

His Majesty's Brig Bathurst - Port Louis - I. of France
November 5. 1821.

My Dear William

Previous to quitting the Ile of France, I feel much gratified at having an opportunity by the Ship Arab, of writing to you & to all my dear Relations at the Rectory again, though from having so very recently dispatched a long letter to our dear Father by HM's Brig Cygnat, I have nothing to write about - That letter was dated from this place between Sept. 28 & Oct. 30 - but the Cygnat having to stop at the Bay of Good Hope, & to forward her letters from thence by the Shearwater, so much delay may be ascribed as to admit of your receiving this first - My last to you was (I think) from Port Jackson in the middle of March last, accompanying a box of Curiosities, which I sent by the friendly hand of Dr. Petherford, R.N. (which I trust you have received safe) - The Dick has another box of much larger dimensions for your Cabinet, which I hope will gradually be increased to a size sufficiently extensive to render it worthy of the notice of the Scientific as well as Curious, in course of time - For Time & Perseverance alone can accomplish that object, & you may depend upon my most cordial co-operation in augmenting the collection, you have begun, by every means in my power - The insects I need not again caution you to be particularly careful of, for they are perishable articles not easily to be replaced, some of them perhaps altogether new to the Scientific entomologist - I regret not being able to send you any thing from this place, for the people here are perfectly Curiosity-mad, & grapple eagerly at any thing of the kind that makes its appearance, giving the exorbitant price of 8 & 9 pence (25 or 28 Shillings English) for a pair of a particular kind of shell called a harp - These expenses I cannot afford to incur; & the accident which befel me on the N.W. coast of Australia, having deprived me of an opportunity of making a collection at the only place where opportunities presented themselves, I am considerably farther afield than my neighbours - We are now nearly ready for sea, & expect to sail in 3 days - in which case, we shall probably be at King George's Sound by the middle of December, off the N.W. Cape of New Holland in the middle of the following month, & at Port Jackson in May, preparing for our voyage homeward: but whether that voyage will be in the least or by a private merchant vessel, we cannot tell till we receive farther instructions to that effect from the Admiralty: we hope it will be by the former, as less expensive, & affording us much more comfortable accommodations - A ship arrived here 2 days ago from Port Jackson, by which we learn that Governor Macquarie was not relieved on 18th September, though Sr. Tho. Brisbane was daily expected there for that purpose, that party spirit was then very violent - the Governor's enemies showing their teeth at the prospect of his speedy departure, & his friends as strenuously supporting him: The Dauntless, Sloop of War, arriving there to refresh, on her passage to S. America, had created such a sensation in the minds of the young Colonists, to whom such a sight was totally new, that they did not fail to evince as much astonishment as a black fellow attempting to take potatoes out of a saucepan of boiling water - Balls & parties of pleasure were the order of the day while she remained there, & many of the most respectable inhabitants had received the novel treat of dining onboard her - we were disappointed in our expectations that the Dauntless would convey Gov. Macquarie home, for we hear that she sailed for South America, where she is supposed to be bound, for a freight of Dollars - I am sorry to hear that the Governor has set his enemies vigorously to work, by the publication of a pamphlet in England, to answer one from Mr. Bennett, the Member of Parliament: I have not seen it, but many names having been mentioned, is the cause of the parties being so closely at it again: You have by this time probably seen something in the newspapers respecting the Commission of Enquiry that was recently sent to ascertain the state of the colony at Port Jackson, under the Chief management of Mr. Bigge: Nothing about it has as yet transpired here, but we are glad to hear of the arrival of the Dromedary in England, as she not only conveyed the Commissioner home to make his report, but took a young son of Mr. St. M. Arthur's to his grandmother's (Mr. Gov. King) to be sent to school: Whenever you see or write to any of that worthy family, I must beg you to give my kind remembrance - I am sorry I have not been enabled to make any more excursions into the interior of this island; and the report of our Botanist Mr. Cunningham, who has visited the Tomb of Paul & Virginia in his occasional rambles among the hills, has served to banish from my mind that degree of regret which I should otherwise have felt at not having visited the spot myself - for he says, the only appearance of any thing of the kind is in the private grounds of an individual, who permits the unlimited examination of the spot by the few persons who have the curiosity to visit it, who invariably express surprise & disappointment at not finding their fanciful dreams realised: The tomb consists of 2 Stone representations of urns raised about 2 feet above the ground, on pillars, with a small stream dividing them, emblematical of the incidents which are related in the interesting tale: a few names having been cut out upon these urns by occasional visitors, a notice & request that the Proprietor wishes they may not again be defaced by similar or any other means, is fixed with a wafer upon them, & no care appears to have been taken to preserve the ground on which they stand in any kind of order: Such is the amount given by Mr. C. who is generally very minute on these occasions; & so little is this spot noticed, or even known to many of the inhabitants, that there are not many of them acquainted with its existence - I have been occupied lately in exercising my poor pencil at taking a few sketches of this picturesque little ^{Bay of the Town} ~~spot~~, though the Sun is so confoundingly warm during greater part of the day, that very little can be done except in the mornings & evenings, unless under cover - Although I have got rid of Capt. Moresby's Chart, I am still tied by the leg with a long tether rope, having the agreeable taste of superintending 2 of his Mids, whom he is anxious to have initiated in the little knowledge which is requisite for committing to paper any observations & corrections he may hereafter have an opportunity of making, & who are now making a copy of the Chart I have finished: I am not however so soft as to allow this to occupy the whole of my time, and it cannot indeed be expected that I should; for anxious as I am to make myself useful (to the extent of my poor abilities) to Capt. M. or any other person, I have given several very broad hints of my close application at his Chart having hitherto prevented my seeing much of the bounty, & that it is my earnest desire to exercise my pencil at taking a few sketches of the surrounding scenery: upon the strength of this, I now go to his house only 2 or 3 times a day for a few minutes, & employ the remainder for the execution of my own plans: My collection of insects has also been a little increased by occasional walks, & I am endeavouring to

