

Dear Mother,

I wrote you by a vessel leaving here on the day of our arrival which was necessarily laconic as I had but a few moments allowed me to dispatch it; Since then we have been very busy in getting our Ship in order & she now presents a neat & nautical appearance decidedly in contrast with that of the Haytian Squadron.

We have been most hospitably entertained on shore by some very agreeable American gentlemen located here & engaged of course in Commercial Speculations; my observations have been many & were I to narrate half that I have seen, my letter would far exceed both my time & the ordinary limits of epistolary productions, not that I think my Dear Mother would weary with reading my letters, but I have duties which I must of course discharge, & this unfortunately is just the time for me to inspect my books &c. So that my descriptions must be postponed until I write from Havana, which I shall do immediately on my arrival there—

Briefly then, Porto au Prince, is embayed completely, surrounded with mountains, that present a most peculiar appearance—a hue that I can only describe as a violet-bronze. The City stretches far along the bay side & is really picturesque, so much for the physical characteristics; for to employ a better & not so large a word) appearance; for its Architecture, Society, &c I must wait until I can do justice to the peculiarities of these Negro Legislators, & their country which is one of great fertility, with a charming climate—being less unhealthy as our friends assure us, than many parts of the Union; but its great resources are declined I fear never to be developed under

Such a wretched Govt. as this - which is false for all purposes of practical good; strong for all purposes of evil! - It is fearful to look around and remember the fearful atrocities, which have been committed by these devils & their fathers, amid scenes of the most perfect & tranquil loveliness.

From Havana I will write you of our "reception" at the Seren of His Black Majesty, the Emperor Sotoguo - who is very black, very fat & very funny-looking in his rich uniform - I could scarcely refrain from laughing indignantly at the importance of Emperor & Court, & such a Court! On the 11th of next month he resumes the Imperial Crown which he will place upon his own forehead; at this farcical ceremony, two French & English Ships will be present & I suppose the scene will be a rare combination of the grand & the ridiculous - by that time however we will be in Havana, & I shall enjoy the luxury of letters from home a happiness, which I would not exchange for Sotoguo's Empire & all. - Yesterday I saw a grand procession; the funeral of one of Sotoguo's Generals, & <sup>but</sup> for the solemnity of death, it would have been beyond any conception ridiculous; the negro Priest, the negro Soldier, the negro Officer & Staff & the little niggers of all ages made up a comical picture - after great difficulty the "Sotoguo" were got into some extraordinary order of march; the band struck up & down street moved the Shoo, while the bells tolled & the drums thumped out doleful sounds - These Soldiers were the flower & chivalry of the Army; some with caps, some with hats & every hue of coat & trowsers - never Virginia Militia that looks so fine & strong, while their faces were utterly

innocent of boot or shoe - at the grave they fired volley  
upon volley, which sounded much like the Christmas Salutes  
at home just about as regular - it was funny - As a specimen  
of their liberty &c, I saw one fellow soundly flogged upon the  
ground for some offence & in this sent to prison - while then  
an old fellow gravely informed me that these were splendid  
troops. But of these things I must write more elaborately &  
a sketch of Society could scarcely be attempted under several  
pages. And now for home, how sweet the word, it is a talisman  
to guard me Dearest; for when temptation comes as it often does  
I think of home, of my mother's dear face & I have always &  
(will ever) found the spell potent for my protection - And soon  
independently of any such moral agency, the reflection that  
I am now nearly 23 years old & quite a man would control  
any disposition which I might feel to indulge in the  
dissipated, free & easy, devil-may-care habits of these  
places; & it is a fact somewhat marvellous that in climates  
where life is less certain in its tenure, they adopt habits well calculated  
to abrogate it. - And now Dearest Mother by the time this reaches  
you I shall be ~~on~~ off for Pensacola, or arrive there probably about  
the time that an answer would come from home - in that letter you  
must tell me of all the little occurrences of home which will be  
so interesting, all the little scandal of marriages, love-making &c. -

Miss Lizzie has of course returned to N. since the death of Mr. Hill  
of which I heard at St Juan de Nicaragua" from Dr. Whiting of the "Recluse"  
what effect is this likely to exercise upon her expectations in that quarter?

A dispatch has just arrived from Jackmel, a town near us  
on the coast, saying that the Commodore is there, what effect  
it may have upon the immediate movements of the Ship I don't

know - but full certain that it can only make a few days  
as we must get to Pa. for provisions; which will be quite  
charming as the nearer I get home the happier I feel! When  
I do get home I shall cling to it as tenaciously as the moss  
to the parent tree - I know not mother how I loved you until this  
separation, & now I feel in each hour of the day that your  
presence & our home are necessary to my happiness - Every  
morning when I read my little bible which is for your  
sake & my Father's, venerated, I think of how soft you, & I  
pray that I may become, for your sake, for mine & for our  
ultimate union, a good man - and if calm & rational  
excitation can attain that end, your wanderer will return  
to you this home, with a character established in mind  
integrity such as you have taught me.

And now Mamma good-bye, God bless you good-  
bye -  
Your own boy  
James.

A thousand kisses my Mother - love to all -  
don't forget Paddy & Mary - the Cosmos - presence  
will not affect our movements - I send a flower  
a sprig.

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