

**THE  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
HISTORICAL MAGAZINE**

**OCTOBER 1967**

**VOLUME 68**

**NUMBER 4**



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**THE SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
CHARLESTON, S. C.**

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THE ABIEL ABBOT JOURNALS  
A YANKEE PREACHER IN CHARLESTON SOCIETY, 1818-1827

EDITED BY JOHN HAMMOND MOORE

(Continued from July)

In the summer of 1827, after nearly a decade of great activity—writing, preaching, lecturing, and laboring for the Unitarian faith—Abiel Abbot's cough returned. And, as his general condition worsened, he decided once more to seek out Carolina's warm sun. He sailed from Boston on November 1 aboard the *Brookline*. The first two pages of this 1827 journal are missing, and it actually covers only about two weeks, November 2 to 14. However, several letters which Abbot wrote to his wife (1827-1828) are in the Archives of the South Carolina Historical Society; and, reproduced here along with this fragmentary journal, they tell us much about Abbot's second sojourn in Charleston.

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. . . In the evening we dropped anchor 5 m. from the bar of Charleston with the *Climatis* near us & other vessels in sight.<sup>1</sup> At 3 o'clock on the morning of the 7th the anchor was weighed, & we sailed with a smart breeze & played off & on till the tide should favor our crossing the bar. It is a difficult pass, not much exceeding the length of our ship. During this agreeable waste of time, the sun rose out of the ocean. I had several times seen this interesting spectacle, but never with such circumstances of sublimity & beauty as this morning. A narrow, level cloud of many degrees extent stretched itself out as a canopy over the god of day as he sent upward the first fair radiance proclaiming his coming. The edges of the cloud were well defined & of a golden hue, & the whole crimsoned with a ruddy & increasing blush. Below a sea green cloud seemed settled on the horizon, which we expected would obscure the rising. But, as the moment drew near, irregular streaks of light, like lightning, played across the spot, & immediately a limb of the orb of day shot its beam to our eyes, clear of vapor. It thrilled the bosom, like the first rays of the sun after a total eclipse, & interjections of surprise & delight were all that was heard till the full orb'd glory was above the horizon.

At half past 7 we crossed the bar & were soon in the harbor.<sup>2</sup> Mr.

<sup>1</sup> The *Climatis* left Boston the day before the *Brookline* sailed for Charleston.

<sup>2</sup> The Charleston *Courier*, November 8, 1827, noted the arrival of the *Brookline* on the 7th, commanded by Captain Dickinson. The passengers included "Mr. Cleveland and lady, Mr. Greene and lady, Mr. Redding and lady, Rev. Mr. Abbot, Messrs. B. K. Hough, Jr., B. Sylvester, and one in steerage."

for the direction of his affairs, although he also employed other agents. The letters of Henry Laurens abound in directions for his correspondents to "take Mr. Manigaults Advice."<sup>57</sup>

Certainly Laurens had great respect for Manigault, both as a merchant and as a person. In his account of the admiralty trials he referred to him as "Mr. *Manigault*, a Gentlemen of most exalted Merit, whose Veracity was never doubted, and whose good Intentions were never *suspected* by any Man but a *Judge of the Admiralty*. . . ." <sup>58</sup> Judge Leigh penned a stinging answer to the entire pamphlet. In alluding to this remark, Leigh struck very close to the truth of the matter when he spoke of Laurens' "friend Mr. Manigault (to whose goodness he [Laurens] daily offers up the morning sacrifice of hat and hand). . . ." <sup>59</sup> Laurens could hardly have found a better model for his own conduct. How many merchants could say, as could Gabriel Manigault, that they had handled their affairs so scrupulously that they had never been sued in their life?<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Examples may be found in Henry Laurens to James Laurens, February 6 and 11, 1772, and Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais, February 28, 1772, Letter Book 1771-1772, pp. 182-183, 185, 196, Laurens Papers, SCHS.

<sup>58</sup> Laurens, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>59</sup> Egerton Leigh, *The Man Unmasked: Or, The World Undeceived in the Author of a Late Pamphlet*, . . . , Charles Town, 1769, p. 25.

<sup>60</sup> Gabriel Manigault II to Joseph Manigault, September 13, 1808, "Early Manigault Records," *Transactions of the Huguenot Society of South Carolina*, LIX (1954), p. 40. The records of the Court of Common Pleas, S. C. Archives, confirm this statement.

Perkins, to me a stranger, but who recognized me from my former visit, gave me a cordial welcome on the deck, accompanied us to the shore, & introduced me to his family, engaged me to dine, & kindly proferred to call on Mrs. S. to see if I could find accommodations in her family. To my great joy, she received me as a brother, & her children as a father, & I am delightfully domesticated with this family in a S. E. chamber, in a central & healthy street, retired, yet near many of the select friends who still remember & kindly greet the invalid of 1818.<sup>3</sup>

Nov. 8th. My very dear friend Mr. J. Legaré called at 11 o'clock. Nothing could exceed the cordiality of his welcome & embrace. His thin greyish hair had given place to a dark haired wig, & I called him Doct. Manning. But instantly recognized his smile & benign look. "Come," said he, "I have at length found you. My son & grandson have scoured the city to discover your retreat, we having seen your name in the papers. I come to carry you to dine with us." I was engaged at Mr. Gilman's, but went in his carriage & past a happy morning with them & was set down by my old friend Walley at Mr. G.'s. Walley & Cyrus could not fully express their joy to see me; W. mingling many brief ejaculations with thanks to God who had preserved us to see each other again.<sup>4</sup>

At Mr. G.'s I was introduced to the brother of my deceased friend, Rev. Mr. Foster. He is like him in countenance, person, & liberal sentiment, tho a Methodist. He is a local preacher & schoolmaster, & I shall hope to glean knowledge of his denomination by cultivating his acquaintance. He invites me to his house near Boundary St.<sup>5</sup>

After dinner my old friend, Col. Roper, Dea. Patterson, & Mr. Yates, I suspect by invitation, called in to take a glass of wine, & by all of them I was received with great testimony of affection; & old remarks, made 9 years ago, repeated to show how well they remembered me. In the evening Mr. Motte spent an hour with me, displaying the same well-informed mind & eagerness to assist my investigation of every interesting & important object in the city.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> This may have been Daniel Perkins, a prominent Unitarian, who conducted Abbot to the Smerdon home.

<sup>4</sup> Abbot noted that "all the pet servants in the families where I formerly past any time, male & female, hurry into the parlor & stretch out their black hands to me with evident emotion."

<sup>5</sup> This was Jonathan Forester.

<sup>6</sup> These gentlemen were obviously Col. Thomas Roper and Abraham Motte. Whether Abbot was now designating Hugh or Samuel Patterson as "Deacon" is not known. Mr. Yates was probably Jeremiah A. Yates (1773-1846), merchant and prominent Unitarian.

