

**MEMORIALS OF
MARY WILDER WHITE
BY ELIZABETH AMELIA DWIGHT
EDITED BY MARY WILDER TILESTON**



CENTURY AGO IN NEW ENGLAND

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light them all by narrating them. He recollects their sitting on the stairs in the front entry, listening to her relation of them, which they all thought more interesting received from her lips than when read from the book. He says that in narrating a story she gave every detail, so that one story would be continued ten days or more. She gave the conversations with great dramatic power, personating each character as she spoke. He remembers her giving "The Mysteries of Udolpho," with such power that after passing an evening listening to her he was afraid to be alone in the dark, and, on getting into bed, covered his head with the bedclothes in terror from the pictures which had been so vividly presented to his imagination.

Upon his telling me that when visiting at his mother's house she took him under her tutelage, I asked him, "In what way?" He replied, "For one thing, I remember she used to have me read with her out of the same book, and I recollect that, when I had made my way over a few lines of a page, I would find her at the foot of it. I can recall the rapidity with which she possessed herself of the contents of a page."

The following letter was written by her to her cousin Eliza Bigelow:

"Concord, March 20th, 1798.

"I received much pleasure from my dear Eliza's letter, and, in return, will tell her all the news I can

think of. Last Friday eve closed, I hope, the assemblies and balls for this season. I can say most sincerely I *hope* this, for I am tired of dissipation. The brilliant appearance of a full dressed assembly, the animating notes of sprightly music, and the flattering attention of the Beaux, certainly amuse the fancy, perhaps gratify vanity, (and who is there that is wholly free from it), but interest not the heart; and, after the charm of novelty has worn off, when sober reason takes the place of extravagant imagination, we then discover how dearly we have paid for a few hours' amusement. I am sure I have reason to say this, for I paid a fortnight's indisposition for a few hours' dancing; for this, however, I am to blame my own imprudence in going out when warm with exercise, but I have got over it, and am now very well.

"I promised you, in the beginning of my letter, to tell you all the news I could think of; to be as good as my word, I must inform you Papa has received another letter from Mr. Schalkwyck, dated 'Paris, Nov. 17th.' He says he shall embark for America soon, so as to arrive early in the spring. He has recovered between sixty and seventy thousand dollars of his estate, or rather, he has so much given him, as compensation, in part, for the plantations that were destroyed, which belonged to his family."

The beloved Cousin Ruth, in looking back upon this period, and speaking of my mother's self-culture, says, "I remember she loved to speak of an

English lady as a very good friend of hers, and quite accomplished in the French language,—Madam Walker, to whose kind attention she was indebted in learning to read and write the French language. This lady boarded in Concord, in the same family with Mr. Van Schalkwyck, and here the very early attachment with this gentleman was first formed. He was a man of education and refinement. I knew him only as a great invalid.”

Mrs. Rapallo, in writing of this part of my mother's life, says, “Your mother, beautiful, accomplished, admired by all who knew her, with, I think, a touch of romance in her delicate nature, became strongly attached to a French gentleman, who was boarding in Concord, and became engaged to him.” From papers in my possession, I infer that this engagement occurred during the winter of 1797-98, when my mother was but seventeen years old.

Mr. Van Schalkwyck¹ was of patrician descent, a French refugee from the West Indies; he was born in Guadeloupe, July 12, 1772. From Mr. Dureste Blanchet, one of my mother's most valued friends, I have learned more of him than from any other source. Mr. Blanchet was a relative and intimate friend of Mr. Van Schalkwyck. He used to speak of him to me as an accomplished gentleman, a man of intellect and character, worthy of the heart he won. I first knew Mr. Blanchet when I was a girl of six-

¹ His full name was Antoine Van Schalkwyck Classe Courcelle. It was pronounced “Skalk'wyck.”—Ed.

teen, at which time he visited at my father's house. He then answered to my idea of a gentleman of the old school. I loved him for the enthusiasm with which he cherished my mother's memory, and for the interest he showed in the children she had left. He, like Mr. Van Schalkwyck, was a West India planter, a royalist driven from his own country to this during the French Revolution, at the same time with Mr. Van Schalkwyck. First, he went to Boston and vicinity. Later, with quite a colony of the French, he settled in New Jersey, where he married a French lady of high descent. They had a large family of children. Some of their descendants still live in this country, and the friendship which existed between Mr. Blanchet and my mother, and which he extended to her children, has come down as an inheritance to members of both families, and exists with unabated warmth to the present day.

Among those who came to this country with Mr. Blanchet and Mr. Van Schalkwyck, and settled in New Jersey, was the Baron Van Schalkwyck de Boisaubin, a distant cousin of Mr. Van Schalkwyck. He was a chevalier of the Order of St. Louis, and belonged to the bodyguard of Louis XVIth. I find among my mother's papers a letter from him to Mr. Van Schalkwyck, which I copy here because it throws light upon the character of one who, from his connection with my mother, has a claim upon the consideration of her descendants:

MARY WILDER WHITE [1796-1801]

"Morris Town, Oct. 22nd, 1798.

"It grieves me, my dear Schalkwyck, to inform you of an event which will cause to you a great deal of pain. Your sentiments and tender feelings are known to me, but, though it is hard to me to entertain you with so afflicting a subject, it is necessary that you be informed of it on account of your business. We have received letters dated St. Bartholomew, from Mr. Bellevue, which apprise us of your father's death. I need not tell you how far this event affected me. When those moral virtues, honesty and probity, are united in the same person at a time which vices are looked upon as ornaments almost everywhere, we need not be relations to regret that one who carried with him all these precious qualities [words missing]. A very great comfort remains to us, that is, we can say that we see with satisfaction the son inherit all his virtues.

Adieu, &c.

BOISAUBIN."

This is all that we know of Mr. Van Schalkwyck. Of what my mother was at the time of her engagement to him, and later, one of Concord's chroniclers says, "Before her first marriage, and during her widowhood, she was the most distinguished of all the young ladies of Concord, for beauty, grace, and sprightliness; and the fascination of her manners and conversation made the hospitable mansion of Dr. Hurd a most attractive place to the young men

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YOUTH

of that day, and has come down, as a beautiful tradition, to later times."

The happiness that came to her from her early engagement must have been greatly alloyed by the anxiety and care to which it introduced her. Mr. Van Schalkwyck was compelled, by the death of his father, to return to the West Indies, under circumstances which were fraught with peculiar danger to him.¹

Of all the letters she must have sent to him during his protracted absence, we have only the following, which shows what she suffered from hope deferred:

*"Wednesday afternoon,
Concord, April 3rd, 1799.*

"I am sick at heart; it is now almost four months since you left this country, and not one line have I received from you. Suspense is intolerable. I know not your fate. I am ignorant of your reception at Guadeloupe, if indeed you have ever reached it. Perhaps you have not received either of the packets I have written, but, even if you have not heard from me, your anxiety cannot equal mine. You left me in a secure and peaceful village, under the protection of affectionate parents, you have every reason to suppose that I remain so, and that I am in health.

¹ The laws in Guadeloupe, as in France, were very severe against emigrants, who were considered disloyal and worthy of punishment. Many who returned to the island were thrown in prison, transported, or otherwise punished. Besides, there were threatened massacres of the whites by the blacks.—En.

But how different your situation! I knew that you were rushing into danger. Not a day, not a night has passed but I have beheld you, (in my mind's eye) a prisoner, sick, perhaps dying. I have sought to calm my soul by the maxims of Philosophy, but I found them weak and powerless when opposed to the strong emotions of affection. I then called in the aid of Religion. I implored the mercy of that Being who is infinitely powerful and gracious; to His care I commended you, and my soul was soothed; but still the weakness of humanity will at times prevail, and this dreadful suspense racks me with doubts and fears.

"I read your last letters from New York, and weep. Sometimes I indulge the hope of your return. I anticipate the joys of our meeting, but I soon return to despondency. I remember this is the picture of fancy, which I may never realize. Yet think not my mind is always agitated thus,—human nature could not bear it. I endeavour to appear cheerful to others. With regard to my health, which you expressed so much anxiety for, it is very good. I think the journey to Wachusett was of essential benefit to me. I have had good health ever since. I have now complied with your request, and my own inclinations, in telling you all my feelings, in giving you a transcript of my heart."

In reply to a letter from Ruth Hurd, congratulating her on the unexpected return of Mr. Van Schalkwyck, she wrote:

"Concord, 27th September, 1799.

"'The intention constitutes the act.' If this is truth, my dear Ruth, and you are convinced of it, I need offer no apology for suffering your letter to remain so long unanswered, but simply to assure you, that I intended to have written immediately on receiving it. Numerous avocations, but, above all, the spirit of Procrastination, induced me to defer from day to day, what I considered as not less a duty than a pleasure. A duty, for our correspondence was a voluntary engagement on my side, which not even a sense of my inability to contribute to your amusement can wholly annul; you, only, have the power to do that; and, as soon as you find an interchange of letters with me to be tiresome, (which, I prophesy, will be ere long), I beg you to give me a candid hint, and thus save yourself the chagrin of reading, and me the mortification of writing, unwelcome letters.

"Accept my thanks for your congratulations on the return of my friend: but, what do you think of Madame Sévigné's proposal, of mourning whenever we behold a beloved friend, from the reflection that we must soon part with them? I fancy you will say, 'as some one else did, 'twould be a great folly to grieve all our life-time, because death must come at last.'

"It is really the case that one knows not when to be sad or joyous; the vicissitudes of life change the tone of our minds each moment. But, blind as we

are to futurity, ignorant in so great a degree of the consequences of things, what absurdity to suffer ourselves to be either elevated to rapture or depressed to sadness by events of which we know not the termination. Does not common-sense inculcate equanimity of temper, to say nothing of Religion? But, surely, if we think at all of the Wise, Beneficent, and Powerful Being who formed the universe, and whose Providence is as extensive as His works, and whose Providence is as extensive as His works, we must believe that He directs all circumstances to conduce to the ultimate happiness of those who place their confidence in Him, and who endeavour, by conforming to His laws, to secure His approbation. How utterly unable we are to decide what is best for ourselves! Are we not, in this present life, this morning of existence, like capricious children, who would be spoilt were they indulged in all their whims and wishes? How easy it is to *reason*, but alas! how difficult to *act*! This is oft my exclamation when the weakness of humanity prevails over the sublimity of faith."

Mr. Van Schalkwyck returned to Guadeloupe in the autumn of 1799. The next letter we have from my mother is addressed to her friend Dureste Blanchet:

"Concord, April 28th, 1800.