make up a sufficient quantity of seeds that I think would be acceptable to our dear Mother's friend Dr. Smith, the
Professor of Botany at the University of Cambridge - I have at present about 40 different kinds, a few from Australia, which
with 80 or 100 bulbs from the latter place. I will make up in a small box & send him as if at the request of dear Mother.
This small quantity would cost upwards of 2 guineas at Port Jackson - but if they are not acceptable, he need give himself no further
trouble than allowing them to rot in the Custom House: for I have not the honor of knowing the Dr., & he knows as little of me,
which may perhaps induce him to think it an intrusion on my part, or that I have a great stock of impudence & am endeavouring
to force myself on his notice - but he never was more mistaken in his life - and it is solely the wish to oblige my Mother's
friend that induces me to take the step - I will also endeavour to make you up a small box of coral, with the few other
things I have for your Museum, & can only regret having nothing better to send: It will go by the Ship Mary, Capt. W. ~~Smith~~
Kneale, & will be landed at the Custom House where the ship arrives: but as this letter must be sent by the same conveyance
you will know when she has arrived, & further particulars maybe had at Lloyd's when you are on the way to pass the box thro'
the Custom House. I have just written something & as quickly erased it, about sending you a box of rarities by the Mary,
without having considered that there is a Liverpool Ship & that there are many chances against her going to the Port of London, which
would render it more than probable that the things would be broken to pieces by travelling so great a distance, independent of
the expense attending their carriage, & the inconvenience or impotentiality of getting them through the Custom House without
great trouble - For the same reason I must defer sending the seeds, & wait a more fit opportunity, though there is every
likelihood of their being passed free of expense, to Dr. Smith, by a Treasury Order, usually given on similar occasions -