Nov. 9th. Have past a restless night, sleeping almost none. The moon shone brightly & was bayed, it would seem, by all the dogs from South-Bay to the Boundary. The shrill neigh of the cur & the thorough bass of the mastiff with all the degrees between them were in full chorus for hours. The chained mastiff under our own piazza every now & then, when the noise was lulling & we were beginning to doze, would renew the cry by a sudden, quick, & eager bark as if the house were assailed. The noise alarmed the roosters of the city, & at midnight they crowed as at day break. While I lay wide awake & somewhat nervous, sweeter sounds reached my ear. It was a distant concert of horns & bugles & deep-toned instruments, sweeping three octaves together. It was very delightful, tho the lighter instruments were too distant to be constantly heard. The musick was well chosen for the swell of the horns, in general, slow & majestic. I rose this morning languid & feeble.

At 9 o'clock my excellent friend sent Walley with a saddle-horse for my recreation. A cradle is scarcely more gentle & undulating than his motions. He walks as if he was ambling slowly; & every species of gate— & it is sufficiently various in Carolina—he performs with grace. I ranged about the city with a stealthy pace, his feet bare & the pavement sand, now in Broad St., now on the Boundary.

On my return to my lodgings, I found Mr. Thomas Legaré with an invitation to tea & mentioning that they were packing their things to remove to the plantation.<sup>7</sup> At 4 P. M. went in his carriage & at 8 returned, drawing up the glass to avoid evening air. I was kindly received by this family, but without the transport I have sometimes witnessed. Mr. White was there & very pleasant, & his wife & child; also Mrs. Holmes & three children, & in the evening Mr. Legaré, the lawyer.<sup>8</sup> The latter gentleman is rapid in conversation & as ardent & enthusiastic as his father on every subject he touches. He spake of Thos. Grimké Esq. in superlative terms, & said that in Boston he would be second only to Webster.

At 12 o'clk. Col. Roper carried me in his gig to hear the Catholic Bp. England's address before the Anti-Duelling Association, their first address.<sup>9</sup> It was in St. Finbar's church in the Vauxhall gardens, a new but

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Legaré, a John's Island planter, died in 1842.

<sup>8</sup> "Legaré, the lawyer" was John Berwick Legaré (1794-1850). He was a son of Thomas and Ann Legaré and a nephew of James Legaré.

<sup>9</sup> John England (1786-1842), born in Ireland and involved in rebel activity as a youth, was named bishop of the Carolinas and Georgia in 1820. A prolific writer and a hard worker, he was an especially strong advocate of education. He named his rustic church for St. Finnbar's Cathedral, Cork, where he was consecrated bishop on September 21, 1820.

somewhat shabby church for a Romish cathedral.<sup>10</sup> Some difficulty has arisen between the Bp. & vestry of the chapel about proprietorship & funds. The Bp. says *my church, my funds*. The vestry says *our church—our funds*, offering him a part of the latter, if he be quiet & modest, & threatening to hold the whole by the laws of the land if he pushes the matter with too haughty a tone. The Bp. has builded this church, I believe with his own funds. It is low & rough, not boarded, but shingled, not ceiled, but open to the ridge-pole; a simple chancel, a small crucifix, & the whole with an air of poverty. The Bp. was expected in robes pontifical. But, because it was not an ecclesiastical occasion or because he had recently lost a darling sister [Joanna M. England], he appeared in a simple coat, tho some of his clergy were in cassocks. The address indicated talents of a high order. He was 90 minutes, & yet the attentions did not for a moment flagg. He began with a definition of duelling; traced it up into Scandinavian history; spake of two kinds, judicial combat under public authority & combat without authority for the point of honor. The latter he discussed somewhat at large, as that with which the association was concerned, stating *seven* reasons in which it was supposed to originate & by which, if by anything, it must be justified. If I understood him, he said he had been advised not to discuss the subject on religious grounds or on the grounds of its being inconsistent with the gospel. Why?—unless there be some who would renounce that authority rather than the practice.

The Bp. is graceful & forceful in his action generally & has a great deal, perhaps an abundancy of it. I should say that he forgets he is a Bp.; for in a prelate we look for dignity as the first & most essential quality. At times he is theatric & throws himself from side to side of the pulpit & darts his hands & head with pugilistic violence & then his utterance is rapid & forceful & the blood rushes into his face as if it would gush & his passions seem in an uncontrollable tempest. This was the case in an apostrophe to the duelist, pointing him to his victim on the ground & thence whirling him to the distracted widow, the agonized orphans, & petrified father. In this brief sketch there is but feeble imitation of the performance. The faults of his elocution are that it is sometimes so hurried, so indistinct, or so Irish that he is not understood. *Ignominy*, he uniformly pronounced *ignominy*. But the faults could not obscure the excellencies of the performance. I sincerely hope it will appear in print & give aid to the cause of humanity, where she suffers in the highest degree in *this* blood stained state. The society pretends to exert no authority but

<sup>10</sup> The Vauxhall Gardens were located at the corner of Broad and Friend Streets.

by prudent & friendly interference & persuasion to settle difficulties short of the breach of the laws of God & man.

It is with regret that I see many distinguished citizens standing aloof from the association, while yet they cordially disapprove of duelling. Whether it is because they do not like the origin of the society, or the leading members of it, or think that it may in some way aggravate the evil, I know not. I have heard it said that several rencontres have been prevented thro their influence.

Nov. 10. At 9 o'clk. my saddle horse again was at the door, & I hastened to see my suffering friend Mr. L. who yesterday submitted to a very painful operation. The nondescript & almost boney substance grew on his forehead & extended to the bone. There is still a kindred scabby sore on his cheek, & both of them I fear had a cancerous tendency, if not cancers already. He will probably submit to a second operation if this should heal.<sup>11</sup>

On my return called on my fellow passengers at Mrs. Courtney's & on Mrs. Hamilton & family.<sup>12</sup> At 4 o'clock I attended the funeral of a distinguished young man of the Laurens stock, who died on his passage from Europe & was preserved at his own request in spirits to be returned to his family for sepulture in St. Phillips.<sup>13</sup> He was buried under arms by a troop [Charleston Hussars] of which he was Lieut. The scene was somewhat imposing; the female mourners had a loose hood with a cape, the men with long bands to their hats, & some with black sashes, & some with white. Prayers were read in the church by candlelight, pre-

<sup>11</sup> Legaré lived on New Street. Abbot told his wife that Walley, Legaré's servant, was much distressed when he learned of the operation—hurt, apparently, that he had not been consulted. "Massa," he said, "they tell me the doctors butcher you like a pig. O Sare, I wonder at your time in life you let them. Better, Massa, go on as you were for your little time." Legaré, both flattered and annoyed by Walley's concern, told him to go on about his business. Despite the operation, Legaré died in the summer of 1828 leaving this interesting comment concerning his slaves: "And it is my will and most earnest injunction that as far as possible in the division of my residuary estate, no husband be Separated from his wife or children not given up for their parents and that whichsoever of my children may get (house) Walley's Wife Doll and her family do take him too and exact from him no labor whatever, making him comfortable the rest of his days for his faithful service to me."

