

ter that was wanting his dinner, he would ha' ordered a hale table-fu' wi' little mair than a waff o' his haun, and here's a' this claver about a bit mutton nae bigger than a prin. Mr. De Quinshey would mak' a gran' preacher, though I'm thinking a hantle o' the folk wouldna ken what he was driving at." Betty's observations were made with considerable self-satisfaction, as she considered her insight of Mr. De Quincey's character by no means slight, and many was the quaint remark she made, sometimes hitting upon a truth that entitled her to that shrewd sort of discrimination by no means uncommon in the humble ranks of Scottish life. But these little meals were not the only indulgences that, when not properly attended to, brought trouble to Mr. De Quincey. Regularity in doses of opium was even of greater consequence. An ounce of laudanum per diem prostrated animal life in the early part of the day. It was no unfrequent sight to find him in his room lying upon the rug in front of the fire, his head resting upon a book, with his arms crossed over his breast, plunged in profound slumber. For several hours he would lie in this state, until the effects of the torpor had passed away. The time when he was most brilliant was generally towards the early morning hours; and then, more than once, in order to show him off, my father arranged his supper parties so that, sitting till three or four in the morning, he brought Mr. De Quincey to that point at which in charm and power of conversation he was so truly wonderful.*

CHAPTER XIII.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.—A CRUISE WITH THE EXPERIMENTAL SQUADRON.

1830-'37.

IN 1830, we get some glimpses of home life in Gloucester Place, from my mother's letters to Miss Penny. She says, in reply to an invitation for her sons to Penny Bridge:—"The boys are transported with the idea of so much enjoyment, and I hope they will

* Mr. De Quincey died at Edinburgh, December 8, 1859.

not be disappointed indeed. I do not think Mr. Professor can refuse them, but I have not yet had time to talk the matter over with him; for at the time the letter came he was particularly busy, and the day before yesterday, he and Johnny left us for a week to visit an old friend, Mr. Findlay, in the neighborhood of Glasgow, from whose house they mean to go and perambulate all the old haunts in and about Paisley, where Mr. W. spent his boyhood, and particularly to see the old minister Dr. M'Latchie, whom I dare say you have heard him mention often; he lived in his house for several years before he went to Glasgow College." My father really must have been "particularly busy" at this time, and his powers of working seem to me little short of miraculous; he had two articles in *Blackwood* in January; four in February; three in March; one each in April and May; four in June; three in July; seven in August (or 116 pages); one in September; two in October; and one in November and December: being thirty articles in the year, or 1,200 columns. To give an idea of his versatility, I shall mention the titles of his articles in the Magazine for one month, viz., August:—"The Great Moray Floods;" "The Lay of the Desert;" "The Wild Garland, and Sacred Melodies;" "Wild Fowl Shooting;" "Colman's Random Records;" "Clark on Climate;" "Noctes, No. 51." My mother, while all this literary work was going on, was too good a housewife to be able to spare time for more than the most notable works of the day. She, however, says jocularly to her correspondent: "I think I must give you a little literature, as I shine in that line prodigiously; I have read, with intense interest, as everybody must do, Moore's *Life of Lord Byron*. Mr. W. had a copy sent to him, fortunately; for strange as it may appear, it is not to be had in the booksellers' shops here, and I suppose will not be till the small edition comes out."

In September and October, the Professor writes, from Penny Bridge and Elleray, the following letters to his wife:—

"PENNY BRIDGE, *Tuesday, September, 1830.*

"MY DEAREST JANE:—We came here yesterday; and my intention was to take Maggy back to Elleray with me to-day, and thence in a few days to Edinburgh. But I find that that arrangement would not suit, and therefore have altered it. Our plans now are as follows:—We return in a body to Elleray (that is, I and Maggy,

and James Ferrier) this forenoon. There is a ball at Mrs. Edmund's (the Gale!) to-night, where we shall be. On Thursday, there is a grand public ball at Ambleside, where we shall be; and I shall keep Maggy at Elleray till Monday, when she and the boys will go in a body to Penny Bridge, and I return *alone* to Edinburgh.

“From your letters I see you are well; and I cannot deny Maggy the pleasure of the two balls; so remain on her account, which I hope will please you, and that you will be happy till and after my return. The session will begin soon, and I shall have enough to do before it comes on. Dearest Jane, be good and cheerful; and I hope all good will attend us all during the winter. Such weather never was seen as here! Thursday last was fixed for a regatta at Lowood. It was a dreadful day, and nothing occurred but a dinner-party of twenty-four, where I presided. On Friday, a sort of small regatta took place. A repast at three o'clock was attended by about seventy-five ladies and gentlemen, and the ball in the evening was, I believe, liked by the young people. The ‘worstling’ took place during two hours of rain and storm. The ring was a tarn. Robinson, the schoolmaster, threw Brunskil, and Irvine threw Robinson; but the last fall was made up between them, and gave no satisfaction. The good people here are all well and *kind*. Maggy has stood her various excursions well, and is fat. I think her also grown tall. She is a quarter of an inch taller than Mrs. Barlow. Colonel B—— lost his wife lately by elopement, but is in high spirits, and all his conversation is about the fair sex. He is a pleasant man, I think, and I took a ride with him to Grasmere t’other day. The old fool waltzes very well, and is in love with Maggy. He dined with us at Elleray on Sunday. I have not seen the Watsons for a long time, but shall call on them to-morrow. The weather and the uncertainty of my motions have stood in the way of many things. I have constant toothache and rheumatism, but am tolerably well notwithstanding. Give my love to Molly and Umbs. Tell them both to be ready on my arrival, to help me in arranging my books and papers in the garrets and elsewhere. My dearest Jane, God bless you always. Your affectionate husband,

“J. WILSON.”

A few days later he writes:—

“ELLERAY, *Monday Afternoon,*
October, 1830.

“MY DEAREST JANE:—The ball at Ambleside went off with great *éclat*, Maggy being the chief belle. The Major is gone, and proved empty in the long-run. We all dined at Calgarth on Saturday—a pleasant party. On Sunday, a Captain Alexander (who was in Persia) called on us, and we took him to the Hardens’ to dinner. We were all there. To-day, Maggy and Johnny made calls on horseback, and we in the ‘Gazelle.’ We took farewell of the Watsons. Mr. Garnet dines with us at Elleray, and the boys at Lowood with the Cantabs. To-morrow they go to Penny Bridge, and J. Ferrier to Oxford, and I to Kendal. So expect me by the mail on Wednesday, to dinner, at five, if I get a place at Carlisle. I found the Penny Bridge people were anxious, so I let the bairns go to them till after the Hunt ball; and no doubt they will be happy. Have all my newspapers from the ‘Opossum’ on Tuesday before I arrive. Tell Molly to get them in a heap. Have a fire in the front drawing-room and dining-room, and be a good girl on my arrival. Have a shirt, etc., aired for me, for I am a rheumetician; a fowl boiled. I got your kind letter yesterday. Love to Moll and Umbs. God bless you! I am, your affectionate husband,

“JOHNNY WILSON.”

“ELLERAY, *Monday, 1830.*

“MY DEAREST JANE:—I had a letter this morning from Maggy, dated Saturday, Bangor Ferry, *all well*; and I suppose that she would write to you some day. She told me not of her plans, but I understand from Belfield, that the party are expected there on Thursday. I think I shall stay till she arrives. We dined at Penny Bridge on Thursday, having called at Hollow Oak, and found all the family at both places well.

“Miss Penny is looking very well. We returned that night to Elleray. On Friday, for the first time—no, for the second—we took a sail in the ‘Gazelle,’ the Thomsons’ boat, for an hour or two, and then dined in a body at Lowood. On Saturday we rode (all five) to Grasmere, walked up Easdale—fell in with a man and his wife, or love-lady—Englishers apparently, named Brodie, who were anxious to see Langdale. We told them to join us, and all seven rode to the head of it, across by Blea-Tarn, and down little Langdale to Ambleside.

“It was a delightful day as to weather, and we enjoyed ourselves considerably.

