this pile to the left which brings the other pile in front, this is then dropped and the down pile raised and the machine is swung (cutting) to the right, so you see it walks forward on the two piles.

These machines have steel buckets containing over one cubic metre, and can excavate 11000 cubic metres in one day!

This co. has excavated more than all the others put together. Their contract covers 36,000,000. cubic metres.

See what Americans can do when they try.

Give my best love to all at home, and ask them all to write.

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic

Puerto Bello,

Jany 7, '87

Friday

My dearest Louisa,

A glance at the heading will show you that we didn't bring up at Cherikee Lagoon after all.

I think I have mentioned the fact in several letters that we intended to go to Cherikee Lagoon. Well we left Aspinwall on last Sunday morning for that place. Before we sailed I mailed a short note to Father for fear we would not return before the str. sailed on her return trip. I hope we will be back in time for this to catch the same steamer.

Now let me tell you how we happen to be anchored in this famous and very beautiful harbor. On Sunday morning we started for Cherikee Lagoon. Most of us were very sorry to leave our very comfortable berth behind the terre-plein, but both the Dr. who is a fussy man, and the Capt. who is a constitutionally nervous man, were persuaded by Capt. Shackford of the New Port - a real nice old lady - that it was unhealthy behind the terre-plein.

We had the usual number of very light cases of fever, so they decided between them that they would make the trip for a "change of air," to improve the health of the crew - who by the way, asked nothing better than to remain. However,

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we started, and I never had a more disagreeable time in my life, and never had more fun.

When we left the air was soft and balmy, and the sea smooth, and the Dr. and the Skipper rubbed their hands and congratulated themselves. It was a run of only 120 miles, and we arrived off the port on Monday morning, but the weather was thick and the skipper didn't like to go in, as neither he or the Nav. had ever been in before.

I had been there on the Swatara, and offered to anchor the ship after they found the harbor, but wouldnt venture to try and recognize the entrance from the outside, as the land is very flat and there are a number of small entrances to the Lagoon. The weather got a little thicker so they decided to lay off until it cleared up - but it didnt clear up. It "came on to blow" from the N E. and we headed out to sea. By noon it was blowing "pretty pert", and there was a sea running about twice the size of the Yantic, and she was kicking and rolling in a way I despise.

To add to the charm of the situation the rain fell in solid sheets. The Dr. and some of the others were sea sick, and you may imagine they got no sympathy. We jeered and taunted them without mercy. We called it "Magruder's excursion." Called him "Yours for Health, Lydia E. Magruder." Asked him if he thought the fever microbes were all blown over board yet; talked to each other about the lovely time we had

Jan 7, '87 - page 3

behind the terre-plein, and made hundreds of foolish remarks, each of which was greeted by shrieks of laughter, mingled with the howling of the wind, the pouring down of rain, the swash of the water back and forth across the deck, the crash of crockery etc. At breakfast we had a regular circus. You talk about your acrobatic performances! but you should have seen us try to eat stew!

I had both legs locked around a table leg, and managed first-rate. You can't imagine the scene. The wardroom deck was wet and slippery, and every roll somebody broke away from the table and slid away on his chair trying to grab something. When the boy appeared with the stew we all cheered, and he promptly slid under the table stew and all. We dragged him out by the scruff of the neck and to our surprise he still had the stewpan right side up with care. Then came the fun of trying to eat it. It was indescribably funny to see a fellow have a "rassel" with a plate of stew, and finally get downed by it. A heavy roll would come and he would commence to look serious and hold the stew with one hand and hold on to the table with the other, then a heavier roll and his chair would slide a little, still a heavier one and he would go scooting across the deck abandoning the stew and trying to save himself, but the stew would keep after him all the same, and after several trips across the wardroom, bring up in a corner, pieces of plate, pieces of

Jany 7, '87 - page 4

stew, an officer and a chair all mixed up together. You can imagine the screams of laughter, especially when the victim would remark with deep feeling "By gad, Magruder, the next time you get up one of your d---ed sanitary picnics, you can count me out.

I laughed and ate stew until I was tired.

All the time we cheered Magruder on, and drew fancy pictures of how he dreamed of microbes as big as foot balls behind the terre-plein.

One idiot (Magruder thought us) would say "What would my Mother say if she could see her boy now" Of course we would howl with laughter, and Magruder would say "You fellows think you'r d---ed funny dont you?" Another howl. Then another duffer would say "What would my wife say if she could see me out on a picnic while she is trying to keep the wolf from the door up in the cold." etc. etc.

You can bet we never let up on the Dr. a minute, and he will never hear the last of the "excursion."

During the remainder of that day it got worse.

I had the afternoon watch, and I never saw it rain so hard in my life. For the four hours I was on watch it never let up a minute. So much water fell, that it couldnt run off the deck as fast as it fell on it, and every time we rolled some of it went over the hatch into the wardroom. We

Jan'y 7, '87 - page 5

tell Magruder it must have washed all the terre-plein microbes overboard, for we haven't seen one since.

I enjoyed the trip hugely, notwithstanding the discomforts.

We didn't have any wind to speak of, but it must have been blowing somewhere else to account for the sea that was running. We steamed to the Northward to get a good "offing" (distance from land) in case it did blow. The next morning the weather was clear but the sea still heavy, and the little Yantic bucking into it. By that time we were nearer Puerto Bello than Cherikee so the Capt. decided to go there; but we had to head against the sea until it went down, as we might lose a boat or two in turning around and bringing the sea on our beam. By noon the sea was smooth enough and we headed for Puerto Bello, and arrived off the harbor the same evening, but too late to go in. The next morning we ran in. Tomorrow morning, Saturday we leave for Aspinwall which is only 20 miles West of here. It took four days for Magruder's excursion to go 20 miles. The capt. was so disgusted that he didnt show his nose above the hatch for a whole day.

This harbor is one of the most beautiful I have ever seen, and very famous in its day. Columbus came in here on one of his voyages.

When the "Bloody" Spaniards took possession of all this country, and discovered the wealth of the Incas of Peru, they

Jan'y 7, '87 - page 6

made this the Atlantic end of their road across the isthmus. The other end was Panama. All the millions of gold and silver from Peru were brought over this road, and it was from here that the famous Spanish Galeons (Galleons) sailed for Spain loaded down with gold and silver. The place was heavily fortified and garrisoned, nevertheless was taken repeatedly by the English under Raleigh, Drake, and Morgan, and several times by buccaneers. Many times attacks were repulsed, and the place has been drenched with blood.

The entire harbor except the inner end is enclosed in high steep hills coming straight down into the water and the chart shows that a number of foils were placed near the entrance, but with a powerful glass I was not able to discover a trace of them, so completely have they been covered up with tropical vegetation.

We hope to get some news about our relief by the next mail, but if we dont I think we will run down here between mails. I also hope to hear from home by this steamer. You know, I didn't get a word from home by the xmas mail.

When you write I want you to answer these questions.

Did you receive the photos I sent you of Aspinwall streets?

Do you (at home) receive my letters? for few of them have been acknowledged, - I ask these questions, because I suspect that the Colombian P. O. is not as reliable as it

Jany 7, '87 - page 7

might be.

Do you have to pay anything extra on the letters on which I put U. S. stamps, and how much?

I will probably add something to this before I close.

Give my best love to all the dear ones at home, and tell them I am just as well as it is possible for a man to be in any climate. We have all been well except the usual number of cases of mild fever, that only put the men on the list two or three days. We left two men at the railroad hospital in Aspinwall with inflammation of the bowels, probably contracted by taking cold when overheated. They both may recover, but one I thing# will not.

Wite# to me soon,

Your loving bro.

(Signed) Wm.

Aspinwall, U. S. C.

Jany 8 '87

P. S.

My dear Lou,

I take it all back about you (all) not writing by the last steamer. I dont care a cent now, for I got plenty this time. Two from you, and two from Father, and one from every other member of the family. Besides this a xmas card from Florie, and one from Grace. Marrige cards from Miss West. A letter from Lemme. One from Kinkaid, an old shipmate,

Jany 7, '87 - page 8

and one from the girl in the Shenandoah Valley.

God bless you all you were very kind to think of me and each write me a letter. I will answer you all when I get time, but cant this time and catch the steamer. We have just arrived from Puerto Bello in time to receive and answer our mail.

I am delighted to hear that you all had a merry and happy xmas. I think we are a fortunate family to get along so well together. We have many things to be thankful for, but particularly that we have good health and love one another.

Your letters were a pure joy to me. You cant imagine nor I cant tell you how much I would have liked to be there.

How glad I am to hear that Alf. and Mary are doing so well. Dont worry about Alf's health, he's all right.

I wish I could have sent you all a xmas present, but money is tight down here and I couldn't. Perhaps I can get home next summer for a week or so.

But never mind, when I get done going to sea I will get several month's leave, and you will have a chance to get tired of me. I spec. I wont be fit to live in a house with women then.

There is no news whatever about our leaving here, so I guess we will stay a while. I think we will make little trips between mails.

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Remember me to all my friends in O., and tell Father to tell Ripple, that I didn't write the clip on the Bombardment of New York.

After you have all read this dont forget to send it to Alf. And, Master Alfred, you must hand it to Misstress# Mary. And Mistress Mary, you must take it to Aunt Mary, and tell her that I will write to her soon.

Give her my very best love, - also to Cousin Addie.

Ever your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

I know you are never tired of hearing that I am in absolutely perfect health, and quite up to my normal weight, notwithstanding the heat - which, by the way, is now more moderate since the trade winds have set in.

P. S. 2.

All things come to those who wait. Soon after we arrived here a telegram arrived ordering us to New Orleans, via. Key West. We leave just as soon as we can coal etc. - in about two days. Send anything you have for me to New Orleans, but write at once to Key West. I will write from K. W., of course.

This is good news indeed. Just what we want. I dont know how long we will remain in K. W. or N. O.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Key West, Fla.

Jan'y. 22 '87

My sweet Louisa,

Your three letters, Jany 15, 16, and 18, reached me all right, and I thank you sincerely for being so thoughtful.

I am sorry you allowed yourself to be so worried about the account in the paper - you ought to know better by this time. However you have my letter from here by this time, and know that we are all right. There is no sickness here (on board) at all, and there wont be any, for the weather here is simply delightful. It has been so cold that an overcoat was comfortable all day long. Temp. 60° and it is very pleasant now. As for me, (and I flatter myself, that is what you all care to know most) I am in simply perfect health.

We sent two officers home from here. One Mr. Reisinger, the executive, who wore his stomach out stuffing himself, the other Mr. Brainard, who simply didn't have "sand" enough to brace up.

If I had been the Dr. I wouldn't have sent them home at all. The truth of the matter is that the Dr. was scared to death at Aspinwall. I have always ridiculed them for their nervousness, and asked them what they thought of the Swatara, remaining there during the wet season, and not sending anyone home. It is not yet decided where we will go.

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It seems doubtful whether we will go to New Orleans now or not. All we know, definitely, at present is that we must be in Hampton Roads by May 1st. Tell Mother she needn't bother about my flannels until we come north as I can make the one's I have last until then.

Did I tell you in my last letter that if you have anything to send me by mail you can address it here? We will probably be here two or three weeks more.

I am very sorry you have been sick. What's the matter - liver again. It would be an excellent thing if you would make it a habit or duty to walk so far every day, rain or shine. Try it.

I suppose father and mother, will have quite a "toot" in Phila. I thank you for sending me Alf's. letter. It does my old heart good to hear of his doing so well (that sounds old don't it.)

Is Florie with you yet. If so give her my love - (with father's permission)

Frank Green, the captains son is well and looking firststrate.

This afternoon - after this mail leaves - a certain Mrs. Cann is coming on board.

I have not met her, nor been ashore at all yet, but I am told by the fellows who have, that she says she knows you. Her husband is a Paymaster in the navy and lives in Harrisburg -

Jan'y. 22 '87 - page 3

near the Shunks. I will tell you what she says when I write again. When you write dont forget to tell me what you know about her.

Please give my best love to little Misstress# Virginia Rich. I should like to know her very much.