<sup>12</sup> Mrs. Humphrey Courtney, widow of a grocer who died in 1824, kept a popular boarding house at 56 Broad Street. This was Mrs. James Hamilton, wife of a young newspaperman whom Abbot mentions shortly. In 1831 Hamilton helped to establish the *States Rights & Free Trade Post*.

<sup>13</sup> This was John B. Laurens.



ceded by a dirge on the organ; & as the corpse was committed to the grave, sprigs of evergreens were thrown into the grave.

Nov. 11. The Sabbath. The young ladies of the family are teachers in the Sunday school of St. Paul's & started for their task at 20 m. before 9 o'clock. They led with them two little beings who are among the most fortunate of the unfortunate. The one is a protégé of Mrs. Smerdon, abandoned by an unnatural father & sustained by the generous widow, who has herself to struggle with difficulties, left a widow without property & with three little children. She intends bringing her up as a daughter; she is about 4 yrs. & walked to church, as beautiful a child as will this day attract attention in the city. The other child is a foundling of about 6 yrs. & now the cherished child of Mr. Hamilton, the opulent editor of the *Courier*. A few years since, he went to Europe to establish correspondencies for his paper. A few days before he sailed, Mrs. H. was lamenting the loneliness she should feel in his absence & wished she had an infant to engage her cares & that somebody would give her one. "My dear," said he, "you have only to open your window & speak & a dozen will be thrown into your lap." Three evenings afterwards, a man knocked at the door & enquired for Mrs. H. On her appearing, he delivered into her hands a small bundle & said a lady requested him to present it to her & disappeared. It was a beautiful infant, which they have cherished with the most anxious care & fondest affection.

The teachers of the Sunday School are all furnished with manuscripts, containing the names of their classes & distinct columns marked thus—<sup>14</sup>

At ½ past ten I attended service at the Archdale church. The house was pretty well filled. We had an interesting discourse from Mr. Gilman.<sup>15</sup> From the words in Mark 10:45: "For even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister & to give his life a ransom for many."

The sermon was 30 minutes & written with ability & a careful & somewhat ambitious style & something of the shibboleth of the church, especially the last point, his giving his life a ransom for many. It was delivered with fine articulation & on a key somewhat high; his fault is monotony. It

<sup>14</sup> Abbot left a space in his diary to show how the manuscript was marked, but failed to make any entry.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel Gilman (1791-1858), clergyman and author, was a native of Massachusetts who succeeded Anthony Forester as Unitarian minister at the Archdale Meeting House on December 1, 1819. He became a prominent citizen of Charleston, serving at this post until his death. His wife, Caroline Howard (1794-1888) was well-known in literary circles as a writer and magazine editor. Abbot himself had been urged to preach, but he noted in a letter to his wife a firm resolve to conserve his strength as much as possible.

would be a very great improvement if he would vary his cadencies & speak sometimes low & sometimes high, sometimes with animation, emphasis, rapidity, & again in a softer tone & with a little negligence, as the strain of thought should require. Bp. E. & Mr. G. are in opposite extremes; the middle ground between them would be the thing.

In the afternoon attended church in St. Phillip's—Dr. Gadsden read prayers devotionally; & Mr. Francis Rutledge preached on "Take heed how ye hear." He was quite serious, yet common place. His talents not above mediocrity, but useful.<sup>16</sup> This church is ancient & venerable, adorned with large pillars on three sides & having a noble entrance. The finest specimens of sculpture adorn many of the interior pillars of this church, commemorating eminent persons, chiefly those patriots who fell in defence of their country.

Nov. 12. On horse back past to Cannonsborough & called on Mr. [Zadock] Gilman & thence to my good friend Mr. J. L. & saw his forehead dressed; it seems in a fine way. At 12, by invitation, attended at the medical college & listened to a well written lecture from the Dean of the faculty [Henry R. Frost] introductory to the course of lectures, now to commence, & have received an invitation to attend whenever it is convenient. If my health is sufficient, it will be an important opportunity to be improved.

The lecture this day delivered on the education preparatory to the study of medicine & on professional study presented a very important variety of matter. I shall not attempt to follow him in his remarks on the study of Latin & Greek which he thought very necessary, & of the French, & of geography, history, natural philosophy, mathematics, metaphysics; on physical education, so necessary to the healthful & successful exercise of the mind lest "the sword should be too sharp for the scabbard;" on intellectual & moral education; on all which topics he had excellent tho'ts & felicitously expressed.—Under the second branch, on professional study, he described the course proper to be pursued, but I have not time to detail it. He insisted much on the necessity of the student's own application & that *what he means to be* he must chiefly make himself, &c., &c., &c.

Mr. Burden called & invited a visit in the evening. Col. Garden was introduced to me & remembered my letter from Bp. Bowen 9 yrs. ago & said he should call on me.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Francis Huger Rutledge (1799-1866), a Charleston native and a Yale graduate, became the first Episcopal bishop of Florida in 1851.

<sup>17</sup> Kinsey Burden, Sr., who died in 1859, was a pioneer in the growth of short and long staple cotton and may have raised South Carolina's first successful crop

Nov. 13. We had a gust of wind in the night which alarmed the prudent head of the family who rose & bolted the shutters. A little rain fell.

At 9 my ever attentive & kind friend sent his servant with the saddle horse, & I started for exercise & calls. My first call was on Dea. Patterson; & then on Mr. Burden, whom I found at home with Mrs. B. & drs. They seemed precisely as formerly & received me with the greatest affection & kindness. Much interesting conversation past; some of it on planting & gardening. His pear trees had been somewhat neglected, on account of the more profitable attention paid to cotton. By great attention to cotton seed he had improved the staple of his plantation, so that it secured an advanced price. He had, however, liberally distributed his seed to others. The merchants laid him under the obligation of silence as to the price he had received, but he did not hesitate to say that in some instances he had refused a dollar per lb.<sup>18</sup>

He had been discouraged about his fruit garden on the island because it is generally pillaged by the negros. His pear trees bear & the fruit comes to perfection he thinks; tho insects he believes to be more destructive than at the Northward. The peach tree suffers here as well as with us, he thinks, by a little red insect too small to be seen but by glasses. With a lie of ashes he irrigated one fine tree, which perfectly destroyed them. He did it by a waterpot on the upper side of the leaves & by splashing up the water with his hand against the underside. The tree has never been since troubled.—At 12 I was introduced by Dr. Legaré to the Faculty at their room in the Medical College & was invited to attend their course of lectures.<sup>19</sup> Dr. Dickson lectured this day & with great genius & ability.<sup>20</sup> He is reputed to be, in the English sense, the *cleverest* of the professors. His elocution is spirited; if he have a fault, it is rapidity.—Maj. Garden again shook me cordially by the hand & lamented that he failed today to find my boarding house & invited me to a meeting tomorrow evening of the Philosophical Soc'y before which

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of Sea Island cotton in 1788. Alexander Garden (1757-1829), Revolutionary soldier, author, and graduate of Glasgow, is best known for his *Anecdotes* of the Revolutionary era published in 1822 and 1828.

