

FAMILY LETTERS OF JOHN HOLMES OFFLEY

John Holmes Offley (1802-1845), the son of David Offley and Mary Ann Greer Offley, was born at Brooke Court-House, Virginia (now Wellsburg, West Virginia) on 13 October, 1802. Educated in Philadelphia, he first travelled to Smyrna (Izmir), Turkey in 1815 where his father, David Offley, had established the first American commercial firm, "Woodmas and Offley", in the Levant. John Holmes Offley soon became widely travelled throughout the eastern Mediterranean and was fluent in French, Italian, Armenian, and Romaika. Entering into a commercial partnership at Trieste with his brother Richard Jones Offley ("Richard & John Holmes Offley Co.") John Holmes Offley later served as a ship chandler, contracted to provide provisions for the American Squadron then stationed in the Mediterranean. U.S. Ships for which he provided supplies included the U.S.S. Constitution, U.S.S. Constellation, U.S.S. United States, and the U.S.S. Lexington. His father, David Offley (1779-1838) was appointed the Consular Commercial Agent at Smyrna by Secretary of State John Quincy Adams on 16 June, 1823 and was involved in negotiating the first commercial treaty between the United States and Turkey. He was appointed as the first U.S. Consul at Smyrna by President Andrew Jackson on 30 April, 1832, in which office he served until his death on 4 October, 1838. He was succeeded in that office by his son, David Washington Offley.

John Holmes Offley returned to the United States with his family on the U.S.S. Bavaria in 1835. Residing at 30 Third Street, New York City, he served, for a time, as the Inspector of Customs for the port of New York City. Later removing to Georgetown, D.C. in 1838, he established his residence there on Gay Street, now, 3318 N Street. After serving on special assignment for the U.S. War Department involving indian affairs at Detroit, he was appointed as Corresponding Clerk in the U.S. War Department under Secretary of War Poinsett, and later saw service as the Acting Chief Clerk of the U.S. War Department.

A member of the American Institute of New York and the National Institute of Washington, he served as a vestryman for St. John's Episcopal Church of Georgetown, D.C. from 1840 until the time of his death. It was at that church that he married Catharine Van Rensselaer Heaton (1806-1887), the daughter of John Heaton and Jane Cooper Heaton of Throgg's Neck, Westchester County, New York, on 22 September, 1823.

John Holmes Offley died on 20 December, 1845, and was buried at the Congressional Cemetery, Washington, D.C. (Range #37, Site #55). Catharine Van Rensselaer Heaton Offley died at 2027 G Street, N.W., the Washington D.C. home of her daughter, Helen Jane Offley Paulding, on 10 September, 1887.

Extract of letter from my  
great grand mother

written me Van B. Weston of New  
Mrs John Holmes of Hingham (M.D.H.)

Extract from a letter written at  
 Smyrna Asia Minor - Dec 1826

We have taken a nice little house sit-  
-uated on the Marina or sea. having a  
garden with three orange trees - a quince  
tree - a grape vine and a jessamine  
I am very busy making sheets - table  
cloths - napkins - curtains even for  
Turkish sofas &c - I expect to have  
a good time with talking and giving  
orders to my servants - for as yet I under-  
stand very little Greek - I however to  
the words of every one talk & understand  
the Italian very well & it is predicted  
that in a year I shall speak perfectly  
well the Italian - Greek & Turkish

I am much pleased  
with Smyrna - and if it were only  
near America - I think I should be  
contented to remain here forever - I hope  
however to see America before Old Time  
shall have bleached my raven locks - The

customs on this country an odd to strangers  
The head dress of the Ladies is beautiful  
Instead of handing wine as is the  
custom in America when any one calls  
here a little cup of coffee is handed -  
These little cups are of handsome china  
& hold about half a gill - they are  
put in another cup of silver sometimes  
of gold elegantly ornamented with  
jewels - This prevents you from  
burning your fingers - The coffee is  
very strong and is taken without sugar  
or cream - Mr Offley & myself called  
a few days ago to see a Greek lady  
an old acquaintance of Mr Offley's  
She received me as a Bride - First  
two servants entered bearing silver trays  
or waiters - one with cups of coffee  
the other with cakes & they went  
out (after we had partaken of them)  
and returned one with glasses of  
Lemonade - the other with conserve  
and sugar plums - After these  
had been partaken of - They returned  
the third time with a silver tray  
on one end a silver urn containing  
rose water - on the other end  
a small urn of frosted silver perfor-  
ated and containing incense  
in the centre was laid a pink  
gauze veil handsomely bordered  
with silver - This handkerchief  
a lady threw over my head then  
her Mother taking up the urn of  
burning incense lifted up the veil  
and waving the urn before me wished  
me in Greek long life and happiness  
Another daughter sprinkled rose water  
on my handkerchief - The veil was  
then removed to Mr Offley's face  
and the same ceremony was repeated  
I have given you this account because  
it is something new - and I assure  
you it had a very imposing & pleasing  
effect -

Smyrna, Asia Minor Dec. 1826

We have taken a nice little house situated on the Marino or sea, having a garden with three orange trees, a quince tree, a grape vine and a jessamine. I am very busy making shirts, table cloths, napkins, curtain covers for Turkish sofas &&& - I expect to have a great time with talking and giving orders to my servants for as yet I understand very little Greek. I, however to the wonder of every one, talk & understand the Italian very well & it is predicted that in a year I shall speak perfectly well the Italian, Greek & Turkish.

I am much pleased with Smyrna and if it were only nearer America I think I should be contented to remain here forever. I hope however to see America before Old Time shall have bleached by raven locks.

The customs in this country are odd to strangers. The head dress of the Ladies is beautiful. Instead of handing wine as is the custom in America when any one calls, here, a little cup of coffee is handed. These little cups are of handsome china & hold about half a gill. The are put in another cup of silver, sometimes of gold, elegantly ornamented with jewells. This prevents you from burning your fingers. The coffee is very strong and is taken without sugar or cream.