“At Ambleside, where we arrived about half-past six, we dined in great strength. The Carr surgeon, the Costelloe ditto, John Harden, Fletcher Fleming, another person, I think, and ourselves five. I got home about twelve, all steady. Sunday, that is yesterday, was one of the most complete things of the kind I remember to have seen; and I presume the floods in Morayshire were in high health and spirits. We lay on sofas all day. To-day, Monday, is stormy and showery, and I never left the dining-room great chair. Tell Mary to write to me the night she gets this, and that, I think, will be to-morrow, and I shall get it on *Thursday*. Write you on *Thursday night*, and I shall get it on Saturday, on which day I shall probably leave Elleray, but I will fix the day as soon as Maggy comes. I shall, on my arrival, have plenty to do to get ready for November 4th; so shall not most probably go to Chiefswood at all. Hartley Coleridge came here on Saturday, and is looking well and steady. He sends his kindest regards to you, Mary, and Umbs. Do you wish me to bring Maggy with me? Yours, most affectionately,

J. WILSON.

“I got your kind letter duly this morning.”

“DEAREST MOLL:—Write me a long letter, and on Wednesday night, if you have not time on Tuesday. Give my love to your Mamma and Umbs. Your affectionate father,

J. W.”

Next year he paid another visit to Westmoreland, from which he writes to his wife:—

“PENNY BRIDGE, *Sunday, 26th Sept., 1831.*

“MY DEAR JANE:—I delayed visiting this place with Mary till I could leave Elleray, without interruption, for a couple of days. T. Hamilton stayed with us a fortnight, and, as he came a week later, and stayed a week longer than he intended, so has my return to Edinburgh been inevitably prevented. Mary and I came here on Thursday, since which hour it has never ceased raining one minute, nor has one of the family been out of doors. They are all well, including Mrs. and Miss Hervey, who have been staying about a month. It now threatens to be fair, and I purpose setting off by and by on foot to Elleray, a walk of fifteen miles, which perhaps may do me good; but if I feel tired at Newby Bridge, I will take

a boat or chaise. Mary I leave at Penny Bridge for another week. The boys will join her here next Thursday, and remain till the Monday following, when they will all return to Windermere. On that Monday, Mary will go to Rayrig for two days or three, and either on Thursday or Friday arrive together in Edinburgh. I and Gibb will most probably be in Edinburgh on *Thursday first*, unless I find any business to detain me at Elleray for another day, on my return there to-night. If so, you will hear from me on *Wednesday*. As Mary wrote a long letter on Tuesday last, full, I presume, of news, I have nothing to communicate in that line. Birkbeck has been at Elleray for two or three days, and Johnny says he expects Stoddart, who perhaps may be there on my return to-night. We all went to the Kendal ball, which the young people seemed to enjoy. Twenty-six went from Bowness, forming the majority of the rank and beauty. I hope you have been all quite well since I saw you, as all letters seem to indicate, and that I shall find you all well on my return. A severe winter lies before me, for I must lecture on Political Economy this session, as well as Moral Philosophy; and that Magazine will also weigh heavy on me. I certainly cannot work as I once could, and feel easily wearied and worn down with long sitting; but what must be must, and toil I must, whatever be the consequence. The month before the Session opens will be of unspeakable importance to me, to relieve if possible my miserable appearance in College beginning of last Session. I wish to do my duty in that place at least, and change and exposure there are hard to bear, and of infinite loss to my interests. I feel great uneasiness and pain very often from the complaint I spoke of; but how else can I do what is necessary for me to do? Whatever be the consequence, and however severe the toil, I must labor this winter like a galley-slave; and since it is for us all, *in that at least*, I shall be doing what is at once right and difficult, and in itself deserving of commendation. If I fall through it, it shall only be with my life, or illness beyond my strength to bear up against. I hope Maggy's playing the guitar and singing frequently, and that Umbs is a good boy. Kindest love to them. I should like to have a few kind lines from you, written *on Monday*, the evening you receive this, and sent to post-office then. I may, or rather *must* miss them, but if any thing prevents it I shall conclude you are undoubtedly all well. You need not send any newspapers after receipt of this, but please

to keep them together. Do not say any thing about my motions to the Blackwoods, as I wish to be at home a day or two *incog.* I shall get my room done up when I arrive, which will save me trouble perhaps afterwards in looking out for papers. Mary is getting fat, and looks well, and the boys are all right. I am, my dearest Jane, yours ever affectionately,

JOHN WILSON."

Two days later he writes :—

"MY DEAR JANE:—I expect to be at home on Friday per mail, or 'Peveril,' to dinner. I purpose riding over to Penrith with Garnet on the ponies on Wednesday, and thence on, which saves me Kendal, a place abhorred. The family leave Elleray that day for Penny Bridge. I was so knocked up with my walk therefrom as to be stiff and lame yet. My walking day is over. The shrubs in the entrance are all well, but too tall, and want to be cut over. The myrtle is in excellent health and beauty, though it seems less.* Charlie† is in high glee and condition. The avenue is beautiful, and the gate pretty, the low walls being covered with ivy, and other odoriferous plants and parasites. The ponies and cows are all well-to-do, five of the former and two of the latter. Of the five former, one is an 'unter, and two are staigs. I called to-day at the Wood, and found all the Watsons well. I have frequently done so. I have not been in Ambleside since Hamilton left us; and we have seen nobody for a long time, it being supposed that I am gone, whereas I am just going. I wish no dinner on Friday, but a *foal*, as F. calls it. Mary is to write to you on Friday next, so you will hear of the boys a day later than by the Professor. Weir must have been a bore. I like Otter; Starky is in treaty for Brathay for nineteen years. He is seventy-two. Rover is pretty bobbish. Star is at Oldfield in high spirits, and neighs as often as we pass the farm. Love to Maggy and Umbs. I expect to find you all well, and if possible alone and in good humor on Friday, for I shall be very tired. Stoddart brought letters. I opened Mag's and yours, but not the other two, which being about eating had no charms. Yours affectionately,

J. WILSON."

That the Magazine did weigh heavily upon him I do not wonder,

* The myrtle was my mother's favorite plant.

† A spaniel belonging to my mother.

as he had already written twenty articles during 1831, five of which were in the August number.

During this year, too, he commenced those noble critical essays on "Homer and his Translators,"* which scholars have remarked "contain the most vivid and genial criticisms in our own or any other language."† I believe deep thought and careful philosophical inquiry, combined with stirring vivacity, are nowhere more attractively displayed than in these essays of my father. But not to the learned alone do they give delight, for my humble admiration makes me turn to them again and again.

The following letter from Mr. Sotheby, relating to these papers, may come in here:—

"13 LOWER GROSVENOR PLACE, October 8, 1831.

"MY DEAR SIR:—One month, two months, three months' grievous disappointment, intolerable disappointment, Homer and his tail, Chapman, Pope, and Sotheby in dim eclipse. What becomes of the promise solemnly given to the public, that the vases of good and evil, impartially poured forth by your balancing hand, were ere Christmas to determine our fate? I long doubted whether I should trouble you with a letter, but the decided opinion of our friend Lockhart decided me. And now hear, I pray, in confidence, why I am peculiarly anxious for the completion of your admirable remarks.

"I propose, ere long, to publish the *Odyssey*, and shall gratify myself by sending you, as a specimen of it, the eleventh book. It will contain, *inter alia*, a sop for the critics, deeply soaked in the blood of a fair heifer and a sable ram, and among swarms of spirits, the images of the heroes of the *Iliad*, completing the tale of Troy divine. After the publication of the *Odyssey*, it is my intent, by the utmost diligence and labor, to correct the *Iliad*, and to endeavor to render it less unworthy of the praise you have been pleased to confer on it. Of your praise I am justly proud; yet for my future object, I am above measure desirous of the benefit of your censures. The remarks (however flattering) with which I have been honored by others, are less valuable to me than your censures; of this, the proof will be evident in the subsequent edition.

* The first appeared in April, followed by Numbers 2 and 3, in May and July. In August, a critique on the *Agamemnon* of *Æschylus* interrupted the essays, but they were resumed again in December, continued at intervals from 1832 to 1834, making in all seven papers.

† Gladstone's *Studies on Homer and the Homeric Age*.

“You must not, you cannot leave your work incomplete. How resist the night expedition of Diomedes and Ulysses?—Hector bursting the rampart—Juno and the Cestus—Hector rushing on, like the stalled horse snapping the cord—The death of Sarpedon—The consternation of the Trojans at the mere appearance of the armed Achilles—The Vulcanian armor—Achilles mourning over Patroclus—The conclusion of the twentieth book—The lamentations of Priam, and Hecuba, and, above all, of Andromache—Priam at the feet of Achilles—Andromache’s lamentation, and Helen’s (oh, that lovely Helen!) over the corse of Hector—can these and innumerable other passages be resisted by the poet of the ‘City of the Plague?’ No, no, no.