You may send me the gloves here, they will be very useful coming north, and most always at sea gloves and overcoats are useful.

I am strongly of the impression that I acknowledged the receipt of the bureau cover from Norfolk, but if I didn't I acknowledge and thank you for it now.

I have just rec'd a draft from Jno Sims for cigars. Tell father if he wants some to send me some money, as I havent enough to get many.

This is about all I have for you this time. Write me often.

With love to all at home

Your loving bro.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Key West, Fla.,
Jany. 24 '87

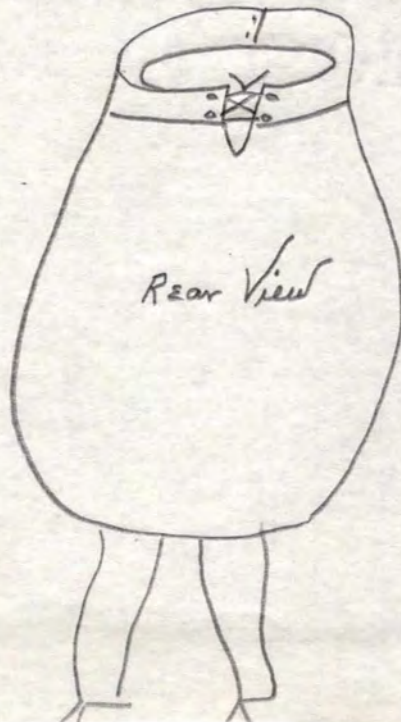
My dear Mother,

I have already written to Lou., Addie, Alf, and Mary, and told them all the news, so I needen't repeat, as you will probably see all the letters.

Lou. tells me you are to get my flannel in Phila. this time. Do you remember what I said when I wrote about them from A. The letter was to Lou., so she probably remembers.

The only alterations I wanted was to make them bigger in the arm hole, and put the neck button farther down from the neck. I wish besides, that you would make the band of the drawers flannel, as the cotton bands annoyed me by becoming wet.

Also put a tape lacing in the back instead of a buckle, as the buckly scratches, get# rusty in time, and comes undone.



This is the way.

We have
three mails a
week here so
you will hear
from me often.

I fancy
you all have

Jany 24 '87 - page 2

had a fine time in Phila.

Give my love to Father, and all at home

Your loving son

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. My health is perfect.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Key West, Fla.

Jan'y 27, 1887.

My amiable Sister,

Your note of the 21st. and photo. arrived last night and I thank you for both. The photo. is splendid. I know two of the **girls**, but dont know the one on the left. Why didn't you tell me the name? "That's just like a girl." I understand that I am to send back one of the photos. **either this** one or the little card one you sent me. Now, naturally I would keep the one with the most faces, so I will send back the card, as your picture is about as good in one as in the other.

I am so delighted that Mother and Adelaide are having such a good time in Phila.

Addie's letter - bless her dear little motherly heart - to you is delightful, I wish you would send me more of them also Alf's. for the bugger dont write to me often.

I am more than pleased to hear that he is so comfortably situated, having such a good time, and doing so well in his studies.

Commodore needs a man to club him occasionally and make him obedient. When you write again tell me about how big he is, and how much he ways (weighs) - if you can weigh him.

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What have you been doing to Jack to cause him to run away.

I hear from Pete. Jones frequently. He is at Cedar Keys on the "Bache," only about 200 miles from here. I will send you his last letter also one he enclosed from Big Jones. Hulme (poor old tired man) is on board.

Dont let Mother forget what I said about my new flannel clothes, in my last letter to her.

I called on Mrs. Cann the other evening, and had a delightful visit. I stayed from 8 to 12 P. M., and we overhauled all Harrisburg society, and plenty of things besides. She is a very lovely woman, and a great admirer of Nancy Shunk (So am I) Paymaster Cann is the most unpropossessing man I ever saw. Why she ever married him I can # imagine. Such things would encourage any man. Who knows but some poor, foolish, lovely creature will marry me some day, to find too late, that she is tied up to a crank.

It is not decided where we will go next. But I hope to New Orleans. I think the chances are in favor of it. I am very glad you have Florie and Bessie with you again. Give 'em both my love. I think you and Mother had better watch Florie and Father. I dont take much stock in her "cold," I think she came up to see father.

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We dont know who our new officers will be, but I hope the new watch officer wont be senior to me, as it will put me in a much smaller room. If it does I may try for another ship. What would they say at home if I struck a foreign bound ship, and went away for three years?

At present I think of remaining here until Alf. finishes college, then getting a years leave with permission to leave the United States, so I could take you and Mother, to Canada, - with Mary and Addie, if they want to go. Perhaps that would be best. Then after the leave I could probably go on a foreign cruise and "see the world." I am glad I never have been abroad, because it is better to go after reading a few years and learning something. Besides I might have been a tough by this time. If I had gone from the Academy to the Mediterranean.

You need not send the enclosed letters back again. Tear 'em up. So they wont be lying about the house in holes and corners for years like mine are.

Give my very best love to all at home,

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. Tell Florie I rec'd a check from Mr. Banks for \$80, for cigars. I also have one from Jno. Sims for

Jan'y 27, 1887 - page 4

\$200. If we go to New Orleans first, I will probably cash 'em, and blow 'em in for red paint.

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

I would like to have this photo. back again if you get some more, for now I come to look at it it is better than the other.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Key West, Fla.

Feb. 3rd. '87

My dear "Sis."

You are getting very attentive to me lately writing me so many letter#, and I thank you very much for them. Your last letter arrived last evening with the gloves. They are just the thing and will be very useful when I come north, and while on the way. Your last letter was a true woman's letter, that is, the gist of it was in the P. S. "Dont forget to tell me all Mrs. Cann says, when you write."

I will do so when I come to it but will commence at the beginning.

Dont forget to give my love to Florie, and tell her to walk you hard every day.

I am convinced that is all you need to keep you in good health.

Dont hurry yourself with the hapkins, and dont send them until you hear from me, for we may leave here soon - for the West Indies or New Orleans I dont know where. The skipper gets more restless every day, and must "move on" somewhere soon.

Somebody "hit him off" exactly the other day by saying that he is as restless as a "borrowed dog."

Last Tuesday evening a very exciting social event

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took place here, viz., the first german in the history of Key West. The leader was a Portsmouth (Va. just across the river from Norfolk) man who is in business here.

I took Mrs. Cann. There were four Navy officers, and one from the Revenue Marine besides a Pay Clerk & wife from Portsmouth Va. We led all the figures, and the Key Westers followed. They caught on easily, and it was a perfect success. We had about 20 odd couples, and plenty of favors. We had nothing but simple toys as nothing else could be had here. I was favored with a tin whistle & rattle, two small tin cups, a rubber ring to cut my teeth on, two sure enough cigars, and a tinsel bag of candy, besides a bunch of flowers. I danced hard, and was a total wreck when I returned at 2 a. m. I went on watch from 4 to 8 a.m., so I had a pretty busy night of it. The Key Westers are delighted with the german, and I think it has come to stay. Some of the girls dance fairly, but they are woefully ignorant of the world, and have curious manners. But you must remember that Key West is a small sandy island that you can walk around in 2 or 3 hours, and few of the people have ever been away. When they do go they find everything so different that they are glad to get back again. You know you cant make a silk purse out of a sows ear.

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Mrs. Cann is a lovely woman, and a perfect lady besides being a good partner for the german. Your remarks about her amused me considerably. You say she was a miss foster (with a big F.) and comes of a very nice family. That's all right, I can understand that easily enough. Then you say "Nothing can be said against her except that she is fond of society."

If that aint a womans sentence I'll sell out; and I suppose a woman would understnad it perfectly, but it is Greek to one of us innocent and unsophisticated men. Of course it is nothing against a woman to be fond of society - out mother is fond of society, bless her heart, and we know she is a good woman, so you must mean something else, possible you mean "too fond of society." But the Lord only knows all a woman can mean by a few simple words.

Explain# yourself Madame. Mrs. Cann says she never met you, (I was incorrectly informed), but she says she has seen you often at the Shunks, and remembers you as a pretty girl with dark hair and eyes (thanks awfully.)

Mr. Cann I find on further acquaintance to bè a very hospitable fellow, and quite a gentleman. He doesn't dance and was therefore glad to have me take his sife to the german. He thanked me for doing so and gave

Feby. 3rd. '87 - page 4

me a drink when we returned - which was a large one (to keep me from catching cold) and went straight to my head, but did not damage.

They have one child, a boy of about ten, his mother's idol and a fine little chap.

I have never called on the Canns without finding her reading to him, I have read one of Barry Cann's books, and liked it very much. (If I wasn't strapped with buying a new cap and shoulder straps), I would get it for her. It is called the Prince and the Pauper, by Mark Twain, dedicated to his two little daughters.

We are expecting orders by every mail, and nothing w'd surprise me in the way of orders. The chances are about even for making a cruise to the Windward Islands, and to New Orleans. We are all in excellent health, and quite satisfied to remain here, for the weather is simply delightful.

Write to me oftning

Give my love to all at home

Your loving bro.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Key West, Fla.
Sunday, Feb: 6 '87

My dear Father,

I enclose you the schedule of the U. S. S. Yantic.

In the Herald you can find the times of sailing of steamers for the mail points. I could find them for you now, but the strike may chance them.

We expect to take a little coal tomorrow, and sail in the afternoon for Havana, arriving there the next day. The mail that arrives here Wednesday will reach us in Havana before we sail. I will write from there.

I am sorry you have no money for cigars, for I have none either, but perhaps I can manage to get you some, tho' I dont know how yet. If I do I wont have a chance to send them home until we arrive in Hampton Roads, and perhaps not until later.

We are all ready for our cruise - have the ship nicely painted, and everything repaired.

It will not be disagreeable, except possible the trip from Havana to St. Thomas, which is nearly all to windward, and may be rough. We run up the Florida coast to about Lat. 30^o, then across and down to St. Thomas, which is a small island just east of Porto Rico.

I think you know where most of the places are, as I have visited nearly all of them before. Santa Cruz

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is a small island south of Porto Rico. Samana Bay is in the northeastern end of Hayti, St. Domingo, SE, Jacmel, South, Aux Cayes SW, point, Nicola Mole NW, Cape Haytian, same. Port au Prince you know of too well, or at least I do.

I have changed the address of my nation to Orbisonia, and I wish you would forward it to me until I reach Hampton Roads. I think foreign postage on newspapers is 2¢.

If there is any naval news of importance, send me a few clips, for we will probably see no American papers until we reach Key West again, in the middle of April.

I am rather disappointed in not going to New Orleans, tho' I dont care much, as I ain't fond of cold weather. Hampton Roads in May will be cold enough for me.

I wish you would keep Alf and Mary posted about my address, for a schedule would do them little good as they dont sell any New York papers in Philadelphia, and there is nothing in the native papers.

Make them write to me from home to all the mail places.

Give my love to 'em all,

Always your loving son

(Signed) Wm.

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P. S.

My health is perfect.

P. S.

They tell me at the book-store here that Blair's Stationary Manuf'y is burned.

Is it so.

(Signed)

Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Havana, Cuba,

Feb. 8 '87

My dear Father,

I find to my infinite vexation that I have carried the enclosed letter away with me, together with all my mail that should have been posted in Key West. This is very stupid, but there is no help for it now.

We arrived here this morning (Tuesday) and will leave Saturday for St. Thomas. This letter will leave here Thursday and be in New York in three days, perhaps reach you in that time. Another mail will leave on Saturday, and you will receive a letter by it. After that you wont hear from me by letter for nearly a month, and perhaps not so soon, as I dont know how often steamers visit St. Thomas.

I expect to get you 1000 cigars, as our wine caterer is going to get several thousand to put in the mess and pay for them when they have been consumed. I am simply going to get him to reserve me 1000 until we arrive at Hampton Roads, and you can have all of them, or as many boxes as you wish, or you need not take any. They will cost about \$50. per. 1000. color, Maduro (?), Size, Couchas (?), Weight, 13 lbs., Brand, Henry Clay. This is the heaviest cigar for the money, and the experts say they are very fine. I am sorry I cant make

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you a present of a thousand this trip, but it's quite impossible. I find that \$59 per. month cant be made to include any luxuries to speak of, tho' I find it quite sufficient for actual expenses. I dont know that I owe a cent in the world.