Mr. Offley & myself called a few days ago to see a Greek lady, an old acquaintance of Mr. Offley's. She recieved me as a Bride. First, two servants entered bearing silver trays or waiters - one with cups of coffee, the other with cakes & they went out (after we had partaken of these) and returned, one with glasses of lemonade, the other with conserve and sugar plumbs. After these had been partaken of, they entered the third time with a silver tray - on one end a silver urn containing rose water - on the other end a small urn of frosted silver, perforated and containing incense. In the centre was laid a pink gauze veil handsomely bordered with silver. This veil a lady threw over my head, then her mother taking up the urn of burning incense, lifted up the veil and waving the urn before me, wished me in Greek long life and happiness.

Another daughter sprinkled rose water over my handkerchief. The veil was then removed to Mr. Offley's face and the same ceremony was repeated. I have given you this account because it is something new and I assure you it had a very imposing & pleasing effect.

(Catharine Van Rensselaer Heaton Offley to her sister, Mary Heaton).

sent to the Pacha  
of Smyrna

Smyrna March 29<sup>th</sup> 1827

1827

My Dear Sister  
March 26<sup>th</sup> 1827

I received your letter per Cherub about a fortnight since particularly acceptable as I had not heard from America in some time - this is the first opportunity I have had of writing since the 1<sup>st</sup> left - by that vessel we sent some trifles which I hope you will have received before this comes to hand - We have got pretty well established now in our housekeeping and get along very well - Our healths are also very good - Holmes is getting so fat that some of his American coats he cannot button - You mention that at the time of writing your last letter you were very busy preparing for Christmas - I will give you a short account of the way in which I passed that day - I arrived in Smyrna in December about the 9<sup>th</sup> consequently on the 25<sup>th</sup> I had not acquired sufficient knowledge of Italian to have any conversation in it - the Saturday before Christmas Holmes and myself went with his baker and wife - Mrs. Mrs. Petto to Bournabat - a little village about 7 miles from Smyrna - the first four miles we went in a small boat - then landed and took donkeys for the other three - these donkeys being constantly in use were like some of our poor old hack-horses - but we trotted off for about two miles when my donkey took a fall and brought me down with my arms very loosely around his neck - I mounted again and we soon arrived at Bournabat - the next day it commenced raining and rained almost without intermission for two or three days - Monday after dining it held up a little and we came down to the water - but the boatmen had come at the appointed hour 5 o'clock and as it was 1/4 past 5 - when we arrived we had no alternative but to ride back again through a shower (it having commenced raining)

returned to Smyrna in as heavy a shower as I have seen in some  
weather nothing for me to do could not talk & no fire made it  
make a Christmas as I have ever passed - the Carnival here was very gay  
lasted very long - 8 weeks - during those weeks there were regular balls at the  
Jan Consuls on Sunday nights at the Dutch Consuls on Tuesdays and on  
Wednesdays at the Capins besides other balls alternately I was at 5 of the Capins  
one at the house of a rich Armenian named Mr. Nubar - and at a Masquerade  
ball at Mr. Vandenberg's the Dutch Consuls. Although I was pleased at the  
latter ball yet from the accounts I had read of Masquerades I was also disappo-  
inted. The best was a figure draped in white on stilts - he harangued the  
assembly in French and told them that they would soon be as he was - he  
represented Death - the next was a little fellow draped in black with two  
horns ~~representing his Majesty~~ and holding in his hand a chain  
attached to a Monk who had a book of plays in his hand instead of his  
book of devotions - there were also a group of physicians who brought in a  
patient on whom they tried all their skill occasionally consulting some  
enormous large books that they brought in under their arms - and they  
finally ended by killing him and then sent him away - there were some  
most beautiful costumes Turkish and of all the Islands - that of  
the Ipsariots women is beautiful - there were a great variety of Shepherds &  
Shepherdesses - Blonde girls Jews &c. One mask intended to represent a quaker the cut  
of his clothes was very good but they were made of that most unquakerish colour  
pink - Mr. Langdon and Mr. Walley two Americans with Mr. Purdy an English  
man were their very good representations of our Native Indians - I have also  
been in a Turkish Haram - Mr. Clarke the English physician here had been  
attending the Pacha during an attack of some severe kind and on the recovery  
of the Pacha he to express his gratitude sent an invitation for Mrs. Clarke  
and some other English ladies to come and see his Mother and sister in law -  
He has no wife she died some time since said to have been of jealousy of

his law who is very beautiful - We by  
party of us the English Consuls among the number there  
were ushered into the room where on a corner of the sofas sat the Pacha  
aid on by the English Progo-man speaking to the Pacha in Turkish and to us in  
even all introduced - the Progo-man told him that I was the wife of Mr. Offis  
his good friend &c. We had handed to us Coffee and sherbet - the attendants officers  
should suppose 50 or more and constantly going out and returning - the room had a rich  
Carpet and the sides of it were sofas - the corner seats of the sofas are the seats of ceremony  
have a piece of cloth of about 4 yds. square laid there different and handsomer than the rest of the  
and two small round pillows or cushions of the same for the arms - in this room the cloth was of white  
a silver (I know not which) and gold it was very beautiful - After sitting here some time the Pacha  
for a black slave and gave him a key - and soon after we went into the women's apartments - we  
in going to them the Pacha's private room where he sits when he does not wish to be annoyed by  
the affairs - it is in the form of a crescent - like all the other rooms it has sofas round it - the  
sofas were covered with crimson silk velvet with gold fringe in this room I observed a handsome Tur-  
Clock and a large picture containing portraits of all the Turkish Sultans - We then came into  
a kind of a hall in the middle of the house where the Pacha's Mother and three  
coiled up on the sofas sat the Pacha's Mother a very homely old lady - his sister in law a very  
handsome young woman and two or three other old ugly women - the slaves were some of the  
young ones very handsome and very prettily dressed in blue and pink luteous dresses  
but the ladies contrary to our expectations were very badly dressed and instead of their  
gaba head dress of pearls and diamonds they had a very common handkerchief tied on in  
the same manner that Rose has on one when she goes to milk in a cold morning - the carpet  
was of red silk with silver and gold woven into it in diamonds - the sofas of the same  
this was very rich but the feet that walked upon it did not answer at all to our ideas  
of the Harams of the East - they were most of them naked - the young ladies forming  
believe a principal the only objection and those of the slaves very dirty a very black  
they die their nails of huts with some red materials - Mrs. Woodman one of our party  
who speaks Turkish and Italian acted as our interpreter in their apartments sacred to  
the Ladies - I observing that all that were in any degree tolerable among them (that  
is in their looks) wore something on the forehead resembling a small piece of black  
was asked her what it was for she told me it was to prevent the Evil Eye - which is firmly  
believed in both by Turks and Greeks - We were shewn into another room and had some  
coffee, sweetmeats and sherbet handed us and soon after took our leave they giving us  
an invitation to call again - on our way out we were shewn into the apartments  
of the Pacha's brother the husband of the lady we had just left it had a marble floor  
a number of marble pillars and two fountains one fell into a basin about 2 feet  
deep and in this basin were a great number of gold and silver fish - the other was  
so arranged as to hold a number of flowers &c. the flowers, fruit &c. had a pretty  
appearance through the water - from this apartment we descended to the court and  
left the house - I have taken up so much paper with this account that I shall not  
have room to say all the kind things that I feel towards you all and as this vessel