“In sooth, I must say, I had hope that at Christmas I might have collected, and printed for private distribution, or, far rather, published, for public delight and benefit, with your express permission, the several critiques in one body, and then presented to the world a work of criticism unparalleled.

“I dine this day at Lockhart’s, with my old and dear friend, Sir Walter. His health has improved since his arrival. Perhaps your cheeks may burn. I beg the favor of hearing from you. I remain, my dear sir, most sincerely yours,
WM. SOTHEY.”*

Miss Watson, the writer of the following letter, was a lady whose name can scarcely be permitted to pass without some notice. She was eldest daughter of the Bishop of Llandaff, and a woman of high mental attainments. When my father resided as a young man in Westmoreland, she was then in the flower of her age, and in constant communion with the bright spirits who at that time made the Lake country so celebrated. Mr. De Quincey, in writing of Charles Lloyd, and mentioning Miss Watson as his friend, says she “was an accomplished student in that very department of literature which he most cultivated, namely, all that class of works which deal in the analysis of human passions. That they corresponded in French, that the letters on both sides were full of spirit and originality.” Miss Watson’s life, with all the advantages which arise from a highly endowed nature, was but a sad one, for her temperament was habitually melancholy, and her health delicate. She has long since found repose. The speech which she alludes to in her letter, was

* William Sothey, born November 9, 1757; died December 30, 1838.

one made by Professor Wilson at a public meeting which had been projected by a number of individuals, to give vent to their sentiments upon the effect of the reform measures in the contemplation of Government :

“ December 3, 1831.

“ MY DEAR PROFESSOR :—I suppose it is to yourself I owe the Edinburgh papers containing your own eloquent and elegant speech. Many thanks ; I admire it much. If you were not born a prince you deserve to be one. Mr. Bolton was here when I was reading it, and he said, ‘ I do assure you, Miss Watson, that Mr. Canning never made a finer speech, and I shall drink the Professor’s health in a bumper to-day.’ I really am not capable of understanding what Englishmen mean by all this nonsense. We are like the Bourbons, of whom it may be said, ‘ that they had learnt nothing by the French Revolution.’ Is it possible that the system of equality (at which a child of five years old might laugh) can still delude the minds of men now ? I have no news worth sending ; all is quiet. The cholera frightens no one. We laugh at it as a good joke. God help our merry hearts ! there is something ludicrous in it, I suppose, which I can’t find out. Blackwood sent me *Robert of Paris*, etc., which I am very much pleased to have. I have not begun it yet ; indeed, I am not well, nor would have sent you so dull a letter, but that I could not delay saying how much I was gratified by the papers. Ever believe me yours affectionately,

D. WATSON.

“ Kind remembrances to Mrs. Wilson and Margaret. It is bitter, bitter cold in this pretty house. As for you and the Shepherd (to whom I would send my thanks for the most gratifying letter I ever received, but that it is rather too late in the day), I advise you both to shut yourselves up in Ambrose’s for a month to come, and keep clear of all the nonsense that will be going on in the shape of Reform ; and every night put down your conversation, and let me see it in *Blackwood*. You shall be two philosophers enchanted like Durandarte, and not to be disenchanted till all is over. Truly I do think you eat too many oysters ! How much I do like those ‘ Noctes.’ Write one, and let it be a good one. Wordsworth says ‘ that the booksellers are all aghast ! and that another *dark* age is coming on.’ I think he is not far wrong. He is a wonderful creature when he will deign to be what nature made him, not artificial society. He read one of his poems to me. The subject was some

gold-fish, but the latter stanzas were magnificent! Oh, what a pity it is to see so noble a creature condescending to be the ass of La Fontaine's Fable! Adieu! I have written beyond my power of hand. I would rather far listen to you than write to you. I cannot now make up a letter, but my heart is still the same. It was the only talent I ever possessed in this world. It *must* be hid under a bushel. How is Mrs. Hamilton? I am ashamed to send such a scrawl, but indeed I am very poorly, as the old nurses say."

The following passages from the Professor's oration, which, on referring to the papers, I see was *the* speech of the day, are worth reproducing. He said, among other good things, that "Often have I heard it said, and have my eyes loathed to see it written, that we of the great Conservative party are enemies of education, and have no love for what are called the lower orders—orders who, when their duties are nobly performed, are, in my humble estimation, as high as that in which any human being can stand. I repel the calumny. I myself belong to no high family. I had no patronage beyond what my own honorable character gave me. I have slept in the cottages of hundreds of the poor. I have sat by the cotter's ingle on the Saturday night, and seen the gray-haired patriarch with pleasure unfold the sacred page—the solace of his humble but honorable life. I have even faintly tried to shadow forth the lights and shades of their character; and it is said I belong to that class who hate and despise the people. . . . Must I allow my understanding to be stormed by such arguments as that the chief business of poor men is to attend to politics, or their best happiness to be found in elections? I know far better that he has duties imposed on him by nature, and, if his heart is right and his head clear, while he is not indifferent to such subjects, there are a hundred other duties he must perform far more important; he may be reading ONE BOOK, which tells him in what happiness consists, but to which I have seen but few allusions made by the reformers in modern times. In reading those weather-stained pages, on which, perhaps, the sun of heaven had looked bright while they had been unfolded of old on the hill-side by his forefathers of the Covenant; when, environed with peril and death, he is taught at once religion towards his Maker, and not to forget the love and duty he owes to mankind; to prefer deeper interests, because everlasting, to those little turbulences which now

agitate the surface of society, but which, I hope, will soon subside into a calm, and leave the country peaceful as before.”*

I fear, however, his political opponents, in that time of madness, did not look upon his words with the same loving eyes as his amiable correspondent, as I see in a letter of my father’s at this time a reference to a rhyming criticism of the Conservative proceedings any thing but flattering, from which I give two lines as a specimen:—

“The Professor got up and spoke of sobriety,
Religion, the Bible, and moral propriety.”

“I need not point out to your disgust,” parenthetically observes the Professor to a friend, “the insinuations conveyed in that wretched doggerel, nor express my own that they could have been published by a man who has frequently had the honor of sitting at my table, and of witnessing my character in the domestic circle.”

In this excited period I find ladies writing strongly on political matters. For example, even the gentle spirit of my mother is roused. She says to my aunt:—“I hope you are as much disgusted and grieved as we all are with the passing of this accursed Reform Bill. I never look into a newspaper now; but we shall see what they will make of it by and by.”

Among my father’s contributions to the Magazine this year, there appeared in the May number an article which attracted considerable attention. It was a review of Mr. Tennyson’s Poems,† the first edition of which had appeared two years previously. The critique was severe, yet kindly and discriminating. The writer remarking good-humoredly at its close, “In correcting it for the press, we see that its whole merit, which is great, consists in the extracts, which are ‘beautiful exceedingly.’ Perhaps in the first part of our article we may have exaggerated Mr. Tennyson’s not unfrequent silliness, for we are apt to be carried away by the whim of the moment, and, in our humorous moods, many things wear a queer look to our aged eyes which fill young pupils with tears; but we feel assured that in the second part we have not exaggerated his strength, and that we have done no more than justice to his fine faculties.” It says much for the critic’s discriminating power that he truly foretold of the future Laureate, that the day would come when, beneath sun and

* *Edinburgh Advertiser*, Nov. 29, 1831.

† *Poems, chiefly Lyrical*. By Alfred Tennyson. London: E. Wilson. 1830.

shower, his genius would grow up and expand into a stately tree, embowering a solemn shade within its wide circumference, and that millions would confirm his judgment "that Alfred Tennyson is a poet." The young poet, although evidently nettled,* received the criticism in good part, and profited by it. On reading the paper once more, I observe that, with scarcely a single exception, the verses condemned by the critic were omitted or altered in after editions.†

In June, 1832, my mother writes:—"Mr. Wilson has long and earnestly wished to have a cruise with the experimental squadron, which I believe will sail by the end of this month; but unfortunately he was late in applying to Sir P. Malcolm."