<sup>18</sup> According to Guion C. Johnson's *A Social History of the Sea Islands*, Chapel Hill, 1930, Burden guarded his research jealously, but Abbot obviously disagrees. The South Carolina Historical Society has an intricate map of John's Island (circa 1826) which Burden drew showing plantations, owners, population, and other details.

<sup>19</sup> This was probably Daniel Legaré who died in 1854.

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Henry Dickson was professor of medicine.

he was to read an essay.— I was introduced to Mr. Ford, for whom I have a letter.<sup>21</sup>

Nov. 14. Laid my head on a pillow of hops & enjoyed sounder & longer sleep.<sup>22</sup> Lay awake, however, a few hours & rose before the sun, finding the mercury depressed to 56.

At half past 9 set out for St. Finbar's to witness the catholic solemnity of high mass & prayers for the dead occasioned by the death of the Bp.'s sister. I cannot say that I was edified. I followed them in a part of the service; but it is so full of ceremony & of appeal to the senses & so little to the understanding & heart & so much of it rebuked by the 2d commandment, that I wearied & was disgusted. There were twelve persons in high dress, the Bp. & 10 priests & a lad. The Bp. was distinguished by a purple cap of velvet & a cape of the same color of silk, lined or trimmed with scarlet, with a muslin frock falling a little below the knee, & I believe a black cassock under it. The priests had cassocks of black & frocks of muslin, wro't like ladies' vandykes & borders, & three of them a cloth mantle with silver lace, one in the form of a cross reaching from the shoulders almost to the ground, the other with borders of silver lace & two intermediate stripes running up & down, with pieces branching from the arm exhibiting a cross. They have a sash, depending from the neck, one of them suspended from the left shoulder & falling to the right side, but the rest resting on the neck behind & falling before—each sash marked with a cross.

In the broad aisle near the altar was the form of a coffin shrouded with black & six tapers, three on each side. Six tapers were burning on the altar. Ten priests sat & stood & kneeled in different parts of the service around the coffin. They read prayers in unison & monotony, very fast; chaunted often, sometimes with the organ; their singing was nasal & with sharpness. Five priests advanced to the altar for the ceremonies there; incense was burned & thrown up in clouds. The ark was ceremoniously opened; & I am too ignorant of terms to say what it was which was displayed. They appeared to pour something from a large phial; & finally the principal priest seemed to drink from a colored glass.

Finally, the Bp. with the mitre on his head approached the coffin, sung a short chaunt & preceded by three priests with a cricifix & tapers on staves sprinkled holy water & burned incense over the coffin, walking round it. Whereupon they all retired.

<sup>21</sup> Timothy Ford (1762-1830), Revolutionary soldier, lawyer, and legislator, served as secretary of the trustees of the College of Charleston, 1802-1813.

<sup>22</sup> A pillow of hops was supposed to induce sleep.

It is not possible for me to say how much those who best understood the ceremony—reading & chaunting—are edified or affected by it. To me it appears superstition & will worship, & tending to render persons formal, not devout, to lead them to trust in unimportant things & to neglect things essential.

At 12 repaired to the theater in the college & listened to Dr. Ramsay lecturing on the history, theory, & practice of surgery.<sup>23</sup> I was interested by his facts; his manner of reading is not very striking, seemed not familiar enough with his notes.

P. M. Took tea with Mr. Motte & repaired with him & daughter to the city Hall, by special invitation of Maj. Garden, to attend a meeting of the Literary & Philosophical Soc'y. Mr. Stephen Elliot, well known to the philosophical world on both sides of the Atlantic, is their President. Once in two months they hold a meeting in this ample Hall & read essays to invited &, I believe, uninvited guests. There was a brilliant attendance of ladies & still a greater number of gentlemen. Mr. Ben. Elliot of the city council commended the exercises by a very able & interesting essay on *history*, "philosophy teaching by example."<sup>24</sup> It was comprehensive & finely pointed, disclosing by his allusions a familiar acquaintance with British & continental history, parts of which he made bear on the U. States with singular felicity, now for its encouragement & now for its warning. I judge his secret object all along was to throw himself in the way of "Brutus," who is an anti-administration writer whose pieces have appeared in the *Mercury* & have been collected, I believe, into a volume & are one means of the political violence in this state.<sup>25</sup> Any thing a few violent partizans of the day might say, he had no fears but the union of these states would be preserved inviolable; whatever discordant feelings, interests, habits, & nationalities were connected in the band of the federal compact, so great was the prosperity which had resulted from their union, so well was it adapted to preserve & extend the common welfare, so magnificent was the prospect before the federal union, & so appalling the scene that would be unavoidable in the case of division, that the nation would & must remain united. He drew proofs from the British history, from that of France, & even of Spain & Italy,

<sup>23</sup> James Ramsay, son of David Ramsay, received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1818 where he wrote his thesis on tetanus. While professor of surgery at the Medical College he was accused of improper conduct and replaced by Dr. John Wagner.

<sup>24</sup> Elliot was an attorney with offices at 22 Michael's Alley.

<sup>25</sup> "Brutus" was Robert J. Turnbull (1775-1833), a wealthy retired lawyer of Charleston.

which countries were combined into powerful states out of discordant & hostile materials by some strong sentiment of common interest. So it would be with us. In a most glowing manner he showed the future from the past & present state of the country. And from the population of England, France, the Netherlands, to the square miles, he found at some distant day that 300,000,000—a Chinese pop'n—would be found in the territory of the U. States. The President next read, sitting, a very interesting paper on the formation of *coral rocks*. I am too little informed on the subject to do any thing like justice to this essay & shall not attempt it. But no one could listen to the story of the vast operation of animalculae, too minute almost to be perceived, or of zoophytes, half animal & half vegetable, rearing their palaces from the bottom to the surface of the ocean, forming & extending islands & threatening to obstruct the course of the navigator, without incredulous wonder & delight.

Maj. Garden closed the exhibition by reading a review or eulogy on the French poet, Dumotier, I believe it is, & giving a versification of many specimens of the work. There was considerable talent exhibited; but for a man on the shady side of 70, his poet was too lovesick & voluptuous to deserve his grave attention & commendation; it seemed winter wooing May.<sup>26</sup>

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Abbot's diary ends at this point; however, excerpts from letters to his wife contain additional comments concerning life in South Carolina, 1827-1828.