... at Sing Sing I must make a  
you are having read it to send it to them - I am delighted  
of which is so much better and I hope by this time that the affair of  
all settled and settled favourably - Next to the pleasure that we received  
safe arrival was the knowledge that you had heard of it as we were sure  
would be anxious about us - I was quite surprised to receive no farther ac-  
of the intended marriage of Uncle Cooper and Miss W. Mason - He has a  
then a Midshipman on board the Corvett Ontario - He has been here several times  
we see a great deal of the American Officers - I being the only Country woman that they  
have here - On board the Sloop of War the Officers are very fine men - They expect to  
return to the United States soon having been now 3 years on this station - I am much  
pleased to hear that Mr & Mrs Parker are succeeding so well give my very best  
respects to them and tell Mrs P. to have a room kept in readiness for our return  
which I hope will be before many years - Although I like Smyrna very much  
yet still it is not America and I think I could almost consent to the  
exchange although my ears would be liable to be assailed with the War & rumours  
of War - ~~How I should delight to see you being in the~~  
~~in the~~ - Holmes writes to Horace and will enclose this so that  
I have more room than I thought I should have - You say that you  
would give your little fingers to see Holmes - I expect he would almost  
shake it off if he could only get hold of it - he wishes me to leave him a  
little to write so I must bring this letter to a close - Please give me some account  
of the fashions &c. You will I hope see Robert before this as he left here about  
two months since in the Cherub for Boston I hope he will succeed as well as  
he expects in America I should not be much surprised to see him again when  
he left so suddenly that I could not write to you - Give my best best love  
to all the dear circle at Sing Sing - I cannot think that we are on the op-  
posite side of the earth when I think how near you are all to my hearts - My love  
to Horace Mrs P. and all enquiring friends and accept dear the love of your child - C. Coffey

Dear Deborah, Kitty has left nothing for me to say, still I have the  
vanity to think that were it but to assure you of my affection & how  
I long to see you, and how I thank you for your kind expressions of  
me in your letter to Catharine, & a great many other hows - you will  
be glad to see my hand writing - Now for a little scolding -  
You must make your letters longer yet much longer too - you must  
say a good deal more about our dear dear Sing Sing folks - I declare  
sometimes when I get thinking of you all I feel almost ready  
to leave Smyrna & all that's in it, take my passage & get  
amongst

March 26th, 1827

My Dear Sister

I recieved your letter per Cherub about a fortnight since and it was particularly acceptable as I had not heard from America in some time. This is the first opportunity I have had of writing since the Falcon left - by that vessel we sent some trifles which I hope you will have recieved before this comes to hand. We have got pretty well established now in our housekeeping and get along very well. Our health is also very good. Holmes is getting so fat that some of his American coats he cannot button. You mention that at the time of writing your last letter you were very busy preparing for Christmas. I will give you a short account of the way in which I passed that day.

I arrived in Smyrna in December about the 7<sup>th</sup> consequently on the 25<sup>th</sup> I had not acquired sufficient knowledge of Italian to have any conversation in it. The Saturday before Christmas Holmes and myself went with his broker and wife, Mr. & Mrs. Petice to Bournabat, a little village about 7 miles from Smyrna. The first four miles we went in a small boat - then landed and took donkeys for the other three, these donkeys being constantly in use were like some of our poor old pack horses, but we trotted off for about two miles when my donkey took a fall and brought me down with my arms very lovingly around his neck. I mounted again and we soon arrived at Bournabat. The next day it commenced raining and rained almost without intermission for two or three days.

Monday after dining, it held up a little and we came down to the water, but the boatmen had come at the appointed hour 5 o'clock and as it was  $\frac{1}{4}$  past 5 when we arrived, we had no alternative but to ride back again through a shower (it having commenced raining). We returned to Smyrna in as heavy a shower as I have seen in some (time)...weather, nothing for me to do - could not talk & no fire made it (a) disagreeable a Christmas as I have ever passed. The Carnival here was very gay and lasted very long - 8 weeks - during those weeks there were regular balls at the Austrian Consuls on Sunday nights, at the Dutch Consuls on Tuesdays, and on Thursday at the Casino besides other balls alternately. I was at 6 of the Casino, one at the house of a rich Armenian named Mr. Mibar, and at a Masque ball at Mr. Van Leneps, the Dutch Consul. Although I was pleased at the latter ball, yet from the accounts I had read of Masquerades I was also disappointed.