I haven't been ashore yet but will go tomorrow to buy some cigars for Mr. Banks, as the cigar "sharps" dont visit the factory where his are made, otherwise I woulden't go at all, for the city is like a Turkish bath in the day time.

Our Dr. the cigar sharp is getting me some cigars for Jno. Sims, so you can have a good smoke when you go to see him.

Just before we left Key West, I received a long letter from Alf., and according to his account, he is making things buzz in the way of studies. He seems to thoroughly enjoy the college life, and says he is in good health. He seems to think the studies for the next term are very hard - or rather that there are too many of them. They do look a little crowded in a Schedule, but I dont think he will have any trouble with them as most of them wont require much more than reading. By the end of the year he will have learned how to study, which is only next in importance to the information gained.

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I sincerely hope I will see him, and the rest of our interesting family next summer. And I will if Luce dont try to keep us too busy. However, at the worst, I will only have to wait until fall, as the fleet will break up then and go to the Navy Yards.

We didn't get any new officers before we left, but expect a new navigator to join us here by the next steamer. I dont think we will get another watch officer until we get to Hampton Roads.

I think if some of you write at once to St. Thomas the letters will arrive before Mar. 4th. when we leave.

They will also have to write soon to St. John, Porto Rico, and St. Domingo, Hayti.

I hope to hear that you are all well, and that your back is well again.

Give my best love to all the dear ones at home,

Your loving son

(Signed) Wm.

Our Foreign Correspondence *

U. S. S. Yantic,

St. Thomas,

Feby. 24, 1887

My dear Louisa,

We arrived here yesterday noon, eleven days out from Havana, after quite a comfortable passage, though we kicked up our heels a little coming through the Florida Straights. Our ice and fresh provisions just did hold out, and added very materially to our comfort. The biggest half of our cruise is over now as we have no more long trips - only a day or so from one port to another. We will remain here until March the 4th. or 5th. when the mail arrives from the U. S. - I hope you have written me some letters. This letter will leave here in about two or three days and should reach you on March 5th. or 6th. I will write again before we leave - and from every place where there is mail connection with the U. S. Your letters of Feby. 4th and 8th. I believe are both answered. In the former you mention a package sent. I have seen nothing of it, but suppose it will be in Key West when we return there.

I haven't made your comb yet, but guess I will soon and get it off my mind. I have gotten into such

* Added in pencil - I don't think the writing is W.S.S.'s. Personal parts of this letter are crossed out, apparently for copying or publication of the rest. - ASF

Feby. 24, 1887 - page 2

a confirmed habit of reading that I shirk everything else for it. However when I once make a start working tortoiseshell I like it first rate.

St. Thomas is rather a pretty little place, but uninteresting. The island is only about 20 miles long and not attractive being rocky, mountainous and with scant vegetation (for the tropics). The harbor is very pretty, nearly landlocked and surrounded by steep "bumpy" little hills, leaving no room for the town except at the foot (feet) of three little ridges, up each of which the yellow, red tiled houses extend a little way. This is a Danish Island, but used to be English, and English is still spoken. Like many of these W. I. places its glory is in the past. It used to be a dis-bursing centre for nearly all exports from Europe and the U. S. when it wasent so safe to sail these seas. Then the little stone forts at various points about the harbor used to be manned and armed - now they are going to ruin. Of course there are plenty of negroes here from the old slave days, and yesterday as soon as we anchored there must have been two dozen washerwomen on board.

I haven't met any of the people ashore yet except the Consul (a Virginian). I will tell you about them (the people) later, as I suppose some busybody will

Feby. 24, 1887 - page 3

bring them off to the ship.

We are alongside the coal wharf now coaling ship, or rather receiving coal, for it is put on board. About 150 negroe women are doing the coaling, and it is simply astonishing how rapidly they get it on board. They carry it about 100 yards in baskets on their heads, walking rapidly in single file. When they arrive at the coal hole in the deck they dump the coal but hold on to the basket and keep moving. In this way they can put 100 tons on board in one hour. They are paid so much per. hundred baskets. The baskets contain about 80 lbs. The women all tuck their skirts up to their knees, and are bare footed and bare legged, and muscular as men. They wrap a cloth about their heads to make a pad for the basket to rest on. I believe they get 1¢ for each basket, and can sometimes get \$2.00 a day, which will last them a month or so, until another ship needs coaling.

We find the Italian Flagship here. She visited Aspinwall while we were there.

Apropos of Aspinwall, the Capt. of my gun who was sick with dysentery there, and whose nuncupative will I made, recovered and was sent to the Brooklyn hospital. He is now on duty again on the Minnesota in New York. When we go there I will go see him. The Dr. in Aspinwall

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told me positively that the man could not possibly recover. He evidently "busted."

If you go to Harrisburg you must tell me all about your visit. Dont forget to give my best regards to the festive Nancy.

Tell Father I have 1000 cigars for him - if he wants them. They belong to the mess but I can have them for him if he wants the. They cost \$48. per thousand. I will send a box of 50 by mail from Key West, and if he likes them he can send money for as many as he wants from some place north.

Feby 25th.

The steamer leaves here tomorrow for New York, - the next one about ten days later. However, you may hear from Santa Cruz before the letter I will leave here reaches you. I will mail at least a note at every place just for fun though some of 'em will reach you from out-of-the-way places out of their turn.

Dont forget to write. Give my love to all at home

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. We are having splendid weather (about 75°) and I am in perfect health.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Frantic,
St. Domingo, Hayti,
March 13, 1887
Sunday.

My dear Jones,

I think of you often, for tho' we have a good crowd on board here, and I am at peace with them and the world, still I have no chums - no Petes, Gages, Lemmes, Baxters, and Big Joneses.

I wonder if I aint too old to make such friends again? And I wonder if I will ever have another winter like we had in Norfolk. All the boys are scattered, and the girls will probably be married soon - including the one in the "Valley." As Joseph Bertha (?) would say "Dieu du ciel, on n'est juene qu'un fois. Ah! Vive la juenesse!" I take a lesson in French every day now)

But never mind, we may get together again some day, and at all events, so long as postage is so cheap we will keep sight of each other.

I acknowledged the receipt of your# last from Havana by a short note, which I hope you have received by this time. Now I will proceed to give you an account of myself since that time, tho' there is very little to tell.

We arrived in St. Thomas in 11 days from Havana, we might have made it in a week by going to the S.d of the islands, but instead we went up the stream to Lat. 30°, then

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East and SE to St. T., bucking a head wind all the way. Our skipper is one of the men who know it all, and he predicted strong Ely winds Sd of the islands. We find what little wind there is, S. and SW. But this is navy growling, which we veteran sailors must be allowed occasionally.

From St. Thomas we went to Santa Cruz, thence to Porto Rico (St. Johns), where they wished to quarantine us for three days, so we only remained one hour. The next port was Santa Barbara, Samona (?) Bay, thence here, where we arrived this morning. We leave this evening to finish our cruise.

I will post this in Port au Prince.

At St. Thomas I re'cd a xmas card from Baxter & Capps, and by the next mail a letter from Bax which I enclose. It isn't much of a letter, for he imagined he had a grievance, says I didn't answer his last etc.

He busted completely, for I wrote him fully, and besides enclosed him a very bright and amusing letter from the Valley - and he forgot it! How cold blooded some men are! However I have now in my escritoir a letter of 30 pages ready to mail to him from Port au Prince, and as you can imagine I have told him it all. Old Bax is a fine chap, and I hope I will sail with him again if he don't become too much of a sharp to go to sea anymore.

I haven't heard from Pete since we left K. W., but expect to find a letter there on my return. I# amuses me to

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find the old gentleman taking to Buckle and Spencer so violently, for I am afraid they would receive less attention in a different atmosphere - Norfolk for example. However Pete has found out that there is something alive in 'em, and if he thoroughly acquires a taste for such "rot," he will have something to fall back on for the rest of his life.

Apropos of books.

I haven't bothered you with any suggestions in that line, and don't intend to bother you much now. But while you have a library at your command, and time to kill, why not read the book that directs the entire business (not government) policy of the civilized world today.

Every business man acts according to its principles, because they have been passed along to him more or less imperfectly, but few of them read the book. Why not be one of the few? It is large enough to kill time, you must find it interesting, and it can't fail to be useful to any man, and especially a business man, for it is simply plain common sense reduced to a system. I mean Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations." Try it.

I was quite gay in Aspinwall, but not at all dissipated. Just before we left the Supt. of the P. R. R. arrived from New York with his bride. She is not very pretty, but has the tin. I am told from the "Valley" that it is always so with men.

Of course I resented the imputation stoutly, and asked

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if a rich man didn't stand a tolerable chance of being accepted when matrimonially inclined - provided he is white and not a cripple.

Do I understand rightly from your letter that Miss Mary Walker is engaged to the Greek? - Pete has not mentioned any such calamity.

I told you all I know of Norfolk and old times from Aspinwall, but will continue the pleasant theme when I have any more to tell. Of course I told Bax all about my visit to Miss Mary in New York, and Miss Annie in Norfolk.

I assumed that he didn't remember which was which, so described them particularly in order to freshen his feeble recollections of them.

Bless their little hearts they are two sweet little friends. I hope they will marry good men.

Your accounts of the cold weather are very refreshing in these latitudes, tho' I dont envy you the -48°. This is good enough for me.

When you write dont forget to tell me all about the little fairy in the red toboggan suit. You had better be careful.

By the way, I forgot to tell you about Stephenson and his Clerks. His position there was a nominal one - Land Agent for the R. R. Co, I believe, but he had the monopoly to supply dynamite to contractors on the Canal, and, they

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say, made \$100,000 or so in a few months, then went home. Arms was Auditor of the Co., at \$4000 per year, I dont know what Garvey's(?) position was but they both left a couple of months ago, as there was a new deal when the new Supt. took charge. Arms is with Stevenson in the New York Yard.

I have not kept track of little Bub., Fritz, Noel, or Sawyer. I think Noel is on the Vermont.

Pere Edsal is on the "Portsmouth," now cruising with the training fleet in the W. I. I think they are now in Trinidad. Kink. (?), as you know is at a college in New Hampshire, I heard from him some time ago and expect another letter soon. Perhaps I can tell you something about him in my next. Sharrer I haven't seen since he went to the Galena, but when the fleet gets together in May I will see 'em all if "Mr. Smith" lets the ships stay at anchor long enough to lower a boat. I will see Lombard! at the same time. Ashbridge is on leave yet, and I haven't even heard of him since he left - yes I did to~~o~~ Before we left Key W. the Blake came in with Seymour on board, and he said he had called on "A" recently, and found his behavior only fairly middling. These is a very tough gang on the Blake. Sears, W. L., Dick Hughes, Rodgers, A. G., and Dean Swift. During the few days the Blake remained in port they were drunk all the time. I haven't heard from Bloody for a long time, tho I expect a letter every day, for I wrote him such a long

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one, that he must answer it. Bloody is one of the finest little men I know, and I hope he dont fall in with too lively a gang in China. He is a trifle weak after the ladies and he might learn the "liquor habit" (as Bob McLean used to call it) if he practiced two or three years.

I found two letters from dear old Pete. on my arrival here, - at Port au Prince, where I am now writing. One of 'em would have amused you, tho' it interested me greatly. It was full of Buckle, Spencer, & Huxley, not of the text, but what he thought about them. They've got him sure this time. He is very much interested, and enjoys them very much. I will answer his letters with great pleasure. When he wrote - Feb. 23rd - he still had some hope for your bill, also the "Ensigns raise." Wouldn't it be glorious if they both passed, and all three got on the same ship again - say in Europe to sow a few oats?

You needn't worry about my shaving off my beard again. I've had quite enough of that. It is quite as long as usual now. We all shaved at Aspinwall, and were all disgusted with ourselves, tho' we wouldnt acknowledge it.