"The certainty of painfully affecting a friend I sincerely esteem, inspires me with an unconquerable reluctance to address you. Under the mask of insensi-

bility, I know you conceal exquisite feeling. Oh, that I was ignorant of this! I could then tranquilly bid you prepare for the disappointment of your expectation of beholding a beloved sister this spring; I could with more composure impart to you the intelligence of her illness, which I received from Van Schalkwyck in a letter, the evening before last. He requests me to inform you that her long indisposition has terminated in the dropsy; our friend received this sad intelligence from St. Bartholomew, the 15th March. Would to Heaven the voice of sympathizing friendship might blunt the arrows of misery!

"To a soul like yours, fortified by the pure, sublime, consolatory truths of Christian Philosophy, common-place condolence would appear arrogant vanity. To the wise and beneficent Power we both adore, and to your own firm mind I leave you,—with assurances of a friendship which can never end till Dureste ceases to be virtuous and noble."

And again:

"Concord, July 16th, 1800.

"T is unnecessary to say I most sincerely sympathize with you, my valued friend. In the school of Adversity, Virtue is perfected. To me, this school appeared unnecessary for Dureste; Supreme Wisdom thought otherwise; and your merciful Father, by removing many of this world's attractions, is drawing you nearer to Himself, the source of felicity.

"Yesterday brought me a packet from Schalkwyck; he is now at St. Bartholomew, where he has been lately ill with a fever; the 6th of June, he was—God be thanked!—on the recovery. He requests me to remember him to you with brotherly friendship, and to chide you a little for negligence: he has not received one line from you, but has written to you three times."

I introduce here the following letter to my mother from her brother Henry, because every line from him, however trivial his subject, has value in my eyes:

"Charlestown, May 5th, 1800.

"We arrived at Charlestown at precisely half-past twelve, after a very agreeable ride, conversing on the road upon several subjects, viz. wind, weather, beautiful, agreeable, and sensible ladies and gentlemen, and the contrary, friends and acquaintances of all denominations, etc., etc.

"When I was up last, Mamma said she wished Isaac and I could get a piece of linen for our own wear. We have, accordingly, been able to procure one, and should be much obliged by having it sent down as soon as made up.

"Our luck in the lottery was not great,—we were however, not losers.

"Thus runs the great Lottery of Life,
In which we all draw blanks and prizes alternate,
But, in the end, we're sure,

If we but act our parts aright,
Our last-drawn blank will be the highest prize.'

"Once reading will be sufficient for this, if then you will take the trouble just to toss it into the fire, you will oblige your truly affectionate brother,

H. WILDER."

Another letter from Henry, dated "July 25th, 1800," ends with these words: "That health and happiness may always attend his sister is the hope on which rests the happiness of your

Truly affectionate brother,

H. WILDER."

When Henry says that his own happiness rests upon that of his sister he does but express their mutual dependence: his sister's happiness was bound up in his. Among other recollections of her in her youth, given me by Dr. Bigelow, he says, "I remember, after I had left home to fit for college, that, on my returning once for a visit, my mother told me that Mary Wilder had been to see her; that, according to Mary's request, they had occupied the same room at night, which was passed principally in conversation, Mary shedding many tears, as she talked of her bitter disappointment in the decision at home that Henry was not to go to college. His tastes and talents fitted him for that education; he desired and had expected it. His mother's property was sufficient to warrant the expectation, and to Mary it

seemed unjust, on the part of her stepfather, to apply it in any other direction."¹ We can easily sympathize with the sister's feelings on the occasion, yet, for Dr. Hurd, it may be said that it was natural he should take the same course with Henry that he did with his own sons. The fact that their uncles in Charlestown were merchants, actively engaged in commerce, gave the young men peculiar advantages for business life. That Isaac and Henry were in their employ at this time may be inferred from the date of Henry's letter.

The following letter to my mother from Mr. Blanchet tells us all we know of the time of Mr. Van Schalkwyck's return from the West Indies:

"Wrentham, November 18th, 1800.

"With eagerness, I improve this opportunity to return my most lively thanks to my much esteemed friend, Mary, for her evinced kindness in forwarding to me Schalkwyck's letter, which came on hand yesterday, by the mail. Since she is acquainted with the tender good-will I bear its writer, it becomes needless to mention how much joy it gave me to hear from S. himself that he was well, and in fine spirits. Without doubt, Mary's sympathizing heart is actuated with similar sensations, anticipates full as much as I do the gratifying happiness of seeing again soon our much beloved friend. He writes that he was go-

¹ I believe that Mr. Gershom Flagg bequeathed some real estate, to be applied to giving his grandsons a college education, and, in Dr. Bigelow's case, it was used for that purpose. — Ed.

ing to take his passage to America, in the first convoy that should leave the West Indies. His letter bears date of the 2nd of September, so, with some propriety, we may expect that he shall be with us ere this month is out. May Gracious Heaven take him under His fatherly protection in the course of the voyage, and shortly waft him to his friend's arms."

From this letter of Mr. Blanchet's we may infer that Mr. Van Schalkwyck's return was not long delayed. We have no letters written by my mother during the spring of 1801. We learn, from other sources, of the anxiety and distress which she then suffered. From letters of Mr. Blanchet to her, the last bearing the post-mark April 27th, 1801, it appears that Mr. Van Schalkwyck had been dangerously ill, probably in Boston:

"Wrentham, Friday morning, 1801.

"With an infinite satisfaction, dear Mary, I learnt, by your interesting epistle, closed on the morning of Monday last, which, however, I received but yesterday evening, that our beloved friend Schalkwyck continues to improve in health. The various accidents which lately threatened his life having subsided, as you mentioned, now leave us almost a positive reason to hope that, with the intervening goodness of Providence, he shall soon be restored to the ardent wishes of his friends in a perfect state of welfare. May our prayers, on this occasion, ascend to heaven and be heard!

"The delay experienced in hearing from you and Courcelle [the brother of Mr. S.] indeed caused me some anxieties at first, but, upon remembering this old axiom, 'no news, good news,' I easily quieted my mind, and your letter proved that I was not wrong; besides, its contents is so pleasing to my heart that, had I even been offended at your silence, I would have forgotten it to think of the happy circumstances you imparted me with.

"The favourable account you give of Mr. De Cheverus does not at all surprise me. He deserves all the good you may think of him, being himself good, by excellency. It gives me pleasure to know that he has repeated his visits to our friend. His conversation is comforting, as well as entertaining.

"Tell Schalkwyck that he would have received before this time, the preserved apples I was to send him, if I had been able to procure, myself, the raw ones. They are not to be obtained about here. If he can send up some from Boston, Mrs. De la Roche will, with pleasure, have them fixed for him. Accept my best regards and wishes for everything that could enlarge your share of happiness, and believe me, for ever, with perfect sincerity, your affectionate friend;
DURESTE B."

Mrs. Rapallo writes, of Mr. Van Schalkwyck's illness, "He was taken very ill in Boston, and his doctor said his only chance of recovery was to return to his

native air. Your mother went immediately to Boston and was married."

I find among my mother's papers a copy of a Boston newspaper, the *Columbian Centinel*, of "Saturday, June 27th, 1801," which contains the following record: "Married on Thursday last, at the Roman Catholic Chapel, M. Anthony Van Schalkwyck, from the Island of Guadeloupe, to Miss Mary Wilder of Concord." I have been told that the ceremony was performed by Bishop Cheverus, who was my mother's warm friend from the time they first met till she died. The two months immediately following her marriage were passed at her mother's house in Concord, the next month in Newburyport.

The following letter, though undated, was undoubtedly written during the summer. It was addressed to M. Antoine Van Schalkwyck, and was written by Madame Courcelle, the wife of his older brother, who had just returned to Guadeloupe after an exile of seven years:

"Il m'est impossible, mon cher frère et bon ami, de vous exprimer toute la joie que j'ai ressentie en embrassant mon cher Courcelle. Après sept ans d'absence, de peines, et de chagrins de tous les genres, cette faveur du ciel me semble si grande que j'ai peine a me persuader que ce soit une réalité! Ah! pourquoi ma chère maman, ma tendre sœur Adelaïde n'existent-elles pas pour être témoins de

mon bonheur! pourquoi la perte de mes enfants, et celle de tous mes parents chéris ont-elles imprimé dans mon cœur un sentiment de douleur qui m'ôte tout espoir de jouir en ce bas monde d'une félicité pure et sans mélange! Mais nul mortel ne jouit d'un bonheur parfait, et celui que je goûte à présent surpasse mon espérance, et j'en rends grâce au ciel.

"J'ai appris avec plaisir que vous étiez unis à votre charmante amie; vous ne devez pas douter que je n'en sois bien aise; tout ce que peut contribuer à votre bonheur, ajoute à ma satisfaction; et il m'est doux de penser que j'aurai en elle une sœur dont le caractère simpatisera avec le mien; une sœur du choix de mon cher frère ne saurait manquer de posséder toute mon affection.

"Ce que Courcelle m'a dit de votre état me cause beaucoup d'inquiétude. Vous ne sauriez donner une plus grande marque d'attachement à vos amis, que les soins que vous prendrez pour vous conserver pour eux. Vous savez combien votre vie leur précieuse, et combien elle est nécessaire à leur bonheur; ainsi, ménagez-vous, mon cher frère, et songez que le jour qui vous réunira au reste de ma famille ne me laissera plus rien à désirer. N'ayez aucune inquiétude sur le compte de votre frère; il a été très-bien accueilli. Le Général Lacrosse ne demande pas mieux que de voir rentrer tous les honnêtes gens; il dit qu'il désire se faire des amis de tous les anciens habitants de cette colonie, mais je crois que toutes les démarches que l'on pourroit faire pour réclamer ses

propriétés avant la fin des locations seroient inutiles. Je compte aller à la Pointe avec Courcelle dans quelques jours, et je tâcherai d'obtenir des secours pour lui. Si le succès de mes démarches répond à mes desirs, je vous ferai passer quelques moyens, et vous enverrai une petite nôte des effets dont j'ai besoin, pour vous prier de me les procurer. En attendant, si vous pouviez me faire passer deux petits chapeaux de castor arrangés avec des plumes, un petit parasol, et quelques paires de gants à femme, vous me feriez bien plaisir, car ces objets sont très rares et très chères ici.

"Courcelle vous écrit; il vous dira comme il m'a trouvé changée; enfin, il ne m'appelle que sa vieille. Vous pensez bien qu'on n'est pas à vingt-sept ans ce que l'on étoit à dix-neufs,—et sept ans de malheurs ne m'ont pas rajeunie. Je ne dis pas de même de lui; à quelques brins de cheveux blancs près, il est plus joli homme qu'avant son départ, ou, du moins, je le trouve tel. Adieu, mon cher frère, je vous embrasse un million de fois, ainsi que votre charmante épouse, et je fais des vœux au ciel pour le rétablissement de votre santé.