Nov. 8th PM. - As we are given to understand by secret thing that it is his intention to sail tomorrow morning from this Port
I must wind up my letter, my dear Willm., & cannot help feeling extremely sorry that it is out of my power to lengthen
it for want of materials: pray however accept it as you find, & believe how joyfully I shall greet that happy period that
restores ~~me~~ all once again to the society of each other, under the roof of the Parsonage, when letters will not be necessary to
convey to each other our sentiments & affectionate good-wishes. - I have just dispatched a letter to our brother S. by the
hand of Assistant Surgeon M. Munn, who is on his passage to Madras, to join his Regiment the 38th, & has promised to
forward it from thence by Overland Post. - We have got on board what Live stocks we can contrive to take with us from
hence, having procured them at the following rates - 12 dozen Ducks at 6^s. 1/2 couple, 12 geese at 9^s each, 25 fowls & chickens at
3^s 1/2 couple, 12 small roasting pigs at 8^s each, & a quantity of vegetables, fruit, Indian corn, &c. for the stocks, at similar rates.
Each member of the mess has had to contribute about £12. towards defraying the expense of this fit out, & our mess for the six
weeks we have been here has stood us in about £8 a piece, living as economically as possible. - Not being acquainted with
many of the Resident inhabitants here, we have not been much among them, & could expect no particular attentions from any:
but besides the invitations I accepted to Govt. House, I have dined once at Gen. Darling's (commander of the Forces) 2 or 3 times at the house
of Col. Hapard, of the Engineers, who has a family, & a pretty daughter, 2nd with Capt. Moresby, & at the houses of 2 civil officers here:
our acquaintance is therefore not very extensive at this place, though I know at least 30 or 40 Ladies & Gentlemen of both countries
by sight, having seen them at the Ball, & elsewhere several times: There is a very fine promenade every evening at a spacious
level green behind the Town, called the Bank of Mars, where 20 or 30 carriages, barouches, gigs, &c. of various descriptions filled
with Ladies, drive round the skirts of the ground, which is abt. a mile & 1/2 in circumference, & a great assemblage of Ladies & Gent.
begin to promenade as soon as the Sun disappears behind the hills: The air is then cool, a fine refreshing breeze blowing
almost constantly at this Season of the year, from the East or N.E. enabling every person to take that exercise which the
extreme heat of the Sun debars them from enjoying during the day: The French Ladies invariably walk out without bonnets or
Caps, but dress their hair extremely neat, & upon the whole are very good figures: There appears to be either a surplus of
respectable looking girls here, or a great want of gallantry among the opposite sex, for it is no uncommon thing to see
8, 10, 12 & even 14 of the former walking together, without one gentleman among them; and although nearly the whole of them
are possessed of sweet pretty faces that would almost induce a person to forget himself by looking behind to enjoy the
gratification of another's ~~glance~~ ^{glance}, they are not so scrupulous on that head themselves, but fairly try to stare one out of countenance,
both while passing & afterwards. - I do not intend to say this is universally the case, but it is generally so, for there are occasional
singles to be found, who are possessed of too much modesty or forbearance to attempt it. It is an abominable practice, & I do
not add a little to the interest & pleasure with which one beholds their pretty little faces. - My dear Sophy need not be jealous because
I admire the beauty of the French girls so much, for I can assure her that I have seen & admired many of her country women
infinitely more; not only for their equal participation in this lovely gift of nature, but for their possessing those solid qualifications
& ornaments of the mind, which alone render a female all that is amiable in the eyes of our sex - I wish I could have the
happiness of talking over these & other affairs with you at home - for I am anxious to see you all once more, & very anxious for
more reasons than one, to quit for ever a quarter of the Globe that has been productive of more uneasiness & pain to me, than comfort
& enjoyment - I grant you this smells very much like Cupid's Gunpowder, but cannot help it; for Salt water sprays, bilge water, and
all the other antidotes usually recommended on similar occasions are not infallible remedies for the heart-ache, nor do I admit
that the presence society of other females, however virtuous & good, holds out sufficient inducement for a person to forget one particular
object that possesses his greatest affection & esteem - I do not mind your laughing, for I do not hear it - but I heartily pity any
poor Devil that is soft enough to get ensnared in that curious net called Love, as I have been 5 fathoms over head & ears in it
myself (but not with a French girl, or at the T. of France, collect) and am now obliged to turn over & over, and over again, in my own
mind, to ascertain whether I remain so still - Next to the sweet pleasure of enjoying the disinterested esteem & love of our dearest relatives
and friends, there is no gratification which a young man estimates more highly than the possession of the pure love & affection of
a virtuous good girl, in return for his own; Surely no disappointment is more keenly felt than when a variety of circumstances conspire
to render it necessary that such mutual attachment should be forgotten - for now that I have got so deep in the mire, I do not scruple to
acknowledge that such has been my case very recently, & that I am still smothering under the pain which these pleasing delusions have
left behind: I hinted at this subject, my dear Willm., in a former letter to you, & regretted my inability to enter into the marriage state,
but as it is now no more necessary to enter into particulars (which would only make you laugh, at my expense perhaps) than it was at that time,
I am sure you will all excuse me from saying any thing more upon a subject which can afford very little interest to any other
persons than those immediately concerned: I can only assure you & your dear Parents, that in whatever situation I may be placed,

Wm. Roe

William Roe, Esq.
at the Rectory of Newbury
Berks.

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