In July he left home for the purpose of joining the squadron, and the result of his naval experience will be found in the following communications sent from time to time to Mrs. Wilson:

"UNION HOTEL, CHARING CROSS,
Wednesday, July 11, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE:—I have received your favor of last Saturday, and rejoice to find that you are all well, and in as good spirits as can be expected during my absence. Had I known what bustle and botheration I should be exposed to, I hardly think I should have left Edinburgh. Every day gives a different account of the movement of the squadron. The 'Vernon,' who is at Woolwich, was to have dropt down to-day to Sheerness, but it is put off till Friday, and even that is uncertain. She has then to get all her guns and powder on board, and her sails set, and other things, which will take some days, I guess; and this morning it is said the squad-

* In the edition of his poems, published in 1833, the following somewhat puerile lines appeared, which I quote as a literary curiosity:—

"TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH.

" You did late review my lays,
Crusty Christopher;
You did mingle blame with praise,
Rusty Christopher:
When I learned from whom it came,
I forgave you all the blame,
Musty Christopher;
I could *not* forgive the praise,
Fusty Christopher."

† "The National Song;" "English War Song;" "We are Free;" "Love, Pride, and Forgetfulness;" Sonnet, "Shall the hag Evil," &c.; "The 'How' and the 'Why,'" "The Kraken," &c., &c., are all consigned to oblivion, or to our acquisitive brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, who may have preserved these youthful effusions in the American editions.

ron are to meet at Plymouth. All this keeps me in a quandary, and I have not been able to see Sir F. Collier, the captain of the 'Vernon,' but possibly shall to-morrow. Since I wrote I have been again at Woolwich, and seen the officers of the 'Vernon.' They were at first rather alarmed at the idea of a professor, and wondered what the deuce he wanted on board. I understand that they are now in better humor; but the truth is, that *pride* is the leading article in the character of all sailors on their own ship; and I am told these dons are determined to take nobody else but myself. Captain Hope (not the President's son) and Andrew Hay were with me at Woolwich, and there we picked up Captain Gray* of the Marines (you will remember his singing), who dined with us at Greenwich. I see Blair every day, and pass my time chiefly with *offishers*, the United Service Club being close at hand. The literary people here seem cockneys. I called yesterday on Miss Landon, who is really a pleasant girl, and seemed much flattered by the old fellow's visit. To-day Blair and I, along with Edward Moxon, (bookseller), take coach for Enfield (at three o'clock), to visit Charles Lamb. We return at night, if there are coaches. On Thursday, I intend going to the Thomsons' down the river, and shall call again on my way on the 'Vernon,' to see what is doing. Meanwhile, you will get this letter on *Friday*, and be sure it is answered that evening, and sent to the *General Post-Office*. I shall thus hear from you on Monday, and shall then (if not off) have to tell you all our future intentions. Meanwhile it is reported that *the cholera is on board the 'Vernon.'* If so, I shall not go, but proceed to the Tyne. But say nothing of this to anybody. Yesterday I visited Kensington Gardens with Captain Hope, but saw nobody like Maggy, Mary, Umbs, and yourself. I met there Lord Haddington, and am to dine with him, if I can, before sailing; but I hope we shall be at rendezvous by Monday night. Tell Maggy to give me all news, and if you have heard again from Johnny. I will send you in my next my direction when we set sail; and I am not without hopes the squadron may land me in Scotland. Some say there will be *fighting*, and that the 'Vernon' will lead the van, being, though a frigate, as powerful as a line-of-battle ship. I will write to Ebony about money for the house after I hear from Maggy, and hope you will go on pretty well till I return. Tell Maggy to be civil to Bob,

* Charles Gray, see p. 132.

and he will be my banker for small sums. I will also send a receipt, which you will get on the 6th of August, for £30 odd; but I will explain how in my next.

“Take good care of all yourselves, and be good boys and girls. Love to Mag, Moll, and Umbs. As for *Blair*, he cuts me so up that I fear to send him even my compliments. I am glad to hear of Moll’s voice being high. Keep Mag to the *guitar* and new songs. Yours ever affectionately,
JOHN WILSON.”

The next is to his daughter Mary:—

“UNION HOTEL, CHARING CROSS,
July 16, 1832.

“MY DEAR MARY:—I have received your kind epistle, and am rather pleased to find you all well. I write these few lines in a great hurry, to tell you to *wrap up in a parcel, two silver soup-spoons, two tea-spoons, and two silver forks*, and direct them to me at Union Hotel, Charing Cross, per mail, without delay. *See them booked at the Office*. Young ladies take such things to school, and young gentlemen, it seems, to sea. See that the direction is distinct. Write to me by the same post, or if any thing prevent, by the one following; but direct my letter, care of Captain Tatnal, No. 5 Park Terrace, Greenwich. I have just time to say God bless you all, but in a few days will write a long letter telling you of our intended motions, as we hope to be off by the 26th. Don’t believe any thing about the ‘Vernon’ in any newspaper. Be good girls and boys till my return, and do not all forget your old Dad. Love to mamma, and tell me if you have heard farther from Johnny. Thy affectionate father,
J. WILSON.”

TO MRS. WILSON.

“NO. 2 PARK TERRACE, GREENWICH,
Friday.

“MA BONNE CITOYENNE:—I am now fairly established here in lodgings, that is, in a room looking into Greenwich Park, with liberty to take my meals in a parlor belonging to the family. The master thereof is a Frenchman, and a Professor of Languages, and the house swarms with frogs, that is, children. I pay fourteen shillings a week for lodging, which is a salutary change from the hotel. I dine with Tatnal or Williams, or at a shilling ordinary,

and hope to be able to pay my bill to Monsieur Gallois when I take my departure. I walk to Woolwich daily (three miles), and board the 'Vernon,' who now assumes a seaward *seeming*. Her gun-carriages are on board, but not the guns themselves, which are to be taken in at Sheerness. I have seen Sir F. Collier, who behaves civilly, but he cannot comprehend what I want on board the 'Vernon,' neither can I. Her destination is still unknown, but she is to have marines and artillerymen on board, which smells of fighting. But with whom are we to fight? My own opinion is, that we are going to cruise off Ireland, and to land troops at Cork. Williams thinks we are going to Madeira, to look after an American frigate, and Tatnal talks of the Greek Islands. Meanwhile, Sir P. Malcoln, I hear, is enraged at being kept tossing about in the 'Donegal,' without knowing why or wherefore; and nobody knows where the 'Orestes' has gone. The 'Tyne' sails to-morrow for Plymouth. The 'Vernon,' it is thought, cannot be off before the 27th, so that there will be time to write me again before I go to sea. You will get this on Monday morning, and I hope some of you will answer it that night. Direct it to me at Captain Tatnal's, No. 5 Park Terrace, Greenwich, in case I should be off. If our destination be merely Ireland, there is every probability of our touching at some Scotch port. I have been several times at Sir Henry Blackwood's, in Regent Park; pleasant family, and fashionable. I forgot if I mentioned that I went to the Opera, singing and dancing, and *tout-ensemble* beautiful. A Miss Doyle (a Paddy about thirty-five), at Sir H. B.'s, plays the harp ten times better than Taylor. She is held to be the finest harpist we have. Miss Blackwood is very pretty, and clever. I go up to town to-day to dine with Mrs. Burke, and to-morrow a party of us eat white bait at the 'Crown and Sceptre' here. Besides the 'Vernon,' there are lying at Woolwich two new gun-brigs, also built by Symonds, called the 'Snake' and the 'Serpent.' They go with us to compete with the 'Orestes.' The squadron, therefore, at first, will consist of the 'Donegal,' 84, the 'Vernon,' 50, the 'Castor,' 44, the 'Tyne,' 28, the 'Orestes,' 'Serpent,' and 'Snake,' 18; and we expect to be joined by the 'Britannia' and 'Caledonia,' 120; but that is uncertain. The hatred felt for the 'Vernon' is wide and deep, and all the old fogies predict she will capsize in a squall. This is all owing to her incomparable beauty. You have just to imagine the 'Endeavor' magni-

fied, and you see her hull, only she is sharper. She is very wide in proportion to her length, and also deep; so the devil himself will not be able to upset or sink her. She has the masts and spars of a 74, and yet they seem light as lady-fern. I am sorry, however, to say, that there have been twelve cases of cholera on board, and three deaths. The disease, however, is now over, and I have no doubt arose from the dreadful heat of the weather acting on the new paint. She is now dry as a whistle, and the crew is the finest ever seen. I hope you will get up a long letter among you in reply to this, and I shall be expecting it anxiously, as the last I can receive for some time. I will write again before one o'clock, sending you my direction, and also a receipt, which will enable you to get some money, I think, on the 6th of August. Be sure to tell me of Johnny, and when he returns I hope he will write me an account of his route and his exploits. Blair, too, might write me a letter, I think. Kindest love to them all. Keep Maggie at her music, and tell me how Molly is getting on with Miss Paton. Perhaps Umbs has a voice! Tell her to try. Compliments to Rover.* God bless you all, and believe me, dearest Jane, yours ever most affectionately,

“JOHN WILSON.”