The best were of a figure dressed in white on stilts - he harangued the assembly in French and told them that they would soon be as he was - he represented Death. The next was a little fellow dressed in black with two horns &c &c (representing his Satanic Majesty) and holding in his hand a chain attached to a Monk who had a book of plays in his hand instead of his book of devotions. There were also a group of physicians who brought in a patient on whom they tried all their skill, occasionally consulting some enormous large books that they brought in under their arms, and they finally ended by killing him and then sent him away. There were some most beautiful costumes, Turkish and of all the Islands. That of the Ispariot women is beautiful. There were a great variety of Shepherds & Shepherdesses, Flower Girls, Jews, &c. One mask



intended to represent a quaker. The cut of his clothes was very good but they were made of that most unquakerish colour - pink. Mr. Langdon and Mr. Walley, two Americans with Mr. Purdy, an Englishman, were three very good representations of our Native Indians.

I have also been in a Turkish Haram. Mr Clarke, the English physician here, had been attending the Pacha during an attack of some severe kind and on the recovery of the Pacha, he, to express his gratitude, sent an invitation for Mrs. Clarke and some other English ladys to come and see his mother and sister in law. He has no wife. She died some time since, said to have been of jealousy of ... sister in law who is very beautiful. We ... large party of us, the English Consuless among the number. When we arrived we were ushered into the room where, on a corner of the sofas, sat the Pacha. Our conversation ... on by the English Dragoman speaking to the Pacha in Turkish and to us in (English. We) were all introduced - the Dragoman told him that I was the wife of Mr. Offley & he said (he was) his good friend & c. We had handed to us coffee and sherbet - the attendants, officers & c (we) should suppose 50 or more and constantly going out and returning.

The room had a rich Turkish carpet and on three sides of it were sofas. The corner seats of the sofas are the seats of ceremony. They have a piece of cloth about 1 yd. square laid there, different and handsomer than the rest of the sofa and two small round pillows or cushions of the same for the arms. In this room the cloth was of white ... or silver (I know not which) and gold. It was very beautiful. After sitting here some time the Pacha sent for a black slave and gave him a key - and soon after we went into the women's apartments. We passed in going to them the Pacha's private room where he sits when he does not wish to be annoyed by public affairs. It is in the form of a crescent - like all the other rooms, it has sofas round it. The sofas were covered with crimson silk velvet with gold sprigs. In this room I observed a handsome French clock and a large picture containing portraits of all the Turkish Sultans. We then came into a kind of a hall in this shape the four darkest places being doors. We passed through one of them and there coiled up on the sofas sat the Pacha's mother - a very homely old lady, his sister in law - a very handsome young woman, and two or three other old ugly women. The slaves were some of the young ones, very handsome and very prettily dressed in blue and pink lutestring dresses, but the ladys, contrary to our expectations, were very badly dressed. Instead of their gala headdress of pearls and diamonds & c they had a very common handkerchief tied on in the same manner that Rose ties on one when she goes to milk in a cold morning. The carpet was of red silk with silver and gold woven into it in diamonds. The sofas of the same. This was very rich but the feet that walked upon it did not answer at all to our ideas of the Harams of the East. They were most of them naked, the young ladies forming, I believe, the only exception. Those of the slaves very dirty or very black. They die their nails & heels with some red material.

Mrs. Woodmas, one of our party who speaks Turkish and Italian, acted as our interpreter in these apartments sacred to the Ladies - I observing that all that were in any degree tolerable among them (that is in their looks) wore something on their forehead resembling a small

piece of black ... I asked her what it was for - she told me it was to prevent the Evil Eye which is firmly believed in both by Turks and Greeks. We were shewn into another room and had some coffee, sweetmeats, and sherbet handed us and soon after, took our leave, they giving us an invitation to call again. On our way out, we were shewn into the apartments of the Pacha's brother, the husband of the lady we had just left. It had a marble floor, a number of marble pillars, and two fountains. One fell into a basin about 2 feet deep and in this basin were a great number of gold and silver fish. The other was so arranged as to hold a number of flower pots &c, the flowers, fruit &c had a pretty appearance through the water. From this apartment we descended to the court and left the house.

I have taken up so much paper with this account that I shall not have room to say all the kind things that I feel towards you all and as this vessel ... at Sing-Sing. I must make a ... you after having read it to send it to them. I am delighted to ... & father is so much better and I hope by this time that the affair of ... all settled and settled favourably. Next to the pleasure that we recieved ... safe arrival was the knowledge that you had heard of it as we were sure (you) would be anxious about us.

I was quite surprised to recieve no farther account of the intended marriage of Uncle Cooper and Miss M. Mason. She has a brother, a Midshipman on board the Corvette Ontario. He has been here several times. We see a great deal of the American Officers, I being the only country woman that they have here. On board this Sloop of War the Officers are very fine men. They expect to return to the United States soon, having been now 3 years on this station. I am much pleased to hear that Mr. & Mrs. Parker are succeeding so well. Give my very best respects to them and tell Mrs. P. to have a room kept in readiness for our return which I hope will be before many years. Although I like Smyrna very much, yet still it is not America and I think I could almost consent to the exchange although my ears would be liable to be assailed with wars & rumours of war.

Holmes writes to Horace and will enclose this so that I have more room than I thought I should have. You say that you would give your little finger to see Holmes. I expect he would almost shake it off if he could only get hold of it. He wishes me to leave him a little to write so I must bring this letter to a close. Please give me some account of the fashions &c. You will I hope see Robert before this as he left here about two months since in the Cherub for Boston. I hope he will succeed as well as he expects in America. I should not be much surprised to see him again here. He left so suddenly that I could not write to you. Give my best best love to all the dear circle at Sing-Sing. I cannot think that we are on the opposite sides of the earth when I think how near you are all to my heart. My love to Harace, Mrs. R. and all enquiring friends and accept dear D. the love of your sister. C. Offley.

