

My dear parents, By this time I dare say you are in considerable anxiety about your old son. Here I am safe and sound on board the Anton of Wells, Norfolkshire - Captain Newson - off the town of Briel in the mouth of the river Maas, in Holland, and if you receive this half sheet with the postmark of Wells, you may be sure that I have arrived there also in safety. I begin to write you this, so early for various reasons. Today we are at anchor, tomorrow we may be under sail, today I am quite well tomorrow I may be sick to the head. My last letter to you I think was written from Geneva and put into the post at Dijon on our journey to Paris. While in Paris I wrote a letter addressed Mr John Campbell, Surgeon, Ripley, Yorkshire but rec'd no reply. I have written so many letters and rec'd so few replies that I really do not know if I am writing to beings still alive. Every time Mr Mark joined us in Paris, I do assure you that I have not had so much time at my command, as would have been sufficient to have dictated to you half a sheet, that then is my present apology for not having sent you news of my movements from there. Altogether we went near two months in that metropolis. It is certainly a wonderful place Rome, Florence, Geneva and the many other towns I have visited, have many things to recommend them but a busy and active population is awaiting in all. In Paris you have businesses in every street, not the bustle and business of London certainly but moving mobs, all seemingly happy and gay even in their rags. Paris can boast of many splendid buildings of great wealth and of still greater luxury. This the centre of amusement - the emporium of foolishings - the dancing school of foppery. The inhabitants of France are, in my opinion, at the present moment equal slaves as under Boney. They have a military police of a most vexatious kind and if they really could enjoy the liberty of England I should most heartily envy them. As it is I pity them as they are incapable of enjoying it. But with all my hate to Boney with all my respect for legitimate authority I cannot help blaming - highly, loudly blaming many of the acts of the present French government. But let all that pass, let the King become monk if he will, to atone for the debaucheries of his younger days, let the nobility rule such as they have ruled before - let the clergy in efforts to master the Pagans, Christians render them enslaved Catholics, all that is little to me. Humanity may weep over these ills of humanity and dismay, weep along with her, but there are tears that afflict us forever. If humanity be oppressed, she will resolve herself, also she deserves to wear her chains. We bade adieu to Paris on Tuesday 3rd September - slept that night in Senlis, on Wednesday Peronne, Thursday at Valenciennes and Friday at Brussels - there remained till that day week - slept at Antwerp on Friday 13th then at Breda Saturday 14th and on Sunday to Monday the 15th and 16th at Rotterdam yesterday/Tuesday we embarked there Friday, owing to contrary winds we have only reached so far as Briel. This now is Friday and as yet we are not in open sea. We expect to get over the bar in an hour or two and as I see the sea running pretty high on the opposite side of the bar, I make all haste to add a few words to what I have already said that can interest you of course, as usual have none of your little tales are soon told and having none of them to tell by turning the page, you may perhaps may find awaiting at the top of the next not altogether unintentionally.

Tho' I think I perceive our major Commandant, becoming every day. more avaricious and every hour more ill tempered, yet I must say that to now he is ever the same. He tells me he has put all irons in the fire on my account. He has spoken to Admiral Hope member for Dumfriesshire to Sir James Montgomery member for Peebles and he left word with Mr Jollie to be upon the watch. They tell me also that Sir James wants us as tutors to his little boy but at the same time prefers me most strongly to finish my studies immediately as he does not know how soon a hole may open for my head. His great wish he says still is to have me established either now or some time hence in his own parish. In a word I have completely gained his good will. The other day he asked me if I did not think it would be profitable to get me thrust into Edinburgh at once. I told him all depended upon him, lead to nothing but I added that I was afraid a young man would find some difficulty in that. Poor Montgomery is becoming more and more fool every hour. He is really become a very wig block. Both parents see it now and tho' it distresses them much, yet they exculpate me from all blame and are forced to laugh sometimes at his silliness. Mrs M has given me the present of 3 pairs black silk stockings and of 3 silk handkerchiefs but the greatest mark of his good will he ever showed me is in continuing now as purser. I did not think that he would have given that up in the hands of an angel even. You may tell Sarah that my finances are most terribly low and that I have thankfully purchased 25/- worth of cambric. I half fear it will be taken from me at the Customs House as I understand that they are become so strict as to search even the gentlemens pockets and the ladies petticoats. I am afraid our ladies will have a bout with them. We have taken our passage to Newcastle Upon Tyne, about 65 miles from CastleMilk but we are to call at Wells in Norfolk first. How long we may be detaining there I cannot guess, of course we will drive straight home and see you before going to Edinburgh. I shall have but small funds in which to support myself there but Providence has never hitherto forsaken me and I still have faith in Him. A four month stay in Edinburgh would finish my term but perhaps I may find lease short enough to prepare for my trials, particularly after so long in absence from all improvement. If I have gained nothing and consequently have lost, and such loss must if possible be regained. I do not know how it is but it would seem that I have been forsaken by all who I once believed friends . Your last letter I received was dated in July. From John I have had none, I know not even if he is surgeon. From Thomas Cannon I have just had one letter and from Mr Andrew one. The former mentioned he was going to France once more and hoped to meet me in Paris. I saw nothing of him, heard nothing from him, know nothing of him. No doubt you must have heard many stories of me coming from the Kells to suppress all opinion on the subject till I see you and if I cannot defend myself, discard me, without mercy, forever. I shall submit to your decree but not to that of every, such as Mrs Cannon is now described to be. Thank God, my conscience is pure and malice shall never wound it.

Monday morning the 23rd Sept. at sea - on the afternoon of Friday we got into open sea - and 24 hours afterwards dropped anchor before Wells. I would have sent this little shot to the post office there but considering I had not above half of my voyage complete, and hoping to perform the remainder as speedily as the former, I deferred ere we should reach Newcastle. While we lay at anchor before Wells the wind changes and although we have been under sail from that place 15 hours I believe we are now further South than when we got under weigh. Such is the fate of marinery. I have not been sick during this voyage, and I feel as well as being over land. When we may get to Newcastle God only knows for at present the wind is about right ahead. Farewell till better times. The Capt. talks of running into the Humber, at Goole in Yorkshire, if he can. There we may lie several days, but from thence I shall certainly dispatch this, if we reach it. Mother we have had a very tiring passage but at last we are on English grounds. I have little time to write to you at present but I send you the half sheet to warn you of my coming. We shall be at CastleMilk on Sunday evening and I shall be with you ere long. After I wrote the above we had contrary winds for two days - close fogs for two more and arrived here this morning about seven. We are now in Newcastle. Excuse me if my page be not full, I haven't been able to think on board but I am a little tired and it is now past bed time. I shall tell you all my little news at meeting. You are so far out of the way that I hesitate if I should send this till my arrival at CastleMilk for I know you will not receive it before tomorrow week. You must judge by that post mark whence it comes. I suspect that I will be discharged on my arrival at .CM. but if it is so I come off with clear conscience and then all is well. I do not know if you should write me to C. M. as perhaps I should have left it before you could send me a few lines. Yet I would like much to know if you are all in the land of the living before I come home to learn it. Farewell just now. I hope your God has preserved you all and I expect we shall all meet once more on Earth for ever more yet again. I implore your blessing and come to receive it at your hands.

I am ever your very affect Jamie.

Send 1000 pipes to Agnes and as many to Janie.

Envelope postmarked Newcastle 28 SE ??16  
Mr William Campbell  
Carsphairn