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Charleston, Feb'y 2, 1828.

You will be tired of reading as I am weary & almost impatient of writing *Charleston-Charleston*, so long after the fixed purpose & endeavor to leave it. I seem spell-bound. However, the capt. of the *Stranger* thinks, wind favoring, we shall sail on Tuesday next.<sup>27</sup> His cargo is partly on board & on the wharf; rice has fallen a little, & our hopes, of course, are raised. Finding a week ago this day, Saturday, that there was no probability of sailing before sabbath week, I very gladly embraced an invitation from the Ropers, mentioned I believe in my last

<sup>26</sup> Abbot apparently refers here to Charles Albert Demoustier (1760-1801) whose best known work was *Lettres à Emilie sur la Mythologie* (1790). It had considerable temporary popularity and by 1827 had gone through more than seventeen editions. See *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, Paris, 1855, XIII, 623-625.

<sup>27</sup> The *Stranger* finally sailed for Matanzas on February 8.

letter, to get into the country, a measure not less conducive to health than to variety & amusement. There is a "villainous" compound of scents in the city, combined with a debilitating heat in the middle of the day, from which it is delightful to escape into the freshness of a country air. O how often do I think of the truth & point of Cowper's simple line—"God made the country; but man made the town—"

Having returned from *Point Comfort*, the plantation on which I have spent 4 pleasant days, I hasten to give you some account of adventures & observations.<sup>28</sup> But, as I have kept a daily journal, I shall be brief, referring you, should Providence spare me to return, to my journal for a very minute account of the novelties of a rice plantation.

We started for the country in style. The younger Mr. R. was in the country. The senior Mr. Roper in his chair, driven by his "humble friend" Robert, & Mrs. R., the lady of his son in her carriage, called for me at my lodgings. In the latter I rode. Mrs. Laurens, mother of Mrs. R., and a younger daughter followed in their carriage, escorted by her youngest son of 10 yrs. on his Shetland pony & a servant on horseback.<sup>29</sup> There was plenty of baggage attached to all the carriages of comfortables to cheer the country; & among the rest, I know not how many colored boys & girls, some of them without bonnet or hat, clinging to the carriages where they could get hold & when the sands were heavy running on foot & sporting as they went. There was one other important personage of the travelling party, Miss Korah, a half breed Newfoundland dog, who for her beauty & good nature & talents in duck hunting is the pet of the family. To render her journey pleasant, she sometimes couched at the feet of the driver in our coach & sometimes bounded out to range the forest or to pick up caresses from the servants. This moving exhibition soon became more lively by our overtaking a drove of mules, fat & sleek, & almost forgetting their character for long-eared *sobriety* by the gambols they cut, sometimes to make good their reputation for *obstinacy* darting backward at full speed, & having the pleasure to be headed by a negro on horseback, & whipped back again into the ranks. Another part of their sport was to bite & kick one another playfully & without fear or malice, tricks which seemed ill-assorted with their gravity.

<sup>28</sup> "Point Comfort" was located on the west branch of the Cooper River a short distance from "Mepkin" and "Elmwood." For a description of "Point Comfort" (circa 1920) see Harriette K. Leiding, *Historic Houses of South Carolina*, Philadelphia, 1921, pp. 51-52.

<sup>29</sup> This was Mrs. Henry Laurens, Jr., the former Elizabeth Rutledge (1776-1842), a daughter of John Rutledge. Her husband died in 1821. Mrs. Roper (Martha Rutledge Laurens) died in 1868 leaving no issue. The Laurens boy mentioned here was Keating Simons Laurens (1817-1853).

After travelling a few miles we entered on the State road leading to Columbia & over the Goose Creek bridge. Other materials failing, they have split small logs in half & laid them bridge fashion, the flat side upward & covered them with a few inches of clayey sand. As the chairs or gigs of this country have no springs, this kind of road keeps your bodies in a perpetual quiver, & you are left to apprehend that your brains may be shaken out of place or addled. Yet it must be acknowledged that the road is much improved, especially for waggoners, from its former state when the wheels used to sink deep into the sand. Such is the *State* turnpike, & the toll is duly collected at the proper distances so that you have the pleasure of being well shaken & of paying for it, half of which pleasure only you enjoy on a Northern turnpike.— We stopped a few moments to gaze down the avenue of *live oaks* belonging to Mr. Moses, a son of Abraham, who in the true style of his nation offered it to the ship carpenters, but avarice saved the most magnificent avenue in the country as they could not afford to come up to his price.<sup>80</sup> You can form but an imperfect idea of the grandeur of this double colonnade of gigantic trees with their evergreen honors & venerable with waving moss like the hoary beards of so many patriarchs.

Between 4 & 5 o'clock we arrived at *Point Comfort*, 28 miles from Charleston. The first appearance did not strike me as answering to the name. The present proprietor has not been long enough upon it to accomplish his intended improvements. The buildings would be regarded shabby on a Northern farm. To render his house tenantable till one is builded, the foundations of which are handsomely laid, he has added two apartments & a piazza in curious style. The walls are of clay mortar, as rude as his negro cottages. They are, however, in general tight & the woodwork is handsome & the sashes of large glass—both probably to be transferred in due time to the rising mansion. The rude apartments are furnished with carpets & rugs, a superb side board & harp, an ample table & healthful & even luxurious viands.

We were cordially greeted by the planter, who had complaisantly & probably impatiently waited three hours beyond his time for his dinner that he might dine with expected guests. We soon sat down to rice-fed wild ducks among other dishes, these deserving to be mentioned as *armorials* of Point Comfort, for thousands (I speak literally) of these beautiful & delicious bird are constantly swimming & flying in sight of the parlor. After dinner, then near evening, Mrs. Laurens & daughter, with Mr. R. to attend them in his barge, went down the creek

<sup>80</sup> This was probably Isaac Moses, son of Abraham Moses, a Charleston trader who died in 1796.



to the opposite bank of the Cooper river where her superb establishment is in full view of her son-in-law at the distance of a mile.<sup>81</sup>

On the second day after our arrival, we received an invitation over the river to dine & were highly gratified with our visit. This was the plantation of Henry Laurens whose name is in the charge of history. He was the first President of the revolutionary Congress, was confined in the tower of London, an object of the keenest jealousy of the British ministry, & treated by them with unmanly & impolitic severity.<sup>82</sup> And it was on this spot where, according to a clause in his will, his corpse was wrapped in 12 yards of tow cloth & burnt to ashes. He builded a spacious & handsome house for his son a few rods distance from his own humbler mansion, but would not inhabit it. The spot is worthy the illustrious man who cultivated & adorned it. The house stands on a bluff 35 feet high, an unusual phenomenon in the low country; live oaks of magnificent size shade the buildings & several acres around. A natural spring fills a pool for tame ducks, & the river & mill are lively with the wild. The mill & granary are very large & protected by lightning rods; &, to give them perfect position, the bluff has been dug away & with the material a wharf formed; & a threshing floor is formed on the height close to the mill, so that the grain is carried from the heap into the third story without descent or ascent. But you will not be entertained by a description which, however, was interesting to see.—

The portrait of Henry Laurens hangs in the parlor & reminds one of Ramsay's remark—"His eye was uncommonly penetrating—" There is something more even than we take from *those words* in his eye— It has a far reach with it, as if he was gazing with prophetic intuition into futurity. The portrait of his gallant son, John Laurens, also hangs in the room, of whom he said to the British ministry when tempted by the promise of enlargement from the tower if he would write to him & advise his withdrawing from the court of France, rejecting the proposition with disdain—"He loves me dearly & would lie down his life to save mine, but I am sure he would not sacrifice his honor to save my life: & I applaud him."