SOPHIE DÉGRÉAUX COURCELLE."

On September 6th, 1801, Henry Wilder wrote from Concord to Mr. Van Schalkwyck, as follows:

"*My dear Brother*,—The affair of my voyage to the East Indies is at last given up, as Mr. Lyman has found it impossible to get the vessel ready in

season for that voyage, but he will not suffer her to lie in port, and whatever voyage he does determine upon, I may have the same berth as I should have had, had he been able to have fitted her out for the N. W. voyage. One of the owners told Mr. Adams that the vessel would now be fitted out either for France or the Mediterranean, on a trading voyage. I must confess I should not be very fond of going up the Straits now that the Barbary powers have 'let loose the dogs of war.' You, my dear brother, and Mary, have been so kind as to wish me to go with you to Guadeloupe, and I will own to you that, if the bargain for the Lancaster place had not fallen through, nothing would give me greater pleasure.

"If I have not written enough about myself, I will inform you that I am very well, and that anxiety for the health and happiness of my dear Mary and her Schalkwyck often engages the mind of their brother,
H. WILDER."

To this letter Mr. Schalkwyck replied as follows:

"Newburyport, Sept. 10th, 1801.

"Your letter, my dear Henry, has been duly received, which informs me that your voyage to the East Indies has failed. I cannot say that I am sorry for it, because I am far from viewing the advantages of it in the same light with you. In this case, it is certainly necessary that you change your plan. When I first heard of your going to the East Indies, you must remember what I told you about it. It struck

me that if you would go to Guadeloupe with me, where you will find a home and friends, make yourself master of the French language, and, a few months after, get into business, which are very profitable there, it would be, in my opinion, the best plan you could form in your present time of life. I have no doubt but, having the confidence of your friends here and at Guadeloupe, you cannot fail to succeed.

"I invite you, therefore, to think seriously on it, only I beg you to follow the wish of your own heart. In such circumstances, we ought always to determine for ourselves. If your decision is to go to Guadeloupe, you may think how much it will afford me satisfaction. It will be an increase of happiness to Mary, and, at Guadeloupe as in every place, you will ever be treated as an affectionate brother. Mary has wrote to your Mamma, and tells her more about you. Undoubtedly she will impart it to you. Since you have been gone, I feel much better, and hope it will continue so.

"You will present my best respects to your parents, and kiss the girls for me. We anticipate to see you soon. Adieu. I wish every happiness—and believe me,

"Your affectionate brother and good friend,
A. VAN SCHALKWYCK."

Henry decided to go to Guadeloupe. Mrs. Rappallo, writing to me of this event, says, "Your Uncle Henry, then, I think, about twenty, said he could

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not let his sister go alone, with an invalid, to a foreign country—that he must go with her, and return when she landed.” Doubtless Henry’s anxiety for his sister influenced him in his decision, and this added poignancy to her grief under his loss; but it is evident that he went with the purpose of remaining in the island, and pursuing the course recommended by Mr. Van Schalkwyck. On September 29th, 1801, they sailed from Newburyport for Guadeloupe.

In a letter to my mother begun at the same date, her stepsister Sally expresses her hope of seeing her again within two years. She says also:

“October 18th. Ere this will reach you, my dear sister, I trust Heaven’s propitious gales will have wafted you to the native shore of our beloved Van Schalkwyck. You will have seen the lovely and interesting Sophie. She can no longer be called unfortunate. Her exiled husband, and beloved brother have returned to her, and the partner of that tender brother makes up the happy group. I wish you to send me a description of this lovely woman. Will you remember me to Courcelle, and his dear Sophie, and tell them I wish them much happiness?”

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CHAPTER III

OCTOBER—DECEMBER, 1801

GAUELOUPE: INSURRECTION, DEATH OF HENRY
WILDER AND MR. VAN SCHALKWYCK,
PLOT OF NEGROES

ON their arrival at Guadeloupe Henry Wilder wrote as follows to his parents:

“*Port-Libre (formerly Port Louis),
Guadeloupe, October 22nd, 1801.*

“*Dear and Honoured Parents,—*It is with the greatest pleasure that I hasten to inform you of our arrival at this place in health and safety, after a passage of twenty-two days from Newbury Port. Mary was extremely sick all the time; the vessel being small (seventy-five tons), and accommodations not very good, made it much worse than it would otherwise have been. Schalkwyck has been as well, if not better, since he left Newbury Port. The sea air suits his constitution very well. It was about six in the afternoon of the 21st when we arrived. I went on shore with the captain, who has been very kind and obliging to us, but could not get permission for Schalkwyck to land, until the physician of the town had visited the vessel, for it seems that they are as much afraid of importing diseases here as we are.

“The evening we arrived, we were informed that there had been some disturbance at Point à Pitre,

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and learned, in the morning, that General Lacrosse had sent officers to arrest Pélage, the Deputy Governor, who resides at the Point, and that Pélage had called upon the soldiery to protect him, which they have done. It created a considerable disturbance, in which there was one man killed, and three wounded.¹ Pélage says that he has been guilty of no fault for which he ought to be arrested.

"27th. We have news from the Point. Lacrosse is under arrest; it is supposed that he will be sent to France. General Pélage is now the Commandant of the Island. He has issued several proclamations tending to quiet the minds of the inhabitants. He has served in the national army in this island eight years, and has acquired and supported a very good reputation.

"Isaac has, I suppose, by this time doubled Cape Horn. God grant we may soon meet again in our native country.

"Adieu, my dear parents, may all that happiness which a dutiful child ought to wish you, be yours, may your declining years yet be soothed by the presence of all your children, is the constant prayer of your son,

HENRY WILDER."

Three days after her arrival at Guadeloupe my mother wrote as follows to her parents:

¹ A letter, of later date, says that Mr. Courcelle, Mr. Van Schalkwyck's brother, was wounded in the affray.—Ed.

"Port Louis, Guadeloupe, Oct. 24th, 1801.

"I cannot for a moment doubt the pleasure my most tenderly beloved parents will receive, when they learn the safe arrival of their children at their wished-for port; and that pleasure will be increased, I trust, by an assurance that, except the fatigue occasioned by the voyage, we are all as well as when we left Newbury Port.

"The first nine days of our passage were most unpleasant, the heavens constantly overclouded, the wind contrary, the vessel rolling, and thunder and lightning often rendering the scene more dreadful. But to your Mary, half-dead with sea-sickness, all was indifferent, and I heard Capt. Basset, on the tenth night, say to Mr. S. 'I shall lay to to-night, for, positively, I feel very unsafe to continue our course,—we have been unable to take the sun these three days; by my reckoning, we must be very near the Bermudas, and I should not like to run on the rocks, as many vessels do every year;' I heard this—I heard them all expatiate on the dangers of that fatal cluster of islands, situated in the middle of the ocean, and so low they cannot be discovered in the night till you are near,—often too near them—without the least emotion; the idea of death was neither painful nor terrific,—so totally had the long continuance of sea-sickness unnerved body and mind, that I should scarcely have raised my hand to save my life. This illness continued, in a degree, the twenty-two days of our passage. I was carried every day by

the captain and Henry from the cabin, and laid on a mattrass on the deck; and, at night, I can compare my feelings on returning to my berth only to those of the slave, who feels his cruel master loading him with chains. Praised be Providence! Mr. Schalkwyck was rather better than worse during the passage; and Henry, except the first two or three days, very well. Our servant was not sick, and was remarkably faithful and attentive.

“By the dawning of day on the morn of the 21st of October, I was awaked by the cry of ‘all hands aho,’ and a moment after, Henry slid into the cabin, with the joyful news of land. The island of Deseada was in view, rising like a mountain from the bosom of ocean. I cannot express my sensations on beholding the firm land once more, and they were heightened to an almost painful degree when, a few hours after, Guadeloupe arose like a faint cloud on the horizon. The heat of the sun was insupportable. I was carried to my berth, whence I was summoned, at three o’clock, to witness a scene new and romantic, beyond anything I ever imagined. We were half a mile from the shore, but it appeared to me near enough to have shaken hands with any one there. The land terminates abruptly by a perpendicular descent to the sea, and, as you sail slowly along this coast, innumerable caverns meet the eye, hollowed by the hand of nature, but apparently the work of art. These caverns were the abode of the ancient inhabitants of this country. They preferred living in

their dark recesses, and subsisting on fish with which the shore abounds, to erecting houses, and cultivating the fertile earth. No verdure can be more bright than the plantations of sugar-cane, no inanimate object more majestic than the palm and cocoa trees, that extend everywhere their hospitable shade. We anchored in the harbor of Port Louis. Previous to the Revolution, this was a rich and flourishing town, but now it presents cruel evidence of the devastations of war. On anchoring, Mr. S. wrote to the Commandant, requesting permission to land; he wrote also to Mr. Tronquier, his tutor, for four or five years, in the University of Paris, to inform him of his arrival. We received an immediate invitation to come to his house, and the next morning, after the physician and captain of the port had been on board, we received permission to land. At the sight of land, I felt strong emotion, but when my foot first felt the earth, when I found myself at liberty to walk, an exercise I had not taken for three weeks,—my sight, my little strength forsook me, and I fainted. On opening my eyes, I found myself surrounded by more than a hundred people of all colours, and apparently of all conditions; it was the day of the Decade, and therefore the crowd of gentlemen, soldiers, and mulattresses was very great. When sufficiently recovered, I was placed in a chair, and carried by negroes to the house of Mr. T.

“*October 27th.* I flatter myself my dear parents will not receive intelligence of the change in the rul-

ers of this Island, till they receive my letter. Henry will give you an account of the late disturbance; for a few hours it was terrific,—but all is past. Be not therefore anxious. General Pélage, who is the successor of General Lacrosse, promises protection to the emigrants, and has issued a proclamation in which he assures them they shall be better treated than by his predecessor. Many royalists return daily, and are as well received by Pélage as by Lacrosse.¹

“I cannot express the degree of kindness and attention we receive from the inhabitants of this place. Many of Mr. S.’s relations and friends have been to see us, particularly Courcelle, and Madame Cruiselly, his mother’s sister, who insists on our passing some time at her house. I believe, however, we shall go very soon to Point à Pitre by water, and from thence by land to St. Ann’s. I have had the happiness to be received in the most affectionate manner by all the friends of Mr. S. I am particularly gratified by the cordial warmth of an old and very respectable lady, who has lately returned with her family from Martinique. She is the grandmother of Madame Boisaubin, and a near relation of Mr. S.’s.