Dear Deborah

Kitty has left nothing for me to say, still I have the vanity to think that, were it but to assure you of my affections & how I long to see you, and how I thank you for your kind expressions of me in your

letter to Catharine, & a great many other hows, you will be glad to see my handwriting. Now for a little scolding - you must make your letters longer, yes much longer too - & you must say a good deal more about our dear dear Sing-Sing folks. I declare sometimes when I get thinking of you all I feel almost ready to leave Smirna & all that's in it, take my passage & get amongst (you)... (J.H. Offley).

(Catharine Van Rensselaer Heaton Offley to her sister, Deborah Heaton).

Battle of Navarino

of Nov

from London November the 1827

1827

My Dear Mary

I received your kind letter by the ship Harriet and was pleased to hear that you were all well. The Harriet was not consigned to our house but patience we hope that the ensuing year may prove more fortunate for us if not I should not be surprised to have orders to pack up and make ready for a voyage to America - one thing however that keeps us here with our present fortune is the circumstance of the means of living being procured much cheaper than in America - We have two servants to one we give 10<sup>s</sup> and to the other 5<sup>s</sup> per annum & our house is quite large enough for us and we consider it as very dear if we spend for all the other expenses viz - fuel - wine - &c. more than 20<sup>s</sup> or 25<sup>s</sup> <sup>per month</sup> - this considering the difference of 14<sup>s</sup> per week in America for our board is a great consideration but as soon as we can make a little we are coming to America to live in quietness - Since last Sunday week Smyrna has been in quite a state of alarm on the Saturday evening immediately previous an English vessel arrived and told the English Consul that the allied forces of the English French and Russian had engaged with the Turkish & Egyptian fleet at Napoli de Malvasia and had sunk and captured every sail the allies were much superior in force having 12 line of battle ships & the Turks having but four. They say the Turks fought like bear fellows and went down with their colours flying and hurraing (I think their absurd religion promises to those who fall in battle a place in Paradise) the battle lasted all day. The French Admiral in a small frigate engaged two Turkish line of battle ships. I know not

whether he succeeded in capturing them but he was to have sustained the  
battle with great bravery and not to have resisted until he had  
sundered his frigate in such a manner that he entertained fears she  
will not float to France whether she has gone to repair. The  
number of killed and wounded on board the Albatross is said to be 800.  
This news of course excited great alarm among the English French & Italian  
inhabitants of this place. We were also a little alarmed as we might  
so easily be taken for English and the poor Greeks as being the primary cause  
of all the disturbance. A courier was dispatched immediately for Con-  
stantinople and the families here were sending their furniture and  
many of them went on board of vessels in the harbour to wait  
the issue of the event from Constantinople. On Sunday morning  
the vessels of war were close in and manned all their boats and  
put guns in their bows. The Constitution frigate by the advice of Mr  
Offly did not move and the Turks took notice of it and were much  
pleas'd. The Pacha although very ill took most efficient measures  
to quell any riot that might take place. The guard was doubled  
and was walking the streets all night. He sent many friendly  
messengers to Mr. Offly and Mr. Offly had numerous applications  
for protection from some English. A strong South wind that has blown  
for the last two weeks gave us some apprehensions of fire as the  
Turks live in the south part of the town and for that reason I put  
some clothes in a trunk in order to have them handy in case we were  
obliged to go on board a vessel. Fortunately for us although very dis-  
agreeable and painful for Holmes he was confined to the house at  
that week by another of those painful gumbails. (this last was I think  
more painful than either of those he had in America.) and by that

means we were prevented from hearing the many evening reports that  
were in constant circulation as the courier was expected to reach Con-  
stantinople in two days it was expected that the answer would be  
received here certainly on Thursday but it did not arrive until Monday  
last and as the Turks there live in the midst of the Turks the conjecture  
here was that the Frank populace had been massacred and that the Pacha  
had received orders which he feared to obey. The force here was  
so great against him. The arrival of the courier he had been detained  
by bad weather on his journey both to and from Smyrna has put  
an almost total end to all fears and the English merchants are  
going on as usual. The Sultan expected to receive news to that effect  
and wanted another armistice of 30 days but the ministers  
refuse to give it him and tell him he must decide on war  
or another. He says the merchants must not be alarmed  
for he will protect them as far as it is in his power.  
This is a long letter and perhaps not an interesting one  
to you at home. I presume all Europe is interested in it  
and happy America looks on and smirks at all political  
intrigue and fights her own battles. Heaven grant she may  
never need the alliance of a foreign power.

The brig with David arrived on Sunday week. having been taken  
by the pirates on her passage from Trieste here and plundered of  
every thing. They were in the pirates hands five days and instead  
of an hundred or two dollars commission. nothing. Patience. we  
will see what another year brings forth. The brig leaves sooner  
than was expected and I shall write but to you and Deborah  
by the Harriet you will hear from me again. Love to all the

family and kind remembrance to all our dear friends - All E.  
Walter that I wished that collar for the shirt that you me and the  
Kings has been very much admired. I have ordered an order to  
send from the same as for my Mother-in-law who has a little  
good and get a small one will you by the way of Albany and  
in my position look at it left at a young

Nov 9. 1827

Miss Mary Neaton  
Long Spring

Compliments to Mr. Bacon. he is a fine little fellow. take care how  
do you get along. Remember me to Rose. Hobbs's love to you  
all. I remain with prayers for your present and eternal welfare  
Your sister E. Giffey

November 9th, 1827

My Dear Mary

I recieved your kind letter by the ship Harriet and was pleased to hear that you were all well. The Harriet was not consigned to our house but patience, we hope that the ensuing year may prove more fortunate for us - if not, I should not be surprised to have orders to pack up and make ready for a voyage to America. One thing however, that keeps us here with our present fortune, is the circumstance of the means of living being procured much cheaper than in America.

We have two servants - to one we give 18\$ and to the other 50\$ per annum & our house is quite large enough for us and we consider it as very dear if we spend for all the other expenses viz - fuel, wine, &c more than 20 or 26\$ per month. This considering the difference of 14\$ per week in America for our board is a great consideration but as soon as we can make a little we are coming to America to live in quietness.