“SHEERNESS, August 4, 1832.

“MY DEAREST JANE:—I have delayed writing to you from day to day, in hourly expectation of being able to tell you something decisive of our mysterious motions, but am still in ignorance. In a few days you may expect another and very long epistle; but I write now just to say that we are weighing anchor from Sheerness for the Nore, and that to-morrow we set sail down the Channel, either for Cork or Madeira, or somewhere else, for nobody knows where. I never knew what *noise* was, till I got on board the ‘Vernon.’ But all goes on well; the particulars in my next. I enclose you a five-pound note just to pay the postage. I cannot get on shore, else I would send a stamp for some money due to me on the 6th. But I will send it first port we touch on. Meanwhile Maggy must, when necessary, get a small supply from Bob.

“You will not think this short letter unkind, for we are ordered off in half an hour. You may depend on my next being rather amusing.

* One of the dogs.

“I shall be most anxious to hear from you, and of you all, immediately. You are all at leisure, and must get up a long joint letter, telling me of every thing. Get a long sheet from Ebony, and cross it all over. Enclose it (directed to me in H. M. S. ‘Vernon’) to Mr. Barrow, Admiralty, and he will transmit it duly. Do not lose time. God bless you all, one and all, and believe me, my dearest Jane, ever yours affectionately,

JOHN WILSON.”

“—, 1832.

“MY DEAREST JANE:—I wrote to you a few days ago from Sheerness, and now seize another hour to inform of our motions since I wrote from London. I found my lodgings at Greenwich very comfortable, but experienced almost as many interruptions there as in town. I dined with Charles Burney one day, and found the family the kindest of the kind, and pleasant. I forget if I told you that the Literary Union gave me a dinner, with T. Campbell in the chair. At last, after many a weary delay, the ‘Vernon’ left Woolwich on *Sunday, 29th July*, in tow of two steamboats, which took her to the Nore. On Monday, 30th, she was taken into dock at Sheerness, and then, after some repairs in her copper, anchored within cable-length of the ‘Ocean,’ of 100 guns. Some of us amused ourselves with walking about the place; but it is somewhat dullish, though the docks, etc., are splendid. On *Tuesday, 31st*, we took our guns on board, fifty 32-pounders, the method of doing which was interesting to me, who had never seen it before; and then lunched with the officers of the ‘Ocean,’ and inspected that magnificent ship ‘The Flag Ship’—Admiral Sir J. Beresford. I dined with the Admiral in his house on shore, and met a pleasant party of males and females. We had music and dancing, and the family proved agreeable and amiable. At midnight we reached the ‘Vernon,’ all tolerably steady, that is to say, Mr. Massey, the first lieutenant, the captain, and myself.

“On *Wednesday, 1st* of August, I breakfasted with the officers of the ‘Ocean,’ and Lieutenant Carey (brother of Lord Falkland) took me in his cutter to Chatham, during which sail we saw about a hundred ships of war, of the line and frigates, all moored like models along both shores. The chaplain (Falls) and I then inspected Chatham and Rochester, and walked to Maidstone, where were the assizes; so we proceeded to a village wayside inn, where

we slept comfortably. This walk gave us a view of the Vale of Alesford and the richest parts of Kent.

“On *Thursday, 2d*, we returned to the ‘Vernon,’ through a woody and hedgy country, and the hottest of days, and in the afternoon saw the powder taken aboard. The officers of the 96th gave me a dinner at the barracks, and a jovial night we had of it. On rowing back to the ship, one of our lieutenants fell overboard, but we picked him up without loss of time, and had him resuscitated. On *Friday, 3d*, I called on the Admiral, and chatted with his three daughters, about the corresponding ages of your three—pretty, and well brought up, elegant, and without *hauteur*. They have no mother, but an aunt lives with the Admiral, who is a kind-hearted soul as ever lived. I also called on Captain Chambers, captain of the ‘Ocean,’ who lives on shore, and chatted with his daughters, three in number, and agreeable—eldest pretty and rather literary—good people all. I also called on Mr. Warden, surgeon, who used to live in Ann Street. I found him and his wife and family snugly situated in a good house, and civil to a degree. I dined on board the ‘Ocean:’ officers of that ship delightful fellows, and overwhelmed me with kindness.

“*Saturday, the 4th*.—The ‘Snake’ gun-brig from Woolwich appeared in the offing going down the river, and the ‘Ocean’ saluted her with twelve guns. At midday the ‘Vernon’ manned her yards, a beautiful sight, while we received the Admiral. I lunched on board the ‘Ocean,’ and dined in the ‘Vernon,’ having inspected all the docks and the model-room, and seen Sheerness completely. In the evening we were towed out to the Nore. On *Sunday, the 5th*, we weighed anchor by daylight, and the ‘Vernon’ for the first time expanded her wings in flight. She was accompanied by the Duke of Portland’s celebrated yacht the ‘Clown,’ whom she beat going before the wind, but we had no other kind of trial till we cast anchor off the Sark in the ‘Swin’ off Norwich. *Monday, the 6th*.—Weighed anchor at daylight with a fine breeze, and went into the Downs. Off Ramsgate, were joined by the ‘Snake’ and ‘Pantaloons’ gun-brigs, the latter the best sailer of her size ever known. It came on to blow fresh, and for several hours we tried it on upon a wind, having been joined by a number of cutters. The ‘Vernon’ rather beat the rest, but in my opinion not very far, the ‘Pantaloons’ sticking to her like wax. But our sails are not yet stretched, and

the opinion on board is, that she will, in another week or so, beat all opponents. The day was fine, and the sight beautiful, as we cruised along the white cliffs of Dover, and then well over towards the French coast. At sunset we returned before the wind to the Downs, and the squadron ('Vernon,' 'Snake,' 'Pantaloön,' and 'Clown') cast anchor off Deal, surrounded by a great number of vessels.

"*Tuesday, the 7th.*—The squadron left their anchorage before Deal about twelve o'clock, with a strong breeze; the 'Clown' and 'Pantaloön' being to windward of the 'Vernon,' and the 'Snake' rather to leeward. This position was retained for nearly two hours, when the 'Snake' dropped considerably astern, and the 'Vernon' weathered the 'Pantaloön,' the 'Clown' still keeping to windward and crossing our bows. At this juncture it blew hard, and I went down with Collier and Symonds to dinner in their cabin. The 'Vernon' was now left in charge of the first lieutenant, and in tacking missed stays. The 'Snake' and 'Pantaloön' immediately went to windward, and we were last of all. It still blew very fresh, and in about two hours we again headed the squadron, all but the 'Clown,' who continued first all along. Towards sunset the wind came off the land, where the 'Snake' and 'Pantaloön' were, and brought them to windward of us about two miles, and so ended the day's trial, with alternate success. The 'Snake' and 'Pantaloön' then came down by signal under the 'Vernon's' stern, and we continued all night in company under easy sail, the wind having slackened, and the moon being clear and bright.

"*Wednesday, 8th.*—At seven o'clock found ourselves off Beachy Head, with the 'Clown' a long way to leeward, the 'Snake' to windward, and the 'Pantaloön' in our wake. The wind had shifted during the night, and we had the advantage of it. But towards morning it had fallen, and we made but two knots an hour. The calm continued during the day, and we made but little way. Early in the afternoon a miserable accident occurred. The crew were up aloft lowering the main top-gallant yard. It is a spar about seventy feet long, and about sixty feet above the deck. As it was coming down, a man slid along it to release a rope from a block, when, by some mistake, the men above cut the rope he was holding by, and in sight of us all he descended with great velocity, clinging to the spar till he came to the end of it, and then with outstretched arms

fell about forty feet upon the deck, within three yards of where I was standing. The crash was dreadful, and he was instantly carried below, affairs going on just as if he had been a spider. It was found that his right arm was shattered to pieces, and his whole frame shook fatally. He continued composed and sensible for three hours, when he began to moan wofully, and in half an hour expired. He was a Scotsman of the name of Murray, one of the best men in the ship, and brother, it is said, of a clergyman. No doubt many felt for him, but the noise, laughter, swearing, and singing, went on during all the time he was dying.