¹ From Lacour’s “Histoire de Guadeloupe,” I learn that many emigrants returned to the island after an encouraging proclamation in June, 1801, but a large number soon hastened to leave it, fearing devastation and carnage such as had been the portion of San Domingo. The army was composed nine-tenths of blacks and mulattoes. When the revolt occurred on October 21st, which put Pélage, a mulatto, in the office of commandant of the island, in place of Lacrosse, a general alarm was sounded, and there was great consternation, the people fearing an immediate outbreak of pillage and massacre by the blacks.—En.

She embraces me, and calls me her dear little daughter. I wish, Mamma, you could see her,—she is the image of goodness, benevolence, and graceful sweetness personified. Monsieur and Madame Tronquier treat us like their children; and, indeed, was there nothing but the hospitality, and the frank and easy manners of the people to recommend this place, that alone would be sufficient.”

From my mother:

“*Point à Pitre, Nov. 5th, 1801.*”

“The embargo which has been laid on all vessels in this port, ever since the arrest of General Lacrosse, will be taken off this day. I will, therefore, close my little packet, and send it to one of the American captains, for I would not that my dear parents should receive intelligence of the disturbance in this place, till they receive it from the pen of their daughter. Such things are usually exaggerated, and I know you would feel very unhappy till you heard from us.

“Since I wrote you last, Mr. S. has waited on General Pélage, and has been received as well as his most sanguine expectations. The General assured him of his protection while he lived, and told him, if he wished for anything in his power to grant, to come to him at any time. Mr. S. is now settling with the persons who have hired his plantations of the Republic. We expect to go to one of them in the course of a few days. We are now at the house of Mr. Landeville, who is one of the first men in the island. We

have been received with the same hospitality and kindness we experienced at Port Louis. Mr. and Madame Landeville are extremely amiable and pleasing persons, and do every thing in their power to make me forget I am with strangers.

“Early, last evening, the inhabitants were ordered to close their doors, as General Lacrosse was going to be embarked for France. The troops, to the number of twenty-five hundred, were all under arms, and patrolled the streets during the night. Quiet prevails this morning, and every one resumes their various employments and pleasures. I shall, however, quit Point à Pitre with pleasure,—the tranquillity of the country was ever pleasing to my heart, and we expect to reside in the pleasantest part of the island, in an airy and healthy situation.”

The following letter from Henry Wilder is directed to Mr. Samuel Clark, Charleston, S. C.:

*“Island of Guadeloupe, Point à Pitre,
8th November, 1801.*

“My brother-in-law is much better than when he left Massachusetts. He has recovered one of his sugar plantations since he came, and is in a very good way to get the others. It has been very sickly for the last three months, but now is as healthy as usual.

“There has been, too, a little disturbance in the Government, which has frightened some poor souls almost to death, but I believe all is over now.

“I am going to the country for a month or two,

after which I expect to take up my residence in this town, where any commands from you, or any of your friends, will be attended to with pleasure.

“With sentiments of friendship and esteem,
I remain,
H. WILDER.”

Soon, too soon, his purposes were broken off! The very morning on which this letter is dated he was seized with yellow fever, which at the end of the fourth day terminated his life.

The next record is my mother's letter to her minister in Concord, the Rev. Mr. Ripley. Upon the outside of this letter I find the following words in my mother's handwriting: “This letter, which cost me agony inconceivable, was written 15th November, 1801, three days after the death of my beloved Henry.”

“Point à Pitre, November, 1801.

“My dear and good Sir,—Have compassion on a heart almost broken with affliction, and spare me a particular recital of the sickness which, in four days, terminated the life of a brother too, too well beloved.

“O Sir! you must impart this soul-rending intelligence to my unfortunate mother. How she will support it, God knows! I cannot tell her she has no longer a son. O God! have mercy on us!

“Tell my mother to live—to live for the sake of her other friends—especially bid her remember that

the life of her daughter is woven with hers,—that, without the hope of embracing her again, Mary would sink to the grave. Remind her of the innocence of his life, of that sweet and heavenly temper which did, and which willed, ill to no one—remind her that his short life was spent in the cultivation of the talents God had given him—remind her that he has no longer pain, sorrow, or death to suffer. Tell her his life closed remarkably tranquil, and that he is now an angel in Heaven.

“Dear, dear Henry, why should I wish thee back in this world, so full of sorrow and distress, where every day brings new affliction, where we love, but to lose the objects of our tenderness, where we hope, but to be disappointed! Henry, dearest Henry! thou wast to me a Father—Brother—Friend,—too much the object of my pride and my affection. God has punished me by removing thee from me. I adore His decree,—I submit to His will,—tho’ it pierces my heart with indescribable sorrow.

“Tell my dear mother we have the consolation of reflecting Henry had every possible attention. If human aid could have saved him, he would be yet alive. He was attended by a celebrated physician and two nurses. On Monday morning, he was seized with the yellow fever—on Thursday evening, God reclaimed the soul He had given.

“To-morrow, Mr. S. and myself expect to leave this place for St. Ann’s. From thence I intend writing to my American friends.

“My dear Sir, I give you a most painful task to fulfil, but I know your goodness. My mother is comparatively happy to receive this sad intelligence from one so able to impart consolation. As for me—I would have given worlds to have heard your voice yesterday. My husband is deeply affected, and far from being well. He loved Henry, and sincerely regrets our irreparable loss.

“Have the goodness to tell my parents not to be anxious on my account. I have paid the tribute to the country. For five days after my arrival in this town, I was sick with a high fever, every night and morn, but now I have no illness, save that grief which lies at my heart.

“Adieu, my dear Sir. This letter has cost me many tears, and much agony, but I could not bear the idea of my parents receiving the intelligence it contains from an indifferent person, perhaps by the newspaper.

“Again, adieu, my respected Friend. You know those who are most dear to me—assure them they are dearer than ever to the heart of

MARY VAN SCHALKWYCK.”

Among our most precious memorials of my mother and of her beloved Henry is a manuscript volume of extracts, upon the first page of which she has inscribed the date, “Marie Galante, January 4th, 1802,” and upon another, the following sketch:

“Henry Wilder was born in Lancaster, Massa-

chusetts, 27th April, 1782. His opening youth gave promise of every virtue, his riper manhood confirmed them all. Lovely in his person, his fine form was a fit temple for the spirit of dignity and truth by which it was animated. His large and expressive blue eye beamed tenderness, but oftener was fixed in sublime contemplation. His complexion was of the spiritual kind that discloses every emotion of the soul. 'The conscious blood rose in his cheek, and so distinctly wrought, that one might almost say, his *body thought*.' This is a faint sketch of the lovely exterior of Henry—but who shall display his virtues, who do justice to his modest, but transcendent merit? What to others was toil was, to him, amusement. He delighted in abstruse study, and his lightest amusements were arts which others attain but by study. A self-taught painter and musician, whose tones were sweeter than Henry's? Who breathed, like him, the soul of harmony? The warbling of his flute stole on the ear of night, and, like Henry, deserving universal admiration, shunned it. The melody fled with the soul of Henry, but the magic tints of his pencil remain. Thy music is no more,—the tints of thy pencil will fade,—but thy *virtues*, Henry, are recorded in the book of the Almighty. And, when 'the heavens shall pass away like a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat,' thou wilt appear with the Judge of heaven and earth, clothed with the white robe, and, having the palm of victory in thine hand, wilt receive a crown of immortal glory."

My mother has left many touching expressions of what Henry was to her in his life, and of her grief under his loss. None are more affecting than those in her handwriting upon the pages of his Bible, from which I will copy a passage. This cherished volume, which descended to my Uncle Henry's namesake, the Rev. Henry Wilder Foote, was first in the possession of Mr. Foote's mother, who was the youngest daughter of my mother, born but six months before her death; she inherited, with her mother's name, her beautiful qualities of mind and heart, and left a memory which is in perfect accord with those to which we now "do reverence."

At the end of the Bible, on a fly-leaf, are these words, written by my mother, in pencil:

"Yes, my beloved Henry, I vow to cherish thy memory,—while I live, thou shalt live also. Though dead to all the world beside, in my heart thou shalt live for ever."

Among my mother's papers I find a scrap upon which are written the following words:

"Possessed of every virtue, adorned with every talent, his person remarkably beautiful, his mind remarkably strong, his understanding clear and profound, his manners mild and unassuming, the rose blushed on his cheek, intelligence beamed in his blue eye. Such was H. W."

On another sheet are written the following lines:
 "Sunday. In the dawn of manhood, in the bloom of beauty, surrounded by fair opening prospects—

thy lips were sealed, thine eyes were closed, and the grave shut in upon thee. Blessed be God! Praised be the wise and merciful Disposer of all events! The sorrows of life, the snares of vice, the terrors of death, shall have no power over thee. Thou hast run the race, thou hast won the victory, and everlasting innocence and peace shall wreath thy brows.

"The God whom thy father worshipped, the God of universal nature, beheld the cherished creature He had formed. He saw the talents He had bestowed doubled in thy keeping. He saw thee mature for Heaven, though few years had passed over thee, and in pity spared thee a longer trial. Yes, my brother—thou art in Heaven, thou hast rejoined thy sainted father! O my father—my brother—look from Heaven, and guide and guard thy child and sister—a poor wanderer, bathing the path of life with the bitter tears of affliction. And Thou—Oh, my eternal and omnipotent Father! Thou, who wilt never desert the creature who looks to Thee for support,—be Thou the lamp to guide my feet, be Thou my shield in the hour of temptation! Enable me to do and to suffer all Thy will,—and finally, when I have lived long enough to answer the purposes of my creation, receive me to Thy bosom, for the sake of my Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen."

Again, on one page of a sheet which contains a French exercise in Henry's handwriting, my mother has written as follows:

"That form which was the object of my pride, and

my admiration, is now mouldering into dust. Ah, my brother! the most perfect beauty, the finest talents, the best heart, the most innocent life, could not arrest the stroke of Death. All were combined in thee,—and thou art gone forever. No more shall I listen to the melody of thy music, no more shall my eye delight to dwell on the graces of thy person,—no more shall my sorrowing heart repose itself on thy fraternal bosom, and find there wisdom, tenderness, and consolation. In sickness, thou wert my nurse,—in health, my dear companion,—at all times, in all circumstances, my tender friend,—and thou art gone forever,—forever. O my God, grant me strength to support this great affliction!"

The following lines, on another page, remind one, as do some of these already copied, of Eugénie de Guérin's attempt, after her brother's death, to keep for him a journal, addressing it "to Maurice in Heaven."