Since last Sunday week Smyrna has been in quite a state of alarm. On the Saturday evening immediately previous an English vessel arrived and told the English Consul that the allied forces of the English, French, and Russian had engaged with the Turkish & Egyptian fleet at Napoli de Malvisa and had sunk and captured every sail. The allies were much superior in force having 12 line of battle ships & the Turks having but four. They say the Turks fought like brave fellows and went down with their colours flying and hurrahing (I think their absurd religion promises to those who fall in battle a place in Paradise). The battle lasted all day. The French Admiral in a small frigate engaged two Turkish line of battle ships. I know not whether he succeeded in capturing them but he is said to have sustained the battle with great bravery and not to have desisted until he had riddled his frigate in such a manner that he entertains fears she will not float to France whither she has gone to repair. The number of killed and wounded on board the allies is said to be 600.

This news of course created great alarm among the English, French, & Russian inhabitants of this place. We were also a little alarmed as we might so easily be taken for English and the poor Greeks as being the primary cause of all the disturbance. A courier was dispatched immediately for Constantinople and the families here were sending their furniture and many of them went on board the vessels in the harbour to wait the issue of the event from Constantinople. On Sunday morning the vessels of war drew close in and manned all their boats and put guns in their bows. The Constitution frigate, by the advise of Mr. Offley, did not move and the Turks took notice of it and were much pleased. The Pacha, although very ill, took most efficient measures to quell any riot that might take place. The guard was doubled and was walking the streets all night. He sent many friendly messages to Mr. Offley and Mr. Offley had numerous applications for protection from some English.

A strong south wind that has blown for the last two weeks gave us some apprehensions of fire as the Turks live in the south part of the town and for that reason, I put some clothes in a trunk in order

to have them handy in case we were obliged to go on board a vessel. Fortunately for us, although very disagreeable and painful for Holmes, he was confined to the house all that week by another of those painful gumboils (this last was I think more painful than either of those he had in America) and by that means we were prevented from hearing the many alarming reports that were in constant alteration. As the courier was expected to reach Constantinople in two days, it was expected that the answer would be recieved here certainly on Thursday, but it didnt arrive untill Monday last and as the Franks there live in the midst of the Turks, the conjecture here was that the Frank population had been massacred and that the Pacha here had recieved orders which he feared to obey as the force here was so great against him.

The arrival of the courier who had been detained by bad weather on his journey both to and from Smyrna has put an almost total end to all fears and the English merchants are going on as usual. The Sultan expected to hears news to that effect and wanted another armistice of 30 days but the ministers refuse to give it (to) him and tell him he must decide one way or another. He says the merchants must not be alarmed for he will protect them as far as it is in his power.

Here is a very long letter and perhaps not an uninteresting one to you at home. I presume all Europe is interested in it and happy America looks on and smiles at all political intrigue and fights her own battles. Heaven grant she may never need the alliance of a foreign power.

The brig with David arrived on Sunday week having been taken by the pirates on her passage from Trieste (to) here and plundered of every thing. They were in the pirates hands five days and instead of a hundred or two dollars commission - nothing. Patience. We will see what another year brings forth. The brig leaves sooner than was expected and I shall write but to you and Deborah by the Harriet. You will hear from me again. Love to all the family and kind remembrances to all our Sing-Sing friends. Tell C. Waller that I worked that collar pattern that she gave me and the design has been very much admired. I have worked an infants cap from the same design for my mother in law who has a little girl not yet a month old. Will you by first opportunity send me my pattern book ...left it at Sing-Sing. Compliments to D.L. Bacon. He is a fine little fellow. Take care how do you get along. Remember me to Rose. Holmes's love to you all. I remain with prayers for your present and eternal welfare. Your sister C. Offley

Miss Mary Heaton  
Sing Sing

(Catharine Van Rensselaer Heaton Offley to her sister, Mary Heaton).



My Dear Catherine,

Trinidad 14th May 1830.

I made an attempt a few days ago to return  
some portion of my debt to you for your two epistolary favours. I  
feared, when you receive my letter, you will pronounce it an absolute  
non-sensum - now again, "Imagination refuses me her aid - matters of  
fact are wanting - how then, make the compromise between  
my inclination and inability - Come my fair Sister, I shall  
smoke like a steam engine - let thy benevolent &  
beautiful smile but speak indulgence and I shall go  
on steadily with my unpremeditated effusions - would they  
prove worthy of the invocation - but that is impossible -

We had the pleasure of extending the hand of welcome  
yesterday to David - he came at a pretty quick rate  
from Constantinople: only 3 1/2 days - His arrival has been  
eagerly expected by my father & the Commodore, for on that  
depended their departure - They intend starting by land in a  
day or two for Constatle. Too pity the poor Officers of the  
Lexington - their hopes have been deferred daily for a month  
past - nothing in the mean while to sustain their spirits  
but glorious visions of the Bosphorus, of Scambr  
and of the "most magnificent scenery in the world" - and  
now it has become quite uncertain whether they go at all.  
They are kept at anchor at Yaurla: a place where the  
fool funds & melancholy Pennic have their especial abode.

The course of things in general here, runs smooth, peaceful, and unvaried: the only diversions a trip to the country or a promenade. The favorite one now is Caravan Bridge, where crowds upon crowds collect every holiday. The scene is then quite animating - the spot beautiful - and the tall gloomy Cypress trees, "the only constant mourners over the dead" to my taste gives not an unpleasant colouring to it. The sweet perfume of the Orange blossoms brought by the breeze from the neighbouring gardens, the song of the nightingale in the shades of evening descend - the representatives of various nations of the earth here assembled smoking the pipes of peace and many other items, too tedious to mention, form a subject worthy a poet's pen - for fear, if I go on in this strain, I shall wax too sublime, I shall descend with a jump to something more worldly.