Thursday, 9th.—The ship has been making considerable way during the night, and at eight o'clock we are off the Isle of Wight; 'Snake' and 'Pantaloons' about two miles behind, all three going before the wind. The dead man is lying on the gun-deck, separated from where I now sit by a thin partition. The body is wrapped in flags, and the walls at his head and back are hung with cutlasses and the muskets of the marines. His weatherbeaten face is calm and smiling, and 'after life's fitful fever he sleeps well.' The night before, he was one of the most active in a jig danced to the fifes. The wind is freshening, and we expect to be off Plymouth (120 miles) by midnight. We have sprung one of our yards, and the fore-mast seems shaken, so we shall put into Plymouth to refit, and probably remain there *three* days. It is not unlikely that the Admiral (Malcolm) may join us there. If not, we shall sail for Cork (distant 300 miles), and then, perhaps, the experimental squadron will begin its career. We have no more fear of fighting, neither do we know where we may be going, but my own opinion is that we shall cruise in the Channel. I do not see that I can be at home sooner than a month at the soonest, as all that I came to see remains yet to be seen. I am not without hopes of getting a letter from you before we leave Plymouth. I meet with all kindness from everybody, and am pleased with the on-goings of a sea-life, though the bustle and disturbance is greater than I had imagined, and the noise incessant and beyond all description. But my appetite is good, and I am never heard to utter a complaint. All day wind light, but towards evening it freshened, and at seven we committed the body of the poor sailor to the deep. The funeral ceremony was most impressive. Before nightfall the 'Snake' came up with a fresh breeze, and we had another contest, in which the 'Vernon' was fairly beaten. In

smooth water and moderate winds the 'Snake' is at present her master, much to my surprise; when it blows hard we are superior. *Friday, 10th.*—This morning at four we entered Plymouth. The country around is very beautiful, and young Captain Blackwood and I are proposing to go on shore. How long we remain here seems uncertain. I hope it may not be above a day or two.

"Captain Blackwood and self have been perambulating Plymouth, and intend to dine at the hotel thereof.

"I have written a tolerably long letter. God bless you all, and true it is that I think of you every hour, and hope you now and then think of me too. Kindest love to all the progeny, John, Mag, Moll, Blair, and Umbs, and believe me yours most affectionately,

"J. WILSON.

"Write to me again on receipt of this, and enclose as before to Mr. Barrow of the Admiralty. The enclosed signature of my name, Johnny will give to Robert Blackwood, who will get my half-year's salary from the City Chamberlain; which you will get from the said Bob. Send £10 to Elleray, and account to me for the rest of the enormous sum.* I enclosed £5 in my last from Sheerness. Once more love to yourself and to children, and farewell. I will write from Cork. Yours,
J. W."

"PLYMOUTH, *August 23d.*

"MY DEAREST JANE:—I have, as you know, received your first long united epistle, and answered it in a hurried letter, telling you to write to me direct to Plymouth. Before that I wrote a long journal letter enclosing my signature for a receipt, which no doubt you have received. To wait for the post of that era (the day after my long letter, August 10), I went up the Tamar with Captain Blackwood, and after an excursion of three days returned to Plymouth. On Tuesday the 14th I dined on board the 'Malta,' Captain Clavell, with a large party, and that evening went aboard the 'Campeadora' schooner, a pleasure-yacht belonging to Mr. Williamson, from Liverpool (nephew to old Shaw thereof, who, I understand, was a rich and well-bred personage), and sailed with him to Portsmouth, distant from Plymouth 150 miles. I passed two days at Portsmouth viewing all the great works there; and returned to Plymouth on Saturday, the 17th, by a steamer; a most stormy

* The Professor's "salary" was £72 4s. 4d. per annum.

passage. Saturday and Sunday I dined on board the 'Vernon;' and on the Sunday I wrote to you the hurried letter above alluded to. On Monday, the 19th, I dined with Mr. Roberts, the master ship-builder of the docks, and met some naval and military officers. Tuesday the 20th was an a'-day's rain, and I kept all day in a lodging-room with Captain Williams, R. N., and his brother, the purser of the 'Vernon.' Wednesday the 21st was a fine day, but I went nowhere, except on board a few ships; and it being electioneering time here, I heard some speeches from Sir Edward Codrington and others. I dined with a party of *offishers* at the hotel. To-day (Thursday the 22d) I saw Sir F. Collier, who informed me that the squadron of Sir P. Malcolm, consisting of seven sail, were in the offing, and that the 'Vernon' is to join them to-morrow at 12 A. M. We are consequently all in a bustle; and my next letter will be from the first port we put into. This is the night of the said Thursday; I am on shore writing this. I hope that a letter from you will reach us to-morrow before we sail, though I *fear* not, because Mr. Barrow is at Portsmouth, and that may have delayed your letter. The letter which you were to write *direct* according to former instructions, to Plymouth, will be sent after us ere long. On receiving this please to write to me, *directed to me under cover to Mr. Barrow, Admiralty*, and it will be forwarded with the Admiral's letters. *The cruise begins to-morrow*, and two months have been spent, as you will see, in another way. I shall take two or three weeks of the cruise, as it would be stupid to return without seeing the experimental squadron. I shall write to you by the first steamer or tender that takes letters from the squadron. I do not think we are going very far. Several balls and concerts were about to be given to us, but our orders have come at last rather unexpectedly, and all the ladies are in tears. I forgot to say that on Monday, the 13th, I dined, not on board the 'Vernon,' but in the Admiral's house, with a splendid party. The 'Vernon' has been much attacked in the newspapers, but my account of her in my long letter is the correct one. I think in strong breezes she will beat the squadron. In light winds she may prove but an 'Endeavor.' I shall say no more of my hopes and fears about your letter to-morrow; but this I will say, and truly, that I think of you all three or seven times a day, or haply twenty-one. I suppose the lads have gone to Elleray, according to my permission in my last, and with the means of doing

so afforded by the stamp-receipt. I will write to you again before long; I hope it will not be very long before I return. Tell the girls to be sensible and good *gals*. Love to them and the lads, if these latter be with you; and do not doubt, my dearest Jane, that I am, and ever will be, your affectionate

JOHN WILSON."

"CAMPEADORA SCHOONER, PLYMOUTH,
August 31, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE:—After some anxiety from not hearing from you, your letter of the 23d, direct to Plymouth, reached me the day before yesterday, and informed me that all are well. I cannot conjecture what has become of your other letters, but I have received only one long one written conjunctly, and your own of the 23d. Any or all intermediate must still be with Mr. Barrow. I presume that Sym has told you within these few days that he has heard from me, and I now sit down to inform you further of my proceedings. The squadron are now collected, and we have been sailing with strong breezes. The first day there was no right trial; the second, from Torbay to near Plymouth and back again, was also inconclusive. The chief struggle was between the 'Snake,' 'Castor,' and 'Vernon.' When going under full sail, in the same tack, close-hauled to the wind, the 'Vernon' was considerably ahead, the 'Castor' next, and the 'Snake' trying to shoot across the 'Castor's' bow, but without success. The 'Castor' carried away her jib-boom, and signal was thereupon made by the Admiral for us to *put about*. The 'Castor' stood in, and we crossed her to windward only fifty yards. As she was more than fifty yards behind when we started, her people claimed the victory, but it was obviously no go. The day grew very boisterous, and we got safe at sunset into Torbay. On Sunday (the day following), I visited the Admiral, as told in my letter to Sym. On Monday we lay at rest. I am sorry to say, that on entering Torbay, on Saturday night, a man fell overboard, and was drowned. On Wednesday morning, at four o'clock, the squadron got under weigh and left Torbay. I had gone on board the 'Campeadora' the night before, and slept there on condition that a look-out should be kept on the movements of the 'Vernon.' Judge of my feelings (mixed) when awakened at seven, and told all the ships had been gone for several hours. At eight we weighed anchor and followed the fleet. The tide favored us, and so did a