"The acacia, with its thorny arms and fragrant flowers shall guard and perfume thy grave, and the sensitive plant, fit emblem of thy modest merit, shall delight to dwell on the sod which covers thee. Accept, beloved Henry, this tribute of fraternal affection, and suffer me to place this little wild flower in the wreath with which justice has bound thy brow."

The next letter we have from my mother brings us to her second great bereavement. The one "dated from St. Ann," of which she speaks as her "last," if it reached its destination, has not been preserved.

It is a disappointment not to find this and other letters which, in her correspondence from Guadeloupe, she mentions having written to her American friends. Fortunately, however, what we have gives a vivid picture of the scenes through which she passed during this most eventful year of her life.

“Marie Galante, December 22nd, 1801.

“Ten days past, I have endeavoured to acquire fortitude sufficient to enable me to write my dear parents. In vain have I strove. At the present moment I shrink from the task, and feel it too painful to be supported. But, let me not, by a selfish wish to avoid reciting late desolating events, risk your suffering more by an abrupt communication of the irreparable loss your unfortunate daughter has sustained. Ere you receive the present, you will have wept the sudden death of my too tenderly beloved brother,—ah! you thought not, at the same time, I was deploring the united loss of Schalkwyck and Henry. My last letter was dated from St. Ann. We were then near one of our plantations. Mr. Schalkwyck as well as usual, except a relaxness; both of us anticipated, when time should have softened our regret for the departure of our dear Henry, finding in domestic life, in the society of our amiable friends, and in the charming scenery of St. Ann and St. François, as high a degree of felicity as is usually allotted to mortals. It is true, the loss of Henry would have ever cast a shade over the brightest day of life, but,

while my husband remained to me, I ever found the tender consolation of knowing I possessed a friend who valued more my happiness than his own, who shared in all my feelings, who participated in every joy, in every sorrow. After my letter from St. Ann, Mr. S. became worse; but, two days after my last, he went with me to our plantation at St. François. On our arrival, he was carried to his chamber, which he never after left. After some days, the sore mouth commenced,—he suffered twice more than any one I ever saw,—with pain he respired, with agony he took the sustenance necessary. Night and day were the same,—he slept not. We had three physicians. Eight days before his death they told me I must hope no more. I dwell not on the agony of that moment. It was to me like the stroke of death. Mr. and Madame Richebois, our brother and sister Courcelle, and some other friends, were constantly with me. Eight nights, I slept not; sometimes, I reposed a few moments in a hammock, but it was the repose of a breaking heart. Three days before the release of my beloved friend, I prayed God to take him from woe to bliss. His frame suffered all that the frame of man can suffer, but his soul was at peace. On Sunday, December 10th, at two o'clock p.m., he perceived himself dying. At that awful moment, he commended me fervently to the care of Courcelle. I pass rapidly over the most cruel day of my life. At nine o'clock, Sabbath evening, without a groan, without a sigh, in the full possession of his reason,

expired the tenderest husband, the sincerest and most disinterested of friends. O my God! 't was by Thy strength alone I was enabled to support that scene!

"The next morning, I was carried to the house of Madame Courcelle. I received, and continue to receive, from all that amiable family, and, indeed, from all the relations and friends of Mr. S. the tenderest attention, the warmest professions of friendship,—but one event has succeeded another with such rapidity, I have been scarcely able to discriminate the tears of grief for past misfortunes from those of apprehension for the future. Four days after the death of my husband, we were informed the negroes at Point à Pitre, dreading the arrival of the troops from France, had entered into a conspiracy to destroy all the white inhabitants. They assembled to the number of three thousand in the night,—their chiefs were selected,—when a negro girl informed Pélage (the mulatto General) of the plot. He marched with his troops immediately against the wretches. Three of the chiefs were killed on the spot, six taken prisoners, and all the negroes dispersed. Still, however, the white inhabitants trembled with apprehension lest to-morrow should accomplish what to-day accomplished not. All who could leave the island emigrated to other isles, to await there the arrival of the troops from France. Mr. and Madame Courcelle, Mademoiselle Coutoute, myself, and five domestics, with many other inhabitants, put ourselves on board a little vessel bound

to this isle. Here, all is tranquil; we receive, daily, the utmost hospitality and kindness from the people, and expect to remain here till the troops have reëstablished tranquillity in Guadeloupe. Nothing but the Peace would have been able to inspire confidence in the bosom of the unfortunate Guadeloupians. We doubt not but peace will restore all the tranquillity we wish. We expect, in the course of six weeks, twelve or fifteen thousand troops from France. I need not say, the circumstance will occasion inexpressible joy to the inhabitants.

"At present, my dear Parents, suffer not apprehension for my safety to empoison your peace. I am in health, in a peaceful and charming island, I am with amiable and tender friends, and, above all, I am under the protection of a God, almighty and all-sufficient. Mr. Courcelle intends to accompany me to New England in the spring. 'T is unnecessary for me to say I wish, ardently wish, to return to my native country and my beloved friends. Fatal, indeed, to my happiness, have been the two months I have passed in the West Indies."

[From the *Boston Gazette*, Jan. 14th, 1802: "Arrived yesterday, schooner *Exchange*, Capt. Vibert, from Guadeloupe. Left it on the 11th [of December] at which time Point à Pitre and the whole of the island was in confusion, another insurrection having taken place there, which, had it not been fortunately discovered at the moment, would have involved the

total destruction of every white and mulatto in the island. The rebels in the present insurrection were the country blacks against the whites and mulattoes. The former, having lent a helping hand in the revolution which had been just effected, expected a total emancipation from their masters; but not finding that event confirmed, or even contemplated in the Proclamation of the yellow general, Pélage, they had determined to achieve their own liberty, through the blood of Pélage and his party. For this purpose, 11,000 were to have been organized on the night succeeding that on which the plot was discovered—to have burnt the towns, and to have murdered every man, woman, and child of Pélage's party! At that very moment only when it could possibly have been defeated, was the plot discovered by a black woman, and four of the ring-leaders were apprehended. Notwithstanding the bloody project had been discovered, and, for the present, warded off, every thing was apprehended from the vengeance and ferocity of the blacks, and all was in the utmost confusion.”]

Some days later she wrote:

“Marie Galante, Dec. 30th.

“I conclude my dear parents have received my letter of the nineteenth of the present month, and are informed of the unfortunate circumstances which have driven us from Guadeloupe, and of the infinitely more afflicting circumstance of the loss of my ever beloved husband. Unfortunate as I am, I have the

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blessing of health, and the unceasing tenderness and attention of all the family of Mr. Schalkwyck,—particularly the family of Madame Courcelle, who consider me as a sister.

“I am inexpressibly anxious to receive letters from you and my American friends, who are dearer than ever to my heart. The loss of my other friends has rendered more precious those which remain. God Almighty, whose goodness has enabled me to sustain the heaviest misfortunes, the most heart-rending events, will, I trust, return me to my native country the ensuing spring. Mr. and Madame Courcelle request me to remember them respectfully to you. Both are ill at present; he has been dangerously attacked with the bilious fever, four domestics are ill also.”

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CHAPTER IV

JANUARY—OCTOBER, 1802

GUADELOUPE: ILLNESSES, ARRIVAL OF TROOPS FROM FRANCE, BATTLES, RETURN TO THE UNITED STATES

FROM Marie Galante, January 15th, 1802, she writes:

“In a moment like the present, agitated by continual revolutions, I feel seldom the courage to write to my beloved Parents; for, to write is to speak only of past woes, to detail distressing events, which have wrung, and which will forever afflict, my heart. Since the death of my beloved Henry, I have sent three packets, by different opportunities, to my friends in America, and, ere you receive the present, you will, I trust, be informed of the succeeding and irreparable misfortune I have sustained in the loss of my long-loved, and ever regretted, Schalkwyck. The omniscient God alone knows the sufferings of my heart, and He alone was my support under these accumulated sorrows. Our necessary flight from Guadeloupe, which I considered as an aggravation of them; has, on the contrary, a good effect on my health; and, by a change of place, by the variety of new objects, and by the care I necessarily took during the illness of Mr. and Madame Courcelle, my mind was drawn from a too intense contemplation

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of my melancholy fate. At present, my most ardent wish is to return to the bosom of my country, where, though I expect not happiness, I hope for tranquillity. This wish cannot be gratified before the last spring month. The settlement of Mr. Schalkwyck's estate will render it impossible for me to quit the West Indies at an earlier period. We expect, every day, the arrival of troops from France, when we can return with security to Guadeloupe. Alas! how has that island been fatal to my happiness! I entered it with the most flattering prospects of felicity that ever opened to mortal view; blessed with the tender affection of a husband I had long loved, with the society of a brother, to whom I was but too much attached, surrounded and caressed by the friends of Mr. Schalkwyck. What a blank now remains! In the stead of the bright visions of felicity which my fancy had formed, the remainder of my life appears, to my view, a solitary passage to the grave.

“*February 3rd.* With a hand trembling with weakness, I continue my letter to my dear Parents. The evening after I wrote the above, I was seized violently with the fever, my life was in the extremest danger for four or five days. I was bled four times in twenty-four hours. Providentially, I was attended by a physician who understands perfectly the American constitution. He has resided five years in the United States, and understands perfectly his profession. My symptoms were the same with my beloved brother. I was seized in the same manner, and had

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every reason to suppose my illness would terminate in the same manner likewise. But it has pleased Almighty God to continue my life, for what purpose I know not, but I hope I shall be able to consecrate the remainder to the practise of every virtue consistent with my situation. Never, during my illness, did I feel the least solicitude to live for any other purpose than to view again my native country, and embrace again my friends. Nor was that wish so strong as to prevent my saying with the most perfect sincerity, 'Oh God, Thy will in all things be done!' I must quit the pen—the irregularity of my writing is a sufficient evidence of my present weakness.

"*February 4th.* Again I resume the pen to converse a few moments with my dear Parents before I close my letter. We have received a very pressing invitation from a gentleman of independent fortune; who resides in this island, about twenty miles from the principal port (where we now are), to pass some weeks with him. Mr. and Madame Courcelle wait only till I have sufficient strength to accompany them, when the whole family will go. Perhaps we shall remain there till the troops arrive from France. Does it not appear a little singular to you for ten persons to remain on a visit at a house for some weeks? Such is the extraordinary hospitality of the country that M. Renard, when he first heard of our arrival, wrote immediately for us to come to his habitation, and proposed sending horses for Mr. and

Madame Courcelle, and Mad'le Coutoute, and a hammock for me, as I do not ride so far on horse back. It is not probable I shall have an opportunity to write from the habitation of Mr. R., and, what I fear yet more is that I shall not receive letters from my friends in America. Ah! if you knew how earnestly I desire to receive intelligence from you! and, above all, how earnestly I desire to embrace you.