The present Mrs. Laurens is the widow of Henry Laurens, Jr., & dr. of a man, on the whole, still more accomplished & illustrious, John Rutledge.<sup>83</sup> He was the individual on whom Ramsay & the state of S. C.

<sup>81</sup> There are several views of "Mepkin" in Charles Fraser's *Charleston Sketch-book*, ed. Alice R. Huger Smith, Charleston, 1940.

<sup>82</sup> Abbot added in a footnote, "On reflection, I believe this erroneous; he presided from '76 to '78."

<sup>83</sup> John Rutledge (1739-1800).

rely in comparing the merits of orators & statesmen of the different states in the union. The daughter is not unworthy of such a parentage. She is an elegant & dignified woman of wit & wisdom in conversation & of some passing talents in epistolary writing. Of these we had a brief & admirable specimen the morning after we dined with her. It was the anniversary of Mrs. R.'s wedding. She sent over a servant with a few delicacies for the table of her dr. & a gratulatory note, which I truly think could not be excelled for point, elegant ease of expression, & maternal sweetness. I tried to get for my family a copy of it, but could only obtain lines, I believe quoted by her from Pope— The manner in which she combined them with expressions of her own I shall not attempt to give— “Blest with temper, whose unclouded ray can make tomorrow cheerful as today—” And, again—“The wife far dearer than the bride.”

I have carefully examined this plantation & pursued the operations from embanking to planting & from planting to heading up the rice. I think I have a correct idea of the whole & can show & explain to you at my return this interesting & peculiar agriculture & milling.—

Having past 4 days in this interesting situation, having on horseback with father & son visited ten plantations & made a call at their club house, where 16 planters meet once a fortnight, & having bid an affectionate adieu to the hospitable family, I set out on my return for Charleston. With a driver in the chair & a servant on horseback we went about 10 miles when the favorite Rolla was taken out & a Dean-like fellow put in & the escort returned to the plantation. I called on Mrs. Middleton Smith's place, which you have heard me describe as the most interesting spot I had seen in Carolina.<sup>84</sup> She instantly recognized me & gave me a cordial welcome. We ranged over her beautiful grounds of infinite variety of trees & flowering shrubs, many blooming, & embowered walks— And I heard from her with dreadful minuteness the circumstances of Mr. I.'s death; & I know not when my heart will be done aching. It required some resolution to pass over to the Elms, a mile from Mrs. S.'s. A rush of reminiscences almost overpowered my mind as I approached & past the halls at that once delightful spot. The princely hospitality enjoyed in that superb mansion, the intellectual elevation & refinement, the delightful courtesy, not only to the stranger, but to one another, the employment of the day, the reading & admirable music of the evening, & conversation abounding in wit & information: in short the happiness

<sup>84</sup> This was “Bloomfield”—also known as “Broomfield” and “Broom Hall.” See Henry A. M. Smith, “Goose Creek,” this *Magazine*, XXIX (1928), 273-278, for a description of this plantation. Mrs. Middleton Smith (d. 1853) was the former Elizabeth Sully, a sister of the portrait painter.

of the family in which even the servants seemed so to partake as to forget they were slaves—all were strongly revived in my mind. But, as I cast my eyes to the mansion, all was silence, dessionation & gloom.

No sweet tones of voice or harp are heard in those spacious halls—  
 no cheering welcome would have met me as formerly at the threshold had I turned up my horse. Two as lovely spirits, I might almost venture to say as ever animated beautiful female forms, long since were called away, a lot which the survivors may think enviable compared with theirs, left to deplore the dreadful death of the head & charm of the family, the sudden dissolution of the bond which held them in happy union.<sup>35</sup> Unhappy man, thy heart was too large for thy means, thy temptations too mighty for thy principles, such as they were. Let the sad fate of H. I. warn all who knew him of the danger of indulging in plans too magnificent for their income—of the danger, of the immorality of incurring debts beyond a reasonable prospect of payment. The danger & guilt of familiar acquaintance with unprincipled writers whose sophistry & wit are clothed in the charms of genius of fine writing.

As I trust I am on the point of sailing, look for my next from Matanzas. In regard to my health, it is improved by every excursion to the country, but advanced little in the city. My object will be to get back into the country as soon as possible from Matanzas, for all cities must have similar infelicity of air & cleanliness as Charleston. Were I not ready to leave this [city] for the island I would hurry to Columbia. Do not misinterpret what is said of the city as if my health were suffering. It is better—better by the scales. I am in a fair way of regaining what I lost of flesh last summer. Do remember me most affectionately to the family, our dear neighbors, & all who ask for me. No child ever longed for a mother's embrace more than I for home—my family, my people.

O it is a sad thing to be far away from those one wants to benefit & enjoy. Yet I am comfortable—having learned in whatsoever *place* I am there with to be content. Friends, strangers are kind; but it is not home—God is kind everywhere—with him I desire to hold sweet communion—& do, & endure, & wait his pleasure.

Most aff'ly yours, A. A.

<sup>35</sup> Henry Izard died on December 26, 1826.

Mary  
d. 1822  
Eliza  
d. 1823

Charleston, S. C., Feb'y 4, 1828.

My Dear Wife,

Two days ago I threw a letter into the *Plato*, expecting it might be the last you would receive from me before I sail for Cuba. . . .<sup>86</sup>

The very natives are astonished at the loveliness of the season. I presume that a winter, thus far, has not occurred within memory in Carolina with so high a mean heat. Roses in the gardens have been in full bloom all the winter. Green peas are cheap in market; strawberries are seen ripe. Vegetables fresh from the garden are in plenty. Plumbs, oranges are in blossom; & the gardens are in their holiday, their *spring* dress. I have been in three charming gardens this day. In Mrs. Wagner's I presume I might have enumerated 50 species of elegant flowers opened. Dr. Whittredge called at noon to carry me to two gardens in the suburbs managed by two skillful gardeners, French gentlemen, Messrs. Chartrand & Noisett.<sup>87</sup> Chartrand I had seen before, & he urges on me anything he has & hopes in return slips from my pears. He wishes me to take a magnolia to keep in a pot & a multiflora of a more beautiful rose than the common. Mrs. Wagner proffered any of her treasures. The beauties in these three gardens would set my ardent & enthusiastic family in the *vocative case* by the hour together.