You know beards are very much disliked in certain parts of Virginia, and the people dont hesitate to say so. However, I continue to defend the beard as one of the most beneficent gifts of an all-wise Providence to the sex who have so much of#need this merciful covering.

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Drop me a line to Key West, to be there by April 15, and give me details of the best way to get from Hampton Roads and Norfolk to Taylorsville, for I intend to run up if we get another watch officer, and "Mr. Smith" dont make it too lively for us.

I think I'd better take the opera along to give Pete's and your sisters something to tease you about, for I suppose you have teased them lots in your time, as I have my sisters.

I think it likely that I will remain on the Yantic, for I am quite comfortable here.

We expect Brainard back when we go north. However if we get a new executive officer and a watch officer senior to me it may change things considerably. We all hope Reisinger wont return. He is a cad - very incompetent, and very dishonest and treacherous.

I am quite an enthousiastic French scholar now, and my oppportunity to study here under a good teacher will have some weight in deciding me to stay.

Remember me to Bill Bouch and be sure and write to Key West. And believe me always your sincere friend,

(Signed)

Sims

March 19, 1887

U. S. S. Yantic,

Port au Prince,

March. 21, 1887

My dear Louisa,

Yesterday I hurried off a letter to Adelaide, for they said the steamer would leave very soon. The letter is in the post office, but the steamer is here yet, so I have time to answer your letter.

I am very sorry you were so unfortunate with your napkins, but please dont bother about doing them all over again, for I know how hard that would be, particularly as I feel very guilty for not having yet made your comb. I have put it off and off, from one time to another, or rather from one book to another. I would say to myself, "now I'll make those combs and get 'em off my mind as soon as I finish this book," but I havent done it, for I usually read two or three books at once - abstract and entertaining ones, for change. When I find I cant keep my attention on a book I put the marker in and take up another, so I seldom come to an end, and am never awake and without a book except on watch - and not always then. It is a wonderful and never failing source of entertainment.

Our skipper reads a great deal and we talk some together, but seldom agree on anything. He is really violently bigoted - believes what pleases him and says

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that what dont please him is "all d__m rot, d__n rot sir." Possibly you have noticed that I dont give up an opinion "right away quick" always, so you can imagine he dont bulldoze me any. Did you ever hear what the one dissenting juryman said about the other eleven "Them are eleven of the stubbornest d__n men that ever was born."

Well that's the kind of man the skipper is, and thats the kind of man (boy) he thinks I am.

(I'm going to make the comb all the same.)

When we were about to leave Key West he said he was going to make the trip by going up the stream to lat. 30° then East and SE to St. Thomas. We had a head wind all the way, which kept him in a very bad humor. Thos# of us who had cruised about here much knew that excépt during a gale it is nearly # calm to the South of the islands (Cuba & Hayti).

The skipper had been there once and struck a gale, and that was enough for him. I had made the trip a number of times, another officer three times, etc., but it didnt make any difference. Our Dr. who todys to the Capt. defended him in the Wardroom. Well we growled all the way to St. Thomas about the head winds, and rough sea, and talked about the smooth water south of the islands. We talked at the Dr. and I guess he told the

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Capt. what we said.

I know they both hoped for strong eley. winds when we came along the south coast, but instead we found light Wly (head) winds the entire way. Two or three times the wind veered around to the SE so we could make sail, and about the time the capt. would be ready to say "I told you so" it would come out ahead, and the sails would have to be furled. Of course we never let the Dr. rest about the strong Ely winds, - nor the health trip, not anything else. If we have to make this trip next winter I'll bet money the Capt goes the same way.

But to return to the comb. As soon as we get out of this where it is beastly hot I intend to make it.

I can imagine that our sweet little sister is as busy as a bee with the "Orbisonia Star." Bless her little heart, I think she has done first rate, and I like the paper very much and think it is very clever indeed. I intend to write some letters for it. I showed it to the capt. and the mess, and some of 'em want copies to send away, so I subscribed for 10 copies.

Stand clear of the new sofa when I come home, for it's just what I've been looking for - a six foot sofa with big pillows.

I have told Addie and Father what little news there is, so wont repeat. I will write again before we leave.

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Give my love to little Va. Rich, and Florie when you write to her, - likewise Nancy. When you write again tell me about your visit to H. - all the gossip, and scandal etc. etc. etc.

Give my love to all at home,
Ever your lovingest brother,
(Signed) William

U. S. S. Yantic,
Santiago de Cuba,

April 2nd. 1887

My dear Louisa,

I found your letter of the 14th. March here on our arrival three days ago, and I thank you for being so thoughtful in writing.

Our captain is so excessively nervous that he is anxious to get to Hampton Roads, and hurries away from each place as soon as he can. We leave here tomorrow (3rd) instead of the 8th. according to the schedule, consequently we will miss the next mail here as we did the last to Port au Prince. We will only stop at Cienfuegos one day, then go to Key West, where we will only remain long enough for coal and a wash. So you must send the flannels there just as soon as you receive this, the ones I have are just about gone, patches and all. Send them immediately if you please. I am glad they are so large, for they shrink every time they are washed. I never thought the ones I have would be too small but they are all a little tight, except the "nighties."

Your lunch card is very pretty and patriotic, but why didn't you give me some Harrisburg news and gossip?

The Ensign's bill, as you probably know didnt come up for consideration, tho' a majority of the Naval Committee

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recommended \$1700. We will have to wait another year and a half and try it again.

We dont know yet what the prospects are for the summer cruise, for we hear that the Richmond is going to the South Atlantic, instead of remaining north as Luce's flagship, and we dont know what vessel can be made flagship. The Trenton will not be ready for some time, and she is intended for Europe, tho' she may remain on this station for the summer. They talk of making the Swatara flagship temporarily, but I dont think she will be ready very soon. I hope they dont get a fleet together until Fall as it is much pleasanter cruising alone. I think we will all visit the fisheries. I would like to go up the St. Lawrence.

As soon as we arrive in Hampton Roads Bootes will be detached to go to the "School" for his examinations. He will not be retained in the service.

Orchard is now a Lieutenant and will have to go to Washington for his examination, so that Kellogg and I will be the only watch officers left on board.

They will probably send us some more watch officers, but I dont know how soon. I hoped to be able to get a few day's leave from Hampton Roads, to run up and visit the Jones families in Virginia, as they have invited me very kindly to do, but I dont see how I can

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manage it.

I have no idea when I will be able to get home.

If our restless Ad. succeeds in getting a fleet together soon, it will probably not be until fall. I think it likely we will be in New York for decoration day, and remain there during part of June, to receive the French Admiral on the Minerve. We found the Minerve here on our arrival, she left here the next day bound for Port au Prince.

The English flagship Belaraphon (?) will be in Newport in June or July. We are likely to have a busy summer, fleet or no fleet.

I would not be one bit surprised if we were ordered back to Port au Prince, and I would not regret it either, tho' it would not be pleasant. It would serve our capt. right for the manner in which he has treated the Haytians.

When we left Port au Prince negotiations were pending between the English and Haytian governments, through an English commissioner sent there for that purpose.

There was considerable excitement and great opposition to our leaving. The Haytians wished us to remain, as they are much afraid of the English, and look to us for protection. They induced a number of Americans in business there to request, through our minister there,

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our detention, but the captain would not listen to it and left two days before the mail was to arrive.

You will see our arrival at Key West in the Herald, a day or so after you receive this. The steamer leaves at 8 a.m. today (it is now 2 a.m.) direct for New York.

Dont forget to send the flannels at once.

I am at work on your comb, but dont know when it will be finished as I will take my time and polish it well. However it wont be long.

Give my love to the little Editor and tell me# I will expect the Star at Key West. I am pleased to hear that they have named the little engine after her.

Com. must be very swell with his new collar. It is a pity he is not more obedient. He should be licked more and petted less. I fancy you "women folks" spoil him.

Write to me at Key West. My health is still excellent, and I suppose you are all well as you say nothing to the contrary.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving brother

(Signed) Am.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Key West, Fla.

April 11, 87

Just arrived.

My dear Louisa,

We are just about anchoring here at the end of our W. I. cruise.

The mail will leave before I have a chance to read the mail already here, so I will have to acknowledge the letters next time.

There is no news, - we are all well and glad to get back.

You will find somewhere in this box a comb I have just finished for you.

I dont like the shape very much, but I followed your pattern. However the shell is quite pretty, and I have taken pains to polish it well. I had a hard time making it but I stuck to it because I love you so much ('hanks)

I enclose also Hal's chain that I have rubbed up a bit.

We had a hard time coming from the West end of Cuba as we had to buck a strong northeaster. We made about 2 knots an hour, and are 24 hours late.

Perhaps I will have time to at least acknowledge the letters, but not to answer them. You will hear from

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me again by Thursday's mail (today is Monday) - I
dont feel much like writing before I see the mail, so
will close now.

Give my love to all at home. I sincerely hope you
are all well,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Pensacola, Fla.

April 19, 1887

My dear Lou,

Your letter of the 4th inst. I found at Key West, and if I remember right acknowledged it from there. I have very little news to tell you this time.

We arrived here from K. W. by way of Tampa Bay - on the west coast of Florida. We stopped there to look for the wreck of a schooner reported sunk there, but could not find her. She was probably swept away or broken up by the last Norther - which came along just before we left K. W.

If we had found her we would have lowered a dynamite torpedo into her and blown her up, which would have been some sport. We arrived at Tampa in the evening and anchored outside in about 40 feet of water, and the next morning could see the anchor and chain on the bottom, the water was so clear. If the schooner had been there we could easily have lowered a torpedo into her main hold. The next morning we went exactly where the wreck was reported to be, dropped a barrel anchored by a piece of iron, and steamed all about it for half a day looking for the schooner. Then we anchored and put out a target and had target practice with "great guns."

I can tell you it makes the little Yantic jump when we fire the VIII inch rifle with a 180 pound shell.

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After that we came on hear#, to get something in the way of stores to carry North to Norfolk. Today is Tuesday. We will remain anchored off the city until Thursday to give the crew a run on shore, then go to the Navy Yard - some miles below the city for the stores and leave there Monday next for Key West.

This will reach you before we leave here, and if you write at once the letter will reach me at Key West.

I was disappointed at not finding the flannels at Key West, for the ones I have are nearly done for.

I dont think the experssage would have been more than \$1.50 or \$2.00, as they come by steamer from New York.

I wish you had sent them for if we are ordered to Hayti again - which is not improbable considering the fuss the papers have been making - I will have a time making them last.

If we are ordered I may have time to get them there (Key West) by telegraphing for them. The telegram will be "A. W. Sims, Orbisonia, Pa. Flannels" - as short as possible as it costs 35¢ a word on account of the W. U. monopoly and the cable to the mainland.

Does the comb suit? I am having you a lanyard made for a watch chain. I# will be a bit of a surprise - you cant imagine what it will be like, and I wont tell.

I enclose you a R. R. puzzle. See if you can do

1
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it, then give it to Father and Hal. I did it in about a minute, but then you know I'm very smart.

I gave the boys one that none of them could do, though I fancy it will be easy enough for you R. R. people.

A

B

A train is at A heading East; another at B heading West. Each has 15 cars and neither engine can draw more. The siding will only hold five (5) cars and an engine. Get the trains past each other.

We are all enjoying splendid health, particularly me. The weather is perfect. Thermometer 70°.

Dont forget to write at once.

Went to a Newmarket party in Key West at Mrs. Canns. She goes north next month for the summer.

Give my love to all at home.

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

When you write let me know how many suits of flannels you made, and how much I owe for the stuff.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Pensacola, Fla.

April 21 '87

My dear Pete.

Your letter of Feb. 8 addressed to the Navy Dept. reached me at Port au Prince, also one of Feby. 22 addressed to P. au P.

I certainly intended to answer them long ago, but you know how it is in a hot climate, I have put it off until the spirit moved me to answer your first (Spencer, Huxley etc) letter in a way it deserved. Besides all this I have wasted a lot of time making a tortoise shell comb I promised my sister a year or so ago - she would feel complimented, wouldnt she? But she understands that I dont like to work it any more as I used to before I took to the musty old books. As a result of all this my correspondence has fallen behind, and now I have only time to write a letter promising another in which I will see what I can do about the Spencer business.