"*14th February.* I have news the most interesting possible to communicate,—the troops have arrived from France. Yesterday, I witnessed the entrance of three fine French frigates, and as many smaller vessels, filled with troops. To-morrow, other frigates are expected with the Generals Lacrosse &c. There are already twenty-three thousand men at Saint Domingo, eleven hundred here, and twelve thousand are daily expected at Guadeloupe. We witness nothing but rejoicings. The inhabitants assemble, alternately, at each other's houses to celebrate the happy event."

My mother's next letter to her parents is dated:

"*Marie Galante, March 4th, 1802.*

"My last letter to you, my dear Parents, was dated February:—since the departure of the Captain who took charge of it, I have again had the fever. At present, I am convalescent; my last illness was neither so long nor so violent as the first; of course, my debility is not so extreme; but I cannot flatter myself to enjoy perfect health, till I breathe again the

fresh gales of my native country; and have the sweetest pleasure that remains for me on earth, the pleasure of embracing my beloved friends. Tranquillity is absolutely necessary for the restoration of my health; I feel it each hour; and each hour convinces me I must not expect it in a country where scenes the most terrible pass to-day, and to-morrow are forgotten in splendid parties of pleasure. The heart of your daughter, after so many shocks, demands to be left to quiet melancholy; but my amiable friends, through mistaken kindness, force me into society. We have often the General and his suite, and not seldom pass the day in a society composed of fifty or sixty persons. This, together with my ill-health, and an ardent desire to embrace all that remains of my family have decided me to return, ere long, to New England.

March 7th. When the above was written, I had determined to return to New England with Captain Choate, who takes charge of my letters to my friends, but Mr. Courcelle objects so earnestly, he thinks my presence will be so necessary in Guadeloupe for the settlement of Mr. Schalkwyck's estate, and is so unwilling for me to return without sufficient funds, and without an attendant, that, to gratify him, I have decided to remain some time longer in the West Indies. The sacrifice I make to his wishes is great, and I know not if I should have decided, had not many persons assured me the season was extremely dangerous.

"I cannot express my anxiety to receive letters

from you, my Parents. More than three months have elapsed since I have received that happiness. I dare not indulge my apprehensions on your account,—they are too terrible. I pray God to grant me the delightful satisfaction of embracing you once more."

Again, she writes:

"Marie Galante, 22nd March, 1802.

"Since my last, by Captain Choate, I have passed a decade in the country, at the habitation of Madame Romane, a cousin of Madame Courcelle. A fine, and very extensive prospect, pure air, and retirement, have had the most favourable effect on my health; I am neither so thin, nor pale, as before, but my heart is more sad. I am extremely anxious on your account, my dear Parents: to what reason am I to impute your long, long silence? My apprehensions are too painful: I dare not think!

"My expectation of returning to New England in April has vanished. It is necessary there should be a written arrangement passed between Mr. Richebois, Mr. Courcelle, and myself, before I leave the West Indies: and, as Mr. R. is in Guadeloupe, and Mr. C. is here, it is impossible all should be settled before our return to that island, unless Mr. R. should come to Marie Galante. But for me, so earnestly do I desire to embrace my dear friends in New England, I should quit everything to be arranged by the law, did not all the family oppose it.

"The excessive heat has commenced, but the sea-

son is not so unhealthy as the four or five past months have been; with you, winter still exercises his rigorous reign, the fireside is still the most agreeable place, and the happy circle still meet to pass the long evenings in simple and innocent pleasures. Alas! why do I not inhabit the same world! Here is a perpetual summer, nature in itself is charming, but an almost general corruption has rendered the society of the grand, detestable. Luxury presides at the board, vice walks unblushingly in the streets, and the name of *religion* is mentioned by the generality only with contempt and derision. I am not so unjust as to include all in this picture of the present manners. The family of Madame Courcelle, and many others, unite the rarest virtues with the most brilliant talents. The people, in general, are hospitable and generous; but religion is cherished by a number so small, it is scarcely perceptible. Ah! how much am I indebted to its divine consolations! What could have supported, what still sustains me, but confidence in that Being who is ever powerful, good, and wise?

"We expect daily the arrival of the remainder of the troops from France. There is already a sufficient number for Marie Galante, but not enough to restore tranquillity to Guadeloupe. It is impossible to express the impatience with which we count the days and weeks, and the eagerness with which we examine each sail that appears on the far, far distant horizon. Ah, my dear Parents, ah, my sisters,—in the tranquil bosom of your country, you can form no

idea of the present situation of the West Indies. To us, nothing appears more extraordinary than the gaiety, the extravagance, and thoughtlessness of this people, in a situation the most critical, surrounded by the greatest dangers.

"*March 29th.* Day after day closes, weeks and months succeed, and I receive no intelligence from New England. I accuse not my friends of negligence, for I am sure they are incapable of neglecting me; specially in my present situation, lamenting, in a far distant country, the loss of a beloved husband and brother. But I lament that sad combination of circumstances which prevents my receiving the sweetest consolation in the assurances of my Parents' unalterable attachment, of their health, and of their resignation to the dispensations of Providence, who has, by the same blow, mutually afflicted us.

"P. S. Will you, dear Mamma, write a few lines to Salla A., and give her a short account of my situation? Assure her I ever love, and cherish her remembrance; she is, and will ever be, dear to my heart. I would write, but I dare not employ the pen, or the needle, so much as my inclination dictates. Any kind of application brings on a pain in the head, and occasions a degree of fever. Tell her I have already written twice, but have not received a line from her."

By "Salla A." is meant Miss Atherton of Elm Hill, Lancaster, Mass. Elm Hill is a beautiful spot, which I remember my father's pointing out to my sis-

ter and myself, during our interesting drive through the town, as the one where, with her friends the Athertons, to whom she was much attached, my mother often stayed both before and after her residence in the West Indies. The following letter, without date or address, which I find among her papers, I suppose may have been written to these friends:

“The moment of my arrival in Guadeloupe was a moment the most critical, the very day when a formidable insurrection had placed a mulatto General at the head of government; terror and distrust was painted on every countenance. Alas! the clouds of the morning were but too ominous of the stormy day that advanced to destroy my peace. In three weeks after my arrival, I lost my beloved Henry, after an illness of four days. In the agony of the moment, I thought nothing could add to my sufferings. I was fatally undeceived in three weeks more, by the death of that dear friend for whom I had left my family, my friends, and native country. Misfortune succeeded misfortune with a rapidity that confounded my senses. Every day I heard of horrors, every night retired to my chamber with an expectation of being assassinated before morning. The dangerous situation of Guadeloupe induced the family of my husband, with many others, to quit the island, and seek in Marie Galante an asylum till the arrival of the troops from France. Scarcely did I find myself in a more secure abode, when I was attacked with the fever in

the same manner as my brother. An eminent physician attended me, and, by bleeding me four times in twenty-four hours, my fever was diminished, but I was left in an alarming state of weakness, which terminated in the fever and ague. At present, I begin to taste the sweets of returning health, but my heart sighs more fervently than ever for my native country, and for those dear friends from whom I have been so long separated.”

From my mother's next letter to her parents, it appears that her hope of hearing from them was still deferred. The letter is dated:

“*April 21st, Marie Galante, 1802.*”

“Capt. Chadwick has, in a degree, relieved my anxiety on account of my dear Parents. He has assured me he saw Uncle Hurd three or four days before he left Boston, and, had any misfortune taken place in the family, he would have informed him. At present, my health is re-established, but the uncertainty at what period the troops will arrive from France, and enable me to return to Guadeloupe, has almost decided me to embrace the first good opportunity to return to New England. Possibly, in the course of three or four weeks I shall embark.

“Could you, at present, behold this island, I am sure you would be wrapped in the most profound astonishment. Every night, the streets are patrolled. There is a sentinel placed at the entrance of all the principal streets. It is a time of war and general dan-

ger, but gaiety, the most extreme, prevails. There are balls and concerts every night, and dissipation of every kind is almost universal. Such is the character of the nation, that it is not in the power of misfortune or danger to render them sad. I speak generally. There are many individuals who feel the horror of the times, and yield to the melancholy so naturally inspired by the present circumstances."

On a blank page of this letter my grandmother has written in reference to her correspondence with my mother: "After improving every opportunity, and finding our letters were kept back, we enclosed them to Madame Lambert Marcilius, an American friend, by whom her heart was made happy in the assurance that her parents could not be made happier by any earthly occurrence, than to fold in their embrace their beloved Mary."

Again, my mother writes to her parents:

"Marie Galante, May 4th, 1802.

"With a satisfaction the most ardent and sincere, I give my dear Parents intelligence of the arrival of the fleet from France. The night before last, at twelve o'clock, we were awaked by an Officer who came to give us the news so important, and so long desired. A frigate anchored before the town, and the aide-de-camp of General Lacrosse landed, to give information to General Sériziat, that the fleet, consisting of four men of war, six frigates, and fourteen

transports, having on board the troops from France destined for Guadeloupe, commanded by the General Richepance, and accompanied by the aide-de-camp of Bonaparte, were within twenty-four hours sail. I need not say, the family arose instantly, the joy became general, dragoons were dispatched to give intelligence in the country, sleep was banished from all eyes; officers and soldiers passed continually, the streets were filled, and,—'the fleet has arrived, the fleet has arrived,' was echoed from mouth to mouth. In the morning, the house was filled with the officers who came to make their adieux, before they embarked to conquer or die. A sensation of sadness mingled with our joy, but the character of the nation was never more conspicuous than at that moment. The regiment of General Sériziat embarked singing, dancing, and exercising their wit in a thousand pleasantries.

"I shall not close my letter till the fate of Guadeloupe is decided; we are, at present, at a crisis the most important. God grant the event may be happy!

"May 12th. After eight days of the most racking suspense, we have received the agreeable assurance that all is tranquil at Grande-Terre. When General Richepance, with the fleet, arrived there, three ships of the line, which were too large to enter the port of Point à Pitre, landed their troops near Fleur d'Epée, a celebrated fort which commands the entrance of the port; the other vessels entered, and landed Gen. Richepance and his army in Point à

Pitre. The black troops made a faint resistance, but the French soldiers, with fixed bayonets, forced them to immediate surrender. Had the rebels been united in opinion, the event would have been extremely doubtful; but their division saved us scenes the most shocking to humanity, perhaps nothing less than the massacre of all the white inhabitants; nor should we in Marie Galante have escaped the general destruction. The aide-de-camp of Pélage, with two hundred black soldiers, forced a retreat, to Basse-Terre, where he united with three or four thousand others, to take possession of the fort and the town. Five frigates were immediately dispatched to attack the town by sea, and two thousand French soldiers, commanded by General Sériziat, marched to attack it by land. We hear constantly the sound of the cannonade. Every one is assured the blacks will be obliged to surrender. They have neither a sufficient quantity of provisions, nor ammunition, to make a long resistance. I tremble however for the victims. Pélage has conducted extremely well. 'T is to him the white inhabitants owe their lives, as he prevented, by his commands and entreaties, a general massacre.