I am endeavoring to take leave of the families to whom I am so much indebted for the kindest rites of hospitality. Last evening I called on Mr. Ford's family, which I believe I have celebrated in a former letter. The fine sense & varied accomplishments of both the parents & both the children & Dr. Ravenel, the weeded son-in-law, husband of the eldest daughter, gone in the bloom of life, has afforded me, on the whole, the most intellectual entertainment I have found in the city.<sup>88</sup> I had letters to them & called often. Decidedly the best music is there that I have heard since my arrival; it goes to the heart. It is also tastefully chosen & commonly of a pathetic cast; & the melodious tones of the second daughter,

<sup>86</sup> The *Plato* cleared for Boston on February 6.

<sup>87</sup> Joshua B. Whittredge (1789-1865), a prominent Unitarian who was a native of Rhode Island, practiced medicine in Charleston for some three decades. Philip Chartrand operated the Tivoli Gardens which included in addition to flowers, an exercise room, bar, and restaurant. Philippe Stanislaus Noisette (1795-1835), noted for his roses, presumably came to Charleston from Santo Domingo. His father, Joseph Noisette, gardener on an estate of Louis XVIII, lost nine sons in Napoleon's Russian campaign of 1812.

<sup>88</sup> Edmund Ravenel (1797-1870), professor of chemistry at the South Carolina Medical College, married (1st) Charlotte Ford, daughter of Timothy Ford and his first wife. And, as Abbot predicts, Ravenel shortly married Louisa, a daughter of Ford and his second wife.

the feeling thrown forth in the soft accent, the careful preservation of air with the graceful variety of modulation, I do not remember to have heard equalled. Last evening they gave me a delightful piece of some difficulty, "The cypress wreath—" funereal, which seems always to suit their feelings best, tho their sister has been 14 months in her grave. "Home Sweet Home" they have given me perhaps a dozen times, for I thought nothing they had could exceed it. But this exceeds it in pathos. I look upon this family with real sympathy & cannot but fear the accomplishments of the younger daughter are but as the garlands which adorned the ancient victim for sacrifice. Her health is very delicate; my secret fear is that she will at no distant day lie by the side of her lamented sister. Report begins to whisper that one of the ladies is to succeed her sister in the affections of Dr. R. & the care of his lovely infant daughter. But I must not enlarge on this interesting family. I will only add that Mr. Ford devised a pretty method of assuring me of the esteem of the family by putting into my hand as I left a letter to a gentleman of this city, who is to be the companion of my voyage & is well acquainted in Matanzas. One clause of this open letter will express what I mean— "I have requested Dr. A., should you be on board, that he will hand you this, who I trust will serve to give you some of that pleasure in his acquaintance in which we have so gratefully shared while he was in Charleston." The gentleman is a particular friend of the family. . . .

Here I am unable week after week to get away for Matanzas. I was to have sailed last Sunday week— Today was the latest day appointed— now tomorrow is *talked of*— *Tomorrow*, "tomorrow; it belongs to the fool's calendar." But think me not really impatient. A merciful Providence is doing things well. It has been almost a constant spring through the winter. Mrs. S. insists that if I could stay here a few months I should live ten years the longer for it. Yet I trust Cuba will be still better by all I hear.— I intended you a short letter, but see how it has grown. Give my love to Mary & Isaac & Mrs. Woodbury when you see her & to all my friends without mentioning them seriatim. & believe me, dearest, yours as ever.

A.

Feb. 4th.

P. S. It is a curious fact in this extraordinary winter that the pest of this country has been prowling & singing every night; & we have no quiet slumbers, except as we shrink behind our gauze rampart. Mrs. Gilman, with perhaps a little poetic license, thinks it a serious question

in considering the evils of the country which is greatest the yellow fever or marchetos. The gauze pavilions give one a charming sense of security, like a good roof in a pitiless, pelting storm. Mrs. G. is an inventor of a day or evening *shield* in this bloody warfare, from which the fair sex even are not exempt—I know not why she should not obtain a patent. The invention is gauze trowsers for ladies, or rather leggings, like those of a little girl that is apt to romp too high, or perhaps like those of a Turkish lady.— This moment (Feb. 5) Mrs. Ford has sent me the song I have heard her drs. play & sing with so much delight; I send it to my dear Anne, hoping she will sing & play it to me the evening, God willing, of my return. I shall try this morning to get the cypress wreathes & send likewise.

Charleston, Feb'y 6, 1828.

My dearest Wife & children,

I commence another letter from this place, to which I seem bound by some wizzard spell. It is somewhat mortifying that a man, for whom I have ever felt a sincere & well founded contempt, should confine me to these shores by the spider threads of a paper blockade. I repaired yesterday to the *Stranger*, it being the day appointed for our sailing, when I found the fair lady disgorging a quantity of tar, which Commodore Porter I understand is pleased to consider contraband of war.<sup>89</sup> This puissant Mexican chief, not American I am happy to say, is pleased to declare the Island of Cluba blockaded. (I have not seen his proclamation & may not have used correct phraseology.) One would think that he was Lord High Admiral of the English navy & could encircle that noble isle with his fleet. At any rate, he has inspired my good captain with terror, lest he should seize the *Stranger*—and he has been conning over his cargo with his proclamation in hand & returning on the shippers what the commodore says shall condemn the vessel— It is not expected, however, that this incident will detain us more than two days, & the Capt. is resolved (almost!) that he will sail on Friday, wind favoring.

Often I am amused in this city with odd sights & contrasts—a day or two since, I was struck with the very figure of the shadow of a shade—or something that in a moment reminded me of Anne's little German story illustrated with cuts. . . . A negro, six feet three tall, I should say, with a frame that one might almost span, & with little more covering of

<sup>89</sup> David Porter (1780-1843), former American naval officer and later U. S. minister to Turkey, was serving at this time as commander-in-chief of the Mexican Navy.

the bones than the portrait pointers give to Time & Death, with a haggard countenance, frightened & frightful, as if the nightmare had sat on his narrow chest day & night for weeks, came coursing down the side walk with a flourishing gait & swaggering knee. I turned quite round with an involuntary impulse & gazed with astonishment, as at a thing pruter-natural.<sup>40</sup> From self-respect, in a full street, I turned away from the sight, before my curiosity was sated or could form an opinion from what causes sprang so extraordinary a thing, when my eyes instantly lit on a negro in every respect his perfect contrast, coming right up to me, about 4 feet tall, & as fat & bulky as a Chinese Deity. It was an odd coincidence &, as N. Englanders, you may guess my feelings.