For the present I only propose to tell you the news of the day, but will write again soon, possibly from Key West.

We finished out W. I. cruise as per program, I sent you. It was one of the same old jog trot cruises I have been making since seven years, so you can fancy I havent the heart to describe any of it. Nothing occurred worthy of comment - to such an old stager.

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When we arrived in K. West we found orders for the ship that arrived to proceed to the entrance of Tampa Bay and blow up a schooner supposed to be wrecked there we didn't find any schooner, but caught three fine king fish while going 8.5 (!) knots. We were also ordered here to get some stores to carry to Norfolk - Canvass & fire brick. We will probably have to live on deck all the way north. We leave here in about three days, touch at Key West, then direct to Norfolk (!!!!!)

I haven't been ashore and dont intend to go for I know no one here.

I hear from Bax. occasionally. He told me all about the waltzin there etc, - all I fancy that he told you. But the wily dog said nothing about the girl from Winchester Va. etc. I am obliged for the 3rd hand information about what Bax and you think my rival.

Do you remember what you said (apropos of Norfolk) about people giving a man credit for much more feeling than he really has etc etc. Well that is my case.

Perhaps you remember that the letters from the Valley were enjoyed by Bax and yourself whenever you showed enough interest in the subject. Well it is the same now. By means of these letters I hear occasionally from or of Norfolk, and in return I spin my usual long yarns about anything and everything - just such letters as I would write to you or

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any other good dorrespondent (no extra charge). So you see I can have no rivals in the sense you mean, and I would be no more surprised to receive her cards than I would yours, and would feel the same in either case, that is I would rejoice with either of you in your happiness. The only difference I could write to you still - somebody's husband but not to her - somebody's wife. That is all, "Honor Bright" as the small boys say.

I have heard nothing about Norfolk since I last wrote but as we will be there a week or so, you may expect a few messages when I write from there. I will of course visit all my friends but will be late for the festivities. I think we will go to New York as soon as we can get away.

Drop me a line to Norfolk. I saw our various bills fail with great disappointment tho' I have got into the habit of not expecting much.

At Santiago I received a long and cheerful letter from Big Jones. He says he likes his billet and is doing well, but you probably hear from him more frequently and fully than I do. Wouldn't it be fine if he could get back and we could all go to sea again. Perhaps we will pull it yet.

We have now four watches with Bootes. He will be detached just as soon as we arrive north. Orchard will go up for examination, and that will leave only two, Kellogg and Sims. So I dont know whether I will be able to run up

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Taylorsville or not, but, I hope so. Harace gave me directions how to reach there in his last letter.

Unless the Dept. is very kind to the Yantic, I dont see how I am even to get home, except perhaps in the fall when we go to a navy yard.

I havent been reading anything special lately, - a few biographies, Les Miserables etc.

My health is perfect, and I hope you are all right by this time.

Drop me a line when you get time, and expect another letter from me anytime.

Remember me to old man Hulme - you must not work him too hard, for he needs lots of rest.

Your sincere friend

(Signed) Sims.

P. S.

I am working the cynic racket now - feel a little blue - hate girls like "pison" etc etc, hence this rather gloomy letter.

(Signed) Sims

U. S. S. Yantic,
Pensacola, Fla.

April 21 '87

My dear Lou;

I am just going to drop a line to acknowledge your letter of the 17th. which arrived this morning.

I am glad you are pleased with your comb - also that the flannels are on their way to K. W. - they are probably there now. I will feel very much stuck up when I get them on, for it depresses a man to have a hole in his underclos.

If you have not already sent the napkins to Key West, you can send them as soon as you receive this, that means immediately. To make them perfectly safe you might pay ten cents and register them.

I think we will be in New York for Decoration day - will you be there then? Of course you understand that I dont know where we will go, - you must have found that out in all this time, that is that nobody know# anything about the movement of ships.

How I would love to see little Adelaide asleep with her seven dolls.

I hope she will keep them for years yet. Give her my best love, also everyone at home,

Always your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

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P. S. I thank you for sending me Alf's bright letter.
Do it again.

(Signed) W.

We leave here next Sunday or Monday, stop at K. W.
for coal, and proceed to Hampton Roads.

(Signed) W.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Pensacola, Fla.,

April 25 '87

My dear Father,

We have our stores on board (800 bales on canvas) and sail this afternoon for Key West, where we will arrive in three days, barring bad weather. We will remain there only long enough to fill our bunkers with coal, probably two days, then sail for Hampton Roads.

I, for one, would not be a bit surprised if we were ordered to Hayti to meet the Admiral there on the "Richmond," now in the West Indies. I will write again from K. W. letting you know our movements - when we will arrive in Hampton Roads or Port au Prince.

We are perfectly well, but it will be a tired looking ship's company if we are ordered to P. au P.

In case we arrive in Norfolk, I think we will remain two or three weeks. Mr. Bootes our long Naval Cadet will be detached there and that will leave only three watch officers. One of these, Orchard, will be away about one week passing his examination, so I dont think any of us will be able to get away.

However I think we will go to New York, and I may be able to get home for a week from there, tho' it is doubtful. In that case I will have to wait until we go to a Navy Yard in the fall. How is it for passes

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now? Do they still give them on the P. R. R. ?

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

Dont fuss about the cigars. I will not send them until it is perfectly safe, and then only one box at a time, that is your box, John's box, or Bank's box.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Key West, Fla.,

April 28 '87

My dear Lou,

My bundle has just come on board, and I am delighted with all my pretty presents. You are all very kind, and you must kiss Mother, Mary, and the little Adelaide for me. The presents are lovely, and I wanted all of them.

I am on watch and we will leave in a few hours, so I haven't time to try the flannels on, so will report from Hampton Roads or Norfolk. The stuff is lovely, and I have no doubt they will fit. It is a shame for me to have you make me so many clothes at home. It must be lots of trouble. The nightgowns are exactly right. I don't have to try them on.

Tell Adelaide the pine-needle bag is very much admired by all on board. The towels are just what I want for "show" towels when we have visitors. The silk handkerchief will be famous for next winter to cover a white shirt, if I am working the society racket, with Mary's handkerchief to put in my pocket.

You are all sweet creatures to take so much trouble for me.

We will drop anchor in Hampton Roads for orders, and expect to carry the canvas to Norfolk; Va. Perhaps

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we will go to New York. I hope not for the young lady from the Shenandoah Valley is visiting Norfolk now!! You can expect to see our arrival in H. R. in something less than one week, barring bad weather.

Drop me a note there.

Give my best love to all at home, and thank them all again for me,

Ever your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

Hampton Roads,

May 3, Tuesday,

4.15 a.m.

(W.S.S. adds in pencil "1887" - ASF)

My dear Father,

We anchored at 3.30 this morning - 45 minutes ago. I had the mid-watch - from 12 to 4 a.m., and have just been relieved, and am going to drop you a line before I turn in, so that it can go ashore in the early market boat and catch the first express for Orbisonia.

We are all well and delighted to get back.

I am in splendid health.

We made a quick and very comfortable passage.

We go to Norfolk tomorrow, and remain there until the 19th. at least.

Haven't re'cd the mail yet, of course. It will come on board in the morning - that is later this morning; when I will write again and acknowledge the letters.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

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

May 11, 1887

My dear Louisa,

Your very welcome letter arrived today. The napkins you know, have arrived all right. Every day for the last three or four days we have had "company" at breakfast, and once for dinner, and my napkins have all been used for them. They have admired them very much, but they dont more than half believe that it was my sister who made them for me. This is a compliment for both of us, eh? We have had some very delightful people on board, and given them lovely breakfasts, and entertained them very nicely for we have a splendid lot of fellows on board. Today was my day, and I invited the Misses Chamberlain, and Miss Meem (the Shenandoah Valley girl). The breakfast was a success in every way and we had a very jolly time.

The girls were lovely, and everybody admired them very much, and said they were the best party that had been on board. One fellow said "Those girls stand sunlight better than any I ever saw."

Consequently I am very much pleased. These little girls are very sweet, and very good friends of mine, and I enjoy their friendship very much, and think nothing of walking five miles to see them - as I have to

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do from here, $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles each way. But I tell you, my honey, I do miss the Jones boys here, - especially coming back to the Navy Yard.

I intend to go and see their families from Hampton Roads, as we intend to drop down there the first part of next week. Of course the Norfolk gossips have me engaged, but they are a little puzzled to know which is the girl.

I am glad you are going to visit Sophie Claude. Give her my love. If you choose you can tell her why I didn't go to the Naval Academy. Mr. Bootes left here two days ago for Annapolis. He will be very busy studying, but when some of his exam's are over you will see him. I like him very much. He is a thorough gentleman. I am sorry there is sickness at Florie's.

I have no idea whether we will go to New York for decoration day or not, but I hope we will - since we are going to leave Norfolk.

Tell my darling mother that I received her letter of the 9th. this evening. It was very delightful and newsy. The flannel is the softest I ever saw, and just splendid. I have given them to my washerwoman here to give them a good washing to take the smell of the sheep out of them. It makes me smile every time I see those long soft night gowns. I'm gettin' right fussy in my

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old age.

Tell Mother not to fuss about Alf looking thin. Of course he will be thin studying so hard, in the hot weather. Remember how thin I was at the "Naval School." I only weigh 160 pounds now, clas. and all, and I bet Alf weighs as much. He only wants recreation. I will write to him, and tell him to "blow in" the money he has saved having a good time somewhere.

Give my love to the sweet little Adelaide. When we have "company" I always show them her picture, and tell them what a wonderfully smart chit she is.

They always say the picture is lovely.

Give my love to all at home,

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Hampton Roads, Va.,

May 21, Saturday.

(W.S.S. adds in pencil "1887" - ASF)

My dear Mother,

We are at last away from the Navy Yard and anchored in the Roads.

The Admiral is expected any minute, and until he comes we dont know what our movements will be. The papers say all sorts of things, and among them that the fleet will go to Annapolis and be there during the graduating exercises. Wouldn't that be nuts for Lou. and I. When does she expect to be there? We may go to New York for Dec. day. Capt. Green tells me that our boilers will have to undergo a couple of months repairs during July and Aug. and that we will get out of the summer drill. I dont take much stock in this. I really haven't the least Idea (with a big I) what we will do or where we will go.

We left Norfolk yesterday, and I am as you may imagine very blue. The little "Opera" girls were very lovely and I enjoyed a delightful time. The girl from the Shenandoah Valley is handsomer than ever.

I will drop a line every day or so. I am not quite, actually, smothered with letters from home just now.

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My health is excellent again. I was a little
under the weather for a few days.

Give my love to the Wee Adelaide and all at home,

Ever your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Hampton Roads, Va.

May 24, 1887

My dear Jones Boys,

My visit (of two weeks duration) to Norfolk is over!

x x x x x x x x x x x x

I leave a little space to give you time to take in all that the above pregnant sentence means.

I intend to tell you all about it - to write until I have finished and there is nothing more to say - and to tell the truth and nothing but the truth about everything and everybody, myself included, and moreover I will philosophize and moralize according to my own sweet will, and let my pen be moved by the spirit of my dreams. You can understand of course that a man can do this for men he loves; and you can also understand that it could not well be done twice, short of a literal copy - hence this circular letter. It will be long, and if not finished today will be tomorrow, or some other day. You, Pete, are probably on your way north, and as your address is uncertain at present, I will send it to Big Jones first, who will forward it to you. You know me well enough to understand my letters. I fancy you can grasp the full force of my cynicism# or enthousiasm# - as the case may be; and that you have confidence in my veracity when you know I am serious. One thing you must remember, viz., that I am a northern man and follow the customs of my section in

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affairs of the heart, which is unbounded pride and open acknowledgement of any success in the fair field of roses. Dozens of your lovely country women have frankly acknowledged to me that it is true they will deny an engagement up to the very altar; and moreover that they think our way of open acknowledgement is "horrid" and spoils all the fun. So if I make any remarks on this subject you will know that I dont mean the opposite.