strong breeze from the land, and in a few hours we discovered the squadron some leagues ahead, but to leeward, and they were all racing, and, as we neared, I had a beautiful view of all their motions. The 'Snake' was two miles ahead of all the others; the 'Vernon' and 'Prince' were next, and close together. The 'Trinculo' followed, then the 'Nimrod;' next came the 'Castor,' and, finally, the 'Donegal;' the 'Dryad' had been sent to Portsmouth, and the 'Tyne' to Plymouth the day before. It now came on to blow very hard, and the waves ran hillocks high; frequent squalls darkened the sky, and shut out the ships, which ever and anon reappeared like phantoms. They seemed to retain their positions. Meanwhile we kept to windward, and ahead of them all, but with a pitching, and a tossing, and a rolling no mortal stomach could withstand. Still, though occasionally sick, I enjoyed the storm. My hat flew overboard, and we were all as wet as if in the sea. There was no danger, and the vessel was admirably managed, but she was liker a fish than a bird. Between four and five in the afternoon the 'Campeadora' dropt anchor behind the breakwater in Plymouth Sound. In rather more than half-an-hour the 'Snake' did the same; in another half-hour in came the 'Prince;' in quarter of an hour more the 'Vernon;' and shortly after the 'Trinculo' and the 'Nimrod;' the 'Castor' and 'Donegal' were obliged to lie off during the night. The race was fifty miles, beating to windward, and in blowy weather. The 'Vernon' was, at the end, seven miles ahead of the 'Castor,' her chief competitor, they being the only two frigates, and built by rivals, Symonds and Jeffrys. As soon as I got myself dried, and my hunger appeased, I joined the 'Vernon,' and joined the officers in the gun-room, crowing over the 'Castor.' They had sold all my effects by auction, and had considered me a deserter. The night was passed somewhat boisterously, *but the name of the Campeadora never once mentioned!!!!* She had beaten them all *like sacks*, and I therefore behaved as if I had come from Torbay in a balloon. Next day (Thursday) we remained all anchored behind the breakwater. Your welcome letter I received on board the 'Vernon,' the evening of the race. I asked one of the officers what he thought of the 'Campeadora,' who had left Torbay three hours after the squadron, and anchored in the Sound of Plymouth half-an-hour before the 'Snake.' His answer was, '*That he had not seen her!* that we had not sailed with the squad-

ron at all; and had been brought in by the tide and the land breeze'!!! The tide and land breeze had helped to bring us up with the squadron; but for five hours we beat them all, as I said, *like sacks* into our anchorage. The whole officers joined with my antagonist in argument, and it has been settled among them that the 'Campeadora' did not sail with the squadron, and that she beat nobody! Such, even at sea, is the littleness of men's souls; it is worse even than on Windermere at a regatta. This is Friday (the 31st), and I slept last night in the 'Campeadora.' I shall keep this letter open till I hear something of our intended motions, which I hope to do on boarding the 'Admiral.' The 'Vernon' is said to be *wet*, because when it blows hard, and she sails upon a wind, the spray spins over her main top-gallant mast. This it seems is reckoned a great merit. As to the noise on board—for it consists of everlasting groaning, howling, yelling, cursing, and swearing, which is the language in which all orders are given and executed—never less than 200 men are *prancing* on her decks, and occasionally 500; windlasses are ever at work, and iron cables are letting out and taking in, which rumble like thunder. Gun-carriages (two ton and a half heavy) are perpetually rolled about to alter her *trim*, and ever and anon cannon fired close to your ears (32-pounders) which might waken the dead. Drums, too, are rolling frequently, and there are at all times the noise of heavy bodies falling, of winds whistling, and waves beating up to any degree. But all these noises are nothing compared to *holy-stoning!* This is the name given to scrubbing decks. A hundred men all fall at once upon their knees, and begin scrubbing the decks with large rough stones called holy-stones; this continues every morning from four o'clock to five, and is a noise that beggars all description. I sleep in the cock-pit, a place below both decks, in a swinging cot, which is very comfortable. But as soon as the decks are done, down come a dozen Jacks, and *holy-stone* the floor of the cock-pit, without taking any notice of me, who am swinging over their heads. That being over, all the midshipmen whose chests are in the cock-pit, come in to wash, and shave, and dress. You had better not imagine the scene that then ensues. As soon as the majority of them are gone I get up, and, at half-past seven, Captain Coryton of the Marines gives me his cabin to wash and dress in. I do so every morning, and the luxury of washing too became known to me for the first time; for

you get covered with dust, and sand, and paint by day and night, to say nothing of tar and twine; in short, every thing but feathers. The eating is excellent, and the drinking not bad, though sometimes rather too much of it.

“I have, since writing the above, seen Sir F. Collier, who informs me we start to-morrow forenoon (September 1st) for the coast of Ireland. I shall go; and if the squadron does not return soon to Portsmouth, I shall sail from Cork to some northern port, and so home. I will write to you by the first opportunity, and I believe one will occur in a week. Love to the girls. I am happy to hear that Molly is getting on with her singing, and she may depend on my being pleased with her *chanson*. Meg is, no doubt, now a Song-tag; perhaps Umbs may also prove a songstress. The boys by this time have, I suppose, been a while at Elleray. *Narcotic* is a good word for the Opium-Eater, but I read it hare-skin. I have just heard that another letter is lying for me on shore. I hope it is from some of you; but I cannot get it, I fear, till the morning, and I am this hour again on board the ‘Vernon,’ and it is blowing so hard that no boats are going on shore.

“I therefore conclude with warmest and sincerest affection for thyself and all our children. Give my kindest remembrances to my sister Jane, who, I devoutly trust, will continue to improve in health, and, ere long, be well. You are now but a family of four females, so be all good boys, and believe that I will be happy to be with you again, when I hope you will be happy to see again the old man. Once more, with love to you and the three Graces, I am, my dearest Jane, ever yours most affectionately,

“JOHN WILSON.

“‘VERNON,’ OFF PLYMOUTH, *August 31st.*”

“LAND’S END, *Tuesday Evening,*
September 4th.”

“About eight o’clock morning we were off the Scilly Isles, and observed a steamer. It contained the Admiralty and other grandees. Sir C. Paget, Sir F. Maitland, and Admiral Dundas, came on board at nine, and at ten signal was made for all ships to close upon the ‘Vernon.’ The wind was light but steady, and the day beautiful. We sailed till five o’clock (seven hours) in charming style, but it would take a volume to narrate all our evolutions. For the greater part of the time the ‘Waterwitch’ kept first, and

then the 'Vernon,' the 'Snake' having outmanœuvred herself by passing too close to windward. The 'Castor' sailed well, but kept dropping to leeward. At half-past four the 'Vernon' weathered the 'Waterwitch' and 'Snake,' and led the squadron. This was done by fair sailing, on which the Admiral made signal to shorten sail, which was done; and the grandees left us and went on board the steamer, which set off for Portsmouth. Sir Pulteney then came on board the 'Vernon,' and acknowledged we had beaten the squadron. The 'Castor' was four miles to leeward, the 'Stag' six, and the 'Donegal' eight: the 'Nimrod' as far; but the 'Waterwitch' and 'Snake' were only a quarter of a mile under our lee. The triumph of the 'Vernon' is declared complete, but, in my opinion, the 'Waterwitch' and 'Snake' may beat her another day; the 'Castor' cannot, in any wind. The Admiral has just left us, and, if weather permit, Sir F. Collier and the Professor will dine to-morrow on board the 'Donegal.' We are now making sail back to the 'Lizard,' where, in the morning, a boat will come from shore for our letters. We will then put about for the coast of Ireland, as Sir Pulteney himself has told me; and therefore, my dearest Jane, either yourself or the lasses, that is, the gals, must write to me, if possible, the evening you receive this—*His Majesty's Ship 'Vernon,' Cork*—without any reference to Barrow, and I shall get it probably before we leave that harbor. That will be the last time I shall hear from you before I return; and from Cork I will write to Sým, who will probably send you my letter or part of it. Pray keep my letters for sake of the dates, for I have not been able to keep a journal. A good many things have occurred on board within these few days, but I have no room to narrate them. Warmest love to the progeny, who, I hope, do not forget him who tenderly loveth them. I expect to find them all grown on my return, and Catalani jealous of Sontag. I send them all kisses and prayers for their happiness, and for that of one of the best of wives to her affectionate husband,

“JOHN WILSON.”