"Adieu, my dear Parents. I have not said the half I have to tell you, but must close my letter, as the vessel, by which I send it, sails this morning."

The following letter from my grandmother, of the same date with this last of my mother, is doubtless the one which was enclosed to Madame Lambert,

the previous ones having been intercepted with the purpose of detaining my mother in Guadeloupe.

"Concord, May 7th, 1802.

"We will not, my dear, my much loved, daughter, presume to arraign the decrees of the supreme and all-wise Ruler of events. They are ordered in infinite wisdom. His almighty fiat has passed; His ways, though dark and mysterious, and far above our comprehension, will most assuredly be made manifest to be perfectly right; it will not be long ere the partition will be taken away, and we, I trust, shall meet those friends so tenderly beloved, never again to suffer a painful separation.

"Your Papa went down on purpose to see Captain Choate, and make inquiry about your situation. My tears flowed plentifully at the disappointment, when you could have come with so good a man, so reputable a character, and only twenty-two days' passage. Your friends' attention to you I feel very grateful for. You will present everything you think proper to them from your parents; but you must return, we ardently wish it. If you cannot leave the settlement of affairs to some trusty hand, leave it; you will be provided for without it. I cannot think of being another year parted from you. The death of my dear Henry was almost too much for me. I thought I could say as David did, 'Would to God I had died for thee, my son!' My reason felt distressed, I feared it would have left me. Never was

anything more unexpected to us. From Mr. Schalkwyck's disorder, we had not an idea that he could recover, or even reach his native shore; from the climate and the delicacy of your constitution, I had every thing to tremble at for you;—but my son, as though the shafts of death could not arrest him, I had almost a certainty of seeing again. But I have made a covenant with my God,—not one decree would I reverse. I devoted you both to Him in infancy, believing in His mercy, that what He saw best He would do.

“When a report circulated that Mr. Schalkwyck had paid the debt of nature, I was confined with a lung-fever, and did not know of it for three weeks. As soon as I was better, your papa went to Boston, to know if any intelligence could be procured. Nothing certain could be procured till your letter of the 22nd of December confirmed it; which we did not receive till the 7th of April, but have never received any one respecting your brother's sickness, except the one you wrote to Mr. Ripley. Was he sensible of his danger, or was it hid from him?

“*May 9th.* Thus far I had written, when I was called to receive a letter from Mary; my heart vibrates at the sound,—date 22nd of March. You say your health is more confirmed,—God be praised! To Him, my dear daughter, ascribe all thanks. Let not any of the allurements which those around you are enveloped in, take you from your duty to your

God. Every resource fails in time of affliction, except His gracious promises. What could I have called on, for aid, had it not been for that support!

““What can I ascribe your long silence to, my dear parents?’ I can answer you readily, not to any want of the purest and most ardent affection. We cannot tell whether you have received any letters from us, but have repeatedly written. Our anxiety and distress on your account has been almost too much for all your friends, as, by the papers filled with the most horrid accounts, we have seen you, in imagination, suffering everything shocking to humanity.

“Indeed, my dear child, you must come with Capt. Choate,—he has orders not to leave you. You will not need any other protector, relying on Providence. Do not bring any slaves with you,—there are too many here already for the safety of the community; the spirit of liberty has already begun to blaze among them. Capt. Choate says if two-thirds of his cargo should be necessary to insure your protection, he would sacrifice it. Your uncle says he would venture a daughter of his to any part of the world with him. We have reason to think some of the vessels were cast away in which your letters were, as you mention many which we never received. A packet from your papa has been in Boston and Charlestown to send, a month. Vessels do not clear out for Guadeloupe. They are unwilling to have it known where they are going. I am afraid to have you go again to that fatal

place. Cannot your affairs be settled where you are? Do not wait till the hurricane months arrive. Your papa has said he wished to go for you himself, but I cannot make another sacrifice.

"It is generally supposed that a war will take place in the course of a year, between France and America. Our President does not appear to be a friend to the people or their liberties, has set aside everything the good Washington did, and expects to bring us into subjection to some other power.

"May the Father of the faithful, the omnipotent Jehovah, bless you with His kind support and protection, may no more clouds arise, and may you meet again on earth those friends who are alive to everything which affects you.

"Your Papa joins in love and parental blessing. We are much gratified that your religious principles are not contaminated by the prevailing vices of the place.

"We have not heard anything from Isaac since October 27th,—he was then at Rio Janeiro, but as many of our young men have shared the fate of Henry, we fear for him. None can die more lamented than your darling brother, whose character was justly published in the *Gazette*; Mr. Schalkwyck's also. We have preserved them for you."

Upon this letter, my mother has written in pencil, "Alas! dear and tenderly beloved Parents, thy Mary sighs vainly for the happiness of embracing

thee. The ocean separates us, and a cruel contrariety of circumstances enchains me to this unfortunate isle."

The following obituaries are those to which my grandmother refers:

From the *Columbian Centinel*, January 13th, 1802:

"Died—at Guadeloupe, in November last, Mr. Henry Wilder of Concord, Mass., aged 20. In the character of this amiable youth were concentrated all the virtues which could dignify human nature, and render man interesting and happy. In him we beheld the bright dawnings of uncommon genius, illumined by those perfect principles of piety, which ever add lustre to greatness. By his death, parental tenderness is called to mourn the loss of a beloved son, whom sweetness of disposition, innocence of life, and filial duty had greatly endeared, while he was daily fulfilling the most sanguine wishes of his parents. As a brother, he loved, and was beloved; for his fraternal affection taught him to be both the friend and the protector. To see, was to admire; to know, was to esteem and love him. Yes, dear Wilder! though the sod of a foreign clime hath covered thee from our view, and thy pure spirit hath fled to its native region, yet, in the heart of each relative and friend, shall be erected a monument of tender remembrance, at which affection and virtue will constantly weep."

From the *Columbian Centinel*, March 31st, 1802:

"Died, on his plantation at Guadeloupe M. Anthony Van Schalkwyck, aged 28. During a residence of several years in this country, he uniformly sustained the unblemished character of the man of honour and virtue. His particular connections and friends, who best knew his worth, will pay a tribute of sincere respect to his memory, and long regret his early exit."

My mother's next letter is dated:

"Marie Galante, June 2nd, 1802.

"My last was written with sensations very different from those which have since agonized my heart. Forced to become a spectatress of scenes the most terrible imagination can form, I have been on the point of bidding an eternal adieu to my beloved friends.

"You are already informed of the arrival of the troops from France, of the ardent joy with which they were received, and of the peaceable surrender of Guadeloupe, or, rather, of Grande-Terre.

"Thus far, all had succeeded better than our most sanguine expectations; when Grande-Terre had submitted to her legitimate governor, we did not think it possible Guadeloupe should dare to resist. Unfortunately, Gen. Richepance did not conduct with sufficient policy. He commenced by arresting all the black troops at the Point; two hundred, commanded by Ignace, a mulatto of a violent and sanguinary

character, made their escape, and passed by land to Basse-Terre, the capital of Guadeloupe, where they united their force with Delgrès, the mulatto who commanded the fort of Basse-Terre, and where they were joined by six or seven thousand men of colour. These men, brave even to desperation, providentially were ignorant of the art of war. Gen. Richepance, who, with two thousand soldiers, passed by sea from the Point to Basse-Terre, landed with very little opposition. It was a critical moment; if the rebels had known how to have seized it, the army of Richepance would have been forced to reembark. Happily, few men were lost in landing, and, after a battle of a few hours, the French army gained the heights, and established their camp; where the General attended the arrival of Gen. Sériziat, who was to join him by land with two thousand men. Unfortunately, the rain fell in torrents, and swelled the rivers in a degree which prevented the junction of the two armies. Meanwhile, Gen. Richepance attacked the fort several times, but was always repulsed with vigour. He had frequent engagements with the black troops, who ravaged the country, and committed daily the most shocking atrocities. Many women and children were assassinated; and others, yet more miserable, were made prisoners, and conducted to the fort. Judge of our situation, when, on the third day of the attack of Basse-Terre, we saw arrive five vessels filled with wounded soldiers, and with the unfortunate females of Guadeloupe. They informed us the num-

ber of the negroes increased daily; scarcely one remained on the plantations, but men and women, after massacring many families in the most shocking manner, repaired to the fort. For five or six days, every person in the family was employed in making lint for the wounded, who were between four and five hundred in number. This was our employment in the day, and, in the evening, we repaired to the shore, where we had the anguish of seeing, on the fifth evening, many habitations in flames. For several days, we had heard distinctly a continual and terrible cannonading; it was the French who bombarded the fort, (the armies of Richepance and Sériziat had formed a junction,) and who finally took it by assault. The number of rebels killed in the attack was very great, but a yet greater number escaped, and fled to the country, where they committed every imaginable horror, burning the habitations, and murdering those who were so unfortunate as to fall in their power, in the most cruel manner.

"We were apprehensive they would pass into Grande-Terre. Every one assured us it was impossible, but, in a short time, our fears were realized. Notwithstanding every precaution, they crossed the river, burnt many habitations, seized a fort near Point à Pitre, and spread horror and dismay among the miserable inhabitants. The town had been left with very few troops; several companies composed of the young inhabitants marched to attack the fort. The women and children threw themselves aboard the

vessels in the harbour, and many came to join us in this little island, where we heard distinctly the sound of the cannon, and where we were scarcely more in safety than in Guadeloupe.

"It is three days since we have received intelligence of the important battle of Bainbridge, which commenced at six o'clock in the morning, and, at eight in the evening, was concluded by taking the fort. Between four and five hundred of the black troops were destroyed, and little more than thirty of the brave young creoles fell, universally deplored. The chief, Ignace, received the mortal wound from the hand of Mr. Blanchet, the brother of our friend Dureste. The other chief, Delgrès, who had remained in Guadeloupe, perceiving himself lost, entered a house in which he had placed a sufficient quantity of powder, and, together with one hundred of his followers, collecting his unfortunate prisoners, put fire to the powder, and all perished.¹

¹ According to Lacour's "Histoire de Guadeloupe," Delgrès did not sacrifice the lives of his prisoners, but those of some French soldiers who had just succeeded in entering the house in question. Three hundred of Delgrès' followers perished with him.