That I have enjoyed my visit goes without saying - I have enjoyed it so much that I hardly know where to commence to tell you about it. One thing however is very distinct and prominent, and that is that I have never missed you boys so much since Camp Osceola as I have during the last two weeks, especially in the foot boats (I never caught the ferry once) by moonlight, and when trudging down through Portsmouth and the Navy Yd. to crawl in my little hole and go to sleep. Children, this is no kind of a world where ones best friends must always be thousands of miles away, not to mention our Mothers who idolize us boys and think us a thousand times better than men ever are.

We arrived in the Roads in my watch, at 3 a.m. May 4th. and the next day went up to the yard, and only the other day returned here to meet the Ad. who has just arrived. Before I proceed let me say a few words about visiting your homes. I had made up my mind to do so as soon as I arrived

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for fear I would be interrupted later, but promptly on our arrival, Bootes was detached and Orchard went up for examination, That left only two watch officers, Kellogg and I, and both of us were under the weather, I with my old enemy but not severely attacked. Orchard has just returned, so there are three of us, and I hoped to go from here, but was not allowed to move until the Ad. arrived, for fear of an inspection etc. Now the Admiral thinks he will send us to New York for Dec. Day in a day or so, and this blocks us again.

You may believe I am very much disappointed, for you must know I would love to meet your people, and some day I will do so, even if it is after next Sept. a year when I will leave the sea for a while.

By that time I will have no particular object in life, for my boy will have completed his course at the Penna U. He is doing splendidly, and will make a fine man, consequently I am perfectly happy and contented . What I will do when I finish going to sea, I have not the remotest idea - probably get leave and take a run ashore, then go to sea again, for I have no particular desire for shore duty.

I warned you when I commenced this letter that I was going to ramble on to suit my own sweet will, and you see I am doing it.

But to return to Norfolk. On the evening of our arrival

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at the Yard I went over to town. It was bright moonlight and very warm, and when I arrived in front of the house at the end of the long street I found the Three Little Maidens all alone on the steps. The moon was full and just across the street from us, and you can imagine the effect. I dont know where the moon was when I left, but it had gone out of sight somewhere. I did not notice it again until I was riding to the Yard in a foot-boat filled with gloomy thoughts. Of course I dont mean that the foot-boat was (quite) filled with gloomy thoughts, tho' there was quite a boat-load there. When I say that the girls were simply lovely, I feel that I make an exceedingly feeble effort to express myself. If I were writing a volume I might attempt to reproduce the conversation, as far at least as I was interested in it. But this is only a letter, and, after all, you are not so deficient in imagination as to need many points. We talked of everything, but mostly of old times; that is until we, or rather I, was interrupted by other callers.

Did you ever notice the annoying peculiarity of the young men in a small town?

A comparative stranger, a bird of passage, you call on some girls, when in come some young fellows, who, having known the girls since they were children, are naturally very familiar. That is all right but it is very trying to the stranger, who, by the way, is totally ignorēd by the young

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fellows. You can understand that this makes a disagreeable interruption - and while I feel savage over it - wait a minute, I want to give my compatriots a lick. I have noticed that down here the Y. Fs. at least say "Miss Mary," "Miss Annie" etc., but in Harrisburg, a larger place than Norfolk, they say "Mary," "Annie," and "Nancy" while the visitor says Miss Nancy etc. - "And while I feel savage over it" let me remark that, to my perhaps, rather seriously inclined mind, the society conversation of the average young man is imbecile. Their sole idea seems to be to amuse and not entertain. If they can make themselves sufficiently ridiculous# by cutting monkey shines enough to induce some one to laugh at them, they regard themselves as a howling social success. Their attempts at wit and ability to laugh at it are very pathetic to a benevolent man like myself.

Perhaps Dr. Holmes' remark that "we always feel a little superior to those who make us laugh," is a trifle severe, but there is a good deal in it.

After a couple of chaps had dropped in, and the conversation became general, along came Josh Garrison and Miss McBlair. They would not come in as they were out for a walk, so I went down to the gate to talk to the latter. I expected ce-vility, but that of the commonest etc, and was agreeably surprised to find her quite affable. She asked after all her acquaintances, said many polite things to me,

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told me what Lemme had to say in his last letter, asked me if I knew Lem. had sent her a copy of the Opera and praised that production extravagantly. I kept a sharp lookout for a vein of irony but didnt discover any. She said on leaving that she hoped she would see me again. Perhaps she intended me to call but she didnt say so, and I didnt see her again.

I dont think she looks as well as she did a year ago. She looks thinner. Someone told me she was consumptive.

By the way, in speaking of you boys she said she was not favorably impressed with Big Jones, and thought Pete wasted his affection on him.

I immediately turned to Miss Mary and asked her to step down to the gate. I repeated the remark and asked her what she had to say to that.

Well if Big Jones had been there and seen the little girl standing with the moon directly in her face, and her eyes fairly snapping while she defended him stoutly, I know he would have felt like taking her up in his arms and kissing her, just as I felt.

Now I must close for this sitting, for it is the end of my mid watch, and tomorrow I will be very busy. A number of my messmates wives are coming off to breakfast, and I will have to put on my best coat and society smile and do the proper. Then I have to go ashore and make an official

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call on the Fort, take dinner with the Captain's wife, supper with a Lieut's wife, etc. - all this is duty, when I would a thousand times rather be writing to you boys, or lacking that burying my nose in a musty old book. However I will continue at the first opportunity and spin my yarn out to the end.

May 26th.

Carried out the above program to the letter - that disposed of the 24th. The next day, the 25th, yesterday, was more fully occupied still, but is to be marked in red on my mental calendar.

By previous arrangement the wee Chamberlaine girls brought their friend from the Valley down to see the Hygeia and the Fortress. They arrived at 8 a.m. with Mr. Chamberlaine and I met them at the boat. Mr. Chamberlaine returned immediately and left them in my charge, thereby paying them and me a very handsome compliment. The day was perfect, and you can imagine how I enjoyed it. I sent them each a bunch of flowers; and with the late Ensign, now Lieut. Orchard to assist me proceeded to take in the place. We drove into the fortress to see guard-mounting, made the tour of the ramparts, climbed up into the lantern of the lighthouse, drove to Hampton and the Soldier's Home, and back to the hotel to dinner. The girls were radiant, and the dinner with them something to be remembered as long as youth lasts. At

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4 P. M. they took the boat for Norfolk, and three of us went up with them, saw them safely home to 16 Bute. Bless their dear little hearts they looked just as lovely as possible. They said they enjoyed the trip very much, and I really think they did. When I said good bye to Miss Mary she told me to give her kindest regards to Mr. Baxter, the next time I wrote, and to Mr. Hilary Jones, but particularly, (and her little face was quite serious) to Mr. Horace Jones. Miss Annie, and Miss Meem also wished to be remembered to you both. It would take many pages to tell all the splendid things they have all said about you boys at different times since I have been here, and I quite love them all for it. I think I am just a little bit in love with each one of them. Wouldn't it be glorious if we three could pay a long visit to N. together. I would give you both your choice and marry the one that got left. There are no finer women in the world than these three friends of ours. When I came through Norfolk last winter you know I saw Miss Annie, and told you how much she had improved. It does my heart good to see the sweet little women looking so strong and well. She is even more beautiful now. Her complexion is simply marvelous. I have never seen anything so delicate and so absolutely pure, not even a child or a baby. On a certain occasion of which I will tell you later, I saw her in "full dress" - low neck and no sleeves - black velvet. I really have no words to express the delicacy and purity of her beauty. She wore a

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single lily at her breast, and I give you my word as an honest man, the lily positively looked sallow in comparison to her neck and shoulders - I am a poor excuse for a ladies man, I know, but I did manage to tell her so, and I am glad of it.

But I am away ahead of my story - as who wouldn't be; and I am reluctant to leave the subject now to take things in their regular order.

Apart from the physical beauty of these three lovely girls, there is a "je ne sais quoi" that is a combination of all the good qualities of the heart. A man is impressed with their absolute purity and womanliness, and to enjoy their society is to be a better man. It is such women as these that make the world better today than it used to be long ago. It is our Mothers, then our sisters, then our girl friends that we owe for any good that is in us wretched men.

I fancy you didnt think there was so much sentiment in me - I dont think I did either. I mean I didn't think there was either.

But to resume the thread of my story - if there is any thread.

When I returned in the foot boat from my first call I felt singularly depressed if not disappointed. I fancied that my reception was not cordial; but when I brought the

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could light of reason to bear on it I could not come to that conclusion, but all the same I could not help fancying it. I could not make it out, and was completely puzzled. I could not recall a single instance to bear out my fancy, but I could not shake it off. I called myself a fool for expecting more, or fancying that I expected more, for I really didn't. If I had gone away the next day I would have carried this feeling with me. But I didnt go away.

I was invited to tea, and went on my next tour off.

The reason I mention this is because Jones H. W. had a similar experience, and din't have a chance to correct it as I did.

I understand it all now and this is the explanation.

In anticipation of the pleasure of meeting all these friends agsin, I had naturally thought of many things I had to say to them, and many things I expected them to say to me. In one evening in a mixed company there was no time or opportunity to do so, hence the feeling of disappointment. We remained in Norfolk two weeks, and I saw them often, and all these things have been said, and this uncomfortable feeling has been entirely dissipated, and I feel that these three girls are good friends of mine.

Somebody told Miss Mary that you H. W. were disappointed in your reception, and she mentioned it to me, saying that she could not understand it, for she was simply delighted

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to see you. I can assure you that you were entirely mistaken; and I believe that if you had remained longer you would have found it out.

I called on all my friends in Norfolk - Miss Newton, Harmonson, Leigh, Mrs. Truxtun, etc. But I never failed to call at 16 Bute every night I was off duty, and I didn't get away very early either. The Yantic did herself proud in the way of entertaining. We had six or seven breakfast parties on board including Mrs. Holt and Hugh Page, Mrs. Dixon, Miss Spotswood (the Baron (?) - going to marry Ensign Quinby, they say), Mrs. Asherhause the Misses Downings (of Portsmouth) Mrs. Van Patten, Will Chamberlaine, and Jim Elliot, Miss Smith (Mrs. Van P's sister), and the three little maids from 16 Bute with Mr. Chamberlaine. My party took the cake - everybody said so - and went off splendidly. The girls looked simply lovely. Paymaster Ball (from Warrington, Va.,) paid them the prize compliment. He said "I never say a lot of girls who could stand the sunlight like those; the brighter the sun the better they look." Of course I repeated this as well as the other remarks, and the girls were evidently pleased. There was nothing stiff or formal about this party. The girls drank their Champagne-water, and allowed us to smoke. Miss Meem was in one of her funny humors, and made several remarks about some photos. in my collection, that set us all going and we didn't

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finish laughing at them until they arrived home, and I fancy they had some fun over them after I left. The Yantic was at the dry dock, and we had the steam launch both ways, and a lovely day besides.

The girls said they never had such a good time.

A few days later Miss Mary gave the selectest party I have ever attended. It was arranged and postponed so as to fit my watches. The party included Mr. Fergus Reid, Mr. Tanner, and Mr. Sims, besides the girls - and that was all. The girls all wore full ball costumes, and we men evening dress. When we all arrived they pulled down the blinds, shut the door and were not at home. At the last moment Mr. Tanner couldn't come, and Mr. Myers was invited as a sub. We played cards (Hearts) until 10 P. M. sharp. Miss Meem won the prise# - a photograph bag - which she put in my overcoat pocket (on the quiet) on the hat rack. Then we had a regular spread, followed by singing by Myers, Reid, and Miss Annie. Of course we skipped off into corners for the festive t.a t. The girls were simply gorgeous. It was on this occasion that Miss Annie wore a black velvet bodice, and made a fresh lily at her breast look sad and old. Miss Mary was dressed in white low neck, and Miss Meem in a low necked dress of very pale blue, and very pale pink. She was simply superb. They all had white flowers in their hair. To say that they looked lovely, would but feebly express it.