You may think it strange that I have never formed acquaintance with Mr. Sell's Brother - both estimable persons, to which Mr. B. adds a considerable degree of beauty - it is probably owing to my modesty and don't know what - Mr. B. has a school in which he instructs a great many Greek children gratis - a spectacle to be contemplated with delight & as reflecting on him great honour - there is a Miss Reynolds with them (she a citizeness of Athens) who keeps an English school for young persons - she is

a very amiable person they say, but she certainly has the appearance of having seen her first nourishment from a Lemon - I have never chosen to meet any of them at all - I think where I take a Cup of tea sometimes - I believe they visit but I am not certain of it.

All our family is at Furona, I and Dimitri being the only tenants of the house here - they are well, with the exception of Henry who has had a slight indisposition for some days past - Mr. Dalworth continues confined by sickness - He gets better, but I really fear she is in a bad way. In general, I believe your acquaintances

here are well. I have not been so happy as to see Mr. Clarke for some time past. I ought to call: but have always omitted doing so -

The acct. you have given me of Helen appears every interesting. It appears her ladyship has learned to run about - Let us see what she will say when she begins to wag her tongue - give her an embrace as affectionate as you can from me -

Now dear Catherine, I shall bid you adieu, with the assurance of my enduring affection of friendship  
Mr. B. the Roberts  
Mrs. C. H. Pfler.

Amirna 14 May 1830

R. J. Offley

Commissioner  
for the Treaty

Recd. by R. J. Offley  
Am. 29

Wm. C. Catherino  
Wm. C. Catherino

Wm. C. Catherino

Wm. C. Catherino

Wm. C. Catherino

Smirna 14th May 1830

My dear Catharine

I made an attempt a few days ago to return some portion of my debt to you for your two epistolary favors. I fear, when you receive my letter, you will pronounce it an abortive one. Now again, imagination refuses me her aid - matters of fact are wanting. How then make the compromise between my inclination and inability. Come my fair Sister, I shall invoke ...thine own fair self - let thy benevolent & beautiful smile but speak indulgence and I shall go on steadily with my ...stated effusions. Would they prove worthy of the invocation but that is impossible.

We had the pleasure of extending the hand of welcome yesterday to David. He came at a pretty quick rate from Constantinople: only 3½ days. His arrival has been eagerly expected by my father & the Commodore, for on that depended their departure. They intend starting by land in a day or two for Constple. I do pity the poor Officers of the Lexington - their hopes have been deferred daily for a month past. Nothing in the mean while to sustain their spirits but glorious visions of the Bosphorus, of Instanbul and of the most magnificent scenery in the world and now it has become quite uncertain whether they go at all. They are kept at anchor at Vourla: a place where the foul friends Melancholy & Ennui have their especial abode.

The course of things in general here, runs smooth, peaceful and unvaried: the only diversions a trip to the country or a promenade. The favorite one now is Caravan Bridge where crowds upon crowds collect every holliday. The scene is quite animating - the spot beautiful and the tall & gloomy Cypress trees "the only constant mourners o'er the dead" - to my taste gives not an unpleasing colouring to it. The sweet perfume of the orange blossoms brought by the breeze from the neighboring gardens & the song of the Nightingale as the shades of evening descent. The representatives of various nations of the earth here assembled, smoking the pipe of peace, and many other items too tedious to mention, form a subject worthy a poet's pen. For fear, if I go on in this frame I shall wax too sublime. I shall descend with a jump to something more wordly.

You may think it strange that I have never formed acquaintance with Mr. & Mrs. Brimes - both estimable persons, to which Mrs. B. adds a considerable degree of beauty. It is probably owing to my modesty or I don't know what. Mr. B. has a school in which he instructs a great many Greek children gratis - a spectacle to be contemplated with delight & as reflecting on him great honour. There is a Miss Reynolds with them (also a citizen of Italy) who keeps an English School for young persons. She is a very amiable person they say, but she certainly has the appearance of having recd. her first nourishment from a lemon. I have never chanced to meet any of them at Mrs. Stith where I take a cup of tea sometimes. I believe they visit but I am not certain of it.

All our family is at Burnova, I and Dimitri being the only tenants of the house here. They are well, with the exception of Henry who has had a slight indisposition for some days past. Mrs. Ducovich continues confined by sickness. She gets better, but I really fear she is in a

bad way. In general I believe your acquaintances here are well. I have not been so happy as to see Mrs. Clarke for some time past. I ought to call but have always omitted doing so. The acct. you have given me of Helen professes every interest. It appears her ladyship has learned to run about. Let us see what she will say when she begins to wag her tongue. Give her an embrace as affectionate as you can from me.

Now dear Catharine, I shall bid you Adieu with the assurance of my enduring affection & friendship. Yr Brother Richard.

Mrs. C.H. Offley

Mrs. Catharine H. Offley  
Trieste  
c/o Capt. Clemereich

(Richard Jones Offley to his sister-in-law, Catharine Van Rensselaer Heaton Offley).

Prima 19 June 1830.

My dear Catharine,

I had the pleasure, a day or two ago, of receiving your little note of the 23<sup>d</sup> May. Please God, we may soon hear from you again with accounts of Holmes having recovered his health. I need not tell you how much I felt at hearing of his illness. I thought the climate of Trieste agreed with you and him as well as could be - but I find he at least, suffers in it. May he soon be restored again to good health - and may you & Maria ever enjoy yours. We are all pretty well here.

The heat, however, for a few days past, is overpowering - I fear I shall have to take my usual summer trip to the Archip! if a chance offers, to brace up a little.