The negroes had taken eighty white women and children from their homes and imprisoned them at the fortified post of Dolé. They discussed, in the presence of their prisoners as the French troops approached, whether they should cut their throats or blow them up. They decided on the latter course, and put a quantity of powder under the building. From the windows of their prison, the unhappy women, in their desperate danger, made signals of distress to the French troops, which incited them to impetuous action. They charged at the point of the bayonet, dispersed the blacks, and saved the women — killing a negro at the moment when he was about to set fire to the powder. — Ed.

"In Grande-Terre all is at present tranquil, but we have every evening the horror of seeing the flames in Guadeloupe. Pélage, under a merciful Providence, has preserved Grande-Terre; which, if you regard its situation, separated only by a little river from Guadeloupe, will appear to you a miracle. A police, the most vigilant and the most severe, is observed; every inhabitant, old and young, is in the service. The town of Point à Pitre has been illuminated several nights, that all which passes may be distinctly seen.

"In all these occurrences, I know my dear Parents and friends have trembled for their Mary. But, thank God! my fortitude has increased in proportion to my afflictions. In the contemplation of general calamity, every private sorrow has been forgotten, and I adore the mercy of Heaven, in taking my beloved husband and brother from a world of suffering and misfortune to its peaceful bosom.

"I request you to remember me respectfully and affectionately to my friends. One of my greatest sources of anxiety at present is the long silence you have observed. For six months I have not received one line to tell me you remember you have a daughter, who has never ceased to love you, and who, in all the dangers to which she has been exposed, has ever rejoiced you were exempt from them."

Upon the margin of the last page of this letter my grandmother has written: "My dear, beloved Mary little knew the laceration of my heart when she wrote

this, and deeply wounded was that heart when we received this. Our letters had been intercepted, we had reason to suppose, by the family, as they did not wish her to return. Every artifice was used to detain her in a second marriage with a French General. Scarce a vessel sailed, but carried letters from her numerous friends."

The following extracts from a letter dated "Marie Galante, June 6th," but without an address, give a few more details:

"My former letters have informed you of the sad destiny which has unceasingly persecuted me, since my arrival in this unfortunate country. Young, a stranger to the world, unacquainted with misfortune, I found myself alone, a wanderer in a foreign country, whose language I knew not, with whose manners I was unacquainted, my heart torn to agony by the loss of friends dearer than life, and in a moment when every one retired to their chambers at night, with the expectation of being assassinated ere the morning.

"I left Guadeloupe with the family of Mr. Schalkwyck, and sought an asylum in this island. But judge if we were in perfect security, when I tell you that we see distinctly the houses in many parts of Guadeloupe from our windows in Marie Galante, so near are the islands. The Gazettes have undoubtedly informed you of the arrival of the troops from France. The troops of colour opposed their entrance, and a

war the most terrible commenced, in which mothers and their children were sacrificed to the ferocious vengeance of the blacks. Every imaginable horror was committed. For six days and nights, the thunder of cannon assailed our alarmed senses; and, when finally the black troops were obliged to evacuate the fort St. Charles, they fled to the country, destroying every white person who was so unfortunate as to fall in their power, and desolating the country by fire and the sword.

"Ah! my dear friend! God grant you may ever remain ignorant of the horrible spectacle a country in flames presents. For fourteen nights we have contemplated it; for fourteen nights, we have seen the red flames mount to heaven, and the richest country in the world reduced to ashes."

To her mother she writes as follows:

"June 7th. I had forgotten to observe, in the enclosed, not one of the habitations of the Schalkwyck family has been destroyed. Two negroes have been arrested in the act of putting fire to the habitation at St. Ann, which providentially was preserved. If I have time, I shall write to my sisters, and Sarah Ripley; if not, they will render me the justice to believe circumstances, and not a deficiency of attachment, prevent me. Indeed, I give my Parents the strongest proof of my affection possible, by writing thus much, at a moment like the present, when my mind is agitated, my heart sad, and my nerves trembling."

Once more, my mother writes:

*"St. François, Guadeloupe,
August 6th, 1802.*

"By the date of my letter, my dear Parents will see I have returned to the unfortunate island, which has so long been the theatre of horrors. Thanks to a miraculous Providence, a large proportion of Grande-Terre has been preserved from the flames which have desolated Guadeloupe, and rendered that rich and beautiful part of the island a mass of ruins.

"On our return to Guadeloupe, we passed a fortnight in the town of St. François, as we were fearful to retire to the plantation, though an apparent tranquillity was universally observed. The town is situated on the sea-shore; it had, previous to the Revolution, many fine buildings, but they have chiefly fallen to decay. There, with sensations of mingled reverence, regret, and horror, I visited the ruins of what was formerly a magnificent Church. The roof, doors, and windows are destroyed; the pavement torn up, the altar and paintings burnt; and the high walls only, which are of white stone firmly cemented, remain, an almost only proof religion had even here ONCE its votaries.

"After passing a fortnight in the town, the tranquillity which existed in the country induced Madame Courcelle to return to the plantation; the evening of our arrival, Mlle. Coutoute and myself were attacked with the fever. For six days and nights, I

remained in an almost constant delirium, and, for nearly three weeks, I was obliged to keep my bed. When, finally, the fever left me, I found myself in a state of debility, which exceeded anything I had before felt; it extended to all my senses. I could not bear the light, the softest voice gave me pain, by the slightest odour I was almost suffocated, my limbs were almost insensible, and I distinguished no difference in the various kinds of sustenance which were presented me. It has pleased my Almighty Father again to restore me the inestimable blessing of health. For what purpose I am preserved, He, to whom futurity is ever present, only knows. This is the third combat between life and death. A circumstance which, I am sensible, increased my illness, was the agitation of my spirits the first day of my fever. My passage was already engaged, my affairs nearly terminated, to my very great satisfaction; and, on the point of returning to my beloved Parents, I found myself extended on the bed of sickness. The disappointment, by agitating my mind, probably increased my delirium, and prolonged my illness. The vessel in which I expected to return, sailed a fortnight since; but my passage, together with that of a female servant, is already engaged in another vessel, and, should no circumstance occur to prevent, I expect to sail the commencement of September, in the brig *Eda*, commanded by Captain Holland, and bound to Newbury Port or Salem. The Captain is an elderly man, of a very respectable character, and who is well

known and beloved in Newbury Port, where his family resides; an ancient and experienced navigator, which, I know, will be a circumstance that will add to the satisfaction of my Parents.

"I have not received one line from New England since I lost my beloved husband. Alas! too often has my bleeding heart felt the need of a consolatory letter from my friends. I have ever *endeavoured* to support my misfortunes with fortitude and resignation, but often the remembrance of the dear, the too tenderly beloved, friends I have lost, brings to my heart a poignancy of grief, which bears down every barrier, and makes me regret I had not shared their fate. My friends are attentive and affectionate; they force me into [word missing] and gay societies, they tell me to *shun reflection* and to *fly from thought*. I have been formed on different principles; but I must render justice to my amiable friends by acknowledging their care to provide me with every thing which could draw my mind from a recollection of past events, has perhaps been the means of preserving my life. It will cost me the deepest regret to bid adieu to my friends in this isle, but it is necessary to sacrifice the smaller to the greater good; and I think there is no earthly happiness reserved for me so great as the pleasure of embracing my dear Parents."

Upon this last page, and beside the lines in which my mother deploras her need of consoling letters from home, my grandmother has written the follow-

ing: "Letters, my beloved mother, from your parents and sisters were put on board a vessel for Point à Pitre a month since. They were intercepted."

My mother sailed for home about the middle of September.

Among the earliest recollections of my childhood is the packet of my mother's letters from the West Indies, which I have copied. Even at that distant period, they were worn from much reading. Undoubtedly, we have all that were received. It is evident that some were written which never reached their destination.

Mrs. Rapallo, in writing to me of this period in my mother's life, gives some incidents not recorded in her letters. She says: "While she was lying ill in bed with the fever, her husband's brother came into the room, and, hastily wrapping a sheet around her, carried her into the street, almost without time to speak. A shock of an earthquake was coming, and they went into the street to avoid being buried in the ruins of the house, if it should fall. I have no record of time,—only facts as related to me present themselves to my memory. While she was still in the West Indies, waiting for an opportunity to return to America, sitting with the ladies in the parlour, they heard a tumult in the street. Then the brother-in-law came in, took his sword, and went out. It was the rising of the negroes, soon after that of St. Domingo. The ladies were put into boats, and rowed to a place of safety. Your mother was anxious

to get to America, but there was no vessel on that side of the island. They heard of one going from the other side. Over a rough hilly country, she was carried in a sedan-chair, while her brother-in-law rode on horseback at her side, sword in hand, as they passed the camp-fires of the negroes."

[In the memoirs of "Madame Desbordes-Valmore, by Sainte-Beuve, translated by Miss Preston," a passage occurs of interest in this connection, as showing from another source the condition of Guadeloupe not long before this time: "Somewhere about 1799, little Marcelline (then fourteen years old) accompanied her mother to Guadeloupe, where they counted on finding a relative who had there amassed a fortune. They arrived, however, to find the country in a blaze of revolt,—the yellow fever raging, and their relative dead. And there the mother of Mlle. Desbordes died herself of the epidemic."

The following paragraph from a recent newspaper shows the severity of the fever early in the century: "A Hall of Honor has been established in Val de Grâce Hospital in Paris, where the names of French medical men who have died in the performance of their duty, are inscribed in marble. A list of 148 doctors and 45 apothecaries has just been placed on its walls, all of whom perished in the yellow fever epidemic in San Domingo and Guadeloupe in 1801-1808."

From a private letter from Guadeloupe to the

Gazette of February 1st, 1802, dated December 4th, 1801: "The fever has been very mortal among the Americans, some vessels have lost half their crews, and others nearly all."

Both General Sériziat and General Richepance died of the fever, in Guadeloupe, in 1802, before October.

The following passage from the "Reminiscences of Fifty Years," by Mark Boyd, also shows what a scourge the yellow fever was in those days: "When I first came to London, I met at the house of a friend, at dinner, a countryman of my own who had spent thirty years or more in the West Indies. Our host described him as one of the *forty-twa*. It appeared that about the beginning of the century forty-two young Scotchmen embarked at Greenock for the West Indies. The ship discharged her cargo and loaded with sugar, which detained her about six weeks, and returned to Greenock, bringing back the trunks, or *kists*, of twenty-seven of the young men, who had, within that short time, fallen victims to yellow fever. Mentioning this circumstance to the late General Frederick Maitland, of Berkeley Square, who had served many years in the West Indies, he told me that one Saturday he and seven brother officers sat down to mess, and the following Saturday he was the only survivor of the party."]

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