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A ball, reception, or German is nothing compared to such a picnic. There was only one thing that could have made it more enjoyable, that would be a substitution of the Jones boys for the other fellows. I whispered this to the girls and they quite agreed with me. Reid is a nice fellow, but not a serious character. Myers is good enough in his way, but badly stuck on himself and his singing. He is not in very high feather there now. Miss Meem told me on the quiet that last winter when Miss Bessye Fyfe was there he haunted the house - asked permission to take her to Boston when she was about to leave, which was "not granted" by Mrs. C., and that he didn't call at all during the last week of her stay, nor come to bid her good bye.

At the time of this party we were in three watches - days duty during the day time, and 6 hour watches at night. I had been on watch all day, remained at the party until 1 a.m., got back to the ship at 2 a.m. and stood watch until 8 a.m. I was tired out and glad of it.

A thousand times I wished you boys had been there, especially on the long tramps from 16 Bute to the Navy Yard. If Pete had been there he could have devoted himself to Miss Annie with a clear conscience (I always fancied he was partial to her) for for, for, f-o-r Miss Mary, Miss Mary Walke is, is, en---- eng----- engaged to be married to a fellow from New York - I forget his name, as I always do with names,

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but they say it is settled. The Greek Mr. Frank G. Opalo is already married. His marriage was arranged by his family, and the brides family, and he submitted.

On the 21th. we went down to Hampton Roads to wait for the Admiral. I then intended to try and go to Taylorsville, but the Captain would not let any one leave until the Ad. arrived and it was known what he was going to do. He arrived the next day, and went up to the yard for coal telling us he would return immediately and sail for New York. He came down in two days and we sailed, so you see it was impossible for me to get away.

I am very sorry indeed, but it could not be helped. You must both tell your people when you write why I could not come. I hope we will come back here for our repairs this fall, when I will have another chance. We are now at sea - May 28th - on our way to New York for decoration day. We will be in tomorrow when I will mail this letter. I understand that the "Bache" is to be in New York by about June the 10th. If you mail this back to Pete it will meet him there.

I know you will enjoy it as much as I have enjoyed writing it. I think I have told you about all the news about the girls, at least, if I have done so in a very rambling manner.

There may be a few items of miscellaneous news - for

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instance Ensign Grant has a son and heir. Jno. Reid is a bigger dude than ever - light pink neckties. Miss Leigh is looking splendid. I think she is rid of Bradford, or whatever his name is - the fellow who wanted to marry her. She told me, apropos of Ashbridge's drinking, that Bradford used to drink but had stopped for two years, but is now drinking hard again. So I take it she has given him a final refusal.

Mrs. Truxtun wished particularly to be remembered to you both. She is much broken by her recent troubles. She was very kind to me when I left - took my hand in both of hers and told me to marry a good sensible girl when I did marry. For a cent I would have kissed her, and I believe she would have liked it. She complimented the little opera, which Miss Mary showed her.

I am trying to think of some more things to tell you about the girls, but cant. Let me warn you, however, against one thing, viz., dont attempt to read anything between the lines in this letter, for there is nothing there. it is all open as day. If there had been anything interesting to tell you about my affairs or feelings, I would have told it. But there is nothing. Much as I admire these girls, and much as I enjoy their society and friendship, there is nothing more. If there was I would be so proud that I couldn't contain it, and you boys would be the first to know it. I never made the least bit of love to any girl, or said or wrote

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anything that could be so construed. My time has evidently not come yet. Miss Meem is the same kind friendly girl she always was. She treats me with entire frankness, and has repeated her former invitation to visit her home. I fancied once that her pride was offended because I apparently preferred remaining at sea over my time, to taking advantage of my opportunity to visit her. Perhaps I was mistaken. However I told her what kept me at sea, and she is woman enough to think none the worse of me for it. She is simply a good friend of mine as you both are, and as long as my letters continue to entertain her I will keep her in sight.

Pete says the average girl is a failure as a correspondent. Perhaps it is so but these are not average girls. Big Jones' remarks are more to the point. He says we must not fail to keep each other informed of the details of our lives so that our friendship may not decay.

I agree with him thoroughly and will keep my end up.

I still owe Pete an answer to his philosophy letter, and will not neglect it - but philosophy never grows old, and friendship does; the first will keep and the latter wont. I have a word or two for Big Jones and will write him a seperate# letter. I intend to write both soon.

I have probably forgotten a lot of things that I will think of later, but I am about at the end of my string now.

Let me hear from you when you have time, and believe me

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always your very sincere friend

(Signed) Wm. S. Sims.

P. S.

Perhaps the mine will pan out yet. See Price's letter enclosed.

P. S.

I wrote Baxter a long letter from the W. Is. but he has not answered yet. I fancy he is very busy. If Pete and Big Jones are so disposed, I, of course, have no objection to this letter being forwarded to him. And, friend Baxter, if it ever reaches you I will expect an answer soon. I hear from Lemme occasionally, tho' he writes very briefly. His billet suits him exactly, and he wants nothing better than to be left alone.

He says he is getting old, and is beginning to be alarmed at not being able to fall in love with a girl any more.

(Signed) Wm. S. S.

P. S. 2.

Yantic,

W 23rd. St.

New York.

My dear Big Jones,

As we crossed the bar coming in we saw the Bache, so I will send this to Pete first - all addressed and ready to mail, but open for him to read. The private letter is also enclosed so as to reach you at the same time.

Your friend,

(Signed) Sims.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Hampton Roads, Va.,

May 26, 1887

10 P. M.

My dear Lou,

Until this evening I thought we had a pretty good chance of going to the "School," but now I am afraid the snap is busted.

I see by today's Herald that the Admiral (now in Norfolk) has received orders to go to New York with the Flagship, and Yantic, and we expect him down tomorrow morning and expect to leave then for New York. It is possible, but not probable that the fleet may go from N. Y. to Annapolis. I think the Admiral would be willing to go if he could get the fleet together. He was very much vexed not to find them here when he arrived from the South.

There was only the wee little Yantic to meet him.

I am very sorry indeed that it has turned out so badly, for I would dearly love to see you again, and visit Annapolis.

I have been having a very good time here for an old duffer like me. The three little Opera maids are very lovely and amiable, and I have seen lots of them.

You know what friends we all were when the old Swatara was in commission and the Jones boys were with me.

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I know you will have a lovely time in Annapolis, as you always do, - give my love to everybody at the Claude Mansion. I am too much disappointed just now to be in the humor for writing, but will let you hear from me later. Please write me a letter addressed to New York, and tell me all the news. Did you give my love to Nancy as you passed through H. ?

By the way, if you see Mr. Knapp, H. S., tell him there is a good billet going to waste on the Yantic. I hear he has to go to sea.

He would have an upstairs room if he came here, and everybody would be glad to see his orders to this ship.

With my best love to everybody,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. Is Florie at home?

U. S. S. Yantic,

Beaufort, S. C.,

Sunday, May, 27

(W.S.S adds in pencil "1887" - ASF)

My dear Father,

Last night on the mid watch I wrote a letter to Mary which, as you will see tells of our sailing tomorrow for Lynn Haven Bay and Norfolk.

At the time I was writing, - tho' I did not know it - there was a telegram on board changing all this, and changing it sadly. We are ordered to proceed at once to Port au Prince, Hayti, on account of some revolutionary trouble I suppose. There is no use kicking for we must go, and make the best of it. The Admiral says he will send the Galena to relieve us soon, but I suppose we will be there a couple of months at least.

Dont forget to write to me for time goes slowly in such a place. You will not hear from me for three weeks or a month after we sail, but you will hear by the first opportunity, of course.

The boys are all very much down the mouth over our orders, but I am not, tho' of course, I am very much disappointed. I am rather curious to know what is the matter down there, and perhaps I will enlighten the public through the columns of the New York Times if they will take my letters - and there is anything to tell.

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I would offer them to the New York Herald if I had time to hear from New York before we sail.

If there is anything serious the matter down there they will send a correspondent by the first steamer, if they have not one already there. If the Times will take my letters, I may make a suit of clothes, besides amusing myself.

It will, of course, be hot there, but it is not unhealthy, except during epidemics - and if there should be one we would clear out. My health is now, as it has been all the cruise simply perfect, so you need not worry about me. Perhaps it will turn out a false alarm, and perhaps we will be relieved in a month or so.

There is nothing more to say, 'cept that I seem to catch all the tough cruising there is going, and have about made up my mind that I have had enough of this station. I am no hog!

When I finish this cruise I think I will go to Paris if I am allowed. I have been studying French pretty faithfully with a Frenchman on board for over a year, and have written to dictation a book of 375 pages. Everyday now he reads ten pages to me, and I read the same pages for pronunciation. I can understand him quite easily, and he says I pronounce quite well. I dont care to go to Paris for any other purpose than to nail this

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French business for keeps. My teacher tells me that with a few months in Paris I could speak quite well. I think it a pity that an officer should not be able to speak French. I have devoted more study to this than any other one subject, and dont want to lose it. What do you think of the scheme?

The papers of the 27th. have just arrived and contain accounts of some rumors of trouble in Hayti, and that Admiral Luce has been ordered to send a vessel - the Yantic not being mentioned.

I will send this by the first mail, and probably write again before we leave.

Give my best love to all at home,

Your loving son,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S. Monday a.m.

We sail today about noon.

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,

New York,

May 29th '87

My dear Jones,

When you write I hope you will be disposed to tell me what you think of Miss Mary Chamberlaine. You know what I think of her, but I fancy you dont know what she thinks of you, and you must not be offended with me if I tell you. I think you ought to know. Recollect, however, that she told me nothing, except that she wished to be particularly remembered to you. She told me this alone, and her sweet little face was very serious, tho' trying to smile all the time. On another occasion, at 16 Bute, when there was nobody present but the girls and myself, we were talking of you boys - of our first impressions of each other etc. Miss Mary said her first impressions were not usually favorable - that it was so when she first met you, but that now she would almost be afraid to know you better for fear she would not like you so much.

She defended you splendidly against Miss McBlair's remark, and spoke of you many times in the same manner. I observed her closely each time; and if there is anything in the expression of a face, in the serious lines about a sweet little mouth, and a softness in bright little eyes, I should say that this perfect little woman has a very tender regard for yourself. I am sure I am not mistaken, and I know

May 29th '87 - page 2

you have no rivals.

You expressed a regret that you had never asked permission to write to any of these friends, Why dont you do so, now that Miss Mary has given you such a good chance by sending you such a kind message.

If you could only have seen her face when she pointed her little finger at me and told me to be sure, and remember her particularly to you, I am sure you would drop her a line and keep alive a friendship at least.

Some of these days, of course you will come east to visit your home, and you will be a duffer if you dont go down to Norfolk and see the little girls.

All this is none of my business I know, but I dont like to think of such good friends of yours drifting away from you. They are all very fond of you and all would be delighted to see you again.

Always your sincere friend,

(Signed) Sims.

Address New York.

U. U. U. Yantic,
Station E, New York.

Wed. June 1, 1887

My dear Louisa,

Your letter of 30th. reached me all right. What are you givin' us about not knowing my address. Plain "New York," will always reach a ship anywheres about New York, Jersey City, Brooklyn, Navy Yard etc. etc. We arrived here on Sunday and dressed ships for the parade, but did not march. I will not answer your letter now, for I have been on duty ever since we arrived, and have little to tell you. When we arrived I sent a note to Florie and have rec'd an answer which I enclose. I will go and them today. I also re'cd a note from Miss Thompson asking me to come and see her, and telling me of her father's death. The "Bache" came in the harbor with us, and Pete Jones came to see me the next day. He is well but looking miserable - only weighs 130 pounds. Hulme is on the Bache. I will go and see him tomorrow.

We have still only three watch officers, so I cant go home yet.

I will write you again day after tomorrow,
Give my love to all at the Hotel de Claude,

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Station E, New York,

June 2, 1887

My dear Father,

Will you please send me by mail at once all the photos you have of Aspinwall. I will return them shortly.

The Supt. of one of the Steamer lines here wants me to meet a number of New York men and tell them what I know about the canal.