Father and party got in from Coniole on the 13<sup>th</sup> inst. having been only 4 days performing the journey which is pretty well. Considering the novelty of the travelling to the marine part of the Company. The Lexington (having the broad pennant) sailed a day or two ago, for Mahon - the "Treaty" was shipped on board of her - and we shall hear

I suppose, in due time, how the President & Senate will  
relish it. We are likely to have no Am<sup>n</sup>. M. of War  
on the station - the Fairfield is expected here: but the Com<sup>d</sup>.  
has left orders for Capt Parker to return immediately  
to Mahon. Our Am<sup>n</sup>. Company here has rec<sup>d</sup>. quite a  
reinforcement by the arrival of Mr. Moore, Mr. Moore  
and children three, Miss Hathaway her sister &  
Mr. Hathaway her brother. The Gen<sup>l</sup>. have set up a  
kind of Ship Chandlery - Mr. M. I take to be a  
smart, sensible, shrewd and managing person, but  
not a beauty. Miss A. I should say was a clever girl,  
and tho' not extremely fascinating, might pass muster  
among the pretty ones. Of the mind I have not had  
sufficient time to study. We are getting quite a colony  
of Yankees - I think we counted one day, in all, of natives  
20 or 22 - of females there are 5 (grown up) besides  
Black Mary (who cannot be ranked among the fair sex)

We are waiting to see what the French will do  
at Algiers - I hope the Crusaders will be more successful  
than they of the days of yore - and may root out & exterminate

this nest of pirates - the expedition is well prepared in all  
respects and looks quite formidable in description - what a contrast  
to the hardy Spanish Adventurers who sailed with a few hundred  
men to attempt the Conquest of a Continent, under Cortes &  
under Pizarro. To come down to present times we  
are very quiet here. They say the Greek Question is  
over - but we see Couriers going pretty frequently  
to and fro which w<sup>d</sup>. make one suspect they are going  
to give it another twist or two. Our Pasha is going away,  
and henceforward we are to have only a Resident or Governor  
as used to be and Hadji Bey is to come to town again &  
take charge of the Police.

Our family is at  
Burnova - father is so fond of the place that he only  
comes in when called by something particular. Mr. Du-  
Combe had been carried out there & finds herself much  
better than in town - there is a very sensible difference  
between the air of country and town - the first is so  
pure while the latter, pent up is impregnated with all  
kinds of impurities. I wonder people do not get sick - but  
they seem to thrive in it, like mice in the mud.

I see Helen is beginning to be a little run about,  
but backward in the use of her tongue - Never fear she will

The will was that organ soon enough. Give the dear  
little thing a kiss and another another for me.  
How does Pasquati come on? remember me to him -

God bless you my dear Catherine and I believe ever  
the affection of your Brother Richard

Mr. C. H. Coffey  
Wishes.

Mr. Catherine H. Coffey of <sup>London</sup>

Richard Coffey  
June 19th 1880  
Respecting the books  
Mr. Coffey (C. H.)  
sent to my  
sent to my  
sent in 1874  
Mrs Coffey was  
confirmed member of  
the United States  
and the American  
Library for 200  
in my name on the  
June in Feb. 1831

Richard Coffey  
Wishes  
1830  
sent to my  
sent in 1874



Smirna 19 June 1830

My dear Catharine

I had the pleasure, a day or two ago, of receiving your little note of the 23d May. Please God we may soon hear from you again with accounts of Holmes having recovered his health. I need not tell you how much I felt at hearing of his illness. I thought the climate of Trieste agreed with you and him as well as could be, but I find he, at least, suffers in it. May he soon be restored again to good health and may you & Helen ever enjoy yours.

We are all pretty well here. The heat, however, for a few days past, is overpowering. I fear I shall have to take my usual summer trip to the Archipo. if a chance offers, to brace up a little. Father and party got in from Constple on the 13th inst. having been only 4 days performing the journey wich is pretty well considering the novelty of the travelling to the marine part of the company. The Lexington (having the broad pennant) sailed a day or two ago for Mahon - the "Treaty" was shipped on board of her and we shall hear I suppose in due time, how the President & Senate will relish it. We are likely to have no Amn. M. of War on the station. The Fairfield is expected here but the Commdr. has left orders for Captn Parker to return immediately to Mahon.

Our Amn. company here has recd. quite a reinforcement by the arrival of Mr. Moore, Mrs. Moore and children three, Miss Hathaway, her sister & Mr. Hathaway, her brother. The Gentn. have set up a kind of ship chandlery. Mrs. M. I take to be a smart, sensible, shrewd and managing person, but not a beauty. Miss H. I should say was a clever girl and tho' not extremely facinating, might pass muster among the pretty ones of the kind I have not had sufficient time to study.

We are getting quite a colony of Yankees. I think we counted one day, in all, of natyves 20 or 22 - of females there are 5 (grown up) besides Black Mary (who cannot be ranked among the fair sex). We are waiting to see what the French will do at Algiers. I hope the crusaders will be more successful than they of the days of yore and may root out & extirpate this nest of pirates. The expedition is well prepared in all respects and looks quite formidable in description. What a contrast to the hardy Spanish adventurers who sailed with a few hund. men to attempt the conquest of a continent under Cortes & under Pizarro.

To come down to present times we are very quiet here. They say the Greek question is over but we see courriers going pretty frequently to and fro' which wd make one suspect they are going to give it another twist or two. Our Pasha is going away and henceforward we are to have only a Moussilion or Governor as used to be and Hadgi Bey is to come to town again & take charge of the police.

Our family is at Burnova - father is so fond of the place that he only comes in when called by something particular. Mrs. Ducovich has been carried out there & finds herself much better than in town. There is a very sensible difference between the air of country and town - the first is so pure while the latter, pent up, is impregnated with all kinds of impurities. I wonder people don't get sick - but they seem

to thrive in it like muscles in the mud.

I see Helen is beginning to be a little run-about but backward in the use of her tongue. Never fear. She will wag that organ soon enough. Give the dear little thing a kiss and another & another for me. How does Pasquali come on? Remember me to him.

God bless you my dear Catharine and believe ever the affection of your brother Richard.

Mrs. C.H. Offley  
Trieste

(Notation on this letter: "D. Offley went to Smyrna first in 1814. Mr. Offley was confirmed Consul of the United States and the American Flag first raised in Smyrna on his house in Nov. 1831".