Dear Father,

As there is a ship coming in sight, I have begun a letter although there is little chance of our getting letters on board; however, I will send it if possible, and if I do not get it on board just now, I will put the latitude when I close it up. You will be a little surprised to see that we have been 7 weeks out or not yet across the line; however, we have had a very pleasant passage. This length except a few storms which we encountered, in which we lived as well as all to the sea, I have never written a word since we left. I am studying trigonometry and other things, having no opportunity for writing; in the interim, I am just as comfortable here as I was ever in my life, and I believe there never was a more respectable cargo of teenage passengers left the shores of Scotia than is at present in the Helen Nicoll, my grandfather.
is a nephew of Angus Cameron in Newburgh. The ship is away past us without coming within hail so I will give you a sort of history of my proceedings since I left home. At our first outset I thought we were to be miserable from the grumbling of every one combined with seasickness and other unpleasant causes but having made up my mind to take always the bright side of things I soon overcame these temporary feelings and now while we are beating about with a strong wind right in our teeth within 1/4 of the line I repeat that I am as happy as ever I was in my life. This is likely to prove a very tedious voyage however as we have now been about two months out and are not yet across the line, some of our stronger lads having proposed a debating society, we are all enrolled in it and some of the intermediate having joined us as we are a very respectable club now, for one of intermediate class is a first rate speaker having often spoken at meetings in Dundee and I am leader of the opposition. I have no doubt by the time that we get to Port Phillip I shall be able for any of them. I go to bed not earlier than ten o'clock and sometimes as late as twelve, sitting in the forecastle talking of home with the sailors who are many of them better educated than I had any idea if we have permission to walk upon the Poop but only in a negative sense so we can scarcely trouble them much. I am almost always the first man that is up in the morning as I consider the morning air good for our health. The society which I was so much afraid of is very good as far as the male sex goes but
the other, I cannot say so much for good. I therefore keep them at their usual
work, as it is amongst a farmer's son from Leithings his father's farm keeps six
pairs of horses. Tell Cecilia that I am a most excellent baker of flour
and a good maker of bread. If you have spare time, I would like to see you
more often. It is a pity we do not have more water. I have two shirts
and a good deal of water. I had my shirt dry to put on again.

I then began next morning to wash my shirts
and stockings and cap. I even washed my trousers. I came in for a piece of the punishment
so you may see that I am already preparing for the hardships of Australia.

I was told that some of the women told me that they would like me to be
here. I thought it best to begin as I had a chance of continuing. If any person asks you
about their outfit to Australia you tell them whether they come as steerage or
as intermediate passengers. I think there should either be a written agreement or
else a good supply of cooking utensils as the food of there is a great meal
nerve to us, after this you must not expect a letter for eight months or so
as it will likely be three months at least before we land yet I

write you from Leith and I hope you are away off by this
time. So you will be getting the stocks matched and the potatoes up
You will be sitting as close to the fire as possible while here we are scarce
able to move from the effects of the sun and are always glad to get under
the shade although this is the case you must not suppose that it is
very disagreeable for except in calm days it is very pleasant indeed.

I now wonder why I thought so much of a voyage before for I now
consider it as nothing so true is it that habit reconciles to anything
for the bad water it is nothing when it comes to be tried. I can do
with as little of it any person in the ship in spite of our own
Greetings, dear father. We are not yet at the line, but we have got a fine breeze which keeps us perfectly cool although it is not as strong as we would like. There is a rebel beating up against us, although it may be a slow one. I have been reading an excellent book, "The Mutiny on the Bounty". I now consider myself fully fitted for the purpose.

This morning I rose early and washed my dirty shorts. Now I have everything clean again. The weather is most beautiful. I saw two dolphins the other day, as for flying fish, we have seen thousands of them. If you come next summer, remember you must not come in the steerage at any rates. Peaceably to the intermediate without a servant. Tell my aunt there are some ladies out in the cabin as old as she is, at any rate, she need not be afraid to come for they seem to enjoy themselves very much. I'll tell Jamie and old George that.

I tried a number of the ships crew and passengers at the sugar tree to cheer one that advanced to the number of about half a score. This shows that I am not losing my strength on the salt beef. Our third mate is son of Dr. Hall of Lechairs. The cabin passengers keep their silver very exclusive, for scarcely one of them has ever exchanged cards with them, but we get many good laughs at them for they sometimes get drunk which we have no opportunity of doing although we had the inclination which some of my companions seem to have, although very few tell George that the chap he recommended.
a bedfellow is one of the worst I could have had in the ship, so that he may have a criterion to judge by. Dear Father we are again writing & preparing our letters from the Cape of Good Hope which we expect to reach in five or six days at furthest. We have never taken in with an refill home and bound with which we might send our letters and this one off being in the captain's bag is again broken up and a new page anointed. My Aunt & Cecilie Fabella will very likely tormenting themselves with imaginary dangers but I can assure them that I consider myself as safe here as at home and sleep as soundly too although the waves be running pretty high. We have got no sort of communication with the two married women here for they are ordered by us to keep their own of the place & of course they do the same by us. The two howeas, one of them Mrs. Hawkins from Lockett well educated person who can produce an Album with all the other Leis of gentle life. I am now writing you while all the rest are in bed it is the 13th Dec and we are now about 3 deg. 6 Long & 34 1/2 Lat. and running with a fine breeze so we will likely lie at the Cape soon where we intend to stay for three days to take in water. Remember me to any friend of yours & all his relations also to Mrs. Shaw & his family. I hope my aunt Margaret are safely transported to their new bed. I hope my aunt Margaret are safely transported to their new bed. I hope my aunt Margaret are safely transported to their new bed. 18 Dec. Near in Table Bay. Providence to whose care I am committed.
RYDE
IN A LETTER

Mr. R. B. Butchart
Broombrae
by Auchtermuchty,
Fife, Scotland

1842

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