I have not seen him yet, but our Dr. saw him while on leave, and he enquired for someone on board who could give him some information. The Dr. mentioned me, and he (the Supt. Mr. Miller, formerly a Lieut. in the Navy, and my instructor at Annapolis) said he would pay my expenses to New York if I would come on.

While I was at Aspinwall I wrote a long letter (about 30 pps.) at Brainard's request, to Civil Engr. Menocal, the Nicaragua man, telling him all I knew about the canal. I wrote to him the other day asking him to let me have the letter for reference. He replied that my letter was very interesting and valuable; that it had been sent to New York and read by a number of gentlemen there, who are interested in Canal matters, and that it is now in San Francisco, etc.

I have always considered the climate and government at Aspinwall, one of the most serious obstacles to the

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construction of the canal, and I want the photos. to illustrate that point. See?

I have not heard from Mr. Miller yet, but will offer him an "interview."

I have considerable confidence in my knowledge and opinions of the Canal, for our report has checked so well with all others since.

Did you notice in the Herald of a few days ago that they had struck water in "one of the large cuts on the canal," and that millions of dollars of excavation had been washed back into the cutting. In our report we mentioned this as a probable obstacle in the Culabra and Emperador Cuts.

Went to see Florie and Nancy last night, and found them both looking well. Nancy is as handsome and as [#] ever, and the same splendid girl. They are both "stuck" on you.

Also called on Miss Thompson. She is thin and pale from her recent great sorrow, but brave and cheerful, Last April she nursed her father for six weeks until he died.

He was a very healthy and strong man, but died of heart disease.

Give my love to all at home

Your loving son

(Signed) Wm.

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P. S.

They say we will leave here next Tuesday or Wednesday for New Port, but you cant depend on the information.

(Signed) Wm.

U, S. S. Yantic,
Station E, New York,

June 2, 1887.

My dear Lou,

Yesterday I went to see Florie and Nancy, stayed to tea, and left at 11.30.

Florie is the same sweet little girl as ever, and Nancy just as handsome and full of fun, as she always was.

She sang "Love, I will love thee ever" etc. for me, and was generally agreeable. She leaves for W. Point on Friday, and will stop at Florie's a while on her way back.

They want you to come to Brooklyn.

Please write me often and tell me all the news.

Florie told me Father's remark about the ladels.

The mail closes at once,

Your lo -/-///

(Signed) Wm.

Yantic,

Station E, N. Y.

June 3rd '87

10 P. M.

My dear Lou;

I haven't heard from you, but I ain't vexed for I know you are having a good time. However, as I feel a trifle lonely, (after Norfolk) and am only one of two officers on board, and the other fellow is asleep, and I am on watch, I am going to drop you a line.

When you get time, tell me all the news, and dont forget to mention everybody you meet that I know. What do you think of Mrs. Capehart.

I think she is a right nice little woman. If you meet Mrs. Eyre give me your impressions of her, as I have heard something about her. Eyre, you know, was my roommate, - he was then about as big as Addie.

Also your impression of Mrs. Hoeseler, of whom I have heard nothing.

Of course you will see Mrs. Manson, nee Nina McKee, and probably through her Mrs. Brainard. I dont think she remembers me, but I wish you would be particularly polite to her, for Brainard is a fine fellow, and a good friend of mine. He is very sore over the treatment his wife has received from some of the navy snobs, who have been cool to her because her father is in a retail trade.

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For that reason I would like you to show her some attention. Tell me what you think of her. Tell me the Annapolis gossip that is flying in the air, for you know that I am quite a gossip at heart. Tell me about all the parties, and shindigs you go to and who you meet. Of course I know none of the Cadets, but I know most of the officers there, and would like to know the ones you meet. I have heard so many nice girls say that they thought such and such an officer was a fine fellow, when I knew them to be reprobates, that it makes me nervous.

I have not seen Mrs. Brewster but will call soon.

Miss Thompson is looking thin and white. You know she nursed her Father through his last illness and her sister Mrs. Outerbridge through a very severe illness. How much sorrow this poor girl has had. I saw Pete Jones the other day, and he wishes to be remembered to you.

He is looking miserable, but is fairly well. He only weighs 130 pounds after his hard work in the Gulf. I only weigh about 160, but am gaining every day, and am very well.

I think I will go to Phila. Sunday and Monday and see Alf. He laughs at the idea of being sick. Says he is all right. I am going to make him promise - all the same - to do no work and no studying this summer,

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but amuse himself with Mary's chums at home.

Write when you get a little time,

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

Dont forget to give my love to everybody.

(Signed) Wm.

3703 Darday (?) Road,

Phila.

June 1887

My dear Lou.,

You make me tired. Positively you fatigue me.

The idea of your not telling me that Florie is engaged to be married. To be sure Mother told me, but wrote the name so badly that I could make nothing out of it. When I called on Florie I told her that Mother said you were going to somebody's wedding, but I couldn't make out whose. I asked her if she knew who it was, and she said she had no idea - and I never even suspected her. Nancy was there, and I guess they had fun over it after I left.

I never found it out until I got to Phila.

Alf. tells me the victim's name is overton (with a big O I suppose) I dont remember him at all. Have I ever seen him.

How and when did it happen. Write and tell me all about it.

I go back to New York this evening. I have seen Mary and everybody, and had a bully time. I will write and tell you all about it.

I will see Florie when I return and if I dont give her a rakin' over.

Excuse this writin'. I am perfectly sober, but

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am using Alf's gold pen, which is soft as a feather
and slippery as an eel.

Love to everybody,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Station E, New York,

June 7, 1887

My dear Adelaide,

Your last very long letter was received some time ago, and I should have answered it before, but have been too fussy to do much.

Last Sunday morning I went to Phila. Alf. met me at the station and we went to Aunt Cellies for Lunch. Aunt Emeline, Jack, Will, Jim. and Bess were there. In the afternoon Alf. and I went to Germantown, and called on Cousin Addie and Aunt Mary. We took tea with Aunt Mary, Cousin Addie, Miss Huschbey, Mary Sims, Innes Forbes, and Mary's Chum, and had a very pleasant time. Aunt Mary is very well and in good spirits. Mary Sims is looking splendid? She was delighted to see me of course.

She has beautiful nails now! Innes is getting very pretty. After tea we went to Chestnut Hill, where we remained until the next morning. I saw the little girls in bed before they went to sleep. They were very sweet and remembered me perfectly. I also saw them the next morning at their school, and heard them sing some German songs.

On Monday morning Alf. took me all over the University, and in the evening I came back to New York.

They tell me in Phila. that Florie Maxwell is going

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to be married. In one of Mother's letters she told me that Lou. was going to somebody's wedding, but I couldn't make out the name. When I went to see Florie I asked her if she knew who mother referred to, and she said "no."

I have not seen Mrs. Brewster yet, but will go and see her when I come off duty.

Alf. is looking firstrate. He will be home sometime after June 8th. when the college closes for the summer.

You must take good care of him and fatten him up.

Give my love to everybody at home,

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

(June 7th, "(2)"- ASF)

U. S. S. Yantic,

Station E, New York,

June 7th, 1887

My dear Lou,

I dropped you a line yesterday from 3703 D. R., just for greens.

Now let me tell you what I did in Phila. I arrived there at 12.30 P. M. and Alf met me. That was on Sunday. Aunt E. Jack, Will, Jim. and Bess were there. Alf. and I remained to lunch then at 4 P. M. went to Germantown. First we called on Cousin Addie and found her out - I mean, found Mary out. Then we went to Aunt Mary's and found her there alone. After a "bit," Mary, Innes, and Miss Ruddles came in. Mary is looking splendid and will be a very fine woman. She showed me her nails with great pride, for they are very pretty - neatly pointed and nicely polished. They were quite a surprise to me. She has improved wonderfully. Innes is very pretty, and commencing to look like a woman.

I have no doubt Miss Ruddles (is that her name) is a great comfort to her Mother. You know the saying.

"She is not very pretty but is a great comfort to her Mother." She seems to be a very amiable girl. Before tea Miss Huschbey and Cousin Addie came in, and we all had tea together, and had quite a jolly time of it.

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Aunt Mary was very well, and in good spirits.

We remained there until nearly 8 P. M. when we left for Chestnut Hill, where we remained all night. The little ones were all in bed when we arrived, but not asleep and I went up to see them. They all remembered me perfectly. John and Grace are simply splendid. The little ones have learned a great deal in their Kindergarden. We saw school commence the next morning.

On Monday Alf and I visited the University and on Monday evening I came back to New York. My visit was entirely satisfactory, and I had a very good time.

Alf. is looking firstrate. There is nothing the matter with him at all as you will see when you go home.

I have not seen anybody since I came back, as I am on duty Tuesday and Wednesday. When I come off I intend to see Mrs. Brewster and Florie.

They say we will remain here until the 13th. then sail for Boston - that we are not going to Newport etc. etc.

After we get there I will let you know where it is. I dont believe anything now. The other day the Admiral signalled to our ship "How many officers do you want." We replied "We need two Ensigns badly." That's all I know about that. I received your last letter on my return from Phila. I would like to run up to Annapolis, but it would be impossible. If I could

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get off for that long I would run home. Besides -
dont you give it away - I havent any money. Alf may
need all he can scrape together next year for he may
have to pay tuition (\$200.)

I didnt know Richardson was married. What kind
of a wife has he got? To my mind he is utterly
insignificant.

Please remember me to Miss Wallace. I remember
her very well.

Your loving brother

(Signed) Wm.

U. S. S. Yantic,
Station E, New York.

June 8, 1887

My dear Lou.,

Please thank Mr. and Mrs. Claude for their kind invitation. It will be quite impossible for me to come on for the ball for the reasons I gave in my letter of last night - before I had rec'd this.

The orders have arrived (this morning) for the fleet to sail for New Haven to help blow in a Sailor's and Soldier's monument. We leave here on the 13th., and possibly earlier, as the show comes off on the 17th. Pretty tough, aint it? Never mind my dear, some of these days all the monuments will be finished and we will have a rest.

Under the circumstances you had better continue your visit, and Florie will always be here and will keep. I will try and get home when we get more officers, or when we go under repairs.

I have not seen Hulme yet - have been too busy to look him up.

We are all delighted to hear that Bootes has a chance. When you write again dont forget to tell us all you know about it. I dont know why he dont write to some of us. He does make rather tough remarks sometimes, and thinks it quite smart. If some girl would

June 8, 1887 - page 2

set on him a few times, hard, - tell him that his remarks are sometimes rather ungentlemanly, it might cure him.

I havent time to write any more just now.

Write soon.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

Yantic,

Station E, N. Y.

June 11, 1887

5 a.m.

My dear Lou.

I went to see Florie yesterday, and she told me she was going to send you a telegram to come on today. I fancy you will be too tired after the ball to come, but perhaps you can come on Sunday.

When I returned to the ship at 10 P. M. last night I found your letter mailed the same morning. I understand by the letter that you are coming on Monday anyway. It is possible that we may not leave until Tuesday, and as I am off duty Monday I can meet you if we dont go. Write or telegraph me in time if you leave Monday.

I went to see Mrs. Brewster yesterday, and found her lovely as usual. They were really glad to see me. I will tell you all about it when I see you, and if I dont see you I will write.

You must not fail to go and see her if you come. You remember her address, doubtless. It is 31 East 22nd St. You can ride all the way there from Washington Ave.

I have only time for these few lines as I am on watch.

Let me know about Bootes when you write. We are

June 11, 1887 - page 2

all interested in him, and want to see him succeed.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.

P. S.

Florie looked lovely yesterday.

Yantic,

New Haven, Conn.

June 15, 1887

5 a.m.

My dear Lou.

We arrived here at 10 P. M. last night. I must send this ashore in a few minutes so have only time for a note.

The weather yesterday was simply perfect, and the sail up through Hell Gate lovely. We met the Annex boat and waved our hats to Nancy and Mr. Overton.

As we passed up the Sound we passed quite near the Galatea, which vessel "exchanged colors" with us. We saw Mrs. Henn and her husband on deck, and brought them down with the long glass.

I dont know how long we will remain, so address here until you hear of our leaving.

With my kindest regards to all at 489.

Your loving brother,

(Signed) Wm.