Yesterday I had a different play on my nerves. In a busy, crowded street, East Bay, where every thing is bustle, my attention was arrested by a loud, stormy voice, when turning to see from what it came, I discovered for aught I know, a sample of the countrymen where I am going—a dirty, sallow, dingy fellow, who might have sat to an artist to give him the *beau ideal of a pirate*. His clothes were whole, but as greasy as if he had been dipped in whale oil & around his middle was strapped a black leather sheathe, so as to present the handle of an ugly knife, as handy as possible. He was talking in a voice, loud enough for hundreds to hear, to a well dressed countryman of his, about their private affairs, the gentleman all the while endeavoring to soothe him by a gentler tone of voice & persuasive argument. I hope I am not to see many such in Cuba.

This morning I have followed the lovers of the fine arts to see the picture of the Coronation of Napoleon by David, the splendid work of 14 years, begun in Paris & finished in his exile at Brussels, on a surface of 750 square feet. The *greatest* work ever exhibited in America, if you calculate by the yard, & I suppose the most superb & tasteful if you judge on more refined principles.<sup>41</sup> Yet, I know not but I subject myself to the censure of better judges when I acknowledge that it excited no such emotions as the picture of West of the *healing in the temple*.<sup>42</sup> This may be owing to the comparative disadvantage of subject in my estimation. In the one, I see the superhuman benefactor of mankind, extending mercy to the wretched with divine power & benignity; in the other, the successful

<sup>40</sup> Abbot means "proto-natural."

<sup>41</sup> On February 4, 1828, the Charleston *Courier* announced that Mr. J. Morley was displaying the David painting at the Academy of Fine Arts from 10 a. m. to 9 p. m. each day. Admission: 50 cents, children, one-half price—or one could purchase a season ticket for \$1.00.

<sup>42</sup> "Christ Healing the Sick," painted in 1801, was one of Benjamin West's most successful pictures.

adventurer, selfishness identified, on the pinnacle of earthly glory, to which he had made his way as the noblest of butchers. What a difference in the moral grandeur of the subject!

I doubt not that in the detail of the painting this has the advantage. As well as I can recollect West's, after an interval of nine years, it has just & noble conception, worthy of the awful subject, but little appearance of limbo labor, of patient execution, of touch & retouch, like the poetry of Virgil, as if the artist designed on *each* face & limb to rest a distinct claim to immortality. But in this painting there seems a detailed care, as great as any artist could render to the single portrait or miniature of a prince. Each head is a study; each figure as ambitious as if it were the principal & claimed the spectator's chief attention. West derives amazing aid in awakening affecting emotions in the spectator from presenting things in *contrast*: Christ & John & close by the envious & scowling priests; the blind aged father led by the dutiful child; the sick child in the arms of a mother in luxuriant health & beauty attended by the grandparents, if my recollection is correct. In short, contrast, the antithesis of painting, strikes you forcibly throughout West's picture. There is nothing obviously intended by David of this nature. There are male & female, civil & military & ecclesiastical characters, but standing without much order & giving no very commanding benefit to each other. But it would be great injustice not to acknowledge that his figures stand out of the canvass, as I think I have never seen before. They look like animated statuary; & as if you might walk round some of them & look at them behind as well as before.

To me the greatest failure, if I may dare to say so, occurs in the principal figure. To be sure it is *portrait* painting; & it is necessary for the artist to be true to life & *historic* painting, & he must be true to facts. But I in vain look for the sublime of man in the face or figure of Napoleon. The Josephine of the piece is exquisitely fine, kneeling & bending forward to receive the crown upon her head from the hands of her august husband. She looks, however, as young as 28 or 30, while her son, vice king of Italy looks scarcely younger, & even her grandson figures in the piece & figures charmingly. I think so young & beautiful a creature in the piece would scarcely have been the grandmother of real life. The brothers & sisters of the Emperor are admirable figures. The favorite, *Duroc*, towering above most with his white plumes, powerfully called up the fine image of our lamented friend Nat. Lamson; it might have answered for his portrait.

The Pope is a very interesting portrait, the only sitting personage in the group. I remember an exquisite miniature of his holiness, brought



from France by J. Thorndike, jr.; & from their resemblance to each other I doubt not they are likenesses of the original. He is extending his hand toward the empress, with two fingers open, conferring his benediction. There is a plentiful sprinkling of ecclesiastics in the piece & numerous generals whose names are in the keeping of history. Talleyrand is distinguished, as in history so in the piece, the arch vicar of Bray, whether in republican or consular France, under the new dynasty or the old restored. His club foot the ingenious & flattering artist has half hid behind the princely leg of Berthier.

But I am running into minuteness. I should have been more general, only that I have supposed you may never have opportunity of seeing the piece.— I will just remark that there are probably a hundred portraits in the picture, most or all painted for likenesses, with the intimate knowledge on the part of the painter of the originals. A whole group of handsomer & yet more varied faces you must despair of selecting out of thousands. But, after all, for producing the strongest emotions in the soul, for awakening conceptions of what is most high & grand among men, take me not to courts & gorgeous scenes of coronations. Rather set me down in Egypt or the Red Sea, in Gallilee or Jerusalem. Let Moses be the powerful figure in the piece & awful scenes of sacred history glow on the canvass round him. Let the Son of God appear on the canvass, if a mortal can conceive anything worthy of the awful subject, as once he appeared opening his lips on the mount, transfigured on Tabor, touching the young man's bier at Nain, rousing the cold sleep of Lazarus, or himself coming forth from the grave, or visibly ascending to heaven. The tinsel of the coronation vanishes in the moral glory of these subjects.—

Feb'y 7. Dearest, I have risen at day break to take this letter to the wharf, expecting that Mr. Hough sails this morning.<sup>48</sup> Yesterday I recd. your delightful & most unexpected letter of 23d ult. Thank you, thank you. How good is God to preserve us at home & far away in health, for so I may now almost say of myself. I have a little cough, as you know I used to have before April last. In good weather it is little or no trouble. My appetite is good. I sleep sufficiently. I am cheerful, & I hope grateful.

I expect to sail to morrow for Matanzas, so says my Capt. with something like a decisive tone. This little space I leave open till I see if Mr. H. is gone or going today & will also see my Capt. to give you a parting word.—

<sup>48</sup> B. K. Hough, Jr., had been a fellow passenger on the *Brookline* from Boston to Charleston in November 1827.

I have seen Cap. Hull of the *Stranger*, & if wind will permit we sail tomorrow; & I doubt not have the wishes of many N. & S. friends for a safe voyage & a pleasant visit in the West Indies. I have not seen in your letters any notice of my 2d Pastoral letter; I hope it has been received. I shall long to get hold of the letters waiting for me in Matanzas. Write often in expectation of vessels; & let me hear every thing important. May the blessing of heaven rest upon you.

A. A.