“OFF THE LIZARD, *September 5, 1832.*”

“MY DEAREST JANE:—I wrote a tolerably long letter the day before we left Plymouth, which was on Tuesday, the 4th. I had then received three letters from you, including one that had been sent to Cork. I therefore knew that you were all well on the 23d

August, and trust I believe you are so *now*. The squadron left port with a light leading wind, consisting of 'Donegal,' 'Vernon,' 'Castor,' 'Stag' (a 46 frigate), 'Nimrod,' 'Snake,' and 'Waterwitch.' The 'Dryad' is paid off, being a bad sailer, and the 'Tyne' sails for South America in a few days, and belongs no more to our flag. The 'Trinculo' has gone to Cork, and the 'Prince' is at Plymouth. In beating out, 'Vernon' missed stays, and drifted, stern foremost, aboard the 'Castor,' with no inconsiderable crash, staving her boat in the slings, and making much cordage spin. We got off, however, without damage of any consequence, and towards night were off the Eddystone lighthouse. There was very little difference in the rate of going between 'Vernon' and 'Castor.' The 'Castor' rather beat us the first two hours, but at sunset (when sail is always taken in) we were to windward about 200 yards; the 'Snake,' as usual, a mile at least ahead, and to windward of us all. All night we kept under easy sail in 'our Admiral's lee,' and on Monday morning at six o'clock, signal was made for us to spread all our canvas, and try it before the wind. We soon got into a cluster, the breeze being so light as to be almost a calm, and so we carried on in a pretty but tedious style for the greater part of the day, our prows being in the direction of Falmouth. The Lords of the Admiralty are there at present, and I suppose we shall touch in this evening. They were at Plymouth, and I was introduced to one of them, Admiral Dundas, who was very civil; so was Sir C. Paget and Sir F. Maitland, the latter of whom invited me to see him at Portsmouth on our return, he being Admiral on that station. Sir J. Graham I did not see, as we were at dinner when he came on board the 'Vernon.' Sir Pulteney has been extremely kind, and is a good old man. I had not heard of poor Minna's death, and asked how she was, when he gave me the intelligence. She was a good woman, in my opinion. She died of dropsy, and had suffered much, but bore it like a Christian. We have just caught sight of an enormous lizard, so large that it is called 'The Lizard,' and we are all to lie under its shadow till morning, so good-night."

"CORK, Friday, 14th Sept., 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE:—I wrote to you on the 5th, off the *Lizard*, and since then have enjoyed *a week's capital cruising* in all kinds of winds, except a positive storm. Your last letter received was the 29th

of August; and I am in hopes of getting your answer to mine of the 5th to-night. If I do not, I shall leave orders at the post-office to send it on to London, where I hope to be in a week from this day. But in case any accident should happen, I wish *one of you* to write to me, the *same day you get this, directed to me at 'Union Hotel, Charing Cross, London, to lie till called for,'* telling me that you are all well. I shall be at Portsmouth (necessarily) a day or two before I go to London, but shall not stay in the metropolis more than *one day*. I rather think I shall come down to Edinburgh by land, for a steamboat after the 'Vernon' will be rather dull, and at this season rolls most infernally. In that case I shall go by York; for I do not wish to trouble Elleray at present, for sufficient reasons. As I shall travel *outside*, I shall probably stay a day at York: but I will write you a day before I leave London, communicating particulars, and you will see me before long.

"On Tuesday, the 11th, we entered the Cove of Cork at sunset; the squadron at four o'clock. On Wednesday, the 12th, I set off on foot for the city of Cork, distant thirteen miles, a most beautiful walk. At nine o'clock, I took a seat in the mail-coach, and was off for Killarney. In the coach were a Captain and Mrs. Baillie, young people who had been in India, and near relatives of the Major and Mrs. Barlow. We became friends.

"At Killarney found that Mrs. Cashel* *was not there!* ought to have known that before. Stormy night, so kept snug in a good inn. Thursday, 13th, left Killarney in a jingle at five o'clock in the morning, and arrived at Marino Lodge, on the Kenmare, distance twenty miles, before nine o'clock. Found the family all well, except Mrs. Cashel, who has an asthmatic cough, *which mention to nobody*. I will amuse you *when we meet* with my account of my visit to that quarter. Nothing could exceed their kindness, and she admires you beyond all. On Friday, the 14th, left Marino Lodge in a taxed cart at five o'clock, and went nearly twenty miles through mountains to a place on the Cork road, where the mail overtook us. Got in—and afterwards out—after being *twice upset*, and three times half upset. More of that anon; no bones broken. I have just dined in the coffee-room with three very agreeable Irishmen, whose names I do not know, but who asked me to drink wine as *the Professor*. I am just about to set off for the

* His sister.

'Vernon' in a jingle; and I hear that we sail to-morrow (Saturday, the 15th), at five o'clock A. M. Indeed, Sir F. Collier told me so before I left the ship. I thought it would or might seem unkind not to see Grace when I was in Ireland, and therefore I travelled 160 miles for that purpose, being with them just twenty hours. You must not be incensed with the shortness of this letter, for you must perceive that I have been in a dreadful racket. I intend writing another letter to Sym on our way up to Portsmouth; but do not say any thing about it. If your letter has come thus far, it will be lying for me to-night on board the 'Vernon.' Tenderest love to the Graces, and also to the lads at Elleray. I hope you will be kind to the old man on his return—all of you. Yours ever, most affectionately,

JOHN WILSON."

"UNION HOTEL, CHARING CROSS,
Tuesday Afternoon, September 25th, 1832.

"MY DEAREST JANE:—The 'Vernon' anchored at Spithead this day week, and the day following I wrote to Sym, who would tell you of my welfare. I got your Cork letter on the Thursday, and on Friday I bade farewell to the 'Varmint' (as she is called), and dined on shore with the Williamses, who have a house at Portsmouth. That night I took coach to London, where I arrived about six o'clock, and went to bed for some hours. I found your letter lying for me soon after breakfast, and was rejoiced to find you were all well. On Saturday, Dr. Maginn dined with me; and on Sunday I called on Mrs. S. C. Hall and husband, Miss Landon, and Thomas Campbell, with the last, not least, of whom I passed the evening. There is a Captain Coryton (of the Marines) on board the 'Vernon,' whose wife and family live at Woolwich. I promised to call on them to tell them about him, and his mode of life, and did so on Monday, having walked thither and back (about twenty miles). He is to be absent for three years in South America. I returned to London by seven, and dined with a German Baron, whose name I can neither spell nor pronounce, a Polish Patriot, (not Shirma), and a French royalist. On Tuesday, that is, this day, after some business connected with my cruise, I called on Mrs. Jamieson, author of *King Charles's Beauties*. She is very clever, middle-aged, red-haired, and agreeable, though I suspect you would call her a conceited minx. She is to send some Italian airs to

the guitar for Maggie, to the hotel this evening. I am going to dine to-day at the Literary Union, with Campbell and some others. To-morrow I shall be busy all day, calling on naval officers, and at the Admiralty, nor could I have sooner done so. And on Thursday, I shall leave London for York in one of the morning coaches. This will enable me to stop some hours there to rest, and I shall be in Edinburgh on Saturday afternoon; I do not know at what hour, but I believe *two or three after the mail*, unless I take my place *in the mail from York*. The gals can ask Bob at what hour any coach arrives in Edinburgh from York, besides the mail. I should think he will know. But should any thing detain me, it will only be my not getting a place at York. The gals may take a look at the mail, perhaps on Saturday. I need say no more than that I shall be truly happy to find you all well and happy, as you deserve to be. God bless you all! Yours ever affectionately,

“JOHN WILSON.”

CHAPTER XIV.

LITERARY AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

1832-'37.

THE following letter will be read with interest:

“LONDON, *November 30, 1832.*”

“SIR:—You have often, and ‘on the *Rialto*’ too, twitted me with an addition to Sonnets, and ‘such small deer’ of poetry, sometimes in a spirit of good-humor, at others in that tone of raillery which is so awful to young gentlemen given to rhyming *love* and *dove*. Yet, notwithstanding the terrors of your frown, I think there is so much of the milk of human kindness blending up with that rough nature of yours, as would prevent you from willingly hurting the weak and the defenceless; on the contrary, if Master Feeble acknowledged his failing in a becoming manner, I can believe that you would put the timid gentleman on his legs, pat his head, cocker his alarmed features into a complacent smile, and, giving him some-